

Barbour, Robin

From: DESE Communications
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 12:01 PM
To: NormandyComments; Riverviewgardencomments
Subject: FW: Normandy and Riverview Gardens

FYI:

From: Evelyn Rehg [<mailto:erehg@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 11:27 AM
To: mogov@mail.mo.gov
Cc: DESE Communications
Subject: Normandy and Riverview Gardens

To Whom It May Concern:

My husband grew up in the Normandy School District and I was in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. We are very familiar with some of the problems.

1. The teachers can not teach when they have to deal with non stop discipline problems.

2. The kids grow up in environments that have nothing to do with education. Many young children are going home to care for younger siblings when they are not even old enough to care for themselves. Dinner might be a bag of chips. Bedtime may be whenever they pass out on the floor, a recliner, or a couch.

Possible solutions:

Look at some of the most successful schools and take out the money factor. Although \$15 million (current expense for one transferring one school) a year should cover anything!!!

Ideally:

1. Create boarding schools Monday- Friday.

2. Or...All students and teachers stay until 5pm. At 3:00pm give students a healthy snack and start homework. If the student has a question they can go directly to the teacher and work one on one. At 5pm everyone gets a healthy balanced dinner. Ask area restaurants to donate a dinner once a week to help with costs. After dinner everyone goes home.

3. Mandatory parenting classes talking about the importance of basic things such as the impact of getting to bed on time and speaking to your child in positive manner. (GET THEM A BED IF NEEDED) St. Louis has enough businesses and wealth that could make donations that this should not be a problem. How is a child going to behave to any adult when they have been hit on the back of the head and told how stupid they are from the time they could walk. I saw this regularly growing up in these areas!! There are many wonderful families in these districts that would probably love to volunteer to teach such classes.

I know these solutions are not easily done but the problems these districts face will not change if you do not address the lack of a positive home environments.

Thank you for your time,
Evelyn Rehg

Barbour, Robin

From: DESE Communications
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 11:28 AM
To: NormandyComments
Subject: FW: Options to School Transfers

FYI:

From: Shelia Pargo [<mailto:sheliap4@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 11:16 AM
To: DESE Communications
Subject: Options to School Transfers

Hello Sarah,

I am in favor of creating an effective way of addressing under-performing schools/districts (mostly minority and low-income). I was a participant in the desegregation here in the 1960s where Afr-Am students from North City were bused to White schools in South City. No one cared that we were traumatized by the restricted grounds access for our safety or the daily need to dodge the bricks thrown at us or our bus. **And** we were expected to happily perform as exceptional students! I believe there is still some debriefing to be done for these and others having had the "busing for betterment" experience. I believe our school systems are still attempting to operate with an antiquated educational design. It's time for a massive forum to discuss the core needs of today's students, family and faculty and its impact on the community. As a former education consultant in the St. Louis area in both public and parochial schools, I would assert there is a resistance to engaging staff, students, parents/guardians and the community around what they feel is needed for us to collectively and effectively educate and how those needs can be met.

I welcome the opportunity to be included in this transformation.

Shelia Pargo
314.724.0073

Barbour, Robin

From: Perri L. Byrne [pbyrne@normandysd.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 9:17 AM
To: NormandyComments
Subject: Normandy School District situation comment

Hello,

I was present at both meetings and although not chosen to speak, I would like to add my comments.

As a 22 year veteran teacher here in the Normandy School district, I understand the issues, challenges and situation first hand. I have had at least 15 different sets of building administration and more than 6 superintendents and their cabinet members.

This year, many new administrators have been put into positions to evoke change. Many arrived with DESE's blessing and they arrived with the understanding that the specific time-frame of improvements was by January of 2015, because we all know, change takes time...anywhere. I respectfully request that the original time-frame of improvement be upheld to allow the current team, to generate the changes they were placed here to create and oversee. Changing the rules in the middle of the "game" creates mistrust, apathy and anger. None of those results will improve anything...anywhere.

If DESE needs to get more involved, then do so - help us out, but please don't strip these 24 municipalities of their neighborhood PUBLIC schools. Financial help would be a great place to start as would adding some people of color to the cadre of visible DESE officials seen at the meetings especially since all of the troubled school districts are predominately school districts of color.

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to present this information/these comments and the request to allow Dr. McNichols and his team the time to do what they were placed here to do. In my experience, they have been and are making positive headway even under the bleak financial circumstances.

Perri Byrne
Family and Consumer Science Teacher, Normandy Middle School facswbyrne.weebly.com

Barbour, Robin

From: Karl Gray Jr. [karlgrayjr@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2013 6:09 PM
To: NormandyComments

I am happy with the transfer of school. My son is doing so good in school this year. I also feel tha this program should continue.

Karl Gray.

How would you feel if someone took the thing that matters most to the community?

—Carleesha Jones, Senior

*I'm disappointed that the people who are supposed to keep
the schools alive are killing them.*

--Kenny Branch, Junior

*It's a good school, we just have to take it slow
and work on the problems we have, problems that can be fixed.*

--Marquise Pointer, Junior

*I just really don't understand what's going on. I know I want everything to change for the
better and I will do whatever it takes.*

--Drew Foster, Junior

I love my school and everyone in it.

--Elliot Smith, Junior

Normandy High School Students

Address

Representatives from the
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

November 11, 2013

Why? Why are you taking everything that means something to my community? Why lay off hard-working staff that means so much to us? Why ship us off like we are a bunch of trash? How would you feel if someone took the thing that matters most to the community? My name is Carleesha Jones and I have been in the Normandy School District since I was 14 years old. I came here after my previous school district Wellston was closed.

The teachers here have been very helpful to me and I have enjoyed all of them. They don't deserve the treatment that they are receiving.

I have been in three different school districts in my life and I have to say that Normandy is filled with some of the best teachers that I have ever met. They are not just interested in test scores but they are interested in what we learn. When I was a sophomore I had some personal troubles and dropped out. A whole team of committed Normandy staff members (I call them the dropout team), came to my house and encouraged me to come back to school, so I did. I came back with only 6.5 credits. I will never forget this because I was determined to turn this around. They placed me in Ms. Myer's class, High School Opportunities, and she helped me get all of my missing credits. She made me believe in myself. I never knew that I could accomplish recovering my lost credits. I also remember Ms. Guile and Mr. Rainey, they helped me with the school work that I did not understand. I could always talk with them. If we lose our staff, classes will become crowded and we won't be able to learn as much as we are now. This year has been the easiest year for me, why, because the classes are smaller.

—Carleesha Jones, Senior

I've been in Normandy since I was in first grade and now I am a junior in high school. My mother, her siblings, and all of my cousins graduated from Normandy High School and we all agree that this situation is saddening. In my opinion, all that is cared about is finances. I understand that we are struggling financially because of the transfer law but as a student, I don't want to hear about my school, a school that I love, being close to shutting down. I don't want to lose any of my teachers but I completely disagree with the seniority rule. I don't understand why you would keep teachers who are close to retirement and lay off teachers who are young and fresh and still have a ways to go in their career. I feel as though being in the classrooms, my younger teachers help me learn better because they have new, innovative methods for teaching a lesson that I had never experienced before. For example, my Algebra II teacher, Mr. Eric Kennelly, is helping me understand math a lot more day by day. My freshman and sophomore year, I ended fourth quarter with a "C" in math. Me being an honors student, that grade was unacceptable. Now, since Mr. Kennelly is my teacher and he actually takes his time out to help us on this device called "Elmo," I'm passing his class with an "A." I think if the seniority rule is still in effect, the complete learning process in our school will decrease because without certain teachers here, students won't want to learn. I honestly wish students would be focused on rather than finances.

--Taylor McCormick, Junior

Normandy is my life. I've been here forever--from Lucas Crossing to the Middle School, and now the High School. I know you all are laying off teachers. But you need to know which ones. Just because you've been here for a long time does not mean you are a

good teacher. Giving kids confidence and pushing that student to success is a good teacher. My band director says, to whom much is given much is required. That's Luke 12:45. I live it. I say, Isaiah 54:17 every day: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servant of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

Right now I'm in the process of moving from my home. If Normandy closes I lose both of my histories. This is where I began and expect to end.

I've seen this year's process: kids want to learn and are even trying to learn. We are a family and we have pride. Like I say in my family: "We all we got, we all we need." Let's not give up and quit but keep going and succeed. Test scores are going down. Instead of looking in the past let's look toward the future. You can see what they say on the news and believe them. Or you can come to a regular day and see it yourself. These decisions can impact our lives. I've built a solid bond with Normandy and it's sticking there. Like the cheerleaders say: "It's in my blood, I cannot lie; I'll be a Viking until the day I die."

When you see process and effort, why take that away? This is what really is happening at Normandy. You see smiles and happiness. People glad to be at school. Plus, other kids that left are coming back. Not because it's hard but they miss their family. Don't think because we lost our accreditation there's no hope. Where there are kids trying and teachers helping there's always hope. As you see, kids stayed because we believe. In order to understand what's going on you need to live it. I've been at Normandy for 12 years and I pray you all can make it 13. I understand if you want to cut teachers, but remember time means nothing. If they show good work ethic then that's the main reason to keep them.

I am sketched into the Normandy district. I do band, dances, and even going to start baseball. But at the same time, I maintain a 3.3 or higher. When there's a problem I do my best to help. I even helped a girl on math and next time a test came she passed. I believe in my superintendent when he says Normandy is getting accreditation. I've been to every school board meeting and seen change. Like I said, we got all we need. I love Normandy and no matter what happens I love you. My mom was told I wasn't going to be able to speak or hear but now I stand speaking to you of how I don't want to leave.

--Jerunek Morris, Junior

My view upon Normandy is clear. Money is just about the most important thing here other than the students. My seven months here have shown me that once a large establishment that was--or was not--at one point successful could be easily broken when overruled by a higher authority. The authority of a man does not give that man control. People are dismantling Normandy without trying to consult with the actual student body on how they will be impacted if Normandy is broken down. I, as a student, don't think that's fair.

--Jazper Boyd, Junior

I think that Normandy School District should not have to pay for the students who wanted to go to Francis Howell. I think their own parents should pay and I think that they

should have given Normandy more chance to get things together. The children should focus better because there are good teachers at Normandy High School and they do teach so it is not fair to Normandy. Some of the teachers who are actually good teachers will get fired then the teachers that don't really teach will still be here. That's just crazy to me because you guys are just taking stuff in your own hands that you think that will help Normandy but it can't really help anything for real, for real they just think about the money. That's not even cool to put down Normandy like that 'cause you should at least give Normandy a chance. Viking pride is not going to go six feet under for anyone because we are going to stand up high and swallow this lump and keep on pushing because at the end of the day Normandy is still going to stay. Stand up for Normandy nation cause we are still Normandy as a whole.

--Imani Bolden, Junior

I've been going to Normandy now for just a few months since school has started. And personally I feel as if it's a pretty cool school. I'm still at the stage where I'm just getting to know and get the feel of the teachers and the school itself. Before attending Normandy Senior High I heard so many negative thoughts and opinions I didn't know what to think nor what to expect. I didn't know whether to believe or disbelieve. After four months of attending Normandy Senior High, I can honestly say it's been an honor to experience the new environment and to be surrounded by my new fellow classmates. Before attending this district I was in Kansas City at a performing arts school where there were no sports or anything like here. I'm now active in dance, so I'm still active in something I love. I'm also a varsity Viking cheerleader and I love this new experience. No, this probably isn't the best school but it's in the process of progression and I think we have what it takes with the help of others to believe.

— Marika Reed, Senior

I've been going to Normandy School for about four years because I started off in 5, 6, 7, and then I left and came back for 10th and 11th. When I was on my way to Normandy everyone said it was bad and it was, last year. But since we got a new principal he has changed Normandy School around because now we have better teachers who are willing to teach us. We are learning new things in all our classes. We are all getting along with each other better than we did last year. If we lose most of our teachers we wouldn't be able to learn. Plus, we'd rather finish learning from the ones who already inspired us to reach our goals and help us through life to become a young adult. The kids are focusing more on their grades and it's less violent than it was last year. My experience is that Normandy has changed a lot since I've been here because I see it's the one place that we can be anything we want to without being judged by each other, not even by the teachers.

--Breana Thomas, Junior

I have been in the Normandy School District for 12 years now and it has served me well. The teachers teach, but not all of the students learn. I know there are national and state standards for education and the teachers at Normandy teach these standards because every year on the MAP and EOC tests I have scored Proficient and/or Advanced

in all areas. There is not a problem of WHAT is being taught, but more so on HOW it's being taught.

My brother went through the Normandy District from Kindergarten and was the salutatorian of the class of 2012. How now attends Morehouse College where he is a sophomore. He too scored Advanced or Proficient on the state's tests, but I know he still had struggles with certain areas. But I believe he ironed out those wrinkles because he asked for extra help from his teachers and parents. Also, once he was getting help he never gave up on himself to understand the topic. That is where I think we, as a district, fell off; we stopped persevering to complete a task. So students nowadays need to just ask for help and earnestly want the help.

--Robert McRath, Junior

Why us? Why our school? Why our students? Why our teachers? Why? Why do people judge us instead of helping us? Why are we always on the news every day. I wake up, I think about what my life will be like when I graduate. Will I get accepted into a good college or will I be denied because I come from Normandy High School? We are we titled The Most Dangerous School in our area? Do we deserve this? Why do some people want to see our school fail instead of helping us come up. Have you guys ever thought about where we would go if our school is closed down? What will our teachers do if they lose their jobs? They have lives too. People always think negative about us but never look at the positive things. We are smart, we are bright, and we can do it. Just give us a chance.

--Aaliyah Edwards, Junior

As a returning Normandy student, I support my school to the fullest. I discovered myself and many talents within myself being here. I've been a Normandy student since Kindergarten. The reason I left from Normandy was to see what others thought of me coming from Normandy. The students I associated with were always questioning my safety and health while at Normandy. Due to the media blasting us in negative ways, other students were afraid of us. Normandy isn't a violent district. Just because of the area we are in doesn't mean every student does the bad things we are surrounded by. All the Francis Howell transfer students, including myself, received so many questions and were always categorized as "those Normandy kids." I felt bad but I showed them my "Viking Pride." I returned back to Normandy because I love my home district. The situation with the teachers is going to make classrooms larger and put people out of jobs, knowing how badly our economy is suffering. All of the people who ask me what school I attend, I always say Normandy. When I tell them they always look at me with fear. I don't want that stereotype placed upon me. They always ask, "Is it as bad as the media makes it seem?" You have to be an actual Normandy student or staff member to speak on this district. If you don't have knowledge on something then don't speak on it; it's just degrading yourself.

How are we going to go to school if we have no school near us? Most students don't have the transportation nor funds. So who's going to pay for us? We are innocent students who want an education. We don't come here for nothing. We are downed by

other schools as though we are underprivileged. Many talented students come out of Normandy High School and the school district in general. I don't see how a label can be placed on us by people who never set foot on this campus. A lot of students are really working hard this school year to keep this school open. Even parents and staff members are trying their best. Closing down a school like this with a large population will have kids out on the streets instead of going to school like we are now. People think we don't want to be at school but those are the people who've never been on Normandy's campus. We have goals just like everyone else so why can't we get our opportunity? Is it because of our district and environment is fully African American? Is it because of our skin tone? Why our school? According to the Declaration of Independence, all men are created equal. This means we have a voice regardless of our race, genders, and environment. Our new principal is working to the fullest to get Normandy back to how it was when our older family members attended this school.

As I conclude, we should be allowed to have a chance. We aren't asking for it we are working for it. Thank you for your time and I hope you take these words I minister to myself and to you.

--Mykel Chambers, Junior

I've been in Normandy School District all my life. When I say all my life, I mean starting at ABC Child Care on Jennings Station Rd., Kindergarten through 6th grade at Garfield Elementary, which is now closed, 7th through 8th at Normandy Middle School, and now here a Junior at Normandy High School. I have never in my years of education had the thought of attending another high school. Even through all the changes, negativity, and differences that Normandy and myself have encountered, I never once gave myself the opportunity or option to transfer. Change is bound to come regardless whether I like it or not. My choice is to deal with this change that I'm facing. Normandy is my home. I literally live five minutes from the High School in driving distance. I found best friends here. I make awesome grades here, and I learn great things here. I can and will be a successful graduate of Normandy High School. I've been a cheerleader ever since I was in the 8th grade and am now an NHS Varsity cheerleader, which makes me a #ProudViking#VikesUp#VikingNation. I love my school, and I want nothing but the best for it. My time is quickly approaching. I'm class of 2015; I will graduate. All of this that's been going on has really taken a toll on me, but everyone deserves a chance, and so does Normandy School District. It's like everyone was banking on us to fall or even shut down, but I know love can prove them wrong.

--Kenisha Webb, Junior

I am writing as a Normandy High School Junior. I have been going to Normandy School District since I was in the first grade. When I first came to Normandy, I thought it was going to be hard and challenging, being that I was new to the school. But that wasn't the case. The teachers made me feel right at home and like I had had been a part of the district for years. The problems at Normandy I know will bring much struggle to teachers as well as students. I only have one more year of school. The fact that this problem may affect the amount of teachers that are employed here may have a big effect on the amount of students in each class. Classes are going to be bigger, and we will not have very much

focus. I have a sister here that goes to the Middle School, and I know it will be difficult on her if she has to switch schools. I really think that the students here will make a big effort to make Normandy a better school. Being at Normandy has changed me as a person, and I know I can do what it takes to succeed.

--Ania Jones, Junior

My name is Cameron Hensley. I am currently a junior attending Normandy High School. This school is very important to my family. Twelve members of my family have graduated from this school. This school is a legacy in family. Therefore, I can't imagine myself walking across the stage graduating anywhere else but Normandy. I have Normandy pride. Every day, I come here regardless of what our situation is. Every day, I hear constant complaints and negative feedback toward Normandy from individuals who haven't ever stepped foot on the Normandy campus. There are so many people who calculate judgments on Normandy simply from what is broadcast on the news. How ignorant and closed minded is that? Yeah, there might be some students here that don't try or attempt to better their life or education, but there are so many more students here that have potential and are trying to be outstanding members of our society.

Normandy is no other than another school. I don't know why the media portrays us to be. We have fights like any other schools, behavior problems like other schools, drug problems like other schools. The only difference is that the media decided to pick on us and point out our every flaw.

In my opinion referring to the transfer situation, I believe that Normandy should appeal to every student and parent that chose to transfer their student out of the district. You should tell them that they're only hurting themselves because you're choosing to pay your taxes to a district who's already stable. You're basically helping them while your own district is struggling and in need.

I believe that students only transferred because they were running away from the problems of Normandy, not knowing they were going into a whole other group of problems. And Normandy will always be in their background and in their blood.

--Cameron Hensley, Junior

Someone that has never been here would never know what it is like. Being here is more than just a place of education. It's a place where outsiders don't even think education is occurring. It means more than one could ever know. This place has been in my life for as long as I've been old enough to attend. Here is where I learned to speak fluently, write and count. What we learn here is no different than what others are learning. It is here that I was trained to utilize my intelligence and become number two in my class. This place has shaped and molded me into the person that I am. Who knows where I would be without it? To me it does not mean much that people decided to leave our school because they could never forget where they came from. This place is filled with too much talent to just vanish. This place is like home to me. The place I call home is Normandy.

--Chanelle Rash, Junior

My name is Elliot Smith. I am a Junior here at Normandy High School. My opinions on Normandy this year are really positive. I believe that our academic percentages as a whole have increased and it will continue to improve. I love my school and everyone in it. I know for sure that attendance is a lot better than last year. At our award ceremony on November 6, 2013, we had more names called for honor roll and merit roll than were in any assembly held in my three years of high school. The only thing negative about my school is actually lunch. I believe Normandy should change its name to Normandy Christian Academy. That's how I feel about Normandy and its improvements.

Oh! And I have no opinion on what will happen when we lose teachers. It is out of my hands.

--Elliot Smith, Junior

I am a student at Normandy High School and I've been going to Normandy almost all my life. Normandy, in my opinion, is the best High School in the state of Missouri. Normandy High School is a high school filled with a ton of educated students. All these bad things that are getting around about Normandy is from people that never stepped a foot on Normandy High campus. I can admit that Normandy has its days where there is just complete trouble that day but Normandy is a very nice school. If we lose teachers, classroom will become way bigger!!! And there will be a lot of conflicts. Kids will start dropping out and there will be a lot of kids looking for new schools to attend and that's going to be very hard. On November 6 there was an assembly for performance and attendance and A and B Honor Roll and I have never seen so many students get awards from every grade level since I've been here. I was shocked. Normandy is not what everyone says about it. For all the people that never stepped a foot on the Normandy High campus: how about you come here one day and see how fast your perspective changes?

--Donovan Young, Junior

Our district has been in shackles and shambles for the past few years. First, we were skating on thin ice trying to keep our accreditation. Now we've lost it and are pushing forward to get it back.

I know that it was only fair for us to lose our accreditation because we got what we earned. Indifference. It is not fair for the district to take our teachers away from us. Most importantly, it's not fair for those chosen teachers to lose their jobs because of this mischief. Some teachers in this school and district are like family to me. Some have literally raised me. I can't even imagine the weight that's on their shoulders trying to make us the best students that we can be, then having to worry about whether or not they'll even see our faces again in January. If anything, they should just shut us down all together because we all, as a unity, fought and are still fighting to get our accreditation back. We're also still striving together to show the people on the outside looking in that we're the top scholars that we know we are.

--Ariauna Carver, Junior

I have been going to Normandy Schools since last year. My Grandfather, Charles Coburn, who regularly attends Normandy's school board meetings, used to attend the High School. My big sister and little sister both attend Normandy School District and are doing exceptionally well academically.

I went to Francis Howell and it was okay, but it was not what I expected. The media made a big deal out of Normandy going there. Normandy, in my opinion, is way better than last year. With smaller classes it is easier to focus. A lot of students receive honorary awards for excellent grades and attendance.

I don't think you should fire teachers and stop providing transportation for students, because if the students from Francis Howell come back to a school with few teachers it will be just like last year. The school and classes will be out of control, and with more students in classes it will be harder to focus in class and grades will start to go down, because people's friends will return. Students will be so distracted by the return of their friends that they will lose focus.

--Martez Young, Junior

I am student at Normandy High school. I and my youngest sister have been here for 4 years and my oldest 2 sisters graduated in 2011 and 2012. This school, our school, my school, is going through the most unfair and cruel punishment in the past year. When I walk through the halls of Normandy then watch the news I just feel as if no one has experienced our school. Just because people have sat in our classes for an hour and walked around our school doesn't mean you know our school.

It hurts so much to go out and be afraid of saying what school you go to. We can't say it or are scared to say it because were constantly being stereotyped because, of the news, and how people portray us. I am one of the smartest students in this school thanks to the teachers you all are trying to get rid of. How are you going to take away the people that are trying to help us get back on track? How are you going to make it harder for us, when we already have been going through so much as it is? How are you going to tell us students that we aren't learning? We need our teachers, we need our money, we need this school and we're going to keep this school. I don't just go to this school; I basically live at this school. I'm at this school for 11.5 hours a day and you're going to take away my learning experiences and my school activities?

We need a chance, just give us a chance. As much as you want this school gone, we want this school to stand, and it's going to stand. You didn't build this school, the students and teachers built this school. Why weren't we given as much time as Riverview Gardens High school? Why did students have to leave as soon as we got our accreditation taken? Why must we suffer so badly so soon? Can we get a chance to make things better before you make it worse for us? Think about the students who stayed because they wanted to. None of us had to stay, we all stayed for a reason and the reason we stayed will mean nothing if you don't give us time. I am Danyel Ross and I am a student at Normandy High school. You know the high school you're trying to take from us? My High School. You know the jobs you're trying to take from our teachers? They teach us. But as long as you don't tear this family we built we WILL get better as a school and as a whole.

--Danyel Ross, Junior

I have been going to Normandy schools since Kindergarten. I have a cousin who is a freshman. At the Middle School, my sister is in 8th grade and another cousin is in 7th. Many of my relatives attended Normandy and are now alumni. If Normandy loses teacher the school may eventually close. If teachers are lost, students will be thrown into crowded classes, students may find it difficult to attain information needed. Many students may begin to fail and lower test scores. This will not at all help us to acquire our accreditation that was lost. If anything, we can use teachers who are more qualified for the jobs. There should be an evaluation on teachers and it should be determined if another teacher has better qualification for that subject.

--Kashari Buggs, Junior

I'm a Normandy High School student who has been in this district since the 3rd grade. I didn't know how I would be treated when I first came here. Yes, I had my ups and downs but really things went and are going well. I went to Bel-Nor and Bel-Ridge Elementary Schools and now they are closed down. So what childhood memories will I have left? Also, every single teacher that is working here now is willing to help us and wants us to succeed. This is why I think this is wrong, what's happening. There can be a better solution.

--Diego Rodriguez, Junior

In elementary school I went to Monroe, Meramec, and Crestwood. In middle school I went to Long Middle and North Middle. High School I went to Cleveland, ROTC, Roosevelt, and Normandy. I've been in Normandy since May of last year. Normandy is a great school. I feel the reason why we are unaccredited is because the lack of ability the students are putting forth to learn. A lot of students have given up. Also the teacher have been putting forth their best effort. I feel we need to have a Normandy High School. Students need to write a letter to the Board of Education expressing how we feel about Normandy as "our" school. If we explain how we feel about the difference in Normandy and the problems we are having maybe they will understand. Also, if we lose any teachers that'll be a loss for the students. Every teacher is valuable in every way. Chef O'Bannon, our culinary arts teacher, is great for the students that want to graduate. Ms. Green is a good fashion teacher, is great for the students who want to become fashion designers. Mrs. Akila Banks, social worker, helps me with my family, school, and personal conflicts and issues that I am having.

--Alexus Griffin, Junior

I believe that Normandy High School and the Normandy District is not as bad as it seems. People make negative comments based on what they have heard but not on what they have seen for themselves. The phrase "don't judge a book by its cover" is an example of this. Lots of people don't have the slightest clue what goes on in the halls and classrooms of our schools. The majority of our teachers have a passion to teach us what is needed to be taught. One example is my Algebra II teacher, Mr. Kennelly. He makes sure we master the objective before rushing to the next.

I have been in Normandy since the 1st grade and have not once heard a teacher say "I don't care about Normandy." Many teachers love their job despite all the negative things that are said. Also, no one ever says the good things about Normandy. Of course we have our problems, but what school doesn't? We have good characteristics, too. But I guess no one cares about that.

I recently told this young lady who enrolled her daughter in school that "Normandy is not as bad and violent as everyone says. It's a good school, we just have to take it slow and work on the problems we have, problems that can be fixed."

--Marquise Pointer, Junior

I've been at Normandy for three years and I hate to tell people that I go to Normandy and their reaction is "oh," with the silence that follows. It's unfortunate that Normandy has to be going through these times but I have to work with what I have. There hasn't been a time when I don't feel safe or that I haven't been taught well. I hope to come back to Normandy one day and see that students feel the same way I did. Normandy has shaped me as a person and made me not oblivious to what I should be expecting after high school and I think that every teenager in American should have that type of knowledge. I have so much to say but I'm kind of lost for words because I'm very disappointed. I'm disappointed that the people who are supposed to keep the schools alive, are killing them. I don't see how closing multiple schools will benefit the people, it will only hold them back. If you expect people to do better than what they're doing, you must give them hope. I don't think DESE is giving the people hope to move forward and I think that's what's the problem. No matter what happens I want to help everyone who is going through this. This is a NORMANDY STUDENT who has ambitions and dreams and does not do what the media says we do. The truth has been stretched and I want to tell every parent and every student the truth about what's going on in our schools and not just Normandy School District. As a people we must put our differences aside and get together to save future generations. I want to fight for education in this community, because I don't want have our future children potentially robbed of an education.

—Kenny Branch, Junior

My name is Desmen Harris. Sixteen years old. In the 11th grade. I -- as a junior and student of Normandy High School -- feel as though we are not being given a chance to show what we know and what our teachers have taught us. Ever since this school year has started students have been working harder and harder to exceed our over-seers. As we work harder, there seems to be more and more obstacles getting in our way trying to prevent us from success. But I as a Normandy High School students and as my father was, I would like to have the same or greater education as him. All that I ask is that we are given at least one chance to prove others wrong.

—Desmen Harris, Junior

Normandy!!! When outsiders hear the name Normandy they think of bad kids, unaccredited school and dangerous people. No, that's not what Normandy is. You can't

really explain or judge Normandy until you actually spend a full school year in Normandy. Not just one day, but a full year.

First off, let's talk about why Normandy has a bad name. The only reason Normandy is getting all this attention is because of the media. I'm pretty sure there are some schools in the same situation as us. The news is part of the reason we're getting all the attention. Some people wouldn't even know about Normandy's problem if it weren't for the news. The news only sees what sells newspapers. They're just trying to get a story.

Let's look at some of the good things Normandy has done. Yesterday, there was an assembly for students on Honor Roll, merit roll, and perfect attendance. No everyone didn't get an award, but most of the students did. I'd rather see that on the news than anything else. Last year our basketball team made it to state. This year they plan to make it again and win this time. That's not even half of what Normandy is capable of.

I've been in the Normandy district every since pre-school. And now I get to my junior year, and hearing rumors about Normandy being shut down is a big disappointment. My whole family attended Normandy and graduated from Normandy. I would like to graduate from Normandy also. I would love for my children to graduate from Normandy. I just really hope this little situation is just a minor setback. We take one step back to take two steps forward.

--Ronnie Williams II, Junior

Why just our school? To be honest, there's nothing wrong with Normandy. You have to be a Normandy kid in order to understand how we feel or what we go through as students every day. Such as, the teachers. If they continue to cut teachers, then how will children learn? Sometimes it takes kids longer to grasp on to new concepts when they're not used to a new way of teaching. Also, I feel that Normandy is actually a really good school filled with educated, well-behaved children. We have times when things can get out of control, but that's where authority and teachers play their part. I've been with Normandy for quite a time now and this school has changed my whole perspective and view about everything I heard about this school. Then, money is another big issue. With so many children transferring we are going broke and what will the school and the board do when we run out of money? What will the teachers do if we get shut down? What will the students do or where will we go if we get shut down? Keep the school open.

Like I said in the beginning: you have to be a Normandy kid to experience the Normandy life. So just keep that in mind before basing your judgement about a place you've never been. Don't go off what you hear, come join us and watch your perspective change. Thanks for listening!

--Ariana Silver, Junior

My experience here has been hopeful because I and other kids at the school have a chance to graduate. I have 9.5 credits. At other schools I would have flunked out or they would have just given up on me. At Normandy, they help you. They are more supportive here. I have a chance to get a scholarship and grow up to be what I want to be in life. The classes are easier this year and the teachers pay attention to you. This is the best report card I've had in three years. Don't believe everything you hear because it's not true. Normandy is not a bad school. It's a good place to learn.

--Trinity Staten, Junior

My name is Yvette Owens. I have been attending Normandy High School for two years now. I have always heard that Normandy was a good school and also had a good athletic department. My favorite memory at Normandy would have to be when I switched schools to attend here and being able to be in a different environment. I attended my first pep rally in Viking Hall and I had so much fun. I had never known that Normandy could have so much school spirit. Normandy High School is a great school that any student could be in an achieve their goals. Also, I believe that if we lose any of our teachers it would be much harder to learn, because there would be too many students in one class.

--Yvette Owens, Junior

My name is Jasmine Johnson and I am a student at Normandy High School. The fact that Normandy High School is the trending topic on the news is not good at all. I have been a student in the district for four years now. I had a relative that went to Normandy a few years back and he said that it used to actually be a really good school. I really do think Normandy is a good school but it's the kids that don't work to their potential to meet the requirements of the state.

I have good memories at this school. My favorite memory is when we had our pep rally last year and the teachers were dancing with us. If we lose teachers I think that our school wouldn't be the same, we wouldn't get to learn like we are supposed to, and our classes would be overpopulated. This is a really good learning place and everyone treats each other like family. I like Normandy and I don't think that it is fair that we are the only ones that are on the news while Riverview hasn't had accreditation since I was in elementary school. This is a Normandy student speaking up who has dreams and ambitions. We are having social media problems and I'm pretty sure that we can grow from it and make Normandy a better place. Normandy needs the students' voices.

--Jasmine Johnson, Junior

My name is Hannah Marie Macon. I am in the Junior at Normandy High School. I have been in this district since the 6th grade. Since I've been here I have learned a lot about myself, others, and teachers/staff. I believe that the shortage of staff will be a bigger problem for Normandy. After the school was unaccredited it had a new feel. The first week of school was different from the two previous years. Not just because I'm a junior. It is because the staff has made a much bigger effort to improve our success. Attendance was pushed harder and behaving in class was a must. It was always a must but this year it was forced in our heads to follow. The movements and changes that are going on in our school are really helping. And decreasing the staff, especially in the Math and English departments, will not be a good move, in my opinion.

Wednesday, November 6, 2013, was the day we had our Honors Recognition Assembly. That day more names were called for attendance and honor roll than I've heard since freshman year. Improvements have been made since last school year. And each staff member is the reason for it. Even the lunch servers, believe it or not.

I don't want to be the child waved off to be handled later. Our voices need to be heard. By cutting teachers we are largely affected. The smaller classes really helped me and others. So please take my thoughts into some consideration.

---Hannah Macon, Junior

As a student, I, Darron Howard, am going to an unaccredited school. (Normandy) I was hoping for a new change in the way where the school could be doing better. But as I have seen, higher authority could be a Normandy issue. I feel as if higher authority means that you are running things in the right direction and all your pieces are in hand. I have only been here three months and see that higher authority (State) is bringing Normandy down. The turnaround starts with the students not the state for Normandy.

Normandy is getting negative views because of all the newscast and media. I know that Normandy has been the center of attention for a while. I once had an uncle that went to Normandy and graduated on a good foot. He was an all-star baseball player at Normandy. Why can't we open our eyes and look at the bigger and greater picture. The loss of teachers is inefficient for the school. I close by saying that Normandy will excel, but it's not in higher authority's hands; it's in the students' and teachers' hands.

--Darron Howard, Junior

I've been going to Normandy School for 11 years now. I have a little sister who is in the 7th grade at Normandy Middle School. Out of all the years I've been in Normandy, I would have to say that my freshmen year of High School was the best. In my 9th grade year, my friends and I made epic memories that will last forever. In this year of 2013, the Normandy School District will be cutting some teachers. As a student, I will be sad if some of my teachers get out of the system. When a person asks me about what's happening at my school, I tell them that it's good and working hard. This year is way different from the last two years; there are a lot of restrictions on what we can do.

--Jonathan BoClair, Junior

My name is Mercedes Princess Morgan. I have been at Normandy School District ever since I was 11. I went from Lucas Crossing, Bel-Ridge, Middle School to the High School. I love being in the Normandy School District. I live in a great community. But my biggest concern is with the school and media.

To start off with, the media. I feel that they criticize what they hear or the little things they go off of. I feel that we have been attacked over these few months. I feel as if they do this just because they see that the students and the others around won't speak up. The media doesn't know what we do inside these walls. How hard we work and how hard we try to make the best out of this school no matter what the flaws and faults are.

I don't think it's right that the media constantly targets us over and over again. I personally love Normandy; I have family and friends who graduated from here. The media has really been very outspoken about the negativities. But what about the good we have done? Our basketball team made it to State, our band members have scholarships, we have an abundance of graduates, and through all of the doubts and agony we still stick together and come as one. I agree that students haven't really been speaking up, but we do have a voice and this does affect us in so many ways, because we do go to this school and see it on the news. We should not be looked at as a bad school or an unsafe school! If they knew what goes on, they would have a different perspective on things!

As far as Normandy, I love the school and the fact that the teachers are getting laid off is really going to be a BIG PROBLEM! The classrooms are really going to be packed and I feel that this is not a good idea. If you guys want our voices to be heard, you have to start where the problem is: THE SCHOOL! We have to start here, because we are so used to not being heard so this is why we don't speak up at all. Nobody listens. I love most of the teachers I have had. We are more than just an unaccredited school, we are a family! GO VIKINGS!

— Mercedes Princess Morgan, Junior

My name is Mickale W. and I've been attending Normandy since kindergarten. It's kind of funny when you come a long way, there's always something that tries to break you down. Like society's new media is trying to break Normandy down to the ground by telling all negative B.S. like deaths, fights, etc, but doesn't talk about the changes that occurred and the positives that have been made. There are less referrals, more honor roll improvements, and less trouble.

The people and schools need to understand you see Normandy from one point of view, but not the main view of what's going on. Instead of paying Francis Howell money for our students' transportation to school, they shouldn't have signed the deal paying over a hundred thousand some dollars just to go over a bridge. But did they ever think that some parents can't reach their kids because they are at work or they don't drive?

I remember there was a student that rode his bike to school (Francis Howell) not knowing that he wouldn't have to do that with any other school in the community. Another also overslept and asked the news crew for a ride to school. Some of the students that went to Normandy before and go to Francis Howell now are coming back. But I know the real troupers are here at Normandy, and Normandy would never go down without a fight.

--Mickale W., Junior

My name is Kayla Johnson and I'm in the 11th grade. I've been a student at Normandy since 1st grade. I started at Lucas Crossing, and then went to the Middle School. Now I'm at the High School. Many people in my family are Normandy alumni. It is my dream to be like them and go to college and become something that could be relevant to many. There are some teachers here who I really feel believe in me. In particular there's Mrs. Tate. She means so much to me. She knows when I'm feeling down and she gives great advice. When we lose teachers, I'm not sure what will happen but I know it will have a huge effect on me and I hope it won't be negative. Lots of people come up to me outside of school asking if we're closing down and I don't know what to say. It can get really overwhelming. But I just ask where they heard that from. The answer I usually get is "the news." Then I ask, "While you were listening to all the untrue negative, did you bother to find out about the positive?" Then I walk away and let them think about it. I am experiencing a wonderful junior year. I'm section leader for trumpets and I'm in dance academy and it's a wonderful experience.

— Kayla Johnson, Junior

Coming back to Normandy has been a great choice for me. I left Normandy School District in 8th grade am now returning as a junior. I came back because I heard of all the hardships the district was experiencing. I had to come back because this school district is like family to me. This is all that I know.

The wonderful staff who have helped me so far and so good haven't steered me wrong. Also the beautiful schools full of children who are hungry for education. If we lose all of this, then what will we have? A vacant community with schools that have been shut down? That's the wrong answer. We refuse to let this school go down in flames. All we need is a lot of cooperation, team work and dedication.

There is no reason why students should have left Normandy. That shows a lack of Viking Pride, if they had any at all. If they had any school spirit at all they would have taken into consideration that the school is paying millions a month for their transportation. I don't think the option to bus students to St. Charles should have been brought up. If their parents felt like they should have gone to a different school then that should have been something they did on their own. It's not Normandy's responsibility whether someone's child should get a good education at some other school.

What should be the main focus is what we can do for us; this team that we have left, the ones who never left, the ones who stayed true, the ones who knew that Normandy has been and will always be a great school. If money is so much of an issue that we have to get rid of teachers why not stop the transportation for St. Charles. They didn't care when they left, let's not care about them. Maybe when this is done we will gain our students back and there won't be any need to lay off. This is a family—a family who are all experiencing this and will be affected after the final decision.

--Anonymous, Junior

I've been attending Normandy since I was in Kindergarten. It's a great place to learn and it can also be a fun place to be. I have lots of friends here, and from the outside looking in, we may seem like we don't care about our situation. However, if you could see what it's like on the inside, as a student who didn't transfer to another school, you would realize that this isn't the case. Students are trying hard and coming to school more. I see almost everyone with a drive to graduate, and most of us want to go to college. We aren't "the worst school" and we are far from what you see or read in the news. Most of us stayed because we believe that this is OUR school, and we can make it out to be whatever WE want, and not what other people think it is. I know we can shape our school up. No doubt about it.

--Zachary Simino-Ruch, Junior

I have been a Normandy student since Kindergarten so I know the Normandy way. That is not the way people are portraying us to be. Also, what people are failing to do is consider what we as students feel about everything. The ultimate goal of a school is for students to learn something to help them in life. I don't think everybody is thinking of the students. Sure, if students see better opportunities at another school district, take it! But kids that say "No, Normandy is the place for me to grow and mature" -- those are the real people getting affected. I think Normandy should get more money for the students who stayed and had pride for this fine place we call Normandy.

--John Prowell, Junior

To be honest, I don't know where to start because I also feel as though regardless of the outcome the state will do what they feel is best. It has gone as far as even the greatest of teachers are getting laid off. When you look back on the history of our school we are more than appearance and I feel as though one thing our school is known for is the ability to fight to overcome obstacles. I have been in this school all my life and every time something negative happened we beat the odds and came back with a positive. Negative people expect negative outcomes and for those who left, they were negative individuals I'm glad we got rid of.

So far we lasted longer than everyone expected. The first few months of school, education was our biggest factor. The fighting, attendance, etc. wasn't a key problem any more. For everyone who asks me what this year is like I always say, "It changed for the better and whatever you think and thought you heard isn't true." Although at times I let the negative come out about this school, deep down inside if something was to happen I would miss it.

--Jazmin Wright, Junior

I am a Viking, I've been so for 3
Years I've been here V-I-K-I-N-G
I am a Viking, My teachers lead the way
Without them I'm lost so they need to stay
I am a Viking, So they look down at me
I stand 6 feet tall, But they see me as 3
I am a Viking and I have Viking Pride
Alone we might stand but together we stride
I am a Viking from good days to bad
Times may be tough but we're strong so they'll pass
I am a Viking, Down to Red and Green
They're on the outside looking in, but what have they seen
I am a Viking, They might hate me a lot
But one day we'll stand up, just sit back and watch.

--Justin G., Junior

I have been in the Normandy School District for some years now. There has been a lot of changes since I've been here, some good and some bad. This has been the worst. I honestly think there is not any reason why those kids were sent to Francis Howell.

That's why the school funding is low. The accreditation has already been taken away and now we have funding problems and some of our teachers will be leaving. This district as a whole is going down. The students don't have a say so in anything. We are the ones going and our opinion should matter too. We need to come up with a plan involving students to help us recover from this.

--Elisha Bishop, Junior

The reason why I stayed at Normandy High School is because – I am not going to lie – I love Normandy! I know it might sound crazy but it's true!! But I've been in Normandy School District all my life. I only went to one different school and that school is Hazelwood. But then I came back. I really opened up to Normandy and it's just like another name for me. Like really. I love some of the teachers here such as Mr. Garrett and Ms. Guile and etc. I know Normandy School District is going through a lot but I know I can't let that get to me because it's my senior year and I have so much good stuff happening to me right now. So I really can't worry about all the reports with all the bad stuff that's not even happening up here any more. I love my high school.

--Anthony Green, Senior

I come to school every day at Normandy
It's not what I want to do it's what I'm gonna be
The problems that we're facing are hard times
But we gotta look past it, 'cause it's our time
Right now we don't have accreditation
But that doesn't mean we can't get an education
We as students come to school 'cause we wanna learn
You guys want us to get accreditation that we have to earn
I as a student am the face of this school
I may go to Normandy, but trust me, I'm no fool
I'm a junior this year and I'm proud of my team
I'm-a do what I gotta do for my class of 2015!!
An' it no doubt about that
Cause I know I'm all about it
We as one have to come together
So we can show that we all about it.

--Major Labon, Junior

I've been attending Normandy School District since I was in the 8th grade. I came from Wellston and I know how it feels to have a school close down. So if Normandy

closes, what's next? I have family members that attend the High School also and they came from Wellston and, as a Junior, I will hopefully graduate from Normandy.

--Anonymous, Junior

I have been to Normandy High School in 2012-2013. My cousin (boy) goes to Normandy Middle School, cousin (girls) go to Lucas Crossing. My favorite memories are Dress Down Day, eating outside, playing sports outside, and going on field trips. If we lose teachers then we will learn less and less.

The Board of Education only cares about how we are in school instead of how we work in school and I don't like that at all. We should wear regular clothes instead of uniforms because it won't affect our work.

--Anonymous, Junior

I have attended school in Normandy School District since Kindergarten. I feel that what we are going through now is a minor setback. My little sister is a freshman, and she grew up in Normandy as well. My other sister is an eighth grader and she just transferred here last year. That matters to me because I would love for them to graduate in the same district I will, and would not have to go through all the extra stuff of transferring. Normandy means a lot to me. I have faith that we can get Normandy back on top, it will just take some time. I also do not like the thought of teachers being laid off. There are an abundance of great teachers here and I would hate to lose some. In a way, I feel that the education of our young ones will be slowed down. I just really don't understand what's going on. I know I want everything to change for the better and I will do whatever it takes.

--Drew Foster, Junior

I think I have one year and six months in Normandy High School. And no, I do not have other family members in NSD. I do not have a favorite memory here. I do not have friends here and favorites things but I have a favorite teacher and she is very nice always and happy. She is a great teacher; she helps me when I need some help. I don't know what happens if we lose teachers. I think that Normandy is a good school but I have nothing to say about this school. My experience is difficult to explain. My first language is Spanish and I have many experiences how English has hurt me in the classroom and many things relate to that. But I think Normandy is a great school.

—Nancy Carina, Junior

I believe this school should not be shut down and we have some great teachers and students. I have been going here for a pretty long time now. It's crazy how this school got so far and now it might end. Other people say that this school is really bad and they think it should be shut down. Most people get the wrong impression of Normandy. It's really not bad. The media never tell about the good things this school has accomplished. For example, last year our basketball team went to state, and just some days ago a lot of students were honored with certificates. I also think they shouldn't fire any teachers because there really are some nice and intelligent teachers here who can teach. Most people learn differently and every teacher has his/her own method. We may lose some awesome teachers and I don't want that to happen.

--Anonymous, Junior

I have been going to Normandy schools since Kindergarten and some of my family members went to Normandy High School. If we lose teachers, there won't be enough students learning. Classes will be crowded and students won't be able to pay attention.

Things are different this year. When the schedule changed, a lot of students and teachers left, not as many classes as last year. We have a new principal. The cafeteria is more strict—I understand why we can't have phones in the classroom, but I think we should be able to have our phones out during lunch.

I'm learning more this year because the classes are smaller so the teachers help us, I pay attention more, and the teachers try to make lesson plans fun and interesting.

--Anonymous, Junior

I have only been at Normandy for a month and a half but this school is pretty okay. I don't have any siblings here but I do have a Normandy family. I was welcomed into Normandy with open arms by both the staff and students and I've never had problems.

My favorite memory about being here so far is my first time in Ms. Addoh's class, she was the funniest teacher ever. I don't really have a favorite teacher because I like them all and the way they teach what they teach. I think it would be hard on the students learning ability to lose the teachers they have grown accustomed to. Every year, we have to get used to the way each of our teachers teach and right now we're used to the way our teachers teach, what buttons can and can't be pushed, what we can and can't say to them, we're used to the way they run their classrooms. So to change that up would mess up how we get our work done.

If anyone asked me on a serious note my thoughts on Normandy, I would say this school has its problems, but it is one of the best schools I've ever been to. The staff is nice, friendly, and always willing to help. The students are crazy at times but overall they're not as bad as what I heard before I got here. This is a great school and it deserves the chance to prove to the rest of St. Louis just how great it can be.

— Anonymous, Junior

I've been in the Normandy School District almost all of my school years. Every school year was a new experience. New students, new teachers, some who were plain strict and others who interacted with students and allowed student interaction—which were the best classes. Most of the best classes were Communication Arts or English. I can honestly say I've never had a bad English teacher or a dull school year. I can't picture myself at any other high school.

— Anonymous Junior

I have been going to Normandy School for three years. I have a brother named Bobby Finley. He is in 10th grade. I had a father, uncle, and aunt graduate from

Normandy, three cousins, two of them graduated and three siblings graduated from Normandy. I think that if we lose teachers then we won't learn more of what we were learning because it shortened our education. I tell the people outside Normandy that we don't need to let the teachers go because it's going to shorten the students' education. By letting some of the teachers go we won't learn. We'll ask, "What do we do now?" and the classes will be bigger.

— Anonymous, Junior

I am an unknown student at Normandy High School and this is my testimony. I have been at Normandy for 3 years and it has been good. I have an older brother that goes here now and no one else in my family has gone here. I have a lot of memories that I favor, like hanging with friends, laughing and joking and telling stories. I have had nice conversations with teachers and staff. I think if we lose a teacher or some teachers, the classrooms would grow rapidly and it would affect our grades. Some teachers are better than others, meaning the new teachers. If anybody asked me outside of Normandy how it is here this year, I would honestly say it's pretty cool, because there hasn't been a lot of fights. Some teachers have been teaching very well. I have had good experiences here at Normandy.

— Anonymous, Senior

I have been going to Normandy Schools all my life. I have one family member that goes to the high school with me, my little sister. My mom, dad, and uncles all went here. To be honest, I do not have any particular favorite memory or teacher here. What I think will happen if we lose teachers is that classrooms will cramp up and grades will go down. What would I say to a person from outside of Normandy who asks me what it is like this year is that it's enjoyable at times. My experience at Normandy now is OK, nothing big but the average.

— Anonymous, Senior

I have been going to Normandy since I have been in the 7th grade. I really love my school and will be very disappointed if something happens to it. I have three sisters here now and my other family members went here and we will live to continue in our family tradition by graduating from Normandy High School. My favorite memory of Normandy High School is my freshman year when we first got all of our laptops and we used them in class and it was very fun and entertaining year. I think if we lose a teacher, students will get mad. I really don't think that we should lose any teachers because students are used to these teachers. I believe that will mess up a students learning and the way they comprehend. To a person outside of school I would tell them that Normandy is a really good school and it has been a very good experience. I really think that if people who don't go here will like it if they came here and will really learn and enjoy themselves by both learning and having fun. I really don't think they should take this away from us because it will be very sad to all of us.

— Anonymous, Senior

I've been going to this school for almost a year now, since the beginning of the second semester last year. I have a cousin that also goes to this high school and a couple

of little cousins that go to the middle school. A lot of my family members also graduated from this school. I do have a lot of days I've enjoyed at this school. I have a couple teachers I really like up here and there are a couple teachers I don't like but I try to put on my best behavior for them all. If we lose teachers at this school, depending on whom, it might make it a little harder for the students to learn. The classes are going to be more crowded which means one teacher will have to teach more students at one time. If someone asked me "How is Normandy this year?" I'll tell them it's okay, kind of a lot going because of the accreditation but as a school we been working on getting it back. People say it's a bad school but nothing really is going on at this school like you think.

— Ryan Moore, Senior

I've been at Normandy since August 19, 2013. I have three sisters who have just as well enrolled into Normandy district, one in elementary, one in middle and a freshman here at Normandy. All though I have not been here long one of my favorite memories I have is being encouraged to run for office positions and getting into different clubs and really getting involved. Because of these clubs I gained a relationship with Mrs .Cusamano, Mrs. Green, and Mrs. Veronica. Throughout the building I'm sure there are several other teachers who are good and the thought of losing their job saddens me because the class will be packed. And the teachers out of a job will lose money for their families. To a person outside of Normandy asking how this year is for me I would say different then my years at Parkway but in the end the same things happen maybe not as often but teens are teens no matter the color.

— Anonymous, Senior

I've been going to Normandy since I been in the 7th grade. I really love my school and will be very disappointed if something happens to it. I have three sisters here now and my other family members went here and we will like to continue in our family tradition by graduation from Normandy High School. My favorite memory of Normandy is my freshmen year when we first got laptops and we used to be able to use them in class and it was very fun and it was an entertaining year. I think if we lose a teacher students will get mad if we lose one. I really don't think that we should lose any teachers because students are used to these teachers here and now and already know how they teach. I believe that will mess up a student's learning style and the way they comprehend. To a person outside of school I would tell them that Normandy is a really good school and it has been a very good experience. I really think that if people who don't go here, will like it if they came here and will really learn and enjoy themselves, by both learning and having fun. I really don't think they should take this away from us because it will be very sad to all of us.

— Anonymous, Senior

I have been going to Normandy schools all my life. I have one family member that goes to the high school with me which is my little sister. My mom, dad, and uncles all went here. To be honest, I don't have any particular favorite memory or teacher here. What I think will happen if we lose teachers is that classrooms will cramp up and grades will go down. What would I say to a person from outside of Normandy who asks me

what it's like this year is that it's enjoyable at times. My experience at Normandy now is ok; nothing big but the average.

— Anonymous, Senior

I have been at Normandy since the 5th grade. My favorite memory is from 6th grade when I won the state dodge ball trophy with six of my friends. I would say to a person outside of Normandy that my school is the best in the world and leave your school to come to a better one. My experience here is very delightful and fun-filled.

— Justin Burrow, 10th grade

I am in the 10th grade. I have four family members attending Normandy School District. While attending here I had a favorite teacher, Ms. Baldessi, who was fired last year. I think if we lose teachers, the classes will be bigger and the kids won't get the education they deserve. Normandy isn't a bad school and they're making Normandy look like a bad school. My school year is fine.

—Anonymous, 10th grade

I feel that Normandy High School should still stand. Even though I'm from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, since I've been here, Normandy is a good school. I see that they help us with personal things, like jobs and transportation. I also think that judging Normandy is not right just by the look of it or the sound is not always true. Normandy is a good looking and also good school. If they get rid of teachers, Normandy will close. I have learned a lot of new things and met new people since I've been at Normandy. I feel that it's not fair for the teenagers that live in the area because it will be hard for them to go to a new school when they wanted to stay here. It will also be harder for parents to travel far to get their teenagers into another school.

— Simez Hands, Senior

I've been in Normandy district my whole life. I don't have family that I know about that attend this school district. I don't have a favorite memory at all especially not my 9th grade or 10th grade years. I think if we lose teachers it still won't make things better. I think some students will fail though because they won't have teachers for extra help. It will be kind of a shame I guess. What would I say to a person outside of NHS – It's improved around the school. My school year is right now neutral.

— Michael R., Senior

I have been attending Normandy School District for four years and I have not had a problem with the school. Normandy Is a good school and the way people talk about it is very disrespectful to me. I don't like it when the news is always up at our school when something wrong is going on. Then they want to go tell the community how awful we are. They don't ever come up here when Normandy has done something good. Even some of our own parents put the school down. I have had some really good times at Normandy and am proud to be graduating from here. Normandy School District has been through a lot but yet we are still standing and will continue too. I think that Normandy is a strong school district and with the power of Viking pride, no one can take us down.

— Lashon Jones, Senior

I think that Normandy School District is not as bad as the news shows it to be. I have been going to NSD since I started in kindergarten. I have never been referred to the office. I have been working very hard every day, and I come to school every day. Most of the students that go here do what they are supposed to do. Some students come to get out of their parent's house and play in all of their classes.

I know that some of the teachers have been here for a long time and if they have to leave here they will be unhappy. I do not like it when the new people come up here and talk about our school. We are not the only school without accreditation.

— Shonnyea Brewer-Clark, Senior

I have been going to Normandy since I was 5 years old. I have had uncles, aunts, parents and siblings that have attended Normandy. I think Normandy School District is a great place. They have done a great job teaching me since kindergarten. I think that if we lose teachers, it will be difficult for students to learn, which equals a good education. If a person comes up to me from outside of NSD and asks me what it is like here, I would have to say, Normandy is not that bad of a school. This year the kids have stepped up and are not getting into as many fights and keeping their grades up. I would also have to say that we are struggling but I believe that we will gain our accreditation back and be a good school district again. My favorite memory at Normandy is going to Prom and Homecoming. One year our class had a field trip to Jefferson City. It was a 2-hour drive and it was fun, I really enjoyed that. My four years at Normandy High have been great. My 9th grade year was fun and exciting. My 10th grade year was cool. My Junior year was nice. But my last year here is going to be greater than ever!

— Anonymous, Senior

I am a student at Normandy High School. I have been in Normandy District for eight years. I had family members that went there. The students of Normandy are like family to me. We get along with one another. If we lost teachers, it will be hard for students to learn because it is going to be 20 and more students in one class. Plus you all might let off the teacher that can teach well and that knows us students. So, if you ask me, what I think about you all letting off teachers, I will say no.

P.S. I am a Normandy student, and I am proud to be one. Let's go Vikes!

— Anonymous, Junior

I have been in Normandy for my whole life. My sisters also went to Normandy for a few years. My mother and other family members also have attended here. When we lose teachers we lose a friend. Some are close to the teachers and have a lot of respect and trust for them. They can go to and talk to about problems.

Everyone wants to say things about Normandy but you don't know if you haven't been here. It's not really bad at all. It's just the labels we get and people that picked out the bad never the good. My favorite memory was going to State last year. It was a new experience and, too, made the school proud.

Everyone was on one page finally. I love being in Choral. It's where every problem leaves. We all are one. We bring joy. Normandy Is my home and where I will always want to be. If teachers leave and students come back or more come, there wouldn't be room. We will be packed with not enough teachers.

Normandy is good.

--Andrea Walker, Junior

I've been attending Normandy since 8th grade. I attended Wellston before coming to Normandy. I watched the School Board close my school down. Now when I drive past, my old school looks terrible. It looks like it was never open. I don't want to see Normandy close. My aunts all graduated from Normandy.

I remember my first day at Normandy High. I was so excited to be a freshman. I met this senior named Courtland Day. He helped me perfect my musical abilities. He also encouraged me to participate in athletics and now I'm in love with track.

I just have a lot of memories here. If we lose teachers the classes will get bigger and then classes will be harder to teach. My Mom had me attend Francis Howell. I was extremely unhappy. The children were very rude. I just didn't enjoy it. I learn more here at Normandy. Like my chemistry teacher, Mr. Carter. He is a great teacher. He teaches me so much.

--Anonymous, Junior

I have been at Normandy for three years, one at Normandy Middle School and two here at Normandy High School. I don't have family members here at this school, nor did I have any relatives that attended Normandy. I don't have any great memories at this school because no good memories come from this school. The Normandy School District will literally fall apart. The classes will become bigger and that could cause problems among students. I will tell them [DESE] the truth.

--Anonymous, Junior

What will happen to Normandy if the teachers leave?

- We will become larger classes.
- Students won't get as much help from teachers.
- Hearts will be broken.
- Grades might drop.
- Attendance goes down; more tardies.
- Lunch time will get crazy.

—Anonymous, Junior

10th Grade Responses to Post-Dispatch coverage (week of October 28, 2013):

Honestly, this article about Normandy kind of makes me confused because I know that closing Bel-Nor Elementary School is going to save the district a lot of money, but what school are the students going to go to? The district should also really think about the teachers and faculty that have homes that need to be paid off. The district should really think about that before closing down a school. But....the district needs as much money as we can get.

This is ridiculous. By ridiculous, I would say that we ALL saw this coming. The teachers, the administration, the students, the families, but we chose to do nothing and play around. Take everything as a joke, I say this because I remember at Normandy Middle we were receiving papers home saying our test scores are important, that we need to study and make sure the students arrive on time and keep them on track cause our accreditation is in the hands of the students. What do we do? NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY. Some were, some weren't. As we continued down this path, SOME teachers weren't doing their job like they were supposed to. At the very end we started buckling down when it was TOO late. Fights everyday, skipping, in the halls, not coming to school, it was the normal! It wasn't enough REINFORCEMENT on both parts. As of now, with all the transfers, financial stability, and our districts future, some of this is unfair. Why didn't the government give us enough money to be able to pay the other higher performing schools their bills while continuing to improve our district's curriculum? How will we ever improve, when most of our money is going to school that DON'T need it, I mean they're on their game. We are falling in the dumps, and to get us out, the money we need, is going to others already out. Like seriously? & I also understand why Normandy doesn't want to pay the bills, but what choice do we have when we are under the LAW? The money is going to be taken from us either way whether we decide to give it to them, or just let it be taken from us. They are trying to make things better, when there isn't enough time to think things through. They closed down Bel-Nor, okay that gives us more money. That's good, but we're losing TEACHERS that can help STUDENTS which can HELP OUR ACCREDITATION. They are LEAVING and going to other schools just like our MONEY and OUR STUDENTS. The students are going to other Normandy elementary schools, but we're still losing something. Overall, there's tons that needs to be changed. Normandy is trying hard and putting people in hard situations to try to keep the school up and running. Things don't happen over night and if Normandy stays the same like we are now we can't solve our problems by firing more teachers.

I would say the entire situation is absurd. Why would Normandy choose a school in St. Charles (Francis Howell) that will cost them over \$200,000 a month or so knowing that they can't afford to pay the bill. Now they have to layoff several staff members off just pay the bill. They should have sent them to Ladue or Clayton. Why aren't students' voices being heard or their opinions? I'm pretty sure they have a lot to say just as much as the adults.

The district is in a bad predicament as far as money and education goes. It wasn't the new administration that just gotten to the district, it was the old administration that screwed us. Because of them, we are in the predicament were in. This shouldn't be the case. As a student, our voices are not heard in when it comes to our education and what we think is

fun. I don't care if we are kids or not, it is important to hear our voices so that the "grown folks" can get a point of view. It is about the students. If there were no students, there wouldn't be a district now would it? What's the point of destroying a district that has been trying to rebuild for years? I have been here since I was in kindergarten. From kindergarten to fifth grade I had a great time because we had a great superintendent. From sixth grade on up, it sucked. Now that I'm in high school now they're trying to do something. This has been an ongoing problem that should have been fixed years ago. I wish things would have been better. Because if I try to go to a good college, it'll be hard. I'm afraid that the colleges that I want to go to won't accept me even if I have an excellent scores on the ACT and SAT and a great essay. Accreditation is very important to particular colleges.

I am a student at Normandy High School, but I did personally attend one of the Francis Howell schools. I did attend Francis Howell Central. To me it is the same. I love Normandy and this craziness that is going on is very confusing and frustrating. The fact that those hundreds of students got bused to different schools was not a great solution, because in the end that's not going to change anything. That's not doing anything that's accomplishments, but just draining the little money that we have left to support us as a school.

Its not a big of a deal the way the media make it seem, Normandy isn't a bad school they just make bad decisions. When parents sent their kids to Francis Howell they took money from Normandy, now Normandy have to pay for those kids tuition and bus transportation. Now the kids at Normandy have to suffer. Now Normandy does not have enough money to pay all they teachers, so now they have to lay off teachers and that is not going to do nothing but hurt the students. Its going to hurt the students because they might have a teacher that they may like and if they laid off that teacher students may not want accept that change.

Ms. Margaret Gillerman should have included the students' side of the story in the article. People make it like Normandy full of stupid students and so violent and dangerous because we are coming from violent neighborhoods don't mean we are not smart or don't try. People don't want to hear good things about Normandy, only the bad things.

I think Normandy is a good school. I don't understand why they want to close down the elementary school. I also don't think they should be paying money for the students that transfer to performing schools. I say that because the money they using to pay for that can go to some of the school to fix minor problems such as books new computers better windows. I would also tell her our teachers are great help because they help us when we're having problems. They also care about us.

The district is in a bad predicament as far as money and education goes. It wasn't the new administration that just gotten to the district, it was the old administration that screwed us. Because of them, we are in the predicament were in. This shouldn't be the case. As a student, our voices are not heard in when it comes to our education and what we think is

fun. I don't care if we are kids or not, it is important to hear our voices so that the "grown folks" can get a point of view. It is about the students. If there were no students, there wouldn't be a district now would it? What's the point of destroying a district that has been trying to rebuild for years? I have been here since I was in kindergarten. From kindergarten to fifth grade I had a great time because we had a great superintendent. From sixth grade on up, it sucked. Now that I'm in high school now they're trying to do something. This has been an ongoing problem that should have been fixed years ago. I wish things would have been better. Because if I try to go to a good college, it'll be hard. I'm afraid that the colleges that I want to go to won't accept me even if I have an excellent scores on the ACT and SAT and a great essay. Accreditation is very important to particular colleges.

Why shouldn't the parents of the students whose parents sent them to the Francis Howell (Transferred Students) pay for their own child's transfer fee instead of the School Board taking money from the owner's property tax who stay in Normandy? In addition, I think the teachers being laid off is quite depressing because I don't think however long a teacher has been working at a school defines if they should work here rather than a teacher who hasn't been working here as long. I think it all depends on the quality of a teacher's performance.

The situation at Normandy is very intriguing to me because the fellow students I have encountered is quite intelligent. I believe the title "TEST" puts a speck of scare in our hearts because so much pressure is put on us to "PASS, PASS, PASS." I heard that pressure is self inflicted but if you constantly hear something repetitiously and you know its important you began to get quite fond of the idea that you NEED TO PASS ! That creates the fear.

The situation with the Normandy School District is overwhelming and saddening. The Teachers, students and administrators should not suffer from this, the school district deserves more than this. The school district should not need to sell their equipment and products such as buses, and need to shut down any of their schools. I am not on any one side but I blame everyone--the students, teachers, and even the board of education. If the students had done better on their EOC tests and behavior, if the teachers made sure that the students was prepared, and the board of education also help supported the district with better technology and new books. Then the school would still have their credit and students will be more focused on their assignments. I am not blaming all the teachers and students, and I score not too good myself because I was not well prepared for the EOC 'cause of students' behavior in my class. And my thought on the teachers layoff is that I do not agree with the idea, that would place too many students in one class which would not be a good learning environment for teachers and students.

Barbour, Robin

From: Angela Harden [ajharden3@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 9:35 AM
To: NormandyComments
Subject: Student Transfers

I attend the public meeting last night. I think it was well organized. I do have a few comments/concerns about the transfer program.

1. Students are transferring that never attended the Normandy School District. The student should have been a student in the district for at least one year to qualify for the transfer.
2. The tuition rates should be a flat rate, not whatever the other district wants to set.
3. It should be a cap on the number of students that should be able to transfer.
4. People who say they stay with people in the Normandy School District should not be able to transfer. The person completing the transfer should have to be the primary homeowner and the parent/guardian.

Thanks for your consideration.

Ms. Harden

Barbour, Robin

From: Bridget Curry [bcurry@normandysd.org]
Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 1:17 PM
To: NormandyComments; Bridget Curry
Subject: DESE NORMANDY SCHOOL DISTRICT HEARINGS

Why does it appear that failing school districts have one common denominator- low socio-economic status. What message is being sent to our students when they are told that they are failures from pre-school to twelfth grade?

Normandy School District has several issues which need to be addressed regarding attendance ,low test scores and lack of parental involvement to name a few: yet one can not micromanage the various issues at hand and expect successful results.

I am a ten year veteran educator within this district. I can say without a doubt that throughout my journey- this year is the first year that the Middle School has operated as an actual school.

Our class sizes are manageable and we as educators are able to give a class size of twenty much more individualized attention than a recommended class size of thirty three. The school culture and climate has changed as evidenced by the increase in student attendance and decrease in student behavior issues.

I am here and the students who have remained are here out of choice. Our students need and deserve educators that care about them and their lives. We are not just teachers, we are mothers counselors, therapists and anything deemed necessary for the success of the students.

In reference to Common Core Standards: How are we able to implement the standards without the necessary resources? We are separate but not equal. Accredited districts such as Clayton and Ladue will have access to the resources to meet the Common Core Standards based on the calculated tax formula.

Normandy receives \$11,000 while Clayton receives approximately \$20,000. When will this tax base formula change so that all students are on an equal footing?

What does DESE plan to do to assist Normandy in providing a separate and equal education for all students?

Barbour, Robin

From: Vivian D. Johnson [vjohnson@normandysd.org]
Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 10:59 AM
To: NormandyComments
Cc: Vivian D. Johnson
Subject: The Future of the Normandy School District

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a long time supporter and employee of the Normandy School District. We have a lot of talent in the Normandy School District, and a lot of new talent that has joined our district. We have a heart for children, and doing what is right and just for our students; but we take one step forward and are pushed two steps back. How are we suppose to survive in this financial deficit or crisis? At this point we need the support and funding of the state to continue our progress forward. I do believe socioeconomic status plays a role in this whole scenario. Why does the Clayton School District receive approximately \$20, 000 per student and the Normandy School District receive approximately \$11,000 per student? This is disproportionate in the dispersing of resources, which our students so richly need. When will the school financial formula be equitable? On top of disproportionate resources, now our school is deemed unaccredited and we have to pay for school transfers; this makes us even further behind; as I said two steps back. We desire a chance to succeed, to have remedial and enrichment programs to meet the needs of our students. How is DESE prepared to support the Normandy School District ? We are still viable, my 90 plus students that I service deserve the best.

Sincerely,
Vivian Johnson