

Dr. Leroy Nunery:

Right. All right. Good evening, everyone. Good evening. If you grab your seats please and we'll get the meeting started. We're a few minutes late, but we promise to keep you on time and engaged throughout the entire evening. My name is Dr. Leroy Nunery. I am strategic advisor to the receiver, Dr. Juan Baughn, and have been working for the last several months on this particular process, the strategic options initiative. We're going to have a brief set of introductory comments from Dr. Baughn from solicitor Jacquie Jones. I'll come back up to give some kind of rules for this evening and some guidance, then the presentations we'll begin.

Dr. Leroy Nunery:

What we would ask is that obviously given the tone of things in and around this country, civil discourse is sometimes hard to achieve. We want to make sure we do that tonight, that we hear everybody, we listen closely, we ask questions thoughtfully, we get into a good exchange. What we're trying to do is learn as much as we can about what the options are, strategic options are for the district. No decisions are being made tonight. So I'm glad that you all are here, you've taken out valuable time of your day. It's important that you are heard and are regarded highly and we appreciate your participation. So I'm going to turn the microphone over to Dr. Juan Baughn, the receiver for Chester Upland School District.

Dr Juan Baughn:

Thank you, Doctor Nunery, and thank you for your work. Tonight's meeting is an important step in moving forward with the Chester Upland School District's revised recovery plan. On May 14th, 2020, Judge Dozer gave approval for the district to move forward with the Receiver Strategic Options Initiative. This initiative required us to begin an RFP process to look at potentially outsourcing the management of schools or other critical functions. Over the last several months, we have worked diligently to create a process that will give us the best results. Until now, the task force, which includes school board members, community leaders and parents, have been the only persons to evaluate the proposals. Today is the chance for the rest of us, including myself, to see the options. As a receiver, I will ultimately have to decide about what is best for the district. However, I will not be doing that tonight.

Dr Juan Baughn:

Tonight, we will hear from the three organizations about their proposals and their vision. This will be your opportunity as the Chester Upland School District community to ask your questions about the proposals and their impact on the education of our students. Your questions and comments will be an important part of my decision-making process. After this meeting, the task force will continue to its work and make a recommendation to me. I will then review everything that has been presented and make my own decision for a presentation to the court. All materials will be placed on the district website after we complete our work. Before this process is over, you will have all the information that I have.

Dr Juan Baughn:

I would ask that everyone take this opportunity tonight to ask their questions and get a full understanding of these three proposals. I want to thank you for your participation in this process. Our children are the most important part of this equation, and I look forward to finding the best solution with you for all of our students. Thank you, Dr. Nunery.

Jacque Jones:

Good evening. I'm Jacquie Jones. I am the school solicitor. I want to give you a little bit of an update of what we're doing here tonight, and I think it's important that we understand where we are in this process legally. Some of you have asked me questions so I want to alleviate some of your concerns. This is the first meeting. This is the first time that the community is going to hear these proposals. Dr. Baughn has not heard them yet. Only your task force that is made up of your school board members, certain leaders in the community, parents, some of whom are all here. They have only heard this so far. Today is an important part of what Judge Dozer has asked us to do as a community. He has asked that we have something similar to a school board meeting where the public has an opportunity to see the proposals, ask their questions and get some answers on everything that we can answer right now. That order was on April 6th, 2021, and as part of that process, this is a public option, a public portion of that.

Jacque Jones:

Now, he specifically said that this is something for the Chester community, and that means just as like at a school board meeting, you will have the opportunity to speak if you are a part of this community. So we would ask that you identify yourself and that you are a member of this district when you were called on to speak. We understand that ordinarily, you have three minutes to ask your questions or comments at school board meetings. This will be slightly different. It will be slightly different in that there are three separate proposals, so you can speak one time at each proposal. You will not be able to get back up and ask multiple questions based on our timing. However, I am still working on options that will allow you to continue to ask questions or give information in a way that we can still continue to review as this process goes on.

Jacque Jones:

If you would like to be heard, there are microphones. Dr. Nunery and his team will be making sure that we do that. There are also people watching us on our Facebook feed I believe. We have someone monitoring the Facebook feed as well. Keep in mind though, especially with something like the Facebook feed, if the questions are similar, we will try to put them all together so that we can have as much time for everyone to get their answers as possible.

Jacque Jones:

As Dr. Nunery said, let's all please be respectful. We will try to give you all the information that we know, but please understand, there are some things that we don't know right now and if we don't know those, I will do my best to look into them. And there are some things that we may not have an answer to because there is a legal process. But obviously, what Judge [Dozer 01:21:26] has said is that when things are right to be given to the community, he wants that information in the community, and I have promised him that I will make sure that those things get out as we are allowed to tell them. So Dr. Nunery, are you ready to begin? Okay, thank you.

Dr. Leroy Nunery:

Thank you, counselor. Our first presenter for this evening is Friendship Educational Foundation. Mr. Harris and your team, if you want to come forward and you can start. If you want to sit here, if someone wants to take the podium. And this meeting is also being recorded so you'll have a chance folks, ultimately to see the full presentations. After you, sir.

Joe Harris:

Hello, Chester. How's everybody? Okay, y'all sounding kind of dull. I know it's late. I just know that this is going to get exciting so let's keep that energy going. By show of hands, how many teachers do we have here tonight?

Joe Harris:

How many parents that have kids in the school district? Let me say to each of the groups, that we've designed our presentation today to really speak to you all because we know how important at Friendship the parents are and the teachers are to educating our kids. My name is Joe Harris and I'm with Friendship Education Foundation. And I have to my left, I have Jherrithan Dukes, he's our principal, I have Virginia Perry, she is our deputy superintendent, and I have Phong Tran, he's our superintendent of schools. I think everyone has had... If you don't have this presentation to tell you a little bit more about Friendship, you can pick up some at the end, but we wanted to pass this out to give you a sense of who we are. I didn't want to waste your time talking about things that you could read about, but more importantly, we want to tell you who we are.

Joe Harris:

Again, my name is Joe Harris and I've been affiliated with Friendships since 1997. Friendship is part of a network of schools that started in 1997. We've been doing education since 1997, but we grew out of a social service agency, an agency in Washington DC, Friendship House, that provided social wraparound services primarily to families in need, and that is who we are today. We provide broader than just educational services. We support families and communities, and as you hear more about who we are, I hope that that comes through. That we're not just a school, we are part of the community and that's what we intend to become if selected here in the Chester District. So with that said, I think that what I'd like to do is have our principal to talk and then we'll rotate based on our presentation interests.

Speaker 14:

You want us to start?

Joe Harris:

I think first, if you guys wouldn't mind, I'm going to do the video.

Speaker 14:

Go ahead.

Joe Harris:

We'll go ahead and do a video just to give you a sense of what it's like for a child and parent to be a part of a Friendship school.

Speaker 15:

Boys and girls, we are so excited for your first day here. Have a super sensational, fantastic first day of school, and I will come around to every classroom to check in with you and to ensure that you are having a great day.

Speaker 15:

I'm excited for the new school to be opening for my son.

Speaker 15:

I'm so excited to be in this new school.

Speaker 15:

I'm so happy to be here at Friendship.

Speaker 15:

We are here, and we are going to be great.

Joe Harris:

We wanted to present this presentation because this was the opening of our first school in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Arkansas, as I looked around and we traveled and talked to people here in Chester, Pine Bluff is an example of a city that really reflects the strength of a community, it reflects the challenges that a community like Pine Bluff that's very similar to Chester. We've become in a short period of time an integral part of the community. We're opening up a third school in Pine Bluff. We have become part of the community so much so that our schools, after it's first year, we've had a waiting list. You will hear tonight about the rigor of the Friendship curriculum. We first and foremost focus on our kids and we believe that with the right resources, every child can be successful. So everything that we do is about focusing on the whole child, but we also recognize that a child is just a part of a community, part of a family and part of a community. And so our model really speaks to that.

Jherrithan Dukes:

Good evening, everyone. My name is Jherrithan Dukes and I have the proud, distinct honor of being the promise keeper of the Friendship mission in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where I do serve as the principal of the school that you just saw on the video. Like he said, that was the first day of school when the school first opened. But what I'm going to talk to you about tonight is just a day in the life of a scholar, as well as a day in the life of a teacher in our Friendship schools. So every day, of course, this is COVID time at our schools, but every day, our safety of our school starts at the curb. So every day when our scholars pull up to the school, when they get off the bus, every day, we're checking their temperatures. Before they even come into the building, checking temperatures, we have a questionnaire that we use for COVID and things like that.

Jherrithan Dukes:

As soon as scholars get into the school, when they get into the classroom, the first thing they do every day is wash their hands, and then it's breakfast time. Scholars every day enjoy a full course breakfast every morning. After breakfast time, before academic start, the first thing that we do every day is we start with a community meeting. So in our community meeting, that's where we focus on social and emotional challenges. As Mr. Harris has told you, our community within our school does serve, our students do have challenges, our families have challenges, our teachers have challenges. We all have challenges, and every day, we start by sitting our challenges to the side through our ruler curriculum is

what we use to address our social, emotional challenges of our scholars. So everyday, we're assessing and addressing the moods of our students every day. After we finished with our daily community meeting, after that, we move into our academics every day. Every day, our students are getting instruction in math, which we use the [Rica 01:29:21] Math Curriculum, in reading, which we use [Win Wisdom 01:29:24].

Jherrithan Dukes:

We also have a heavy focus in Arkansas on reading, so not only do we use our Win Wisdom for reading comprehension, we also use [Heggerty 01:29:32] and the Wilson Foundation System to improve phonetic awareness, phonemic awareness, and to address any reading deficits or any reading challenges that scholars may have. As a result of the reading and the math curriculum that we use, you're going to hear from our superintendent a little bit later about the results that we're currently getting academically with our scholars. But every day, as students are getting reading, math, social studies and science every day, after that, we have electives in our school. So right now, we offer music, art, MPE. Looking forward to next year, opening up and activating our innovation lab in our school where our scholars will get access to project based learning activities, a full length computer lab. We are currently one-to-one technology. We have several online platforms that we use to develop our students academically through reading and math. We currently use [Zern 01:30:22], we use [Malexia 01:30:23]. We also use Reading A to Z as our programs that scholars can access at school as well as at home every day.

Jherrithan Dukes:

After they finish with their academics, after they finish with their elective period, as students, of course, they get lunch every day, and then at the end of the day, we have an intervention period for our students. That intervention period is where we have taken our data and we decide every time that meet with our teachers, which is weekly, where our students are challenged at right now academically. And based on that, we make adjustments to our intervention program, which our scholars get intervention daily for an hour every day. After the intervention period, we also have an optional after school program. We actually have before and aftercare in our school, so during our after-school program and even during our before care program, our academics wrap around to wherever that deficit is for our scholar. They're getting that support in before, during the school day, during intervention time, as well as during after-school time.

Jherrithan Dukes:

So that is the full academic day for our students. It starts as early as 7:30. Our afterschool program... Before care actually starts at seven for those students that do participate in before care. After care extends till six o'clock every day, and of course, we have a lot of kids to stay for after care. They get their snack, they get their academics, we have a basketball team and several other electives that our scholars get a chance to participate in, so that's a full day in the life of one of our students.

Jherrithan Dukes:

Our students always talk about how much they love their teachers, how much they love school, and we have several students that are part of our clubs that we have. So because of the community that we're currently in, the challenges that we see with our students, we have several clubs that we offer in our school to address all the needs that our students have. I'm very proud of the fact that this year, we

kicked off a Gentleman's Club for our boys, and our Gentleman's Club for our boys, at Friendship, we do have core values which are very important to us, which of course, I'm not going to say similar to everywhere that you go, but our response to our core values is all about respect, responsibility, showing care, showing commitment, showing compassion. And that is what we use during our Gentleman's Club to help teach our young boys about being compassionate, about being respectful. So weekly, we have a Gentleman's Club meeting at seven o'clock in the morning. Our scholars, they dress in their bow ties. They come much similar to what I'm wearing right now to school every Wednesday morning for Gentleman's Club.

Jherrithan Dukes:

We also have a young ladies club that we kicked off this year for our young ladies. They do some of the same things. Their most recent meeting that they had was all about testing prep. So for them, they got a chance to get together, focus on testing prep skills before we took our end of year assessments last week, and they did very, very well. Other clubs that we have in our school that our scholars participate in, we have a student government association. We're very proud to have our mayor come to our school and induct our first student government association. So we have students as early as second grade right now activating their scholar voice and taking an active lead in our school and the decisions that we make. They attend several of our staff meetings that we have, they plan several events for our school, and those are just some of the things that our scholars are getting a chance to do every day in our school.

Jherrithan Dukes:

So if you get a chance, if you ever visit one of our schools, ever see anything online, you're going to see our scholars taking charge of our school, scholars taking charge of their education, and that's something that I'm very proud about as being a principal for our school.

Jherrithan Dukes:

Our teachers. Of course, like I said, our teachers also have challenges as well. So one thing that we're proud about for instruction for our teachers, that they get support as well. You're going to hear from my deputy superintendent. He's going to talk more about our teacher development program, but weekly, our teachers engage in professional learning communities. That is the standard for our school where our teachers do meet weekly and collaborate about decisions for students, decisions for our school, and they do that weekly through our PLC process. I talked to you about interventions in after school. All of those plans, all of our instructional plans are generated by our teachers coming together to collaborate with our principals, with our academic coaches to create the plans for our scholars every day.

Jherrithan Dukes:

In addition to our PLC process, we also have a professional development program that we offer, our FIAT program, which is, like I said, you're going to hear from our deputy superintendent about that, but it's all about professional development for new teachers, professional development for all of our current teachers. So those are some of the things that we offer for our students and for our staff, and you're going to hear about our data that we have as a result of all those systems working together to ensure success for our students and for our teachers. Anything else? Right. Thank you.

Virginia Perry:

Good evening. I'm Virginia Perry Henry, and I'm the deputy superintendent. At Friendship, one thing that we pride ourselves on is the fact that we nurture and grow our teachers and staff. If you'll notice, one of the bullets that's actually on the handout that you have, actually, it says nurturing and grow teachers. To that end, we work with each teacher on their own personalized learning path. So the teacher decides where they want to grow, where they think they need to grow with the assistance of their principals. We've also developed, with Friendship comes the friendship Institute for the Advancement of Teaching, which we call friendship IAT. It's open to not only our teachers, but also traditional district teachers that actually want to come in and get help with content, with pedagogical challenges. It's offered during the summer and also throughout the course of the school year.

Virginia Perry:

One thing that we have prided ourselves on this year is being safe and ready. In this time of COVID-19, everyone has felt very uncertain, including our scholars and our teachers, but we made the commitment to both our scholars and our teachers that we would have a safe, inviting, engaging environment. So we were able to pivot when needed, provide the necessary resources to ensure that our schools were safe.

Virginia Perry:

Training.

Joe Harris:

You want to talk about it? You got it.

Joe Harris:

I wanted to just, and I don't know how much time we have left, but I wanted to just hit some points that I believe is really important to this audience, and one of which is that what you would have in Friendship is a partner in education. We offer a tried and true educational approach that includes high expectation for our students, we offer a rigorous academic program, we're really proud of the fact that we focus on the whole child. I myself have two kids and I can't tell you how different they are, and I think any parent with multiple kids know that one school oftentimes don't fit the needs of children, so we designed our model based on the interests and needs of the individual child.

Joe Harris:

But we also recognize that parents are important to the process, so we include the parent as part of the teaching of the child. We have high expectation for our kids, but we also believe that parents should be active, involved in education. We didn't talk about it, but just to share a little bit about my story, and I believe this is of interest is our SPED Program. Our SPED program, we recognize that in day one, it's our goal, we will have a fully operational SPED program. My second son had his challenges, ADD, ADHD and LD. I had to, as a parent, learn how to navigate a system, and had I not had this contact with the education system, I would have been in a position that so many parents find themselves, which is not knowing how to navigate. We have in our design a system that support parents to be an active part of their child's education, whether they are.. Well, all kids are gifted and they are special, but those kids that need a little bit more attention.

Joe Harris:

So we are looking at how we can be the very best education support network for kids and families. When you think about, I know this is a competitive process, but we know that the choices that you guys currently have and the decisions that are going to be made related to the individuals that have submitted proposals. I would ask that you look at us in a different way from the other schools in that our program is unique. We have 24 years experience in operating high performing schools. You've heard us talk about Arkansas, but we are much more closer. We got our origin, we're based in Washington, DC. We have over 20 schools, we have over 7,000 kids, we have over 1,200 employees and we operate with a budget in excess of \$180 million. So we are an experienced provider or charter operator, and so you would have, with Friendship, someone that has experience doing this in a high performing manner. We have been identified as one of the top 25 charter school networks in the country.

Joe Harris:

And one of the things that really makes us special, and I think that this audience will appreciate, is that we are a minority managed charter school network. 80%, over 80% of our staff reflect the kids that we serve, and 98% percent of the kids that we serve are black and brown kids. We often say that Friendship, we don't steer away from the hard jobs. All of our schools are in areas where they are the greatest need, and we are a public chartered organization so every child is welcome. Under the laws, we can not [inaudible 01:41:02], but what we can do is do our very best to make every child and parent feel welcome and we do a great job of that.

Joe Harris:

I drank the Kool-Aid so I'm a little bit biased, but what I can say to you is that friendship will do its very best job to ensure that the children of Chester get the very best education that they deserve. All children deserve the very best, and that's who we are and that's what we want to bring to Chester. Also, what makes us special is the fact that... There are a number of things that make us special, but I hope you get a sense that our true commitment to being a partner in the community. We have a model that has proven to be successful in other areas. However, what we know is that we can't supplant the model in DC or Arkansas or Baltimore or Baton Rouge. We want to build a school that is Chester, that reflects the needs and the interests of the community, doing it in a way that is respectful. Now, I don't want to stand here and say that we can solve all of the problems, educational problems, but what I can promise you is that we will work as a team, as a partnership.

Joe Harris:

I want you to see a Friendship school is something that restores the pride in the community and the city. You saw, I think, a really good example of where our priorities are, but that was our first school that we opened and that was the first day of school. That was a converted church that we made an investment in over \$15 million into converting that to a school. Everyone that walks into a school, I think within the first five steps, you can tell where the priorities are for that school. We believe that the facility is a third teacher in a child's life, so our schools come with resources, innovative curriculum and talent that supports the children where they are now and in the future. We have as our model, we say that we produce kids that contribute to their society, but that also social entrepreneurs.

Joe Harris:

We want to see our kids at every level, believing that they have a voice and recognizing that force, because they are our leaders of the future. But we know, just as a school, we can't do it alone, so we're counting on each of you to be part of what is going to be the transformation of Chester education system. That's not a dig at what's going on here, but it really speaks to what's required of education and preparing our kids for the future. Between COVID and what's happening, things change daily and a school and a school district has to be prepared to respond to those issues, and Friendship does a good job of doing that. You're going to see and hear or learn more about us. We talk about the whole child and it is the uniqueness of the child that makes us special, so we protect that in the Friendship model.

Joe Harris:

I know we're going to go into the Q and A section, but I really would just like to impress upon this body that we are fully committed to Chester, and Chester represents for us, and for me personally, a city that feels like home. I grew up in an area where the schools were the pride of the community, and I know that that's here. One of my business partners grew up here and he talks about the pride of Chester. We think about, and I've had some conversations with the alumni of the high school, and they talked about how they want to develop a mentoring program.

Speaker 16:

When they talked about how they want to develop a mentoring program. Well, that's what Friendship, that's what we do in that is be a part of the community and tap into all of the resources to support our kids. So we're not really talking about building a school. We're talking about building a community and I believe that Chester is going to be welcoming to the friendship model and be supportive of what we envisioned for the families and kids of Chester. How much more time?

Dr. Nunery:

Six minutes

Speaker 18:

Hey everybody. So I just want to end this up by saying a few things. So the first thing is to our teachers out there. When we come to a school, we actually come in with open arms. We're not going to come in with a sledgehammer and try and ruin everything and do everything from the beginning. We're going to try and work with you all to make sure that it's a community effort. On the other hand with our parents, we're also going to be working with you as well because it's a partnership to ensure that your child gets what they deserve to ensure academic success. So I want to end it with this. So at our schools at this moment in time, and I'm pretty sure you guys hear about the COVID slide, about the learning loss that has been occurring due to COVID.

Speaker 18:

So I'm proud to say that at our schools in Pine Bluff, we actually, at this moment in time, we have a 61 proficiency, and this is proficient. This is not growth. This is proficient in mathematics and 59% proficient in reading. So we have at our schools virtually caught up to the learning losses that would have occurred due to COVID, but due to our hard work, due to the individualized student action plans, so on and so forth, we were able to catch up and that's what I want to leave you guys, and finally, our DC schools like

Mr. Harris has talked about. We have six schools in DC that are tier one, which is the top tier in DC, and the rest of our schools are in tier two. There's three tiers. So none of our schools are in tier three nor have they ever been in academic distress. So I just want to emphasize that to let you know that we are about academics as well because that's our major focus. So thank you.

Dr. Nunery:

Okay. Thank you, Friendship Education Foundation. We'll take questions now. Again, our mode for tonight is going to be if you have a question and/or comment, limit it to no more than three minutes, but clearly try to ask your question clearly so everyone could hear it. There are microphones around the auditorium. We'll also take questions online if there are any. First question I have is you have not said yet which schools you are looking at. So if you can just respond right there.

Speaker 19:

Sure. Presented a proposal to begin first with the Upland Chester School of Arts, and then the Toby Farm Intermediate School, the elementary and middle school. We think that we could have the greatest impact by creating a solid K-8 program here in Chester.

Dr. Nunery:

Excellent. Thank you. Any questions from the floor? If you'll please just step up to the microphone, please? If you'll give us your name and your affiliation with the district.

Speaker 21:

My name is Taslin Goodman. I have four children that's in Chester Upland School District. Three of them are at STEM Academy and one is at CUSA. I also have worked within a district and a charter school that operates in a district. Actually, two of them and I'm a strong advocate for public school education. My comment for the night is I just want to know why the option and what's being thrown on the table is to just completely charterize the school district. Why is there not an option to create a magnet situation where you can still come in as a charter school? If you truly want to partner with us, that is an option so that we don't lose any more children who are in our district to a charter school so that our property value is not looked at as, oh, they're just a charter school.

Speaker 21:

So that Forbes is not writing about Chester Upland School District being taken over by an outside charter school. Yes, you can go into some of the worst neighborhoods in the world, in the United States. Chester is not Chicago. Chester's not Brooklyn, New York. Chester's not Harlem. Chester is not the Bronx. Chester's Chester. So you cannot come to Chester, Pennsylvania and say we've been successful in these other neighborhoods because this is not those other neighborhoods. This is Chester, Pennsylvania. We have the same bullets you hit up there on that screen, we want the best for our children. We respect the whole of the child. We want our parents to be included in everything that we do. So what you're saying is not anything different from what we're trying to establish. What we need is someone to come in and support the growth instead of coming in and continuously taking from what we already had. I don't have a question. That's my comment.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you. Yes, if you care for, yes.

Speaker 16:

Okay. That's why, let me just say we appreciate your question and you've heard us talk about the very things that are important to you. We're not coming here with all of the answers or trying to transform or believing that there aren't, that Chester and Chester education school system isn't working. It's about how we work together to make it better, and not that there is a better needed, but better in the sense of our kids deserve the very best and it requires partnerships. The world has changed. We can no longer work in a vacuum, and so we really have to look at how we work together as a partnership across the country with other entities. You've heard us talk about your values and your concerns are ours. We don't see Chester as needing Friendship. We want to be a part of Chester.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you. Yes. Question in the back, please, and there are microphone covers if you desire. Please, if you'll give your name and your affiliation with the district. Thank you. Excellent. Thanks.

Speaker 22:

My name is Tiffany Raymond. I have two children at Chester High currently, one child at STEM academy, where I'm also a member of the PTSA, one child in CUSA, and one child in Toby Farms, and when you're saying you're going to make those K through eight options, that concerns me because I don't feel 100% safe with younger children and older children, not to mention bell schedules are different so how do you work around that, and what is my option if I choose not to go to a K through eight?

Speaker 20:

Thanks for your comment and your question, ma'am. So I think that what Mr. Harris was saying is our plan is not to make both schools be K-8. What he was saying was that the plan will be to start with the first school, Chester Upland with the first school and then the second school, Toby Farms, that will be a K-8 range. Both schools will not be a K-8, but those that from both schools would be K-8, but the original school, Chester Upland, that will be a school one of K-5 and then Toby Farms would still be what it is right now as a middle school.

Dr. Nunery:

Is there another question from the floor? Oh, okay. Sorry ma'am, didn't see you. Then whoever is next, if you'll step to the microphone, that'd be great. Please, if you'll give your name and-

Speaker 23:

Good evening, my name is Sheena Hudnell and I am a resident of the city of Chester, 1412 West Seventh Street. I am also a teacher of over 30 years for the school district and a graduate of this high school. I have a concern just to say that the curriculum that you stated and the before and afterschool program that you stated we to offer the same exact programming. How is your programming going to be different or more structured, or is it more enriching? How? That's our question. How is your program different from our program?

Speaker 24:

The program will basically be tailored to meet the Pennsylvania standards. So it won't be the exact same. It won't be a replication of the program that we have in DC or the program that we actually have in Arkansas. It'll be different because our teachers are going to help to build it. We believe in backwards design. We'll basically have the teachers working with the coaches and working with our principals to help to develop a curriculum that we know that actually works. Also, we believe that our teachers should be the CEOs of their classrooms. So when it comes to instructional techniques, our teachers will actually have the bandwidth to decide what works best in the classroom.

Speaker 23:

Okay. Our teachers currently get coaching from the, you said foundations? Was that the breeding program you spoke about?

Speaker 16:

That's what we use for fundings, yes ma'am.

Speaker 23:

Okay. So we have that also, and we have the coaching coming in also, and our principals are very active in that. So I'm just kind of like if at sometime, you can give to schools that you're planning to look at more in-depth information on how you're going to strategically change what the teachers are currently doing.

Speaker 24:

We'll also look at assessment and how you're currently using assessment, and this might be a conversation for another time, but we'll look at assessment and how the assessment is actually informing the decisions as far as the curriculum is concerned. So we'll look and see what's being tested, what's being taught, how it's being taught.

Speaker 18:

And I'm pretty sure data-driven instructions is something that everyone knows, but we truly believe in data-driven instruction. We will always go ahead and look at the test scores and we'll break it down to the standards to everything that we need to do after that, and when we do that, we don't look at it as a group, but we'll look at it as individual students. Then we'll work with the teachers to ensure that every single student has an individualized instruction plan. So where is it that they're going to go next, but at the same time, what we're going to do with our teachers, that we're going to coach them. So we usually have POCs every week and then on top of that, we also have every other week, we have usually half a day where the teachers come together and get professional development from our coaches, from our principals.

Speaker 18:

And that's when we also look at data driven instruction more. So it's not a once-off thing that we'll look at. It's weekly, it's through exit tickets. It's through all the problems that we do, and then on top of that, we mentioned before about the [inaudible 01:57:13] program. So at the beginning of every year, we have a two week bootcamp where we go in and we go ahead and provide professional development for

every single one of our teachers, every single one of the content, behavior management, classroom management, so on and so forth so that on the first day of school, they'll be ready. They're not going to be waiting and say what is it that I need to do? They'll be ready to start instruction because every single minute that we waste and that those kids are not going to get back. So that's what we need to do.

Speaker 23:

To piggyback on that... I'm sorry.

Dr. Nunery:

No ma'am, I'm sorry. We do have some other people, if you would allow them-

Speaker 23:

Okay. I'll let them speak. I just want to say please make sure that you review our way of teaching, how we've been trained from the people who come in from those programmings and look at our data also. Thank you.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Speaker 25:

Yes. Hello. My name is Diane Rambert and this is my daughter, Tracy [inaudible 01:58:12]. I don't know if we're supposed to be in this meeting, but I just have a comment to make. I sent my granddaughters, her daughters to Chester Charter School. I have had no problems. They both graduated 4.0s with honors and got scholarships to Cardinal O'Hara. I have one granddaughter that's getting ready to be a junior in Cardinal O'Hara and she's still at a 4.0. She's been at a 4.0 since she's been in Chester Charter and they are bombarding us with scholarships for her, things for her to come to see their college, and she's not even a junior yet until September.

Speaker 25:

And on the other side, my other granddaughter Layla, when she first went into Chester Charter in Aston, she was struggling a little bit. She was behind and she was struggling. The teachers took time out with her and us so we could go ahead and get her to where she needed to be and she is graduating from Chester Charter this month with a 4.0 and honors, and she has been accepted to Cardinal O'Hara with a scholarship from Chester Charter and Cardinal O'Hara. That's all I have to say. Make up your mind, but to me, this school is excellent. They did a great job with my girls and I'm very proud to say that they are going to be a part of society. One wants to be a director and a writer, and the other one wants to be a doctor.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Thank you. Congratulations on that. We have some questions from our Zoom cast directed to Friendship. The first is how will you fund the schools? Where will the money come from? What is your funding plan?

Speaker 16:

Sure. You want to talk about the [inaudible 02:00:20].

Speaker 18:

We'll work with the state and look at the per person funding from the state, but at the same time, we're going to try and get philanthropic funding like we've done in other schools as well to go ahead and supplement all the programs that we're doing. So that's the main point, but majority of the funding will come from state and federal funding, just like Title I, Title II, Title III per person funding, so on and so forth.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you.

Speaker 16:

And we, just to kind of underscore, Friendship has been doing this for 24 years and we've developed a number of philanthropic partnership partners that support all of our schools and they are prepared to support our work here in Chester County. What I didn't say was Friendship has a long reputation of supporting kids to and through college. We have given away over 14, I'm sorry, \$15 million in scholarship. We have a two through model that not only graduates kids and get them to college, but we support and follow them through college with internships at Friendship, Friendship schools, when they come home for the summer. We have five current staff members that started with Friendship in kindergarten that now work at Friendship. That is who we are.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you. We have a question at the microphone, please. If you'll give your name and your affiliation.

Speaker 26:

My name is Carol Caseen, I'm a parent of Chester Upland School District. I have three children that attend between two different schools actually in our district. So I have a couple of few questions. I don't know if you want a space in between.

Dr. Nunery:

Remember, you've got three minutes so if you'll ask them, why don't you ask them all together and we'll try to respond as quickly as we can.

Speaker 20:

Are you guys accredited? That's the first thing.

Speaker 24:

We are accredited in all of the states that we're in. Yes.

Speaker 20:

Okay. But you don't have any schools here in Pennsylvania, so you're yet not accredited here?

Speaker 24:

True. In order to be accredited, you actually have to have a school.

Speaker 20:

Okay. I know you stated earlier about the Pennsylvania standards and you guys were going to try to align some things. How will you do that?

Speaker 24:

We actually have curriculum specialists that will actually work on the alignment. So we'll look at the standards, we'll look at the curriculums that we currently use and possibly seek out additional curriculum and make sure that they're actually aligned to each grade level standards.

Speaker 20:

Okay. And you said who would be responsible for that?

Speaker 24:

The curriculum specialist.

Speaker 20:

And they work within the charter school?

Speaker 24:

Yes.

Speaker 20:

Okay. I also would like to know, as far as the children with special needs, how do you guys plan on separating them? I haven't heard anything about a class size. Would they be together? How would that work?

Speaker 24:

That depends on, I'm sure as you probably well know, that depends on the individualized needs of the students. So we will offer a full continuum of special education services. So whatever services the individual students need, then they'll get the services that they'll actually get. So as far as separating them, that's not something that we necessarily like to do or try to do or intend to do, unless that child has a need to be self-contained.

Speaker 20:

Okay. I also was reading where you guys stated that how long would this transition take? You said within this year or within a year?

Dr. Nunery:

We have yet to get to that point yet. We're not sure yet.

Speaker 20:

But I'm talking about as far as their proposal, they stated somewhere in their proposal that within a

year, as far as building, you stated about how you wanted the build, how you want the... What is your timeframe?

Speaker 16:

Sure. In our proposal, we're proposing to take on the elementary school in year one and then the intermediate school in year two.

Speaker 20:

So what would happen to the intermediate schools in between then?

Speaker 16:

We're negotiating what that transition would look like and the timeframe for it. We operate with a slow growth model, and that is really committing to ensuring that all of the grades are supported, but growing in a way that really makes sense for ensuring a complete and solid school model. So that's our proposal is to open up one of two schools, one school the first year and then a second school the second year.

Dr. Nunery:

Okay. And where are you ranked in your whole school district?

Speaker 16:

Last question.

Speaker 20:

Where are you ranked in your own school district? Within your district, where are you ranked?

Speaker 16:

I'm sorry?

Speaker 20:

Ranked.

Speaker 16:

Oh sure.

Speaker 20:

With the tracking. Where are you guys at in your district?

Speaker 19:

I can talk about Pine Bluff, the campus where I'm the principal right now. Right now, we're the highest performing school in Jefferson County, in the district where we are right now. So right now in the district that my school is in, we have Pine Bluff, we have Watson Chapel. We have three school districts where my charter school is and we're the highest performing in that area.

Speaker 20:

And that's due to test scores?

Speaker 19:

That's test scores. That's also parent data and all that. Yes ma'am.

Speaker 20:

Okay. I just want to make a comment if there were proven that there were insufficient test scores and that's why a rank wasn't yet put out. Thank you.

Dr. Nunery:

We have another question from the Zoom participants. It's similar to the question that was just asked about the educational outcomes of Friendship. If I can tell that question, can you give us an example, let's say in Washington, DC or Pine Bluff, where you were and where you are now, just very, a couple of brief examples, I think would demonstrate.

Speaker 19:

Okay. So to start the school year just right now, our school in in year three in Pine Bluff. The first year proficiency scores for our school was roughly around 40%. Last year, we were at 50% and right now, we're touching 60% proficient in math, 61%, and as Mr. Tran said, 55% right now currently in reading. So that's where we currently are. We've shown growth. All of our scholars right now with the most recent tests that we've just completed really just last week, we are 100% growth in our school where all of our students' scores have grown. We've also grown our proficiency scores from year one to year three by grade level cohort as well as this year, every time that we've tested, our scores have increased.

Speaker 16:

And you asked about our ranking. Friendship has been ranked nationally. We've been nominated as one of the or considered as one of the top 25 charter schools in the country. Our schools in Washington, DC, we have the largest number of tier one schools in Washington, DC. Every 11th child in a charter school in Washington, DC attends a Friendship school. We have a 98% high school graduation rate. We have a 97% matriculation rate from the various grades or various grade levels. All of our schools, we have not in our 25 years had any of our 24 schools to be under any list of need improvements.

Speaker 16:

So we have a high ranking where we have all of our schools and that is our goal. One thing that we pride ourselves on, growth is expected within Friendship. You'll hear schools talk about they measure their success by growth. We measure our success by proficiency. On average, we have 62% of our kids across our network are proficient in math. We have 59% that are proficient in reading.

Dr. Nunery:

I'm going to take a question from-

Speaker 27:

Barbara Thompson, 1228 Crosby Street in Chester. I'm a teacher assistant in the district, and I'm also a

grandparent and a parent. I'm one of 15 children whose mother and father raised 15 children in this school district and I'm very passionate about this school district. I raised my four children in the school district, and they're all successful degrees out of Chester Upland School District. When you say charter, to me, it means that it separates our children. I'm trying to figure out how are you supposed to keep our children so that they're not a part of one thing or the other because this is a big problem here and we need another charter school like we need a hole in our head.

Speaker 16:

First off, the word public is often left out of charter schools. We are public schools as well. We cannot discriminate. Every child is welcome and we are held to the same standards as any district school, and being a charter school, and I really kind of speak to what I talked about before. It is about choice and where there are successful charter schools, there are equally successful district schools. We learn and we grow together. It is about education and educating our children and having choice should be and I know it is important to every parent because every child is different. We have to find the right school for our kids and every kid and every parent, every family deserves options.

Dr. Nunery:

We have a question here, ma'am, please.

Speaker 28:

My name's Rebecca Tiffany. I am a parent and also a taxpayer in Chester Upland and I also worked for Chester Upland as a teacher's assistant. Okay. I do have a few things. What will it look like for the teachers in order to create the individual lessons for all the students sound like and look like? Will they have to create these individual lessons on their own? Next-

Dr. Nunery:

Why don't you let them respond very quickly to that? That way, we can get all your questions in.

Speaker 19:

So one thing that the teachers in our schools in Arkansas enjoy is that all of our teachers, they have a planning time every day. So every day, our teachers do have an hour of planning time. As I told you about already, our professional learning community meetings that we have, where you're not planning by yourself, you're planning with your team. You're planning with your principal, with your academic coach. So you're not left alone in that academic process to plan by yourself.

Speaker 19:

So we do have an hour of lunchtime that we designate to our teachers in Arkansas, uninterrupted duty time for lunch and recess, as well as an hour of planning time per day, and that's basically our standards in Arkansas that we have, but an hour a day is way more than an allotment for Arkansas requirement as far as planning time. I hope I answered your question.

Dr. Nunery:

Next question.

Speaker 28:

According to the Delaware county assessors, the fair market value of main street schools, 2.6 to 8 million. Why would the district even think about only giving a million for that property? The district also received upwards of 34 million from the American rescue plan. Why would you turn over the schools now when there's an infusion of funding to fix some of our public schools? Also, as far as choice, I agree with Ms. Thompson. The charter schools are here. The parents had their choice. They chose to send them there. The parents have brought some back to us and we have the rest. Why would it have to change right now?

Dr. Nunery:

Okay. All right. Thank you. We have a couple of other questions and only five more minutes for Friendship here. Any plans to expand to a high school?

Speaker 16:

Our model is based on a K-12 model, or actually pre-K, 12. Our plans right now, we do not have any plans to expand that to the 9th-12th grade. However, we support the community and where the needs are. We saw and we see our greatest success where we are able to have kids and offer a K-12 program for families. It's not part of our short-term strategy, but we are open to a longterm strategy of operating a K-12 model here in Chester.

Dr. Nunery:

A question here, please explain the poor performance of the DC charter schools.

Speaker 16:

The poor performance of?

Dr. Nunery:

The DC charter schools. I'm just taking the question as it came in.

Speaker 16:

Well, we don't have poor performance so I don't know what that question is talking about.

Dr. Nunery:

Maybe what you were going to do is just explain, tell us what charter, what's going on in DC.

Speaker 16:

Okay. Well, what's happening in DC is what's happening everywhere around the country. Due to gentrification and changes in the charter school structure, charter schools are being really shut down. Charter schools, on average, if they are a poor performing school, they get three years. Within three years, if they're poor performing, they only have two years to turn around and we're seeing a number of schools that are in that position. In the last two years, Friendship has taken over four schools that were at risk for closing.

Dr. Nunery:

Thank you. Question here about new teachers or... Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am.

Speaker 29:

Some of your questions might correspond with what I'm going to ask so please, give your question.

Dr. Nunery:

Okay. Thank you. We only have a couple more minutes so thanks. So one question here is about new teachers, I guess is part of your plan or our teachers, existing teachers, same thing with principals. What would your plan be for managing talent and retaining teachers, instructional staff, et cetera.

Speaker 16:

I'll talk about the baseline part of that. So we have done this nine time converted schools. Our approach is not to, we've found success to not to go in with a hammer and try to dismantle what is working and what's not working. The first year of a school is really about evaluating the talent and really supporting the structure and the talent that's there within the school, believing that everybody within the school building is there to support kids. We work to make not just teachers, but our school leaders the very best. I think if you talk to a Friendship staff member, you'll hear them talk about how they have gotten a lot of support both professionally as a teacher, but also in their individual career path.

Speaker 16:

And that's what we pride ourselves on. So our going in and/or converting a school or coming in and being a district partner is about taking advantage of the talent that's already there, looking at how we can make things better, and better in a sense of not dismantling what works and what doesn't work. So we see ourselves as a partner. So we don't see ourselves coming in and firing all of the staff. As an example, we have one school that we just took over and a hundred percent of the teachers that were there before we took over the school have remained with us in the first year.

Dr. Nunery:

Do you have an average teacher/student ratio that you either aim for or have currently?

Speaker 16:

Classroom size?

Speaker 19:

So for us, it's all about the state guidelines. So in Arkansas-

Dr. Nunery:

I'm sorry, we can't hear you.

Speaker 19:

I'm sorry. in Arkansas, we follow the state guidelines. So for us, our classes are around 20 students per class For the state, depending upon what grade level. So for kindergarten in Arkansas, you can have up to 22 kids in a class. We go a little bit below that. We're at 20. First grade, second grade, third grade, you can have 23. We try to keep our classes no larger than 20 students per class.

Dr. Nunery:

All right, thank you. So we've got a couple more minutes left. Just if you'll ask your question, please.

Speaker 29:

Let me say thank you to the Friendship persons for coming to Chester to present to us, and please understand the context in which I'm going to make this statement. I intend no disrespect. By the way, my name is Jean Arnold and I live in Chester and I'm a taxpayer. Some of us in here who are educators have standards for our students and we require them to present in class with a level of vigor and intellectual prowess. What concerns me is that repeatedly in Chester, people come to make presentations for us and they do not give us the data.

Speaker 29:

We would have appreciated some charts, some data that shows your students' performance in reading and in math over a period of time at the schools where you operate and compare that data to what we are doing here in Chester because one of the things that is driving this process is the education of our children and the other is cost savings. We would like to see that you are better equipped and have a track record of educating your children better than we are educating our children here in Chester. I heard you. [inaudible 02:18:02], folks. I heard you rattle off some numbers, but for some of us who are teachers, if we had had you as students, we would have requested that you put that in your presentation to present it to us so that we could see the numbers, and the other thing I would have wanted to see is what your proposal is for cost savings.

Speaker 29:

We know that if we had enough money to run our school districts, we would not be in this room for this occasion, and so I'm hoping that the task force because I've asked at these meetings how much money is the district looking for to save to make all of this go away? I've never been given a number. So I'm hoping in the taskforce work, all of you presenters bitters have given us some hard factual numbers that reflect how much money you propose that you could save the district by us converting from our operations to yours. So did you provide any of that information?

Dr. Nunery:

Yes, they did. Yes, they did. In their proposals once they are posted, you will see their numbers. you'll see not only their projections for savings, but also in terms of student performance. They were only given 30 minutes here to present, but you'll see the data in terms of their proficiency growth, as well as promotion rates, et cetera. All of that was asked for in the RFPs.

Speaker 29:

Yes. Well, we would have appreciated some hard data here tonight. Some of us are quantitative enough to understand that.

Dr. Nunery:

Understood.

Speaker 29:

I don't mean no disrespect. I'm just wanting to see some rigorous good information here.

Dr. Nunery:

Understood. And I appreciate you. Thank you. Was there a question coming to the microphone and then after this will be the last question, then we're going to take a 10 minute break and have global leadership come up. So please, you have the last question.

Speaker 30:

Good evening. My name is Margaret Rios. I am a resident of the Chester Upland School District. I also retired in June, 37 years of teaching.

Dr. Nunery:

Congratulations.

Speaker 30:

Thank you.

Dr. Nunery:

Wow.

Speaker 31:

Congratulations.

Speaker 32:

Thank you.

Speaker 31:

Wow.

Speaker 32:

I am here on behalf of the students. Especially during these extraordinary times, our students need consistency. And what I think a lot of us want to know is are they going to be able to count on the teachers that they have counted on for years? One of the things that they always admired about me was I always came back and I'm still volunteering in the community. They want to know that their teachers are still going to be here, possibly with a new program. Because everything at Chester is not broken. It might need a few tweaks here and there, but we have awesome teachers. We have awesome programs and we have awesome students. And we just want you to know that not everything in Chester is broken. So I'm asking, are you planning on maintaining the teachers that are already teaching or are you going to bring in your own staff?

Speaker 33:

I think you answered that question, but you may want to reinforce the answer please.

Speaker 31:

Yeah. We went in to tap in and support the talent that's here. That's what we've done in the past and it's worked really well for us. We don't see ourselves as fixing a broken system. Chester, in my opinion, isn't broken. It is about at a point now responding to the demands and education, which oftentimes, and we know this, schools are under-resourced, but have a high expectation. So we all work together. It is not our plan to come in and dismantle any of the education, but to be a part of the enhancement and growth of education in Chester.

Speaker 34:

And just to confirm what we said before, so we came in and we helped schools before, failing schools, and we kept 100% of those teachers. So we're definitely not going to go without... And I'm not saying [inaudible 02:21:56], I'm just saying what we did. And we kept every single one of our teachers on its first year. So again, we're not going to come in with a sledgehammer and fire everyone and damage anything. We're going to work with the current administration, with the teachers to make sure that academic success is going to occur.

Speaker 33:

Thank you. All right. So that winds up our presentation by Friendship Education Foundation. It is now 6:15 by my watch. We're going to take a 10 minute break, restroom break, a refreshment break. Please come back at 6:25 and then Global Leadership Academy will be presenting. Thank you. Oh, also, folks, questions are still coming in on Zoom. Go ahead, Counsel. You see it.

Speaker 35:

We are still getting questions in on Zoom. I am trying to set up a way that we can still review your questions and make sure they're answered. I know some people are frustrated because they have more questions. We're not shutting you down. We're trying to find a way to keep things going. Thank you. We'll see you in 10 minutes. Thank you. Yeah. (Silence). [crosstalk 02:24:43]. [inaudible 02:25:41].

Speaker 36:

All right, all right. How are you doing?

Speaker 37:

Hey, how are you?

Speaker 36:

Okay. Let me see if I can find you on [inaudible 02:25:53]. (Silence). [inaudible 02:28:47].

Speaker 33:

All right. Good evening, folks. We're about to start our second presentation. Global Leadership Academy. Absolutely. This is Dr. Booker, Naomi Booker.

Speaker 38:

Hi, how are you doing? You are who?

Speaker 33:  
She's superintendent.

Speaker 38:  
I've read about you. Okay. (Silence).

Speaker 33:  
All right. Good evening. We're about to begin our second... Good? All right. We're about to begin our second presentation. This is Global Leadership Academy. There are several speakers from global leadership here, and there are going to also be a few narrating and speaking from their Zoom sites. So please pay attention. And Dr. Naomi Booker, the founder of GLA, will be speaking first and leading off. (Silence).

Dr. Naomi Booker:  
What? Mm-hmm (affirmative). [crosstalk 02:36:12]. (Silence).

Dr. Naomi Booker:  
[inaudible 02:38:22].

Speaker 33:  
[inaudible 02:40:11] the visual? Okay.

Tamika Evans:  
They can't hear you. They can't hear.

Speaker 33:  
They couldn't hear the audio, that's all.

Tamika Evans:  
Can they hear [inaudible 02:40:32]?

Speaker 33:  
Yes, yes. Yeah, that, I think they can.

Tamika Evans:  
All right. Good evening, everyone. We greet you this evening. We're going to keep on going. We have a lot to present to you this evening. So we want to start by saying, "Thank you for this opportunity to present to you this evening." We're not just here to present Global Leadership Academy and who we are, but we're here to talk about why we would be a great partner with this school district. We're excited for this opportunity. We're excited to present in front of you. Global Leadership Academy is a K-8 school model. Our school model is over 15 years old. We're excited because we create these small learning communities that are located in West Philadelphia. We know that what we do in West Philadelphia can be translated into what we can do here in this school district as well. We're excited because our scholars are competent, creative, and they're competitive when they leave us. They are

21st century learners, and we know that what we do allows them to be future leaders of the world.

Tamika Evans:

The reason why we've been able to be successful over the last 15 years is not just because we do the same thing that everyone else does. But our global studies and our leadership development programs are what guides us in all that we do. Our scholars not only leave us competent, but they leave us culturally competent, they're creative, and they're ready for the world. So we're excited about what we can do in this school district as well. One of the other reasons why we've been successful is because we've been a part of a turnaround school model with transformational leadership and visionaries, and our visionary for our school has been none other than Dr. Naomi Johnson-Booker, who has been in the business of education for the last 40 years and an assistant superintendent, and has a plethora of information that she can give you as well.

Tamika Evans:

But what we've been able to do in other places, we know that we can come in here and we can hold hands with you and collaborate with you to do the same thing in this school district. So at this time, I introduce to you none other than Doctor Naomi Johnson-Booker, who is the founder and the CEO of Global Leadership Academy Charter Schools. And before she comes out, just let you know that I am the proud CEO and principal of Global Leadership Academy Southwest. So I am Tamika Evans. And now, I'll give you Dr. Booker, who I've worked with for the last 15 years. Thank you.

Dr. Naomi Booker:

Thank you. Push which button?

Tamika Evans:

The middle gray. We're having technical difficulties, but we're going to get it right.

Dr. Naomi Booker:

There we go.

Speaker 33:

Ah, back up and running now.

Tamika Evans:

All right.

Tamika Evans:

[inaudible 02:43:34]. Good evening, everyone.

Speaker 33:

Good evening.

Tamika Evans:

Good evening, everyone.

Speaker 33:  
Good evening.

Dr. Naomi Booker:

All right. [inaudible 02:43:41]. So what is the transformation? That word is up there on the screen. A transformation is an extreme change in a culture and an environment. And for us, transforming focuses on empowering an organization and its members. I am a transformational leader who inspires, encourages, models, challenges, and enables others to do the work. I created four teams at failing schools in Philadelphia, beginning since 1990. On the screen, you will see those schools. One school, Climber Elementary, located in North Philadelphia, I was a principal from 1990 to 2001.

Dr. Naomi Booker:

In 2001, I left the district and joined the charter world. In 2004, I was at Renaissance Advantage Charter School at 56 and Chester and transformed that school to a successful model. In 2006, I was asked by the district to go to Raising Horizons Quest Charter School located, at that time, at 49th and Master. At 49th and Master, it was a failing charter school, beset with financial problems, board mismanagement, and low academic scores. In 2007, we changed the name of the school to Global Leadership Academy Charter School, which we now have 15 years later. And it is located at 46th and Girard Avenue. In the center of that screen, you see a building ablaze to fire. In 2010, Global Leadership Academy went down in flames, but we rose from that. And since that time, we have continued to move forward. In 2016...

Dr. Naomi Booker:

Oh, and the screen at the bottom, you'll see our brand new building, Global Leadership Academy Charter School at 46th and Girard, which we invite you all to come see. And then also, in 2016, the district asked me again to take over a failing Philadelphia public school at 52nd and Pine Street by the name of Huey School, which is now called Global Leadership Academy Southwest, which is to the right of this screen, which I'm looking at it different than you are. But anyway, you could see all of us up there. Making a transformational team is what you have to do to create a successful organization. And we know that we can do that with you here as partners here in this district. So I'm going to now allow my team to tell you, how do we do this? How do we take a school that has many good things, but needs to be transformed so that we can see all the positive things and turn it into a model school? So we will start with Mr. Choice, who is our assistant principal. Mr. Choice.

Mr. Bari Choice:

Peace. Good evening, everybody. I'm Mr. Bari Choice Senior, assistant principal Global Academy Schools, GLA West and GLA Southwest. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about our seven pillars. And the seven pillars is the framework in which we ground our practices at Global Leadership Academy. And those seven pillars are culture, climate, and safety, scholar centered decision-making, culturally relevant exposure, academic rigor, building relationships, sustainable systems, and last, but certainly not least, intentional and consistent reflection. Culture, climate, and safety. This pillar is placed first for a reason, because the reality is children can not learn and teachers can't teach if the environment is not conducive for learning. That's just what it is. And families send their children to schools that are safe first. Culture learning must be created. And to accomplish this, making the environment has to be predictable.

Expectations should not be something that anybody has to guess at. It should be clear. It should be well understood. And everyone should know what to expect in the environment.

Mr. Bari Choice:

Through research based systems for classroom management, SEL curriculum, school-wide PBIS, family and community engagement, and scholar-based, student-based, children-based initiatives of cultural learning is created. Scholar centered decision-making. This pillar identifies the importance of making sure that any decision made has the children at the heart first. The end goal was being, how do we create independent, responsible decision-makers in the children that we serve? Culturally relevant exposure. This is the practice of ensuring that all the learning in the environment is grounded in the cultural identity of the children and families that we serve.

Mr. Bari Choice:

This is an effort to increase the capacity of their cultural competence, which is their knowledge of self, knowing who we are, and their cultural intelligence, knowing the coaches around them and being able to move and identify who they are in places or spaces, no matter where this person is around the globe, having that cultural capacity to be successful on the world stage. Academic rigor is ensuring that teaching practices and teaching tools are, one, relevant. They have to matter culturally. Two, relatable. They have to connect to the children and families in the environment. And three, rigorous. Well planned, well implemented at a highest standard. Building relationships. Now, this is built on that age old adage, you can't teach me if you don't know me, understanding that the only way to win at anything is to find the assets in the community, link hands, and get the work done. Sustainable systems.

Mr. Bari Choice:

Any system that's in an environment have to be two things, doable and usable. Otherwise, what's the point? And last again, but certainly not least, intentional and consistent reflection. The most highly successful people and organizations have to remain confident in your practice, but also critically think and assess outcomes to ensure that what we're doing has sustainable systems, if it builds relationships with the community and all stakeholders, if the curriculum is academically rigorous, and if it's culturally relevant, if in fact that the environment embodies and fosters decisions that center around the children, and last, but certainly not least, that it creates a culture of learning and the climate of safety. At this time, you're going to hear from Ms. Tyler, who's the principal of Global Leadership Academy West, who will talk to you more about the academic program model at Global Leadership.

Shoshana Tyler:

Thank you, Mr. Choice. Again, my name is Shoshana Tyler. I am the very proud principal at Global Leadership Academy Charter School West. Marva Collins said, "There is a brilliant child locked inside every student." And when I think about GLA, we work to unlock their brilliance, their brilliance that we know is already there. Oftentimes, in education, the narrative is framed around deficit thinking. We talk about achievement gaps. Even during the pandemic, we've heard so much talk about learning loss. Well, we as a school believe that it's not about learning loss, it's not about gaps. It's about us identifying the inherent greatness that we know is in our scholars, that we know are in our communities, and pulling that out of them. A lot of times in education, we talk about the fact that urban schools are not achieving. Well, we say, "Not achieving according to who? According to whose standards? According to whose

goals?"

Shoshana Tyler:

We believe that teaching skills in isolation is not enough. We believe they're preparing scholars to be able to pass a standardized assessment, that is not enough/ For us, the end goal is actually not student achievement. For us, the end goal is liberation. How do we teach our Black and brown babies to be able to walk into any room and to be able to be confident, to be able to be competent, and to be able to compete? At the heart of our academic program model is our global studies program. This is our heart. This is our soul. This is our baby, and we created it. With our global studies model, through project-based, thematic units of study, our babies not only learn about Philadelphia or Chester, they learn about the world. Starting in kindergarten, they're learning about different communities and their families, from the city. We look at the state level. One of the things that we really, really focus on is how do we teach them to be able to make connections across time, across space, and across culture?

Shoshana Tyler:

And then most importantly, with everything that they learned, what are you going to do with it? How do you connect it to activism? How do you connect it to being able to do something to make the world better than the way that you found it? That is the heart of our instructional model. We use many of the same programs. We use iReady. We use Haggerty, we use Engage New York. So I don't want to spend too much time talking about the programs. But what we know is that programs don't teach children. Educators teach children. Their belief in their ability to achieve, that is what propels them. And so we're really, really intentional about making sure that whatever they learn is connected to something deeper. And through travel, we're able to do that. It's one thing to learn about the civil rights movement, but it's another thing to be able to stand on the Lorraine Motel Balcony, where Dr. King took his last breath. And that is exactly what our sixth graders do as a part of their civil rights unit of study.

Shoshana Tyler:

We have traveled to Canada. We have traveled to The Bahamas. We have traveled to Jamaica, to China, to Kenya. And when our scholars come back, they tell us that their lives are changed, that their worldview is changed, that they want to now take what they learned internationally and be able to act locally. I sat with some of our seventh graders in a gifted and talented school in China and watched them not only hold their own, but do it with excellence. And that is what we are about and that is what our global studies program is able to provide. Because we know that through exposure, that our scholars can achieve any and everything. On the next slide here, I won't read them off, but these are just some of our expeditionary school partnerships. Because again, we believe that it takes a village. So when our scholars are going on these excursions, they're not just random trips. Everything that they learn is connected to what they have been doing all-

Speaker 39:

Everything that they learn is connected to what they have been doing all year long in the classroom. So we're really, really proud of it. We're really, really proud of the ways that we have been able to connect our academics to the world at large and we're confident that in doing this, that we are able to prepare future leaders of the world.

Speaker 39:

Up next, Alicia Kennedy is going to talk a little bit about our Special Services program. Mrs. Kennedy.

Alicia Kennedy:

Thank you. I'm Mrs. Kennedy. I'm the Director of Special Services for Global Academies. Our program is about a journey. It is a service, it is not a place. We do not put children in the corner. We teach children and meet their needs where they are. It is very important to us that we offer the full continuum of services, but that's what everybody does. What do we do different? We offer small learning classes. Our groups are not bigger than five scholars with our one teacher. Our groups are meant to meet the scholars in the classroom and bring that extra support and make sure that they are successful no matter what they choose to do.

Alicia Kennedy:

How do we do this? We have a very strong MTSS system and program. They get interventions starting from the day they walk in the door. We make sure that, no matter what barrier may exist to scholars learning, that we address those barriers expeditiously. We make sure our teachers are trained to address any barriers that may arise and we do this by working with a team. They talked about scholar-centered decision making. We do it together. We make sure that we're always looking at the scholars and what they can do well.

Alicia Kennedy:

Our current numbers are about 12-14% special services. Again, we have scholars with autism. We have scholars that are emotional support. Our Southwest site is a center that has a lot of scholars with emotional support. We offer socio-emotional learning programs. We have every related service that any other school would have and we make sure that, again, we meet all scholars' needs. But at the end of the day, our goal is to exit our kids with special services. We want them to not need to rely on us. We want them to be advocates for themselves and to really grow. And we go into the classrooms, we work with the teachers and we do this as a team. Thank you.

Speaker 39:

Next is Ms. Aviles.

Valerie Aviles:

Good evening. My name is Valerie Aviles. I am the Director of School Operations.

Speaker 40:

The next person is actually virtual, so they're trying to make sure that she can talk and be heard and everyone on the screen can actually hear her.

Valerie Aviles:

Testing?

Speaker 41:

[inaudible 02:57:53] presenter on the screen.

Speaker 40:  
Yes.

Valerie Aviles:  
Testing? Can those in the audience hear me?

Speaker 41:  
Talking from the screen. I don't even ... She's more just listening now, but she's supposed to be presenting. She had a different code to go in. [inaudible 02:58:19].

Speaker 39:  
We can keep going.

Speaker 40:  
[inaudible 02:58:31].

Speaker 39:  
Let's keep going.

Speaker 40:  
[inaudible 02:58:36] right at the top.

Speaker 39:  
So can we turn back on the [inaudible 02:58:41]?

Speaker 40:  
Yes.

Speaker 42:  
[crosstalk 02:58:43] Yeah, we'll keep rolling.

Valerie Aviles:  
[crosstalk 02:58:48] Testing? So this next slide talks about our hiring, our recruitment, and our retention. Some of the conversations and the questions that were brought up in the audience earlier were around teachers and what we do for our staff and how we address our staff and what that looks like. So Ms. Tyler and I will kind of talk a little bit about that as the principals in the building. The first thing is that we create partnerships. We believe in partnerships. Partnerships are important to us, whether they are local partnerships, whether they our international or our national partnerships, but especially with our community and our parents and our teachers.

Valerie Aviles:  
So for us, we have competitive salaries. We try to ensure that our teachers have the most competitive salaries. We are reevaluating what that looks like each and every year. We sit at the table and make sure

that our teachers have what they need. This includes sign on bonuses. It includes performance-based bonuses. It includes something as simple as just having your tuition reimbursement. Those are the things to ensure that our teachers continue to keep up their skills and that they know that this is a place that they not only come to teach, but they come to grow.

Valerie Aviles:

So within that, our employees, they receive full benefit packages. These full benefit packages also include their families. Most schools now, you pay into your benefits package. At Global Leadership Academy. Bed is not the case. We believe that in order for our employees to actually be the best for our scholars, we must make sure that they are the best at home as well, which is why we are making sure that we provide a full benefits package.

Valerie Aviles:

We also provide certification assistance. We recognize that some people come in and they may not be the best test takers. We make sure that we are, but they may be great teachers. And so for that reason, we are pouring into them through professional development, ongoing certification assistance, ensuring that our teachers come to the table and they come to us right but that we also make them better in this process. We are honing skills each and every time that a teacher walks in our door.

Valerie Aviles:

Our employee referral program, we have, which we believe that our teachers know best who would be best for our scholars. And so we put together this employee referral program, where we ask our teachers, please give us the best teachers, because you know needs to work in this district. You know who needs to serve our scholars. And so our teachers are our best marketing tool. We do not do a lot of bus ads and TV ads because we don't have to. Our teachers want to be with us, from our wellness initiatives, to all of our salary, as well as our ... just a secure and a safe learning and working environments.

Valerie Aviles:

Mr. Choice talked about it earlier, but this idea that teachers come to teach and children come to learn. And many places, teachers feel they are fighting each and every day just to do what they need to do as teachers and educators. We had teacher appreciation week this week. And for many schools, that's the only time teachers are appreciated. But for Global Academies, they are appreciated every day. We ensure that our teachers know that they come here to teach and we come here to support what that teaching looks like.

Valerie Aviles:

So as far as our hiring, our recruitment and our retention, our retention rate is high for our staff. They stay with us. They move up. If you look at Ms. Tyler right here, Ms. Tyler was a teacher who is now the principal of the building after 15 years. If you look at me, I've moved up in the ranks. Everyone here, we grew them from within. We believe that our leaders come from within. And so when you look at most of the people on our leadership team, their faces are actual teachers that have been in our organization. Their faces are the instructional assistants that have come up and become teachers in our organization.

Valerie Aviles:

So our plan for Global Leadership Academy and when we partner with other schools or school districts is to ensure that we bring the best to our teachers and our staff. Our goal is not to come here and dismantle anything. Our goal is to walk hand in hand with your partner, with your teachers, to ensure that we provide for them the best learning environment and the safest learning environment possible so that we can educate the children that deserve the best from us.

Speaker 39:

[inaudible 03:02:43]. I think you said everything.

Valerie Aviles:

All right. So we'll keep going. So when we think about these partnerships, the other thing we think about is many times we think about partnerships as being outside pieces and outside providers. But for us, our health and wellness program is a big bang for us. We recognize that children come to us each and every day needing breakfast, needing social skills, needing SEL programs. We recognize that our children's health and wellness is of the utmost importance for our schools.

Valerie Aviles:

GLA has recognized that for so long that we have a health and wellness coach that is a full-time member of our staff that actually provides for us what we are looking for in this. We have a holistic model. We just won another grant for \$17,500 to do redo our gardening program, to ensure that we can feed the community. We recognize that all of our community programs, from our Vetri Family Dining Style program, to our partnership with Independence Blue Cross and Blue Shield, to our partnerships with fresh fruits and vegetables, our social work, our socio- emotional, and our ...

Valerie Aviles:

We even have been named as the healthiest employer in the city and in the state. And that is because of the wellness initiatives that we put in front of our teachers, from our yoga to our liberation teaching, to all of the things that we do on a daily basis to ensure that not only our teachers, but our scholars and our community all can thrive in our community. Again, this is about a community partnership. And in order to make sure that that community partnership works, you must focus on wellness of our staff.

Valerie Aviles:

At this time, I'm going to introduce someone. I'm going to ask them to come to the podium. And that is none other than Ms. Fuller. She is our Family Life Coordinator and Ms. Fuller is going to come with a little bit of fire right now, so she can tell you about our parents and what they do. So at this time, I want to turn it over to our family life coordinator, Ms. Fuller.

Speaker 40:

All right Ms. Fuller [crosstalk 03:04:36]-

Ms. Fuller:

Good evening, everyone!

Speaker 40:  
Good evening.

Ms. Fuller:  
Can I hear you say parent power?

Speaker 40:  
Parent power.

Ms. Fuller:  
Yes.

Speaker 40:  
Yes. Parent power. Global establishes high expectations for our parents. There is a 40 hour a year that we ask our parents to put in in one way or another, because we realized that our parents work and that they're not always able to come in the building. But we find other ways that they can participate and hold our hand as we hold their hands to lead their child to success. We are building an active parent advisory council where you will have a say, where you can come to the table and say, "This is good. We don't like that. Well, I think we should try this. Or can we implement that?" But we build that through our parent power.

Speaker 40:  
Our town hall meetings, they're twice a month, when you can come online, on Zoom and we do a number of things. We have workshops, we have dance classes, we have very, very important meetings, we have information sessions, we talk about mental health. You name it, we do that in our town hall meeting. Yes. We create productive workshops for our parents and establish and strengthen and maintain community partnerships by encouraging volunteerism through our parents.

Speaker 40:  
Not only do we bring our parents in as volunteers, but we hire them as well. We have a parent scholar program that we implement in the school. We coordinate community activities because we think it's important to be involved in the very community that you're in. [crosstalk 03:06:26]. And so what happens is a lot of times you, when you're in a community, the blocks have all kinds of programs that they do, and all kinds of special events. Well, we get involved in that. We get involved in the special events. We take your hand with that as well and help make it better.

Speaker 40:  
And Global puts on some of the best special events you ever want to attend. Also, we have ... are having a tea ... well, it used to breakfast with the principal. But now that we are on Zoom, we had tea with our principal where you can come to the Zoom and with your cup of tea, your cup of coffee, and you can talk to the CEOs and the Principals and our Parent Life Coordinator about whatever's on your mind, whatever you're concerned about, your children, your community, the school. So we have those things.

Speaker 40:

And the one thing that I like, this is one of my favorite things, is parent recognition because I recognize my parents at the end of the year. I reward them at the end of the year for being good parents, for making sure that their children show up every day, for making sure that children come to school looking like they're ready for school. So we have a big parent celebration every year. It is a big part of what we do at Global Leadership Academy. I would like to share with you the life at Global Leadership Academy.

Speaker 41:

We are not certain if this will actually play for our Zoo participants, but we are going to still show it for you.

Speaker 40:

Somebody could probably stream it from their phone if you want to make sure it goes through.

Speaker 41:

Their wellness program that we talked about earlier, you'll see examples of that. Those smiling faces of our children. You'll see our creativity in those outside activities including yoga right there.

Speaker 43:

That's our rites of passage.

Speaker 41:

Rites of passage because we know that scholars do not graduate from 8th grade but it is a rite of passage.

Speaker 43:

These are some of our most wonderful trips that we take because in 8th grade we take them to colleges so that they can see what the life is like in college. [inaudible 03:09:12] and the desire to go there. And we take them to some of the best colleges that the United States has to offer.

Speaker 40:

With emphasis on HBCUs.

Speaker 39:

You're going to see some of our world travelers.

Speaker 44:

And I applied and got in, and I've been very [crosstalk 03:09:33]-

Speaker 45:

Yes, we have drill teams and cheerleaders.

Speaker 44:

She's getting comfortable. Dropping her off here and leaving her, I know she's going to be safe and the staff and all, they really care about the students. I love what ... how they're being taught, not only the

academics, but also how to build up their character. So that they'll be good citizens in this country once they become leaders. Because this is what they're taught, they are future leaders of the world.

Speaker 46:

And I want to amplify those voices. I want to bring to the mic, Ms. Diane Clayton, one of our grandparents.

Diane Clayton:

Good evening. My name is Diane Clayton, and I am the proud grandparent of a third grade scholar at Global Leadership Academy southwest. My granddaughter has been a scholar at this school since kindergarten. I was captured and impressed from day one. My grandchild is happy, safe, and well educated. My granddaughter is taught self-love at the school. They're referred to as Kings and Queens. They're taught self-respect, good character quality so they can be productive citizens in society. During this pandemic, my granddaughter has grown and enjoyed the virtual school. It is very organized and effective. I'm convinced that Dr. Booker, the founder of Global Leadership Academies has a God given gift to love and educate our children. As a parent, I'd recommend her and her staff to lead any school to excellence. Thank you for your attention.

Speaker 46:

We want to continue amplifying our voices by bringing you one of our very own babies. She was a scholar at Global Leadership Academy. She went on to high school, then to college, and she came back a teacher. And now she is one of our staff members. Come on and put your hands together for one of our alumni and one of our staff members, Ms. Leslye Lloyd.

Leslye Lloyd:

Good evening. Let me start by just saying, wow. I can honestly attest to everything that was presented on this screen. Sorry. I can honestly attest to everything that was presented on this screen from being an alumni to now being a teacher here at Global Academies. Let me start over. My name is Leslye Lloyd. I am currently a first grade teacher here at Global Academies. Before that I was an alumni. I graduated in the class of 2011. I loved my experience here at Global Academies. I loved it so much that I wanted to come back. I loved it even further from being a scholar to a teacher that I will eventually send my own children here to Global Academies.

Leslye Lloyd:

One thing that stuck out to me the most while I attended GLA was the loving and small classroom culture and climate that encouraged me to be the teacher that I am today. I want to provide that same experience to the scholars that I teach every day, that I get up for every day. After graduating from GLA, I went on to high school at Multicultural Academy Charter School. I graduated from there in 2015. Later ... well, following that, I went on to college at Widener University, graduated in 2019, studying early childhood education and special education. There, I had the privilege and honor of working in the Chester community. I have participated in the Seed program through Widener. I have done my student teaching at [Stetser 03:13:53] and I have also been a part of the Soccer for Success program here in the Chester community. I am very excited and looking forward to working again in the Chester community.

Speaker 46:

We also have a scholar who they cannot get on the screen, but her name is Faith Lofted. She was scheduled to be on screen with us today. But we're going to keep it moving. We're going to bring ... first, we want to thank you. But we're going to bring to the microphone, back to the microphone, none other than our CEO, Dr. Naomi Johnson Booker. Thank you so much.

Naomi Johnson Booker:

I told you I had a team and that's what you just heard, a team that we have put together over the years, many years, we have brought to fruition with the work we do. I am so proud to lead them. I am so proud to be on this journey with them. Because of them is who I am. And that is what we will do with you as we partner with you to make the same kind of journey that we've done at the schools that we've been with over here at Chester. Chester is right next to Philly. It is our home too. There's so much here that we know that we can share as well with our children.

Naomi Johnson Booker:

We call our children scholars. The reason we call them scholars is because they take responsibility for the learning. And I want to tell you a little bit about the pandemic. During this pandemic, the only thing missing from us was the building. Outside, the children were on virtual, global virtual. All of our teachers were set up at home with double screens, all the equipment that they needed so that they could teach and do what they needed to do every day and which they did. Our scholars had high attendance, 85, 90% of them were on the screen. And those that weren't, we went to find them with other instructional people that we have there with Ms. Fuller and our families and our parents. Because it's important to us that we reach to everybody.

Naomi Johnson Booker:

So when they talk about learning loss, let's stop talking about that because right now our children have become tech savvy. In this year, they have learned more than all of us. So now when they come back, it won't be, they'll be just doing TikTok and all those other little things. They know about all of the rich software programs that they have been using over this last year. I am so proud of the work that my staff does and our children, and we are ready to go when they come back in the fall.

Naomi Johnson Booker:

Thank you so much for listening to us. And we are now ready to answer any of the questions. We do have on the screen ... well on Zoom, our lawyer and our finance people and our and Director of Curriculum Instruction and our personnel, HR person. But again, you can't hear them and so we'll do the best we can. Thank you.

Speaker 47:

So folks, we'll take any questions from here in the auditorium. We'll also, as we did a few minutes ago, record questions from Zoom and if there are any answers that need to come from your folks who are virtual, we'll try to feed ... at least to get them to type in answers. We'll try to do that. We'll keep corresponding. But we want to make sure we get the full experience [inaudible 03:17:39] if we can. So do we have any questions from the floor?

Danine Mosely:  
Hi, my name is-

Speaker 47:  
If you wouldn't mind, if you can remove your mask at least so we can hear you?

Danine Mosely:  
Sure.

Speaker 47:  
And if you'll tell us who you are and what your affiliation [crosstalk 03:17:53]-

Danine Mosely:  
Sure. My name is Danine Mosely and I'm a multiple property owner in taxpayer in the city of Chester. And my comment is more in regards to this entire process than it is to this organization. I have some information. Dr. Baughn got up and stated on May 14th of 2020, that he received direction from Judge Dozer to move this RFP process forward. However, it wasn't the judge determination to even start this RFP process. That process was determined by the then superintendent, who was Dr. Juan Baughn and this Chester Upland school district board. And so that process was requested by the board with the approval of the superintendent to even move forward.

Danine Mosely:  
Now, Juan Baughn sits as the sole receiver, and some of the people on the board are part of this review board that's reviewing these proposals for a decision to be made to outsource this district. And so this is a breach. This is a conflict of interest, and I don't see how we can in good faith entertain proposals when this is so one-sided. There are four members of the board that sit on this panel, there is one parent, and there is one community member. And that is not fair representation of how this community feels about this process. And I feel like it really needs to be examined and opened up and due diligence really needs to be done.

Danine Mosely:  
You cannot sit as the superintendent and make a decision Juan Baughn, to then give yourself permission as the receiver over all of the children in the Chester Upland School District. This board cannot hire an attorney per the board minutes from October 17th, 2019 at 6:00 PM, to hire your attorney, to tell them to start the bid process. You're bringing it to the community like the court came up with this idea. This was an inside job. And if you, as the receiver, the superintendent, and the board do not have the wherewithal, the leadership, or the skills to oversee this district, remove yourselves from the seat. Put people in positions that will welcome the \$30 million in PPP, the lost money that has been found, millions of dollars, and will work with the community to keep our district intact.

Danine Mosely:  
Get out the seat. If you will not leave, if you will not stand with us and say, hail Chester High. Our honor praise be thine. We are [inaudible 03:20:56] we are to thee, whatever we hope to be. Through futures broadening past, our life's stern duties we lie. We'll finally tread with visions clear and thank thee

Chester high. Thank you.

Speaker 47:

If there are any other questions before, please if you'll step to the microphone, give us your name, your affiliation with the district.

Speaker 48:

How you guys doing? My name is Malcolm Flamer. I'm a proud graduate of Chester High school, 2005. Some people may know me. I'm actually one of the seven students that led a revolt against Edison and the state of Pennsylvania's education system when they came in to disrupt Chester High School. My one question, my only question is, and it's coming off of what they had said, that it's all student based. Has anyone even asked how our students feel about this process right now?

Speaker 48:

Just to be clear, the reason why I say this is because in 2004, the graduating class of 2005 knew that the state was going to relieve control and it was going to be back in the hands of the people. We were ecstatic. We were ready to go. We came in fire, ready to get everything done, even though into our 9th grade year, our wings were clipped because we couldn't go to ... I couldn't forget the name of that school right up here on Ninth Street. We couldn't go to the academy because it got disbanded and we were put into general population.

Speaker 48:

When we found out that everything was undermined into the district, we as the students stood up, because it's fighting for our education. And Mr. Baughn, you do know me. You know me very well from when you were Secretary of Education and I came into your office and told you about what you should do because I had a niece going through this elaborate district. She actually graduated, was the first to graduate out of STEM, also to work diligently to graduate with the Chester High Students because she wasn't into separatism. She wanted to be equal with everyone else. She also graduated with honors and also a Salutatorian. And now she's actually getting ready to graduate from West Chester University with a bachelor's of criminal justice.

Speaker 48:

So I say this to you Dr. Baughn, and I say this to all those in the room, before we make a decision, ask your students that have to sit here for four years and those after them as well. Because those that go through 9th, they're here 12th, but then you also got those that's going from 6th to go through 8th, to get into this lovely, luxurious building. Thank you.

Speaker 47:

[inaudible 03:23:32] we have a couple of questions regarding special education. Have special ... it says service students, but I'll assume it's special education students, been able to excel during remote learning? I'm assuming it's around COVID. And is there any data to support special education success? What do you point to?

Speaker 49:

Hi. Thank you for the question. As far as special services during the pandemic, we were the first department to get up and running virtually, when we found out that we were closing last year on March 12th. Our teachers are resilient and they persevere. They set up their classrooms right away. We called all the parents. We were very transparent. We communicate with each and every one of our parents to let them know what was happening and what the next steps will look like. We put procedures, we talked about sustainable systems. We put sustainable systems in place to ensure that all scholars still received 100% of their services during the pandemic. As far as ... you asked a question about data?

Speaker 47:

Yeah. What data is there to support special education student success? What do you point to?

Speaker 49:

Okay. So we are part of all of the data collections. We do not not have our special services scholars participate. So when we collect school-wide data, all of our special services scholars participate. We then meet and look at that data. We're a part of every single instructional strategy meeting along with the general education teachers. We form a tight partnership to make sure that we're constantly looking at data. One of our goals this year pre-pandemic, was to look at the PSSA data and look at specifically, how can we move our special services scholars forward? How can we make sure that they're making the adequate growth that they need to make to be able to compete with their peers that are considered non-disabled? So we do have that [inaudible 03:25:37].

Speaker 47:

Thank you. Is there another question from the floor, please?

Speaker 50:

It seems as if several people are asking about data and that was going to be my question. I'll just reiterate. It is very important for us here in Chester to know specifically what data you have to indicate your educational success with your students. You have been in business for quite a long time and we would have expected to have seen some trends that you could give us to show how the travel and the richness of your program has resulted in great scores for reading, math, etc. And to the degree that we have not seen that kind of data here tonight, let me just speak for myself, I feel a little bit offended. I think that we merit that kind of information here at Chester. And I won't say more than that because I want to stay positive and pleasant.

Speaker 50:

The other item I would like to ask about is a question that someone else has asked. And that is, for the established programs that we have been very successful with in Chester, what can you say to assure us that in the midst of your beautiful program, you will still look to support some of the programs that we have already established here? I'm sure you're going to tell me yes. What else would you say?

Speaker 49:

First of all, we want to thank you for your comment. We recognize ... I just want to everyone to keep in mind, we were told a half an hour, we had 30 minutes, and we had to try to squeeze in everything in 30 minutes. Our last presentation that we did before the board was an hour long presentation that

included all of the data points and all of the trends, which is all a part of the RFP as well. So those things were included, but we had to kind of truncate everything to try to just give this information this evening. So we apologize, and we're not trying to be offensive to what needed to be stated-

Speaker 47:

Indeed.

Speaker 49:

... here for this community. Trust and believe that that is very important to us and that we have that information.

Speaker 49:

But the other thing I want everyone to keep in mind is that this is not a one-sided conversation. We are here to this evening to speak to you for the very first time. But the gentleman that just sat down and talked about the scholars, and then the young lady that just sat down and came from the mic, talked about what are we going to do to look at your programs that are already currently here? This takes time. It means that we have to come into this community more than just tonight. Tonight was about presentation. And many times people get in front of you and they do ... they bring their presentation self. But who's going to actually be here to ask you what is working here? What do we do that's the same? What do we do that's different? How do we not come in and supplant anything that's here, but how do we come in and support everything that's here? And so the question becomes what is working, what's working well? And for us to really be able to have those conversations. So that is what our town halls would be about. That is why we will have our parents coming in for meetings and our scholars, asking them, what are the things that are working?

Speaker 49:

We looked at Stetser, and in looking at some of the programs they had, we were like, oh wow, they do some of the same things we do. They have the gardening program, they have these things, they're working with this industry, they're doing this. And we just know that whatever we do, we want to come in and help to support what is already going well in your organization. So again, this was not at all to shuck and jive. I just want to be very clear about that. It was because we were given a timeframe and some parameters that we had to stay within. But all of our information is definitely available to you to have that information.

Speaker 49:

And then also please do note that this is just a ... this is our presentation. But trust and believe there's more to this story, which means that there has to be the surveys that go out. We have to ask you the questions. We have to meet with your PTO or whoever those numbers are that are important to your community-

Speaker 47:

And be physically present.

Speaker 49:

Right. So we expect to be here-

Speaker 51:

Right. So we expect to be here a long time. So if we are those that are chosen to be a part of this journey, you're going to see our face a whole lot. You're going to get sick of seeing our faces, because we're going to be here asking you questions and wanting to know what it is that's best for this community. Again, we're here to partner and not to supplant.

Speaker 52:

And it goes back to my statement about you can't teach me if you don't know me. Well, you can't know me if you're scared to come to my neighborhood. So that's why we have so many people with us, because you have to be a part of the environment to truly know and serve and respect and see the assets in the space.

Speaker 53:

[crosstalk 03:30:36] Doctor ... [crosstalk 03:30:37] Okay. We've got a couple of other questions and I've got a couple from Facebook. So please, if you can, just make your questions succinct so we can get everybody in please. Thank you.

Speaker 54:

Good evening. I love the name of your academy, because anything that we can do to bring people together, to introduce people to different cultures, is wonderful. My concern is how is the Hispanic community being addressed and are languages such as Spanish being taught, so the students can go out into this world, especially into the United States, which is a bilingual country, prepared to face the challenges of the next century?

Ms. Tyler:

First of all, I love that question, right? Global leadership is just that, right? We embrace diversity, but we also want to be really, really clear about the scholars that we serve. And so the population of scholars that we serve is 98% black scholars. And so we are really, really intentional about teaching to their greatness. We are intentional about them having knowledge of self, their identities, then being able to learn about the fact that you're not just the descendants of enslaved Africans. And so I want to be clear that the reason why we are so intentional about beginning with who our scholars are is because we believe that we have to start with identity.

Ms. Tyler:

But once you have an awareness of yourself and you're then able to appreciate the differences in others, through our global studies program, we are able to expose them to the world. Our scholars take French. Our scholars have taken Mandarin. They have taken Spanish. We are intentional about each month celebrating different cultures through our jewels of the month. We teach them what it means to embrace diversity through the texts that we use. So you mentioned the Latino population. We also through reading, through many different ways, try to embrace all of the different ...

Speaker 55:

Food, dance.

Ms. Tyler:  
Food, dance.

Speaker 52:  
Culture, [crosstalk 03:32:23] travel.

Ms. Tyler:  
Yes, through our cultural arts program, for example, where they are being exposed to things like art, music, dance ... what else is cultural arts? We really try to use the arts to infuse those things. And so I don't want you to get the impression that we are solely focusing on African-American children, but to be clear, that's who we serve in Philadelphia currently.

Speaker 54:  
Well, I just want to make sure that the students that are here in Chester, the Hispanic community, feel welcome in your program.

Speaker 52:  
Indeed.

Ms. Tyler:  
[crosstalk 03:32:48] Absolutely. And so we will begin with their greatness, right, and really having them have the opportunity to talk about and learn about their own identities first. We always begin with their own self identities first.

Speaker 54:  
Okay. I just want to make sure that was ... [crosstalk 03:33:06]

Speaker 56:  
Say what?

Speaker 61:  
You have more than just the [crosstalk 03:33:07]

Speaker 54:  
Yeah, that's what I was just going to say, because we have multiple cultures in the community.

Speaker 53:  
Ma'am.

Speaker 56:  
[crosstalk 03:33:09] Well, can I also just add that last year before the pandemic, we had the Holocaust Museum come to the school and deal with our children. So it's all cultures for us. When they're in the

eighth grade, they study Chinese slavery, African American slavery.

Speaker 53:

Ma'am. [crosstalk 03:33:32]

Speaker 56:

Well, I'm speaking to the ...

Speaker 53:

Ma'am, please.

Speaker 57:

[crosstalk 03:33:35] I have to find [crosstalk 03:33:35] because I'm not at [inaudible 03:33:35], and I'm not [crosstalk 03:33:36].

Speaker 56:

Good point.

Speaker 53:

Thank you very much. We have a question here that I'm going to go to a couple of questions from Facebook so we can keep it going. Please. Wait, did you have a question?

Speaker 58:

Yes. Give me one second. I'm trying to get the thing ...

Speaker 53:

All right. Thank you. While they're getting themselves assembled ... [crosstalk 03:34:08] okay. Very good. Thank you. So the question ... I'm going to put these three together. This is from online, is your intention to use the same buildings or I guess build new schools, the same teachers, or get new teachers, the same money for teachers or more money? It's kind of a packed question, set of questions.

Speaker 56:

The intention as far as the buildings are concerned ... we walked through the buildings ... I think we had a walk through in November ... is to transform them to be better served environments. So we're not building schools. We are going to take those schools that we have and make them a better places for the children to be at. As far as the staff, again, we have to evaluate the staff that's there. They will be there. They will apply to be there. They will be a part of it. And so the staff will be there. As far as money, we will use ... we are in the state of Pennsylvania. We have a salary scale that we use that is commensurate with all of our schools, and we stay as competitive as we can with all of the schools or the districts around us. And was that the ...

Speaker 53:

That's [crosstalk 03:35:24] Thank you. Do you have your question ready?

Speaker 58:

Yes. Do I have to repeat who I am and everything again?

Speaker 53:

No, just go ahead, please. Thank you.

Speaker 58:

My first question is exactly can you guys clarify what schools you guys were trying to come in and support?

Speaker 56:

We are looking at Stetser and Toby Farms.

Speaker 58:

Okay. Thank you. My first ... well, second question is due to the Pennsylvania test scores that you guys have, because I know you said you only had 30 minutes to be able to put up a presentation and you couldn't do the data, so I actually did do that. You guys are actually scoring at 12% proficiency in math.

Speaker 62:

Oh shit.

Speaker 58:

And also 36% in English. So let me also notate that you guys are also in Philadelphia, which is a large city. So that actually tells me that the students in your school is scoring a below year to year academic improvement.

Speaker 62:

God damn.

Speaker 58:

So my question is how would that align with our students' academics in its achievement here when the Pennsylvania average ...

Speaker 58:

(silence)

Speaker 56:

... see the results of them as they leave us. So it's a continuum of being in school nine years, eight years. And there's also a lot of variables that occur throughout the school. School life that may cause a test to come and go. For right now, we're in the middle of a pandemic, and what will happen to the children moving to go back and have to do testing now as well. So I will say to you that for my own children and the children that are my children, they are not a test score. Ms. Tyler?

Ms. Tyler:

Yeah, no, I definitely agree with that. And I think that as an organization ... we too, right? We are critical of the fact you know that better than us that there is already so much excellence in Chester, and that the excellence in Chester isn't defined by a test score. And I think that we had that same notion, where it's like, okay, there is one way to paint a picture. But I think that many of the things that we do well as an organization are difficult to capture on a standardized test, right? And so that's why we as an organization try to spend so much time and emphasis on allowing our scholars to show in various ways their performance, right? It's one thing to be able to be an excellent speaker or an excellent writer, but we have excellent dancers. We have excellent artists.

Ms. Tyler:

And so I think that we view our role as not only just preparing them to be able to take tests, but preparing them to also be able to compete. And I think that that is not always captured, right? I think so often in black and brown communities, the narrative centers on test scores. Well why? Who says that? Who says that standards that were arbitrarily created, not by us, should determine the excellence that we know is in our scholars? And so I think to your point, absolutely. Our proficiency data isn't in the 90s, but you know what? When I looked at the scholars that we serve every day, when I see the gifts that they have, we know that there are more than those numbers.

Speaker 58:

Thank you. I actually asked that question ...

Speaker 53:

One more question please. One more question.

Speaker 58:

One more?

Speaker 53:

We just ... we've got ...

Speaker 58:

I was supposed to get ...

Speaker 53:

Ma'am ...

Speaker 58:

Mr. [inaudible 03:39:33], let me try to hurry up and get through, but let me make a comment to notate behind that test score. I actually asked that question because that's why we're under receivership. So for the same thing that you're saying, and as the reason why you don't look at test scores, that's what we're here for. So behind that, they're saying the line and us having to invite you in, it's because of those test scores. So the same thing that you guys are saying about dancers and everything, we have the same.

Speaker 58:

So let me also go to my next question. I looked at your presentation, you stated about the special education students who are then transferred into another classroom setting. So how was that then assessed for those students? Because I'm also, again, going back to the test scores and a percentage. So they have needs or special disabilities and they're being transferred over. How do you know that it's now time? Like how do you put them back together in that setting to expect them to then ...

Speaker 59:

So all of our scholars start ...

Speaker 52:

Go ahead.

Speaker 59:

All of our scholars start in the general education classroom. That's where we want them. We want them exposed to the general education curriculum, getting everything that everybody else is getting. Our teachers either go in, or if necessary, we pull them out into a smaller learning environment to offer them that research-based instruction that they need so that they can go back and compete with their peers in the general education classroom. So everything ... we use standard suite screening, we make sure that they participate, again, in every single thing that everybody else participates in. We just make sure that they have the tools to be able to access the general education classroom and all the curriculums.

Speaker 58:

Okay. I also just wanted to notate that there was ...

Speaker 53:

I'm sorry. Can I have this gentleman do his question, and if we ...

Speaker 63:

I'll just defer if we run out of time.

Speaker 53:

Okay, very good. If you defer, then that's fine. Please, go ahead.

Speaker 58:

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Speaker 53:

One more person, and then we've got questions from Facebook.

Speaker 58:

I would like to also notate that there was 36% of teachers that came through your program that had either one year experience or more, and it looked like it was in reference to a high turnaround teacher rate. So that's another thing that I was concerned about, that even though you guys are bringing this,

that you guys have a turnaround rate in teachers.

Speaker 56:

[crosstalk 03:41:47] I thought. I couldn't understand your question. You said you saw something that was 36%?

Speaker 58:

Well, I also spoke with previous teachers. You guys have a high turnaround rate with teachers.

Speaker 56:

No we don't.

Speaker 53:

Turnover rate you mean?

Speaker 58:

Turnover rate. You know what I meant.

Speaker 53:

No we don't ...

Speaker 58:

I'm just trying to speed up because he's rushing me.

Speaker 56:

No, we don't have a high turnover in our teachers. Our teachers are with us a number of years. We have a teacher here that can attest to that. We do have ... one of the schools is only five years old and the other one is 15 years old. Again, the people that are sitting right here in front of you have been people that have been with the school for a number of years. That 36% is very high.

Speaker 51:

And also keep in mind that when we were given the ... provided the opportunity to go into GLA Southwest, the school district of Philadelphia, we had to have all of the teachers to leave. We had to hire a full new staff of 70 people in one year. And because of that ... so I'm not sure where those numbers are coming from, but some of that could come from us needing to rehire based upon the coming into a new school.

Speaker 53:

I have a question from Facebook here or from Zoom. Who funds the travel activities and how is that different from existing just through Upland district programs?

Speaker 56:

So no, we do a lot of major fundraising for our scholars. We have different programs all year long throughout the year. And so we try our best to get grants and things so that it's a minimum amount of

money that a parent may have to pay. But we also have a lot of activities where the parents can do fundraising as well. But we work very hard because we don't want to leave any child behind because of them not having the money. We have teachers and staff members and family members and partners who actually will give a scholarship to a child if a need be to go on any of our excursions.

Speaker 53:

Okay, we've got three ...

Speaker 58:

You also stated that you had a cultural and social learning based on environment. How do you cultural serve the families within the same atmosphere like communities like Philadelphia you guys are in with children like here in Chester that faces or have faced trauma? Because that's what we're struggling with behind our curriculum.

Speaker 56:

The trauma?

Speaker 53:

Before you respond, so there's also ...

Speaker 56:

Mr. [inaudible 03:44:12]?

Speaker 53:

This will be the last question. There's also a question from online on the program for emotional support. So maybe you want to combine all of that.

Speaker 60:

Okay. So I want you to know that we have mental health programs. We have social workers. I am the family life coordinator. I go in and talk with parents, talk with students. I've helped parents organize student roles. We love on our babies immensely, whatever they need. I've tapped into programs to help get them what they need. So we do not leave them just exposed to hurt and pain. As you know, right now in Philadelphia, the murder rate is just off the chain and we have not gone on hit as a school with that. And so we are definitely just right there with our parents. We've called them. We've talked to them. We visit our children. We have a grieving program that we use as well. We order grieving books, whatever it is that we need in order to help these babies get through that process and to help our parents, because if my parents are not healthy, I can't get my babies to be healthy. So whatever I need to help my parents get to that point, we do that.

Speaker 56:

We also have several ... a partnership with a social worker group, and she actually lives in this area and she is in charge of our social worker. So we have at least six to eight social workers that work within our schools and also have been doing trauma activities on zoom and with the children. And she has been looking at ... and there's someone at Widener that she knows so that we can also have some social

workers here. And I know Stetser has a social worker program as well, but we are ... you got a healthy mind, healthy body. All of this has got to come together so the children can learn. We have got to give them the tools they need so that they can [inaudible 03:46:23] of their lives so that they can be the citizens that they want to be in the future.

Speaker 52:

And you can't support trauma from a distance. You have to be in the mix. You have to be in the ... if you're serving in New York, you have to be in the city. If you serve in Philadelphia, you have to be in the city. You serve at a Chester, you have to be in the mix where the people are and the concerns are, because life is very real.

Speaker 52:

And everything can't be scripted out. For instance, when the murder of George Floyd occurred, that following day, we had school. Well, it would have been shame on us to just get on and do business as usual when the hood is hurting right now, when black families and brown families all throughout the country are experiencing that pain of seeing this play out over and over and over again. So as a culturally responsive educator, do you go and teach the lesson or do you stop and make sure you have everybody on the line to ask parents and families, like my brother said, "How are you feeling? How is this affecting you? And what does that look like when you have to wake up and look out your window and see the army reserve occupying your block because the neighborhood is in a complete uproar?"

Speaker 52:

It has to be addressed in real time. And it has to be addressed physically present. When you talk about all the stuff that's been going on in Philadelphia, all the protests and the marching and being physically present. We weren't in the comfort of our own homes when you talk about the marches down 52nd street. Ms. Fuller's there, I'm there, countless staff are there. When you talk about community feeding, we're out there doing the work and getting our feet in the hands on the streets of our communities that we serve. Because otherwise, you can't identify with my trauma if you are free to come around.

Speaker 53:

All right. Well, thank you ...

Speaker 58:

I would like to thank Global Leadership ...

Speaker 53:

I'm sorry. We have ... [crosstalk 03:48:22].

Speaker 56:

Can I just say one more thing?

Speaker 58:

Ma'am, can I just finish off? Because I'm done with my questions. [crosstalk 03:48:27] I honestly just want to thank Global Leadership for coming, because I can feel the energy of you guys wanting to help.

The only reason why I'm asking the questions that I'm asking is to show you guys that it's nothing in difference, that we are going through the same things within our community and our schools and our test scores. So we need to look beyond the schools, but more in our education system.

Speaker 58:

So I'm just asking our task force over there to be able to look into our education system and fixing the problems. And I'm not mad at you guys cause you were invited here. So I just want to thank you for coming, being able to present yourself. I do feel the energy. I do believe you guys do want better for the students, but I just want you to know that somewhere in between this cycle chain, there's something that is wrong within our system. That's all I'm trying to say. [crosstalk 03:49:19].

Speaker 52:

We thank you. We appreciate you.

Speaker 53:

Thank you, Global Leadership. We're going to take five minutes and switch over. Chester Community Charter School is up next. [crosstalk 03:49:44].

Speaker 53:

(silence)

Penny Burrall:

Hi, Louise.

Speaker 64:

Hi [crosstalk 03:53:10] Are you muted?

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

Okay. Good evening, good evening, good evening. Thank you for hanging in there. It's been a long evening. So thank you for remaining and being a part of this process. It's tough times now, very tough times, but we are surviving and we are getting through.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

Before I get started, my name is Dr. David E. Clark, Jr. I'm the proud CEO of Chester Community Charter School. I've been there since 2003. Accompanying me is our executive director of curriculum, instruction and assessment. She's joined us last spring and she is responsible for presenting our CEM program, and she'll talk more about that.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

But before I get started, I just want to make a couple of comments, especially about Chester High. I understand where the community is coming from, and what looks to appear to be a loss. And I understand that. And I also understand the pride in this community. You see, I've been up here for a while. I'm part of this community. My child, my grandchild, whom I love dearly who's like my son now because I'm raising him. I'm back at it again. But he goes to my school. He goes to Chester Community

Charter School because I believe in it. I'm a parent. And I truly believe that parents have a choice. And that's my choice. I'm a taxpayer, and I believe we have a choice as a parent.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

But no one in my organization intends to destroy or take away the district itself because there's a lot of pride in this community. I've been up here now for a long time, and I feel like I'm part of the community now. I'm not ... I moved to this area.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

There's something that I've come to understand and appreciate about Chester, and this is my experience. The people in Chester, the community people in Chester, they have a bond. They really do. They have a bond, and can't nobody from outside come and talk about it. You follow me? You all can be hard on each other, but can't nobody be hard on you because you had this ... it's almost like family. It's almost like everybody's extended family of somebody's, and so it's tight. It's very tight.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

And I understand that and I appreciate that, and that's a strip that this community has, and I'm not here to disrupt that. There's has a lot of pride, and I hear it. And I hear the thing about Chester High and we are going to lose a district and we're going to lose students. Well, no, that's not going to happen. We're going to partner. But also keep in mind that a parent, a tax-paying parent, they really have a right to send their child where they want to if they have the ability to do that. I don't own them. We don't own them. The school district doesn't own them. I don't. My school doesn't. They, parents, have a right to choose. I can't tell them what to do. I can't tell them where to go.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

But we're presenting something that I think will help the district get out of the financial bind that they're in, because really, I don't think we'd be here if it wasn't for the finances. So when there's comparison about test scores and PSSA, which I think is the worst thing in the world ... and I'll get to that later, but I think it's the worst thing in the world, especially for some of our children, because it's not for them.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

But I want to share this one thing with you. I used to work in this building. And when I came to this building from Delaware by choice, the first thing I came here, I was in ... they used to have grade level principals. Say, you were like a principal of a grade, and then they had an overall principal. And I was a principal of the ninth grade.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

It was the year 2000, they called it [inaudible 04:00:11]. And that was Ramirez Jamir's year, his class. And the first thing that I did when I came up here, you know those little cement flowerpots that are right in front of the school? You know just what I'm talking about? You know, the ones, right? The first thing I did when I came up was put plants in them, plant flowers in those pots, because you know why? Because pride means something. And you define the area, it means something. And I'm getting to if we as an organization can work together with the school district and partner with the school district and provide you with two beautiful looking schools, help you get out of the financial bind that you're in now

... and it's real. It's real. If it were not for that, I would not be here. And I believe ... I could be wrong, but I believe it's more about finances than anything. So nobody's saying that the curriculum that you guys are failing, we just want to introduce something and make it better. That's all.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

Okay. Now, we talked about purchasing. Well, we're going to talk about purchasing your two oldest buildings. In that purchase, we will convert them to SEM schools, and Mrs. Rice will talk about that later. And not only will we purchase the buildings, so you make a profit, however, then we were going to build two brand new buildings, and you see a rendering right there. Well, you see it there.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

And some person can say, "Well, that doesn't mean a thing because you build new buildings. It's just something new." Well, it does mean something. It does mean something for our children to walk into something that's new. And just because it's new doesn't make it work, don't get me wrong, because you have a brand new anything, and it doesn't work. But if they're walking into something that's new, imagine what they see and imagine how they going to feel. And that means something. [crosstalk 04:02:33]

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

I think we're supposed to hold the questions, but I might answer that. [crosstalk 04:02:36] All right. Okay, with this proposal, we're going to save the district millions of dollars. And that's part of the reason, again, why we're here. Now, there'll be an opportunity ... that number 800, it seems to scare people. 800 kids. "We're going to lose the district." No, you won't. You will not lose the district, and I'm going to go back to parents having a right. They have a right.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

We could come up with a program and they say, "I don't want any parts of that mess." Oh, that's what they could say. They could say that. They don't have to come to us. It's by choice, and that's the law. And I think it's a fair law. We intend to build two new schools, one the Main Street Academy for Entrepreneurship, and also the Performing and Visual Arts Academy, the one that's one 9th Street, used to be the old high school. I was in that building as a principal when they had an academy there. We had some really good students come out of there. [crosstalk 00:33:48] That is a ... [inaudible 04:03:53]

Speaker 53:

Folks, please, let the presentation go, and then we'll be on time for the [inaudible 04:04:03] response, okay? Thank you.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:

Again, let me go back to the financial challenges. And at this point I'm going to call in, if I may ... because we had a little technical difficulty here, [Vonga Reagan 04:04:20], who will explain the financial challenges that we are currently experiencing. Let me try to keep him on speaker.

Vonga Reagan:

Dave?

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:  
Yes. You're on.

Vonga Reagan:  
Okay.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:  
On the financier challenges slide.

Vonga Reagan:  
So as it relates to the finances, financial issues, the slide that you have is ... not this slide that's part of my presentation.

Dr. David E. Clark, Jr.:  
Okay.

Speaker 65:  
... that's part of my presentation.

Dr. Clark:  
There you go.

Speaker 65:  
Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Clark:  
Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 65:  
So the proposal would have us have the Chester Community Charter School purchase the two buildings that Dave has outlined, the main street building and the school of the arts building, which purchase price would be the greater of \$2 million or the appraised value. So if the schools appraised that by example, 4 million or \$5 million, that would be the purchase price. We would, in addition to that, provide state-of-the-art technology, insofar as every student would be provided with a Chromebook, and every classroom would be a smart classroom with smart TVs. The next slide.

Speaker 65:  
So far, and up to this point, the Community Charter School has been involved with and facilitated the construction of over 500,000 square feet of school buildings since 2001. They include 10 classroom buildings, which includes the Ethel Waters Center for the Arts, three gymnasiums, head start facilities. And all the facilities are climate controlled, free of asbestos, free of lead paint, and have all life safety features, including but not limited to facilities that accommodate the handicap. All of them are located in the three municipalities which make up the Chester Upland School District. To give you an example of

what it costs to build the school today, there are a number of schools in the local area that have been built, 34 million plus for an elementary school in the Haverford School District, 86.5 million for Lower Merion Middle School, 136 million for Springfield High School, and over 30 million for the Chester School of the Arts. So as you can imagine, for us to construct two schools will probably be price tag of in excess of \$60 million.

Speaker 65:

In addition to the 2 million plus that we're going to pay the district upfront, there'll be a significant annual tuition savings to the school district, based on the rate that we will charge the district per student, which is significantly less than the state's PDE-363 rate, resulting in a savings to the district just on the 2,400 plus students that we have now from Chester of over \$5 million a year. So if you look at the breakdown of those savings, you can see from your own information that the district's total revenue is a little over \$134 million. And according to your budget, you paid the charter schools a little less than \$61 million, which leaves the charter schools with \$17,000 per student and leaves the district with \$73 billion to spend on your 2,621 students, which leaves you to spend on your kids \$27,984. This clearly shows that the misrepresentations that have been made regarding the district losing money if they have charter schools in the district is incorrect. In fact, the district gets 11,000 a student more than the charter schools.

Speaker 65:

If you flip to the next page. In addition to which, the district will save even more money if any of the students in the two buildings become charter school students, an amount which would equal up to an additional \$5,348 per student, bringing the dollars per student for the school district students to \$33,332 per student that you'll have available to spend on your kids.

Speaker 65:

Next chart. The rates that we had proposed are on this chart, and the chart is up there so that you can see how the rate compares with our peer schools, the district, and the 14 other schools in Delaware county. So as you can see on the far right, the current charter school rate of the Chester Upland School District in the PDE-363 is \$42,599. We would propose a rate of \$30,500, making the Chester Community Charter School rate among the lowest in Delaware County. As it relates to the regular ed rate... Can you please leave that chart up.

Dr. Clark:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Let me turn it back.

Speaker 65:

No, the next one. As it relates to the regular ed rate, we would propose a rate of \$11,500 per student, making it the second lowest rate in all of Delaware County. The only lower rate would be Upper Darby School District. So in summary, I just want to make three final points, that our proposal is the only proposal which would save the district significant amounts of money because we're significantly lowering the district's rate. Our proposal is the only one that would give the district brand new schools. And we are the only applicant who's been in Chester since 1998, for the last 23 years. Thank you.

Dr. Clark:

Thank you. Before I go onto the next chart and introduce Ms. Rice, I want to ask you a question. And I'm not asking for an answer, but I just want you to think about it. What has to happen here is something completely different, a paradigm shift. Something major has to happen. We can not continue to do the same things we've been doing over and over again. I've been here long enough to see people come in and I've experienced what happened. What if, and there's reluctance there, because this is hard to believe, but what if it is true? Don't answer it. Please, just think about it. What if this is accurate and valid data?

Dr. Clark:

The other thing is school districts are always trying to build new buildings and build. That's something that they like to do, they want to do, they try to do. They float [inaudible 04:13:40] and all kinds... Just to get a new facility. So it doesn't mean that there's history being lost, but there's a thing that's new. Sometimes new is good. Just think about it. That's all I want you to do. Just think about it. At this time, I'm going to introduce Ms. Rice who's going to talk about the SEM program.

Jamilla Rice:

[inaudible 04:14:10].

Dr. Clark:

[inaudible 04:14:14].

Jamilla Rice:

Good evening, everyone. I would like to start off by saying thank you for giving us your time and thank you for remaining for the final presentation. My name is Jamilla Rice and I am the executive director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment at Chester Community Charter School. I just started at the school in April of 2020. And before I came to Chester Community Charter School, I lived and worked in my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I worked at a charter school first, and then I worked for the district high school and all of schools as a social studies supervisor of curriculum. Like you all, I was also in a position where I saw outside folks come into our district as leadership within the district. And it was not a good transition, what happened with us in that city.

Jamilla Rice:

And part of the reason why is because when the new folks came in, they did not come in positioning themselves as learners, and they did not come in valuing the culture that existed where they were currently employed. And as Dr. Clark has said, we have a commitment here in Chester, and we know that there is nothing that can be done in order to help our scholars if we don't learn about the community and learn about the culture and infuse that into whatever learning takes place within the school.

Jamilla Rice:

So just to let you know, a little bit about the SEM model. So as Dr. Clark said, we're proposing to look at the two schools, the school for the arts, as well as the entrepreneurship school. But the model that we're going to use in both of them is the SEM model, which is the school-wide enrichment model. If we

look at that, it is a teaching theory, it is not a curriculum. And it's a theory that's based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms. Some originated as a gifted and talented model, but they want to build, we're going to build a talent, find talent within our scholars. And that's the goal, to create those multiple paths with varying entry points no matter where our scholars are, find out what their interests are and then use those interests and those passions in order to develop the whole child.

Jamilla Rice:

So how does SEM work within a school? If you see with the SEM model, we have the total talent portfolio. And what that is, it's just a combination of a lot of data that we get based on testing our scholars in multiple ways to see where their interests are. So it systematically gathers reports and uses information about students' abilities, their interests and learning preferences, learning styles. The other component is the curriculum modification techniques. So sometimes when we're teaching, especially with newer, more novice teachers, they like to follow the textbook or follow whatever your particular program might be to the letter. And what we're saying is that should not happen. What should happen is a tailoring of the delivery of instruction based on the particular students that are in front of you. What did they need? Nothing, no program is going to know that. The only person who wouldn't know that at that moment would be the child and would also be that teacher, and of course, the parents as well.

Jamilla Rice:

The other component is enrichment learning and teaching. So through the enrichment model, we have scholars take an inquiry stance to say, "What do people with an interest in this particular area do?" So we want to connect what they're learning to real-world situations and authentic experiences and authentic projects that they would be developing. They would need to know, "What knowledge do I have to have in order to be successful in this particular career or field? And in what ways can the products or services that I'm creating have an impact on audiences?"

Jamilla Rice:

When we think about SEM, since we are looking at what the individual student is interested in, that does equal equity. And when we think about equity, and we think about culturally responsive education and culturally responsive pedagogy, what we're looking at is building scholars' particular skills, so that in any situation that they're in, they will know how to approach that learning situation and be able to take the skills and their toolbox that they developed in order to meet those needs. So the SEM component of this relates to a three part model. The first is explore, and then they learn, and then they investigate. And exploration starts with that inquiry stance, having questions about whatever the topic might be and the teacher honoring all of those questions that our scholars might have, and exploring. The next is after we explore, we want to do some research to investigate and learn more about that. And then after you've done the research, you're taking informed action to see, "How can I apply this to a real-world problem or situation?"

Jamilla Rice:

The ways that young children assemble and reassemble pieces of information forecast the ways that adults put together ideas. So if we are working with our scholars, working with our children from a very young age, to honor their inquiry, to develop and support that inquiry stance, then they'll be able to

follow their passions through what we develop along with them.

Jamilla Rice:

If we're looking at the two separate buildings, the main street academy for entrepreneurship at Chester Community Charter School, but bringing that career and education and workforce standards that are usually just treated in schools as a compliance measure, to finish a couple of lessons per year, that are required by the state. And we want to use that as the heart of the program in order to see how we can involve our scholars and true career exploration within the core content areas. Career exploration and preparation, career acquisition, career retention, and entrepreneurship are those four components. At the performing and visual arts academy, it would bring the National Core Arts Standards to the forefront, and scholars would work through creating, performing, presenting, and producing, along with responding to different arts that they're exposed to, and then connecting that in order to create their particular projects. So thank you very much for your time.

Dr. Clark:

Okay, I got a two minute video, so I'm going to make it [inaudible 04:23:04]. It's been a long evening, so thank you. I'm going to talk about special education briefly, and then I have a two minute video to show you. And the lady that was speaking talked about our school, and I'm proud to say that was one of our children. So everybody remembers, some people remember the Duane B situation. I was here then had to go through that as well. It was a tough situation and we never, ever want to be back in that situation again. Special education is a special kind of thing, and you have to be very, very organized in order to make it work. And we've been able to do that. I am currently one of the people who actually audits other special ed programs. So I've taken that experience and developed a model, an exemplar, if you will, of a special ed program. Our special ed program is unique and it's extremely orderly, organized, and very successful.

Dr. Clark:

One of the things that we've done, and I know that we have behavioral challenges in our schools. We have some serious behavioral challenges in our schools, if we're honest about it. And so what we've done is we've developed a program, and I'm really proud about it, called TAAS, Team's Approach to Achieving Academic Success. We started off with eight children in this particular class. Now we have up to 10 and we have little over 100 students participating in this program. And then really good thing about this program is they do not have to go into an approved private placement, which costs us a lot of money, costs the district a lot of money. But we're servicing them in-house, in-school, and they're extremely successful. Suspension rates go down. They're making progress, in that we can document. But keep in mind, we didn't have much time to present a lot of information to you.

Dr. Clark:

We have a special ed executive director and we also have a compliance director. Now, we have a person who actually has a team of people on staff who actually read IEPs, go over them. They go over the psyche [inaudible 04:25:21]. They go over the [inaudible 04:25:22]. They go over everything that's involved in the paperwork process to ensure that it's a quality document. And also keep in mind that you can have a great program, but if it's not documented, it never happened. And one of the things in terms of showing progress for our special education students, IEP drives the progress, progress

monitoring. We have a sophisticated progress monitoring process. All of our IEPs are reviewed for progress, the student progress. Okay.

Dr. Clark:

All right, I'm going to pretty much have to shut it down now, but we have, real quickly, we service all categories of special education. Whether it's autism, whether it's emotional support, whether it's a resource room, we cover everything. And as a charter school, we are committed to and have to take in, if we have space, no matter what you're disability is, we have to accept you and enroll you. And I just want to make that a point. Okay.

Dr. Clark:

I'm extremely, extremely excited. What has been taking place here is simply remarkable. The fact this could be done under these circumstances is just unbelievable. And when you go into the building and you see what has taken place, you're going to be floored.

Churon Martin:

[inaudible 04:26:57], Chester Community Charter School was a really good experience for me. I think something to always talk about with some of my colleagues now that I've graduated college is the first time I was able to read a recreational book was in class, in sixth grade. Not the first time, but the first time I read a book without pictures, and I feel like that was the start of my own relationship with education, a self-education, [inaudible 04:27:24] that engage new ways to see school in a lens beyond the academic classroom. That's what started me to understand, our possibilities are limitless.

Erick Goldsmith:

Chester Community Charter School certainly helped prepare me for high school, because one of the things that I learned is how much the teachers and the faculty are actually trying to do their best to put you in the space to get the tools you need to go forward. And those tools included my time in the different academic areas as well.

Tiara Harris:

Attending Chester Community Charter School, I would say, was a great experience for me. I will say that Charter helped me grow into the scholar that I am today. Starting in fifth grade, I was picked to join the enrichment program. And that experience definitely helped me soar as a scholar. The curriculum was definitely challenging for me, but helped pave the way in order to attend Tattnell for high school and also North Carolina State for college.

Dr. Clark:

We are the biggest elementary charters school in Pennsylvania. We've been so successful and we have so many Chester students. Now, we're part of the Chester community.

Speaker 66:

Thank you. Dr. Clark. Questions for Chester Community Charter School. You'll come to the... Oh boy. All right. So again, folks, and thank you all, seriously, for your patience tonight, for your grace tonight. This is not easy to do. So all I'm going to ask is if you'll please just give you a question. And because we've got

so many speakers, I'm sure we'll have a lot of online questions, we'll try to move through everybody, makes sure everybody's gets their voice in. Please, ma'am, if begin.

Inaja Harmon:

Hello, my name is Inaja Harmon. I am a graduate of stem academy at Shoalwater, and I work at Main Street Elementary School. So in the district right now, there are three elementary schools, there's [Stessor 04:30:07], which is taken over by Weiner, and now there's Main Street and [Kusa 04:30:11]. At the beginning of your presentation, you said the parents have a choice. Once we are charter-ized, where's the choice? There's already charter schools. There will be no more elementary schools for the public. Where's the parent's choice?

Speaker 66:

Just respond to the mic, yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Clark:

All right. So the question is if they choose not to come to our school, would they be able to stay or go? Where would they go?

Inaja Harmon:

Say you are the chosen school that we go with. Once you take over, there's no more choice for the parents because it's not Main Street Elementary at Chester Upland. It's not Chester Charter School of the Arts at Chester Upland. It's charter. There's no more choice for the parents. So where does their choice go once the takeover happens?

Dr. Clark:

Okay. That's a good question. Yeah, it is. All right. We're proposing these schools not necessarily closing. Parents have a choice. I don't know the capacity of the school just yet. Let me finish. I don't know the capacity of school district, but I'm sure they have space for additional kids. It's no way, from my perspective looking in, that they are fully capacity for some of the fact that we have a number of students already. So you could actually get some of those students back in there. I have gotten students that have come back, and there's a recruitment process trying to get students back from the charter school as we speak. I don't think that the school district is at full capacity. You're not going to answer that?

Inaja Harmon:

That's not necessarily the point.

Dr. Clark:

Well, I thought your point was that if the charter school, if we had two schools, and that the parents would have nowhere else to go, so they would have to come to us.

Inaja Harmon:

Yeah. That's not a choice. They have to go there. I have a little brother who goes to Kusa. And once he graduates Kusa, I want him to go to Toby Farms. I don't want him to go to charter. But once charter

takes over there, they don't have nowhere to go. My niece, she goes to Main Street. It won't be Main Street Chester Upland. It will be Main Street charter. And once charter takes over, there will be no more Chester Upland. We have a choice now, Chester Upland or charter. Where is the choice after you take over?

Dr. Clark:

We're only talking about the two schools. You're not talking about the Toby Farms. We're not talking about Stetson. We're not talking-

Inaja Harmon:

My niece goes to Main Street. That's the school you want to take over. Once you take over, how do I have a choice to keep her at Chester Upland? Main Street got taken over by charter.

Speaker 66:

All right. All right. Honestly, your point's well taken. And remember, there's no decision's been made. I understand what you're getting at. I want to get other folks in.

Inaja Harmon:

Okay. I have one more question, then I'll bounce.

Speaker 66:

Okay. Can you pose that question please? Thanks.

Inaja Harmon:

We all know Chester Charter is an at-will school, and we have a whole crew of dedicated veteran teachers. My question is, once you take over, if you do take over, where does that leave the teachers that's already here? If you choose to keep them, will they take a pay cut?

Dr. Clark:

That's a good question. Any teachers in here? Raise your hand, please. Listen, we're not an act-will... Pennsylvania is an at-will state. Let me make that clear. So no school. Pennsylvania's an at-will state. The other thing is we do not intend to cut anybody's pay, period. And so I heard the other applicants and they weren't clear on that. They weren't clear on whether they will keep the teachers or not. Our intent is to keep the teachers. Okay. Well... Anyway. All right.

Speaker 66:

All right?

Dr. Clark:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Speaker 66:

We'll take a question. Yes. That's a sign up. Okay. I guess that's a statement, not a question. Do you have a question please?

Speaker 67:

The schools, so we don't have to go into that. I would have appreciated, Dr. Clark, if you would have presented some charts to show the progress that your schools have been making over the years and compare them to the schools that you are proposing to oversee. You by no way and in no way, no means over the years have come close to educating our children better than we do. And so we would have appreciated that. One quick question though. Someone had asked Dr. Nunery if we could have the charts that people have shown tonight presented to the community, when the district posted on the website the summaries from the bidders. They by no means had the information that we have tonight. And Chester does matter. And so when we don't get that information, it makes us feel like we don't matter. And so I'm asking the question, and I'm hoping the answer is yes, that we will be given the charts that was-

Speaker 66:

Yes, yes. You will be.

Speaker 67:

Thank you so very much for that.

Dr. Clark:

Can I respond?

Speaker 66:

Go ahead.

Speaker 67:

Are you going to take away from my time, Dr. Clark, by answering?

Speaker 66:

No, no. I'm moderating the time. Just hold on. I didn't know you wanted to respond, so I will come back to you. Okay? Thank you. Go ahead.

Dr. Clark:

In no way have I said that we were better than Chester Upland School District. No way. In fact, my beginning statements talked about the financial struggles and what this RFP, a lot of it is about. I've never said that. Never. All I said was, and I quote myself. I said, "We want to make things better." And doesn't anybody and everybody? So when you say... I never criticized Chester Upland School District teachers. Never. And I never would.

Speaker 67:

Sir, my point is that the data shows that none of the bidders do as good or better job in educating our children. As I understand, the rubrics and what we were looking for in this process to save money and to find people who could educate our children as well or better. That's the point that I'm trying to emphasize. So let me move on to my other point. Question, we will not be enamored, excited by shiny.

There have been a number of cultures, groups of people across the planet who have been impressed when other folks come in with something shiny and lose their land, their heritage. We will not be confused by that. And so my question is, why have you not done some of these wonderful things with your own prefab buildings there to turn them into a state of the art facilities, where you were doing these wonderful things with your children, and then demonstrate that solidly before you would offer that to our school district or our four buildings here? The other thing I want to say too, and I'm jumping all over the place-

Speaker 66:

Yeah. Last one so we can make sure we get everybody in place. Last one, please.

Speaker 67:

I want you to know-

Speaker 66:

We have other people speaking, okay? Thank you.

Speaker 67:

May I?

Speaker 66:

Yes, please.

Speaker 67:

I do know that we spend \$3 million every month during the school year to your school, sir. The checks are listed in the back of our agenda. And so somehow I know that when I hear you talk about what you're going to do for us, somewhere in my little mind, I'm thinking that you are taking the money that we give you to do whatever you're going to do for us. And somehow now, that doesn't sit right with me.

Dr. Clark:

The unfortunate thing here, I'm not able to answer your questions.

Speaker 67:

I didn't expect, sir.

Dr. Clark:

I want to.

Speaker 67:

I just would have wanted your data that Dr. Bongo and Gary presented to us to be clearer. But if he had given it to us ahead of time, we would have been able to look at some of that and analyze it and maybe respond to it a little differently tonight. So I want to say to the board that is here, the task force, to some of us, this looks like this is a done deal. I just need to put that honestly out there for you.

Dr. Clark:

It's not, ma'am. It really isn't.

Speaker 67:

That's what I expect you to say. What I-

Dr. Clark:

No, I'm telling you the truth. It's not.

Speaker 67:

I believe you were telling me the truth from your perspective. What I want you to hear, sir, is the community's response to what they're seeing. Now, I don't want anybody on the task force to not know. That this is why we had a meeting tonight. Our receiver allowed us the opportunity, and God bless us so, to give us the opportunity to talk some more. I appreciate that. But I want you to hear, sir, what we're saying. And so when all of these negotiations are being-

Speaker 68:

What we're saying and so when all of these negotiations are being done and considerations, I want you all to realize that. And the other thing I want to say to our receiver is that we have had receiver after receiver leave us worse off than we were when they came. They had divested us of our land. I have stood at receivers meetings and begged them not to sell our land and they patted me on the head and sent me on my way and sold our land anyway. So I want to put that on the record and thank you, Dr. Clark for presenting. However, I really would advise you, listen to me giving you advice, yes I'll do better, to do some of those things then with your own student body and do not shed your students off to us because you've done that every year in October when your students are misbehaving you send them to us. That we know about.

Speaker 69:

Right, a very quick response.

Speaker 70:

Okay. One quick response, right? You saw the video of a new school that we just recently built. And the other thing is, you said you speak for the community, the community, the community. We have at least 2000 families whose parents have decided to send their children to us. They've spoken. All right? They have spoken. I mean, I get it. I understand, but you don't lose history if you got it. You don't lose history based on a building, you don't. What about all these other school districts that build new buildings? I just don't-

Speaker 68:

Sir, you don't understand architecture.

Speaker 69:

Okay. All right. Thank you. Please. Can you just-

Speaker 71:

I'm Sheena [inaudible 04:41:41]. I'm sorry.

Speaker 69:

Yeah, thanks.

Speaker 71:

Well in school we talk with our masks.

Speaker 69:

I understand, I know.

Speaker 71:

But anyway, I'm Sheena Hudnall and again, I'm a teacher here in the community. I live here and as I stated before, I graduated from this particular building, but my parents graduated from the old Chester high school. And when you say you don't lose history, that's why we have a historical society in the country so that we can preserve buildings. We don't go in and just knock every building down because then there would be so many monuments missing in this world today. So my question to you, Dr. Clark is, the other two charter schools that walked through here this evening, they didn't come in and say they wanted to purchase the building and knock it down, they said they wanted to come in and work within the building and to revitalize the inside, not tear down the outside because you know what God gave us this body. This is our outside. The doctor works on the inside and he helps me inside get better. So I just want to ask, why can't you work with inside and let that outside get better as time goes on.

Speaker 71:

That's my first thing, because I have a passionate feel about that.

Speaker 70:

Can I answer it?

Speaker 71:

No. You can't answer it.

Speaker 70:

I can't?

Speaker 71:

You can't. Not yet because I got three minutes. My next one is for the buildings, I teach in a classroom. My classroom is much larger than what you pictured there. Now it might be a little old. Yeah I got a leak here, but you know what? This weary building, it gets better with time and just fix it here and tweak it there. Don't tear it down because that's not a partnership. A partnership is working together one and the other.

Speaker 71:

We may be small in numbers in this room. We may be small in numbers on that Facebook and on that Zoom. But guess what? We are strong. We are a strong community and yes, I know you've got half of our children, but that other half, we count. And being a teacher here, this bothers me that yes, every year we get a few children come back and I don't care that they come or that they go, as long as they're being educated, that's all my business is about but it's some of the comments for why they came back. That's my concern. There's comments about special education concerns. There's comments about just the atmosphere, the people don't know us because the staff members are not from the community. I know you have been around forever. You and I have worked together. I ain't mad at you, it's a business, but I want you to know that the inside of what Chester Upland makes, does still make Chester.

Speaker 69:

Okay, thank you.

Speaker 70:

Real quick. In the very beginning, I should have said this, but I didn't, this is a partnership and a lot of these things are negotiable. They are. And I know you don't want to hear that. Some of you don't want to hear it, but some of these things are negotiable. [inaudible 04:44:47]. I get that. I get that, but I'm not lying to you.

Speaker 69:

We have another question and I'm going to read a couple of questions from online. Please.

Speaker 72:

Good evening. I'm a retired teacher from the district. I've also lived in the district and pay taxes. I have a question. If you're awarded the contract for the two schools that you want to take over, are all of the spaces in those buildings going to be for Chester and Upland residents, as well as a Chester township, or are you going to continue to bring in students from Philadelphia that take away spaces from our students?

Speaker 70:

Okay. You want me to answer? Okay. Charter school law and our charter mandates that we take children in the community. They have priority. The children in Chester have priority. Period. And their siblings have priority.

Speaker 72:

So why is it that I know people who live in the community have tried to get their children into your program but couldn't?

Speaker 70:

You know what? I'm going to give you my email, just to anybody out there. You want to email me, you got questions, please feel to do it. It's real simple. [Dclark@chestercommunitycharter.org](mailto:Dclark@chestercommunitycharter.org), [dclark@chestercommunitycharter.org](mailto:dclark@chestercommunitycharter.org). And I would be more than happy to answer some additional questions and also meet with you. That's how serious I am about this. I have no problem doing that.

Anybody.

Speaker 72:

Okay, I just want to make sure that our children in this community are educated.

Speaker 70:

Absolutely. Absolutely. They are priority.

Speaker 72:

Thank you, sir.

Speaker 70:

Thank you.

Speaker 69:

A couple of questions before I come to you and then you, I'm sorry. Plans for teachers compensation and benefits. And there was also a question about teacher retention rate. So what would your plans be for teacher compensation and benefits and then also what is your retention rate of teachers?

Speaker 70:

Okay. Our retention rate is getting better and better and better each year. Now we're in the 90 something percentile at maintaining our teachers. And I'm going to be honest with you, a lot of teachers, they come to charter schools in an urban area and they're able to satisfy their loans, they get good training and they leave sometimes. And that's what they do, but we've been able to get better and better and better each year. And that's the truth. And some of these school districts in the surrounding areas, we train our teachers well. We have extensive staff development. And so we even have a program, a leadership program designed for teachers to go through our program who want to be administrators, who want to be principals, assistant principals. We have that available. We have tuition reimbursement. Our compensation will be the same.

Speaker 69:

Yes ma'am, please.

Speaker 73:

Hello. My name is Christina Oody. I teach at Stem Academy and I have taught at Chester Community Charter School. I [inaudible 04:47:48]. So one thing that I do agree with you is that this is about money. The businesses and corporations that are here tonight is because education is lucrative business. So all of you, I think, spoke of not dismantling our public schools yet all spoke of quote unquote, "Serving the communities that need it most". So you all basically agree that what you do is racialized dismantling of public schools. So you taking public schools, as other people here said, is not giving parents a choice. It's stealing the hub of their community.

Speaker 73:

Now I was trying to mess with that thing while the last person was asking a question. So I apologize if I'm

repeating the same question, but since these charter schools, and this is all of you, but Chester Community Charter School, particularly because I'm familiar with you since you are up for possibly taking over two of the elementary schools, will you also be bringing in students from, I think, what is it, 14 other districts into the Chester community? Because that's what the other charter schools are run like. You have students from Penn-Delco, Philadelphia, Darby, all over the place. So are you bringing all those districts into this community?

Speaker 69:

Okay. All right. Well, I answered that question.

Speaker 73:

Okay so you answered her by telling [crosstalk 04:49:19].

Speaker 69:

No, I answered that question. And something else I want to answer.

Speaker 73:

I asked the same question. I apologize for that.

Speaker 69:

And something else I want to answer as far as stealing children, we don't own them. They're not... They're kind of like property. Again, I choose to send my child to a charter school, to Chester Community Charter School. Right? I don't think that I'm stealing from someone. I think as a parent, I have a right to do that. So this thing about stealing and taking, that's a misnomer. That's a misconception. It's not like that. The other thing is, charter schools are public schools. We are under scrutiny.

Speaker 73:

You're a for-profit school.

Speaker 69:

And-

Speaker 73:

You're for profit.

Speaker 69:

No. The school is not for profit. A school is not for profit. It's a 501(c)(3). We are not for profit. You know what? I do want to continue. I want to talk to some people.

Speaker 69:

If I have to do it individually, I'll do it. But there's a misconception out here and number one is we've got to service our children, we've got to provide them with the best thing that we possibly can. Right? And I'm not saying that the district is bad. I'm not saying that. I'm saying we could work together. We have to do something that's major. We have to do something that's different. You've mentioned it Ms Hutton.

Now I've been through it. I've been through it before some people in this room now don't even know what I'm talking about. We can't continue to bring somebody else in. I'm not an outsider. I've paid my dues and we can't continue to bring people in here because it's shiny. The only thing we're talking about is new schools. And we can talk about that, but it's turned into something shiny.

Speaker 73:

I'm sorry if I repeated that question. I do have another question.

Speaker 69:

One more question.

Speaker 73:

I have two more questions, but I didn't get my three minutes because Dr. Clark was speaking.

Speaker 70:

I'm sorry. Go ahead. Sorry.

Speaker 73:

Okay. You mentioned doing culturally responsive education. Can you explain to us when that will be implemented? Because in my experience it hasn't been implemented yet.

Speaker 74:

Pardon me? I don't know if this is on or not. Are you referring to our current school buildings or are you referring to the proposals for the two take-over schools?

Speaker 73:

Both.

Speaker 74:

Both. Well, to let you know, I did just arrive here last year and one of the things that we have been working toward is examining the culture of responsive pedagogy that might be present currently in our different curricular materials, as well as the actual written curriculum, along with the proposed pedagogy and instructional practices. So we started to do a book study in relation to that, and that is one of the big pieces of the major work that we will be engaging in at the current Chester Community Charter School.

Speaker 73:

What do you mean book study?

Speaker 74:

Book study related to culturally responsive pedagogy, because we can't expect-

Speaker 73:

Like a [inaudible 04:52:32] study for the students?

Speaker 74:

No, no, no. A book study with the teachers and all staff members, along with the facilitator materials that pertain to a very reputable text. And the title of that text is "Culturally responsive teaching and the brain", and so we are using those.

Speaker 73:

It's one thing to say that and it's another thing to actually teach culturally responsive material.

Speaker 74:

So yeah, teaching culturally responsive-

Speaker 73:

I wasn't permitted to. I wanted to teach "The Watsons Go To Birmingham" and was reprimanded.

Speaker 74:

I can't speak on anything that happened.

Speaker 73:

I know you can't speak on that but that's why I'm asking about culturally responsive, when this will be implemented, if this will be implemented.

Speaker 74:

So it will be implemented and I would like to respond completely to that. So one of the things that was noted within the presentation about some being a component that would lead to equity is because what we would be doing is arming our scholars with the skills and strategies they need to empower themselves as learners and take ownership of their learning through being able to know how to approach learning and thinking. That is at the heart of the text, "Culturally responsive teaching in the brain" which talks about the empowerment of scholars, leading them from being dependent learners, who are only engaged in doing the activity after activity and really thinking clearly about what they want to investigate and how they can engage in those practices.

Speaker 69:

Wait, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. We're going to move to our next speaker. Thank you. We've only got a few more minutes left so we can keep every presenter on time. Give them the same amount of time. You can have time with them afterwards if you'd like, but please state your question. Please.

Speaker 75:

Well, I want to reiterate real fast as a comment, Dr. Clark, when the young lady said about an at-will, I know what she meant, even though we pertain to it as far as the state, this process right here is considered like an at-will. How like when you go to a job, they can fire you without any reason, any explanation. So this whole process that we have going on without a clear detail of what exactly is going on, what happened with funds, what happened between school board members, that's what she's talking about as far as at-will, that you can still do as you please running as a chartered school district.

And I'm saying you guys have your own school district, but still receive public funding. That's what she meant by at-will. So to go onto my question. The first thing is, I know that you stated that you're also an auditor, correct? You're an appointed auditor?

Speaker 70:

We what?

Speaker 75:

You stated that you were an auditor?

Speaker 70:

No. Okay. They call me a peer monitor and I actually, on occasion, go into schools and audit review their special ed programs. That's what I mean by that.

Speaker 75:

Okay. So you're not... okay, so you review the special education programs and that as someone has spoke about children being kicked out that were also from special education, the problem that comes in since literally 2011 I believe, you guys have been audited plenty of times for misappropriations of funds.

Speaker 70:

Ma'am, that is so not true.

Speaker 75:

Child documentation.

Speaker 70:

That is so not true.

Speaker 75:

We've been accumulating more children as in attendance here in our school district than funding rolling over.

Speaker 70:

Okay. That is so not true. Okay but you know what? I will meet with you.

Speaker 75:

Sir. I don't like math, but when it comes down to me sitting down and doing my numbers, I'll do it.

Speaker 70:

Please. I want to meet with you.

Speaker 75:

We have been taking in more children than funding coming in. I'm not blaming you.

Speaker 70:  
I understand that.

Speaker 75:  
But I'm saying we have. And you guys were also audited from it and know that the money was not sent over. That goes into my next thing of how you also made a comment and stated that it may seem like we're losing but we are, because we have also been given a new proposal from the governor, even though nothing has been yet set in stone but part of that proposal is charter reform. And the money that will now be given to the public schools is a \$1.3 billion increase. So we are going to be losing for what we've been fighting for technically. And the funding that you guys will be receiving through the state would actually be less because that's called the fair funding, what we've been missing out on for a long time. That we were owed.

Speaker 75:  
So we will be losing. So everything that everybody's up in here fighting for, for the longest, for resources, for more programs, it's like it's just going to roll over right in your hands. And we've been working with nothing but the muscle. So, that's the problem that everyone is trying to be in here saying to you right now. And again, I'm going to say this for the record, you were invited here, so nothing you can do unless you're allowed. So I just want you to understand that. Thank you, Dr. Leonard, you don't have to cut me. Thank you.

Speaker 69:  
No I'm not. I just see three people behind you and I appreciate you. I really do. Please. We've got three more questions, then we'll end up here and Dr. Clark will be around to answer any questions after the session is over. So if you please just pose your question, give us your name and your affiliation. And that way we'll have that for the record. And please just pose your question. Thank you.

Speaker 76:  
No problem. My name is Dia. I'm a resident here, of Chester. I pay taxes here in Chester. I was a substitute teacher throughout the Chester Upland School District, as well as I work for [inaudible 04:58:39]. Just mentioning all that to say I was going to kind of tie into my questions here. One Chester Community Charter, you mentioned, you said if chosen, you would give the district \$1 million for each school and you would build new schools. If this deal goes south, who will own the new buildings and the land that it sits on why was Columbus not proposed to purchase? I'm just going to stop there before my third question.

Speaker 70:  
Okay. Some of the questions, again, negotiable. And so again, I'm going to take some information down and I want your information, if you don't mind giving it to me, your email address or whatever you choose to give me.

Speaker 76:  
Sure.

Speaker 70:

And I promise to get back to you because I don't want to say something that I'm not 100% sure about it. Okay?

Speaker 76:

Okay. I appreciate that.

Speaker 69:

One more question.

Speaker 76:

Yeah, this will be my last question so I respect everyone's time. Okay. So to kind of go back, you mentioned retention for your teachers.

Speaker 70:

Teacher retention.

Speaker 76:

Teacher retention. Now what are the numbers for your teacher retention? And I'm going to stop for a second... I'm stopping for a second because working for [inaudible 04:59:55] I know that there are many young college students that graduate and they come into urban areas just to get their student loan debt forgiven, and then they're gone. So you kind of touched on it, but you didn't necessarily elaborate on that. What is your retention rate after five years? Because they have to teach for five years in area with low income. What is your retention rate for teachers who are recent graduates who come to teach after five years, do they remain?

Speaker 70:

I have to get that information from HR.

Speaker 76:

Well I was asking that question because you brought it up sir, so you should have these numbers already if you're bringing that up.

Speaker 70:

All right. What number I have, that I know about now, is our retention rate based on last year. and I didn't put that up on the screen because we're limited as to what we can talk about, time-wise, not that we don't want to talk about it. Right now, as we speak, right. We are 93% of our teachers who have decided, already to come back next year. That's at 93%, in May, in the beginning of May.

Speaker 76:

How many have been there over five years is my question sir?

Speaker 70:

That's something I don't know. I get the question. I don't have any information on it.

Speaker 76:

I could tell you, "Hey, I'll be back for the next week" and then I don't come back. What are the percentage of teachers who have taught already five years? And then they come back to-

Speaker 70:

Our school? I have to go back to HR and get those data.

Speaker 76:

I will pass my email on to you.

Speaker 70:

That's a legitimate question.

Speaker 69:

And again, any questions that we're getting, Facebook here that haven't been answered, we're recording them and we're going to have each of the proposers respond.

Speaker 70:

And you got my email address, correct?

Speaker 76:

No, but I'll [inaudible 05:01:49].

Speaker 70:

All right.

Speaker 69:

Your question, please? And then we're going to wrap up after.

Speaker 77:

Hi, my name is Adelaide Evans. I'm a resident of Chester and I have a few questions, but I'll make them real brief. So initially Dr. Clark, you stated that the deal wasn't finalized, so I kind of beg to differ a little bit only because I received a brochure from you guys and on the front of it had the same two pictures that you showed up on the screen. So I don't know why you would be sending out a brochure to try to gravitate more kids to your school if the deal hasn't been finalized.

Speaker 70:

Okay. The picture that you saw in the mailing is that we showed you in that video. If you look at the renderings, that's the school.

Speaker 77:

No it was the entrepreneur school, and the other school that you spoke of. Not the asset school right there on the screen, the other two schools that you were proposing to build for us. So why did I receive

a brochure with those two schools on the front, trying to gravitate my children to your school if the deal wasn't already finalized?

Speaker 69:

They're just renderings, right?

Speaker 70:

They were renderings, yeah. They're renderings.

Speaker 77:

Which I understand that but at the same time-

Speaker 70:

And we do want public support. I get it. And listen, this deal is far, far from settled. It really isn't. This is not for sure. This is not for sure. This deal has not been settled.

Speaker 69:

For anyone.

Speaker 77:

I have been on both sides of the Chester Community Charter parent, and I've also been an employee.

Speaker 70:

Right?

Speaker 77:

The parents side, I had to remove my now 20 year old daughter from you guys' school because I was told that her whole school was her whole class was going to fail and miraculously, they were going to pass because they passed the PSSA test. I then removed my child from your school and put her in a Catholic school. Now the flip side to the teacher assistant part of it was, I was in a classroom with seventh and eighth graders who were reading on a fourth grade level, but passing the PSSA tests.

Speaker 77:

So I'm going to move on because I'm going to just leave you guys to ponder. Why isn't there a charter school review board, and I say that because why are we considering, or no... Let me roll back a little bit. We have signed an additional nine year contract with you guys and you're underperforming. And I say that very candidly because I am a parent. I am a mother. And it's just very disheartening that you guys now want to come in and try to get more of our kids and you're already not educating the ones you got.

Speaker 70:

I got it. In terms of underperforming, we are not underperforming. We get results. We have outcomes. Well hold on. We have hundreds of students who are doing quite well. I'm not saying that you don't, but when you say that we don't, that's not true. And I have a right to say what we're doing in terms of outcome, we have a multitude of, hundreds of kids who are doing quite well, who received scholarships

from our school. Many of them. Many. I mean, many, hundreds. And so when we talk about outcomes, everybody gets focused on this PSSA test and I can tell you about that test, which is totally unfair, but we have hundreds of students who are doing quite well.

Speaker 70:

In fact, I just got noticed that one of our students who graduated got a scholarship, is now in a doctoral program at Temple. No, I'm making a point. I'm making a point just like you did. You made a point. [crosstalk 05:05:47]. I said hundreds.

Speaker 69:

One more question coming from the audience please. I know but I'm trying to be fair with every presenter who is given a certain amount of time. I realize you have the time. Excuse me.

Speaker 78:

Excuse me.

Speaker 69:

Yes. Dr. Clark said that he would respond to questions after we have this last question from the audience. Again, if you have questions, make sure we capture them and we'll get them responded to. So please ma'am, do you have a microphone?

Speaker 79:

This has actually been my major question with this whole thing from the beginning. If the proposals are taken away, they become these charter schools, what is my option if I choose not to put my kids in these charter schools? Because I stayed here. I didn't have to be here. I stayed in the city of Chester because my kids are actually doing well right now. They're doing better than they were doing when they were in Southeast South [inaudible 05:07:03]. So I want to be here for them. But if I now don't have the option, I have to change their school. When I came here, I could have chosen your school. I didn't because I didn't see what I guess you guys saw. So what do I do now if you take away my schools? I need to know what my option is.

Speaker 69:

Well, again, what I encourage you to do is look at the RFP document and the way that judge's order-

Speaker 79:

The way that I understand, the way that I-

Speaker 69:

Ma'am can I respond?

Speaker 79:

If take these elementary schools away, if you make any charter, if I don't want my child to go to the charter, where do they go?

Speaker 69:

Again, look at the judge's order, the way it's written, the district has to provide options so that it's not all one or the other. Sorry, that's just the way it's written. We're taking two more questions. We're taking a young lady who's at the microphone, the gentleman behind her and those will be our last two questions. Thank you.

Speaker 80:

My name is Alicia Stuart Martin. I'm a proud graduate of Chester High School. I walked these halls for four years. I was born and raised here. I went to every school imaginable that was public in the city of Chester. So I stand before you, not you Mr. Clark, with the Chester Community Charter School has nothing to do with you, this is basically for the task force. And for the task force I want to know, why is there no community review board for all of this that's going on? That's my question. That's the first question. The second question is for Anthony Johnson who's sitting up front and I want to know why you didn't recuse yourself from this when you belong to a group that issued... that was on a charter school that [inaudible 05:09:21], that's my question to you. Why are you so willing to sell our children to the highest bidder?

Speaker 80:

Lowest bidder, basically. Yeah, lowest bidder. And then you single-handedly, air-quotes, hired a superintendent without the community involvement. Okay? Why don't you let her do her job? Why are you micromanaging her? Let her do her job for our children. We found this new -found money and the pandemic money. Let it be used to redo our own district without selling off anything for these children. It's about our community. And you guys are selling our children as modern day slavery. And all I'm saying is on behalf of the Chester High School alumni association, board of directors, think about our children, because most of you who are standing on this board or who sit on this board, they don't live here, they didn't go to school here and they don't give a rat's tail about our children.

Speaker 69:

Thank you. Sir, do you have a question?

Speaker 81:

My name's Brian Foreman. I am a teacher with the Chester Upland School District. My question pretty much works based on the past. Do you believe you would have got a nine-year deal if Peter Barres wasn't involved already, as a receiver, but also as a fiscal officer for the non-profit that you currently work with? Given the academic, it's never taught to any school in this district yet a nine-year deal by a gentleman who was a receiver but is also financial repair for the Friends of Chester Community Charter.

Speaker 70:

Are you asking me a question? You're making a statement?

Speaker 81:

Do you believe you would've got a nine-year deal with Peter Barres was not the receiver?

Speaker 70:

Peter Burrows?

Speaker 81:

Barres.

Speaker 70:

Barres? I have no idea what you-

Speaker 81:

He was the fiscal officer in 2014 for the Friends at Chester Community Charter, which would be the real estate company or group that is partnered with you to procure profits.

Speaker 81:

I mean, you've got to know your board, right?

Speaker 70:

I do know my board, yeah but I don't know what you're talking about. Okay? I really don't. And it's easy to make statements. It is. It's easy to go up there and make a statement, but sometimes the statements aren't true but that's easy to do. The other thing is, and I want to make this clear, there's [inaudible 05:12:18], there's Toby Farnes, we're only proposing cater five so there's there's room, there's space for children who do not wish to attend the charter school. I'm sorry.

Speaker 82:

I've got a question.

Speaker 69:

Just very quickly please and we're going to wind up.

Speaker 82:

I've got a question.

Speaker 69:

Go ahead.

Speaker 82:

When they talk about building, you're talking about building new things here in the city and any new schools that you want to build, are you putting a swimming pool in there?

Speaker 70:

A swimming pool? What was that?

Speaker 70:

She wants a swimming pool?

Speaker 69:  
A swimming pool.

Speaker 82:  
Yeah. Are you putting a swimming pool in any of these new schools that you're building? All the other areas, all the other districts basically have swimming pools in their schools and our children want to learn how to swim.

Speaker 70:  
Okay.

Speaker 82:  
You're going to be with the district and you're going to help us. That's a part of helping.

Speaker 70:  
That's where the negotiation pieces come in. Okay? And I'm certainly not saying no.

Speaker 82:  
Okay, a swimming pool.

Speaker 69:  
Well Folks, thank you very much for your patience. And again, we're tracking questions from online and anything that was not answered in person, Dr. Clark I don't know if you'll be around if anyone wants to talk to you.

Speaker 70:  
I'll stay around.

Speaker 69:  
Okay. Very good. All right. Thank you very much folks.