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CITY OF JACKSONVILLE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
MEETING

Proceedings held on Thursday, September 10,  
2009, commencing at 9:00 a.m., City Hall, Lynwood  
Roberts Room, 1st Floor, Jacksonville, Florida,  
before Diane M. Tropa, a Notary Public in and for  
the State of Florida at Large.

PRESENT:

- WYMAN DUGGAN, Chair.
- MARY O'BRIEN, Vice Chair.
- MARTHA BARRETT, Commission Member.
- JIM CATLETT, Commission Member.
- WILLIAM CATLIN, Commission Member.
- ROBERT FLOWERS, SR., Commission Member.
- BEVERLY GARVIN, Commission Member.
- MECHELLE HERRINGTON, Commission Member.
- ALI KORMAN, Commission Member.
- JEANNE MILLER, Commission Member.
- GARY OLIVERAS, Commission Member.
- CURTIS THOMPSON, Commission Member.
- GEOFF YOUNGBLOOD, Commission Member.

ALSO PRESENT:

- STEVE ROHAN, Office of General Counsel.
- JEFF CLEMENTS, Research Division.

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1                                    P R O C E E D I N G S  
2    September 10, 2009                                    9:00 a.m.  
3                                    - - -  
4                    THE CHAIRMAN:    Good morning.  
5                    I will call to order this September 10th  
6                    meeting of the Charter Revision Commission.  
7                    And, as a reminder, I would ask everybody  
8                    to turn their cell phones to vibrate or silent  
9                    before we begin.  
10                    We will start with the Pledge of Allegiance  
11                    and a moment silence.    And I know during my  
12                    moment of silence, my thoughts will be with the  
13                    family of Judge Fryefield and the family of  
14                    Jerrell Stewart, the fine young man who passed  
15                    away -- drowned, actually, trying to save his  
16                    girlfriend, both last weekend.    Certainly our  
17                    community is diminished by the loss of both of  
18                    those fine citizens.  
19                    (Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.)  
20                    THE CHAIRMAN:    Thank you.  
21                    As a matter of housekeeping, I know that  
22                    Commissioner Austin is out of town and will not  
23                    be attending the meeting today, but I believe  
24                    everybody else is here except for Commissioner  
25                    Eichner and Commissioner Barrett.

1           That's another -- Commissioner Barrett will  
2           be attending, but she cannot attend until  
3           roughly 10 o'clock. She called to let me know.  
4           She has an unavoidable conflict, but she will be  
5           here today.

6           And, with that, I would ask Mr. Clements to  
7           take us through the material that is in front of  
8           you.

9           Mr. Clements.

10          MR. CLEMENTS: Yes, sir.

11          Very small package today. You've got your  
12          agenda, you have the transcript of the last  
13          meeting, and you have a table entitled  
14          Civil Service Board Disciplinary Grievance  
15          Statistics. This was provided by Steve Rohan,  
16          at your request from an earlier meeting, as to  
17          how many cases go before the Civil Service Board  
18          and how many are settled in favor of which  
19          party. So that's just for your information, for  
20          a future discussion if you want to have that.

21          THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clements.

22          I did have a conversation yesterday with  
23          Mr. Rohan about the Civil Service Board issue.  
24          He is still compiling his data, so he will be  
25          making a presentation to us that is responsive

1 to our request to him. This is a preliminary  
2 response, but not the final response. He's  
3 still working on gathering the information  
4 regarding -- I believe the arbitrations or the  
5 mediations, which was the alternative.

6 (Mr. Rohan enters the proceedings.)

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And here he is.

8 I was just telling them about our  
9 conversation yesterday and the additional  
10 information you're compiling on the  
11 Civil Service Board issue, if you want to add  
12 anything to that. Mr. Clements has briefed us  
13 on this chart.

14 MR. ROHAN: Yes, we've already got the  
15 chart from the Civil Service Board. We're  
16 trying to get similar information from the OGC  
17 regarding arbitrations that have been  
18 conducted. And I'm doing a history of the  
19 Civil Service Board from consolidation on to  
20 give you a better idea of how the law has  
21 changed over the years. And if you have a  
22 little bit of patience, I'd love to get to that  
23 next cycle.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. That's fine.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. ROHAN: Thank you very much.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. With no further  
3 ado, you have the agenda before you. We have  
4 great speakers today, and I will turn it over to  
5 Commissioner Miller to introduce our first  
6 speaker.

7 MS. MILLER: Thank you.

8 Through the Chair to the commission, it's  
9 my honor this morning to make two  
10 introductions. The first is the introduction of  
11 Senator Steven Wise.

12 Senator Wise, as most of you know,  
13 represents District 5, Senate District 5, in  
14 this area. And Senator Wise has been a public  
15 officer, a public representative for this area,  
16 for the Northeast Florida area, for almost 20  
17 consecutive years. From 1988 to 2000 he served  
18 in the House of Representatives, was termed  
19 out. And when Senator -- then Senator Horne  
20 ascended to the Commissioner of Education  
21 position, Senator Wise ran for that office and  
22 became the successor to Senator Horne in Senate  
23 District 5.

24 Prior to and during his time with the House  
25 and prior to his years as a public officer and

1           representative of this community, he served for  
2           30 years as a public servant in education, with  
3           higher education and K through 12. In fact,  
4           23 years of his 30 years were served with what  
5           was then Florida Junior College and Florida  
6           Community College and what is now Florida State  
7           College.

8           During his time with the college, he was  
9           vice president of college development and is  
10          credited with developing and coordinating over  
11          1,500 projects that brought in a cumulative  
12          total of \$60 million of external funding, not  
13          State funding, external funding for the  
14          college.

15          During his term in the House, Senator Wise  
16          served in the highest education positions within  
17          the House, on the Academic Excellence Council.  
18          He was also education -- Chair of the House  
19          Education Appropriations Committee.

20          As a senator, Senator Wise is chair of the  
21          K through 12 -- that's kindergarten through 12.  
22          You may hear that phrase a lot, K through  
23          12 -- Appropriations Committee. He's chair of  
24          that committee today.

25          He also serves on the K through 12

1 Education Policy Committee. They're separate  
2 committees.

3 He's also on the Community Affairs  
4 Committee, Criminal Justice Committee, as we  
5 said -- as I said, Education Policy Committee,  
6 Fiscal Policy, Joint Legislative Auditing,  
7 Legislative Budget Committee, Rules, and  
8 Regulated Industry Committees.

9 He's very, very active and a truly  
10 dedicated public servant for our community, but  
11 more than anything, Senator Wise has been a  
12 champion for education in this community and  
13 throughout the state of Florida, and he'll bring  
14 to us today, based on his experience and his  
15 knowledge in working with -- in the House and  
16 the Senate and with legislative staff, some of  
17 the best practices and some of the perspectives  
18 he's seen, different governance models for  
19 school boards throughout the state.

20 And, with that -- following Senator Wise  
21 will be Senator -- former Senator Horne, who  
22 I'll introduce a little bit later. And after  
23 their talks, we will have time for questions and  
24 answers.

25 So, with no further ado, Senator Wise.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Commissioner  
2 Miller.

3 (Senator Wise approaches the podium.)

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Senator Wise.

5 SENATOR WISE: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for --

7 SENATOR WISE: Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Before you begin, I have one  
9 housekeeping matter.

10 Diane, I would like -- now that we've  
11 started as a commission our fact-finding phase,  
12 I would like for all of our witnesses to be  
13 placed under oath.

14 THE REPORTER: Okay.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Help me remember that as we  
16 go forward. I meant to do that last week and I  
17 forgot.

18 Thank you.

19 THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the  
20 testimony you're about to give will be the  
21 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
22 truth?

23 SENATOR WISE: Yes.

24 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Senator Wise.

1           SENATOR WISE: Listen, you run a great  
2 committee. I can't believe you get started on  
3 time and everything. I have six members on my  
4 Appropriations Committee with \$20.7 billion and  
5 it's hard to get them there some days, so -- I  
6 don't know if they're being, you know, hijacked  
7 or what, but I -- it's great to be here and to  
8 speak before you.

9           The area that -- I passed out a paper  
10 that -- I did a little research looking at the  
11 superintendents that -- appointed or elected,  
12 and then we'll talk a little bit about school  
13 boards and then maybe a little bit about  
14 governance, structure, and maybe breaking up the  
15 school districts into smaller school districts  
16 and the values of that, but --

17           When we're looking at -- in Duval County,  
18 Ed Pratt-Dannals is the superintendent, as  
19 everybody knows, and he was appointed by an  
20 elected school board. That's not always the  
21 case in the state of Florida. I think it's  
22 43 -- 44 school districts elect their  
23 superintendents, which is kind of an interesting  
24 thing in itself because, nationally, it's  
25 one percent or less are elected as

1           superintendents. And there are only three  
2           states that do it, Alabama, Mississippi and  
3           Florida.

4           And if you look at -- in Florida, the way  
5           it works essentially is the large school  
6           districts are appointed by a school board and  
7           their life expectancy is -- as far as a term in  
8           working there, is about four or five years, and  
9           then they move on to something else, to a  
10          different school district or what have you  
11          and -- because it is such a stressful job and --  
12          in the large school districts in Florida.

13          Florida has the largest school districts in  
14          America. They also have the largest schools in  
15          America. Think about that a little bit as you  
16          begin to look at the school structure in  
17          Florida. There are high schools in the state of  
18          Florida with more than 5,000 kids in it. You  
19          wonder, then, how in the world anybody becomes a  
20          leader.

21          The prime concern that we have, as you  
22          begin to look at the research data that I've  
23          provided you, is that -- about student  
24          performance. Is there any significant  
25          difference in student performance if the

1 superintendent is elected versus being  
2 appointed?

3 The research shows there is no significant  
4 difference in student performance, which is an  
5 interesting thing. So then why do we do  
6 whatever it is we do? Because -- the prime  
7 reason that you have somebody is essentially to  
8 impart knowledge upon young people, and it  
9 becomes pretty obvious that the teachers in the  
10 classroom and how we structure the classroom  
11 really makes a difference.

12 Just -- this is parenthetical, and it's --  
13 when we begin to look at the data -- I just got  
14 through writing a paper on the lost black boys  
15 of Jacksonville. And when we begin to look at  
16 the kids that failed two or more times in  
17 Duval County -- anybody have an idea how many  
18 failed -- how many kids that we have in the  
19 school system today that fail two or more  
20 times? The answer is --

21 MR. OLIVERAS: (Indicating.)

22 SENATOR WISE: Yes, sir.

23 MR. OLIVERAS: Seven thousand.

24 SENATOR WISE: Seven thousand.

25 Well, let me give you -- it's bigger than

1 most school districts in the United States, the  
2 number I'm going to give you. It's bigger than  
3 most school districts. It's 19,400 kids have  
4 failed two times.

5 One young man -- or girl, and I'm not sure  
6 what it -- if it's a boy or girl -- has failed  
7 eight times. And, you know, I kind of make a  
8 joke out of that. The person ought to be given  
9 an award for perseverance.

10 You think about that. If you failed eight  
11 times and you're still in the school district --  
12 the chances are, if you have failed more than  
13 two times, the chances are that when you hit 16  
14 you're out of here. Think about that a little  
15 bit.

16 I'm going to give you a couple other little  
17 statistics. On the north side of Jacksonville,  
18 in three ZIP codes there's 60,000 ex-offenders  
19 that live there. This year in the state of  
20 Florida, 10,000 kids did not go home for  
21 Christmas because they're behind razor wire.

22 A hundred and fifty-two thousand kids got  
23 in the juvenile justice system in the state of  
24 Florida, and they're -- and if we don't make  
25 some, you know, significant difference in what

1           we're doing -- and the question then begs -- is,  
2           is it the superintendent or is it the classroom  
3           teacher or are the policies that we have at the  
4           legislature or at the local level making a  
5           difference in kids' lives and are we going to be  
6           able to change them around?

7                   And that -- those are questions as we begin  
8           to look at whether or not you ought to elect a  
9           superintendent or you ought to appoint them.

10                   The issue that I've always thought -- and  
11           I've served under elected superintendents and  
12           under appointed superintendents, and I will tell  
13           you that it's -- it's an interesting thing  
14           with -- when you're elected, the question is, if  
15           the school board says we want this policy and  
16           you're an elected superintendent, they can't  
17           fire you.

18                   Now, think about that. I mean, you're the  
19           boss, you're elected, and they can't fire you,  
20           and they want this policy done or go in that  
21           direction, and you say, "I'm not doing it." It  
22           really puts up an interesting confrontation  
23           between elected bodies or elected persons or  
24           what have you, a superintendent versus a school  
25           board.

1           And so as we begin to look at that, does it  
2 affect how children learn? And that's the  
3 question.

4           Let's say I'm a superintendent and that I  
5 am elected, and let's say, for instance, I want  
6 to go and look at the two worst high schools in  
7 Duval County. It's not only the two worst high  
8 schools in Duval County, it's in the top ten in  
9 America. I don't know if you know that or not.  
10 It's Ribault and Raines.

11           So the question would be -- let's say the  
12 school board -- or the superintendent says,  
13 "Well, what I want to do is -- I'm going to make  
14 one of the schools an all male school with all  
15 male teachers and one school an all female  
16 school with all female teachers, and that we're  
17 going to -- we're going to change the culture,  
18 we're going to have all men teachers teaching  
19 the boys and all female teachers teaching the  
20 girls, and we're going to -- we're going to redo  
21 the curriculum." And the school board says,  
22 "No, we're not doing that."

23           Well, now, who -- if you're elected -- a  
24 superintendent, you say, "Well, you know, that's  
25 too bad. I'm the manager of this thing and

1 we're going to do it that way."

2 So the question then begs of -- you get  
3 this polarization between elected and appointed  
4 as you move along. I just say those to you as  
5 we begin to look at --

6 (Cell phone interruption.)

7 That's good.

8 -- as we begin to look at the structure of  
9 whether or not we can change the culture because  
10 we've got to change the culture in Duval  
11 County. There is no doubt in my mind what we  
12 need to do, and there are lots of people doing  
13 that.

14 In Northeast Florida, Baker, Clay, Union,  
15 Bradford, Columbia, and Putnam are all elected  
16 superintendents. And the appointed ones are  
17 Duval, Flagler, St. Johns, and Volusia County in  
18 kind of Northeast Florida. You see it's the  
19 large school districts -- the larger school  
20 districts rather than the small districts.  
21 Sometimes it's because the employee -- I mean,  
22 the constituents, if you will, are -- they don't  
23 want to give up their right to be able to vote  
24 for somebody, and the superintendent of schools  
25 is probably right down to the grass roots where

1           you -- you really know it. It's Bubba and he's  
2           running and he's a farmer, a peanut grower, and,  
3           you know, he's got a high school education, and  
4           everybody knows him. You know, he could be  
5           elected. Bubba could be elected. Think about  
6           that a second.

7                     There are no qualifications in the state of  
8           Florida, in the statutes, that says that you  
9           have to have certain kind of qualifications. So  
10          Bubba, who's a peanut farmer, could be your  
11          superintendent of schools and never graduated  
12          from high school. Think about that. That could  
13          be a scenario that shows up. You know, you say,  
14          well, that can't happen. Well, around in  
15          America, I think, you know, all kinds of things  
16          happened, and that could be one of them.

17                    And so I say that to you as you think about  
18          whether or not we ought to be or not -- elected  
19          or not.

20                    Now, let's, then, move to the school board  
21          members. The school board members in the state  
22          of Florida are the highest paid school board  
23          members in America. You know what the average  
24          salary -- if you want to call it a salary -- of  
25          a school board member in the United States is?

1           A hundred bucks a meeting.

2                     Dade County, they get 40,000 a year, plus  
3           retirement and fringe benefits and whatever.  
4           Duval County, it's pretty close to the same. So  
5           this year, I started out with, let's start at a  
6           hundred bucks.

7                     I was much taller. And after they beat the  
8           tar out of me, we -- I said, well, why don't we  
9           just do this. Why don't we make it my salary,  
10          the same as my salary, which is all the way to  
11          \$28,000. And that didn't go over real good  
12          either with them.

13                    And so as we begin the structure of the  
14          budget this year, we came out with -- it's got  
15          to be the same -- at least the same or lower  
16          than the beginning teacher's salary.

17                    Now, when you begin to look at -- around  
18          the state of Florida, is that teachers' salaries  
19          are sometimes less than what the school board  
20          members are. So when you retire from the school  
21          board -- I mean, school teaching, you then run  
22          for office, and you begin a new retirement  
23          system, and you are in the retirement system  
24          when you're elected.

25                    And so I say that to you as we begin to

1 look at it. Why -- if you look in Duval County,  
2 you have the JEA, they're appointed. Well,  
3 let's go to the schools. Florida State College  
4 of Jacksonville, they are appointed. How about  
5 the University of North Florida? They're  
6 appointed.

7 A school board member said to me one day,  
8 he says -- when I said, you know, "We ought to  
9 just appoint you and \$100 a meeting" or  
10 whatever. He said, "Oh, my goodness. Do you  
11 know how big our budget is?" And I said, "Well,  
12 let me see. Is it bigger than the University of  
13 Florida where everybody who runs on the board of  
14 trustees at the University of Florida, their  
15 salary is zero. They just get their travel  
16 money."

17 Now, their budget -- and they got a pretty  
18 good football team too. I mean -- so the issue  
19 is who appoints them. And if you looked at the  
20 structure, should -- could you set up where the  
21 governor appoints, maybe sort of like we do with  
22 the ports? The governor appoints some and the  
23 City Council appoints some. That could be, you  
24 know, a structure as we move along.

25 But the only caveat I say to you is, when

1           you take away something that we're doing  
2           already, which is called elections, it has a  
3           political effect upon the people who are in  
4           office and -- and who appoints them, and does  
5           the constituents out there say, "Well, we're  
6           losing our authority to be able to elect  
7           somebody." That's -- those are tough questions,  
8           and I think that's -- you know, you have a tough  
9           job. Do you make some kind of recommendation  
10          along that line? Because those are -- those are  
11          possibilities.

12                 Let's talk about real -- just real quick,  
13          what I proposed about two or three times,  
14          just -- you say, well, why would you do that?  
15          What I did was I put a bill out to divide the  
16          school district, Duval County, into four or five  
17          school districts. And we started in 19- -- in  
18          the late '90s to do that, and we had a  
19          subcommittee of the approp- -- of the  
20          substantive subcommittee of education to look at  
21          that, and it became an issue of property taxes,  
22          how do you do that, how do you divide up the  
23          whole deal? And it was froth with a lot of  
24          issues dealing with the constitutionality of  
25          what it was that we were proposing.

1           So you say, well, you know, why do you keep  
2           putting it in? Well, I just -- you know, it's  
3           just kind of interesting. I always put that  
4           bill in because then everybody focuses in on  
5           that and then I can go do something else. You  
6           know, but -- that's, you know, the political way  
7           that you kind of do some things, and I always  
8           put that bill in so it gets everybody excited  
9           and they focus on some things that they ought --  
10          probably ought not to be wasting their time on  
11          it because it's very difficult. I don't think  
12          we can pass it.

13                 But talking with the superintendent, he  
14                 could divide the district up into subdistricts  
15                 and have assistant superintendents and so  
16                 forth.

17                 And then, lastly, let me just say this: I  
18                 taught in a school with 1,800 kids at one time  
19                 in Brevard County, and I thought about -- back  
20                 in those days, you know, what we had was -- the  
21                 parents disciplined their children. They  
22                 weren't afraid of Children and Family taking  
23                 their children away.

24                 What we have done in the legislature is  
25                 cause a series of things where the kids are in

1 charge and not the teachers and not the parents,  
2 and we've lost the ability to control our  
3 children.

4 And if you look at -- they call them  
5 Class 2 offenses in Duval County. And this is a  
6 number of years ago, and I don't know what the  
7 number -- I didn't check the number, but the  
8 fourth, fifth and sixth grade in Duval County,  
9 Class 2 offenses -- Class 2 offenses are when  
10 you give the finger to the teacher, you give her  
11 the F word, tell her to go screw herself,  
12 and "I'm not doing it; you can't make me."

13 There were 35,000 offenses in Duval County  
14 in the fifth, sixth and seventh grade. They're  
15 all destined to get into the Juvenile Justice  
16 System if you have multiple -- 10, 12 offenses  
17 like that in your school system, and the  
18 teachers are not able to control the children  
19 because the children are in control.

20 And that's not your problem, but it's a  
21 problem of our society where we've gone -- where  
22 the little darlings didn't get a good breakfast  
23 and so they could do whatever they want to do,  
24 and we go along with that -- "we," the  
25 legislature -- and allow them to put -- for us

1 to put those kind of policies in where the  
2 teachers are not in charge and be able to  
3 control what's going on, and it starts -- it  
4 starts at a very, very young age.

5 And I will just tell you one quick story.  
6 Children and Family went to see this family  
7 because somebody reported them on child abuse,  
8 and what it was was a two-year-old kid or  
9 one-and-a-half, almost two, with a diaper on,  
10 and the child started running towards the street  
11 and mom grabbed him and gave him a swat on  
12 the -- on their diaper, and somebody saw that  
13 and reported them to Children and Family and  
14 wanted to take their child away.

15 Now, those are the kind of things that we  
16 have going on. And when I look out here, we  
17 come from a different culture, where our parents  
18 had discipline. And when you look at the  
19 numbers of -- going on -- if you didn't do well  
20 in school, I'll tell you, you got something  
21 going at home. And, you know, we're going to  
22 cut off your TV or we're going to cut off your  
23 PlayStation, and -- "Don't do that to me or I'm  
24 going to call Children and Family; you're  
25 abusing me."

1           And so the parents become afraid of their  
2           children, and that's -- part of the problem is  
3           we ought to continue to focus on what it is that  
4           we're doing, and that is student performance.  
5           And that's why we have the FCAT and what has  
6           been put in, that we can see where they started  
7           and how much progress they had.

8           I tell you that the -- General Fryer, who  
9           was the superintendent of schools here, which  
10          you all know, knew every teacher and all the  
11          beginning scores of kids and how much progress  
12          the student made. Fantastic program, and I'm  
13          not sure if we've continued that on or not, but  
14          I will tell you that he knew what -- how every  
15          teacher did in student performance in the  
16          classroom.

17          So that -- I've told you more than you want  
18          to know. I'll be glad to answer any questions  
19          that you have, but I just -- I still think that  
20          it's a great debate over whether you ought to  
21          have elected or appointed school board members  
22          or superintendents. It's a challenge. It's  
23          something that's going to be difficult, but  
24          progress is not made if you don't do -- you  
25          know, have good debate on tough issues, and I

1           applaud you for doing that.

2           Thank you.

3           THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Senator Wise.

4           Let me ask you a question. If your  
5           schedule allows it, we would like to hear from  
6           all the speakers and then have the commission  
7           ask questions, but if you have a conflict --

8           SENATOR WISE: No. I'm just waiting for  
9           something to happen.

10          THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

11          SENATOR WISE: Thanks.

12          THE CHAIRMAN: Stand by.

13          Commissioner Miller.

14          MS. MILLER: Thank you, Senator Wise.

15          I think -- you don't wait for much to  
16          happen; you make it happen.

17          It's my honor now to introduce Jim Horne.  
18          Many of you know that Senator -- former Senator  
19          Jim Horne served from 1994 to 2001 in the  
20          Florida Senate where he held several key  
21          leadership positions, including chairman of the  
22          Ways and Means Committee, Finance and Tax  
23          Committee, Education, Appropriations  
24          Subcommittee.

25          Senator Horne, while in the Senate,

1 sponsored many significant education  
2 initiatives, including restructuring the entire  
3 governance system for the state of Florida  
4 for -- in education, teacher performance pay,  
5 workforce funding formulas, charter school  
6 legislation, and other school choice  
7 legislation.

8 In 2001, Governor Jeb Bush appointed  
9 Senator Horne to the first-ever appointed  
10 secretary -- Commissioner of Education. In the  
11 new position, Senator Horne had oversight and  
12 responsibility for the first K through 20 -- K  
13 through 20. We've heard -- K through 12 is  
14 through high school. K through 20 is through  
15 higher education -- as a seamless education  
16 system in the country, first ever.

17 Senator Horne graduated, earned his degree  
18 from Florida State University, graduating in  
19 three years in accounting. He served as the  
20 youngest tax manager in history at  
21 PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Jacksonville  
22 office.

23 Senator Jim Horne is now a principal with  
24 Dutko Worldwide, where he serves and heads up  
25 the Jacksonville office, bringing immeasurable

1 public service and private sector experience in  
2 areas like business development and education,  
3 technology, energy, environment, health care and  
4 transportation issues.

5 Prior to joining Dutko, Jim Horne was also  
6 founder and president of the Horne Group, a  
7 governmental consulting and business development  
8 firm.

9 We're very happy that Senator Horne was  
10 able to join us today while he's in  
11 Jacksonville, and he will bring to us a slightly  
12 different perspective based on his experience in  
13 the public and private sectors, both in the  
14 Senate and as the Commissioner of Education in  
15 the state of Florida.

16 Thank you, Senator.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Commissioner  
18 Miller.

19 Mr. Horne, before you begin, we'll have our  
20 court reporter swear you in.

21 MR. HORNE: Swear me in?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

23 MR. HORNE: Okay.

24 THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the  
25 testimony you're about to give will be the

1 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
2 truth?

3 MR. HORNE: Yes, I do.

4 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

5 MR. HORNE: Very good. Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

7 MR. HORNE: That's the first time -- I've  
8 been sworn at, but I'm not sure about being  
9 sworn in, so that's good. I appreciate that.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: We're making no assumptions  
11 about your testimony.

12 MR. HORNE: Very good. Thank you. Thank  
13 you very much.

14 And I'm excited to be here and I think this  
15 is great that there is, you know, this focus on  
16 education. Education is very important. I  
17 think intuitively we know that. You know, at  
18 the coffee pot by the water cooler, everybody,  
19 you know, talks about education. And everybody,  
20 I think, instinctively knows that it's very  
21 important that we have those kinds of dialogues  
22 and conversations, but oftentimes I'm not sure  
23 if we ever stop and take a direct look at why we  
24 think that this is so important.

25 Seventy-seven percent of our gross national

1 product is in human capital. You know, you  
2 think, what does that mean? Let that sink in  
3 for a minute.

4 Seventy-seven percent of the value of this  
5 country is in education. You know, I know we  
6 think of America being great because of great  
7 companies, tall skyscrapers, the manufacturing,  
8 and all the things that we think make this  
9 country great, but the truth is we're great  
10 because of an educated population, and it's very  
11 important that we continue to stay committed to  
12 that very fact.

13 Education drives all parts of our economy,  
14 and clearly we've seen over the last couple  
15 hundred years, you know, a transformation of  
16 education from a time probably in the 1850s  
17 where less than two percent of the population  
18 had access to an education to today where we  
19 provide access to all, but I think we've also  
20 come to recognize that simply creating access to  
21 education is probably not just -- is not  
22 enough.

23 I mean, I think clearly we try to create  
24 quality, but now we've got to perform. I mean,  
25 it's clearly -- in almost a blink of an eye our

1           economy has transformed from sort of an  
2           unskilled labor force where the bulk of the  
3           labor force really didn't require, you know,  
4           what I'd call a world-class education, to today,  
5           where, if you're going to function in society,  
6           if you're going to improve the quality of your  
7           own life and that of your family, you have to  
8           have a quality education, you have to have a  
9           skilled labor position. You cannot simply  
10          function, I think, today in society being  
11          unskilled. So education is very, very, very  
12          important.

13                 I know you're focusing on governance, and I  
14                 really believe that governance is extremely  
15                 important. I believe that governance is the key  
16                 to how we move forward --

17                 (Cell phone interruption.)

18                 MR. HORNE: Okay. Do you want me to just  
19                 keep talking or is it --

20                 THE CHAIRMAN: It's interference with a  
21                 cell phone.

22                 MR. HORNE: That's not going off.

23                 Governance is very important, and I know  
24                 that one of the key pieces of it is the whole  
25                 issue of an appointed superintendent versus an

1           elected superintendent. And, you know, the  
2           debate has raged on in Florida on that issue,  
3           and you'll have strong opinions on either side  
4           of that equation.

5           If you look across the nation, 99 percent  
6           of all superintendents are appointed. Less than  
7           one percent are elected. There's only 154  
8           elected superintendents out of over 15,000  
9           school districts in this nation. So there's a  
10          very small -- very, very small portion that are  
11          actually elected.

12          Now, Florida, it's a little bit different.  
13          You have over -- I think 43 or 44 that are  
14          elected, so you have a majority in the state of  
15          Florida that are elected. There's only three  
16          states that have elected superintendents,  
17          Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida.

18          Last time I checked, Alabama and  
19          Mississippi are not two states that you  
20          necessarily want to model after. I know that  
21          Senator Wise will remember, we used to -- back  
22          in the day when we were really trying to move  
23          the education system forward, we would usually  
24          say, thank goodness for Mississippi, because  
25          that was the only state that we were higher than

1 in performance, and so I don't know that those  
2 states you -- necessarily you would want to  
3 model your governance structure after.

4 Now, that sounds like that I'm against an  
5 elected superintendent. I'm not. I think that  
6 that can work fine. Actually, in Alabama and  
7 Mississippi they actually, in statute, have  
8 higher qualifications.

9 In Florida, unfortunately, you have to be a  
10 resident of the county and be 18 years old, and  
11 you're qualified to run for superintendent of  
12 that county. I think that, clearly, one  
13 recommendation that should certainly be borne  
14 out, if you don't take sides in this equation,  
15 is to improve and increase the quality of  
16 qualifications. You know, make sure that there  
17 is an appropriate credential. I mean, I think  
18 that's really, really important.

19 Now, if you look at elected versus  
20 appointed, you will -- interestingly, you'll  
21 note, on the pro elected side, there seems to be  
22 more stability. The average tenure of an  
23 elected superintendent is 10.6 years. The  
24 average tenure of an appointed superintendent is  
25 4.6 years. So there's a significant variation

1 in terms of stability.

2 Now, some may say that doesn't mean  
3 anything. Maybe they stayed too long, maybe  
4 they weren't very good. But, nonetheless, there  
5 clearly is more stability in an elected  
6 superintendent versus an appointed  
7 superintendent.

8 The political side to me is the part that  
9 is where you really need to focus. Clearly, in  
10 an appointed version, you can look at a national  
11 pool of candidates. You can look outside your  
12 county, you can look outside your state, you can  
13 look across -- even across to another country,  
14 if you like, to begin to look at, interview and  
15 do a search. You can get a national pool of  
16 candidates.

17 In an elected version, you're going to  
18 elect a politician, somebody that can get  
19 elected, somebody that's probably not more than  
20 ten miles away that can, you know, raise money,  
21 who can influence people and who can get  
22 certainly more votes. You're going to get a  
23 political-type candidate.

24 Now, having said that, there's been some  
25 outstanding elected superintendents, and I would

1 put a few of those up against any appointed  
2 version that we had in Florida. I mean, you've  
3 had people like Sara Wilcox, from, I think,  
4 Martin County. Served a long time, was very,  
5 very effective, was probably one of the highest  
6 producing school districts in the state.

7 David Miller from Wakulla, a third, fourth,  
8 fifth generation, been in that office for a long  
9 time. Year in, year out, produced really good  
10 results.

11 I mean, you could look at, you know,  
12 pockets here and there where you've had a lot of  
13 success, whether elected or appointed, but the  
14 politics of it -- and oftentimes I think that  
15 you can't have this conversation without also  
16 immediately injecting the conversation of an  
17 appointed versus elected school board and the  
18 role of the school board because oftentimes what  
19 I see in an appointed version, if you don't have  
20 a very strong appointed superintendent, then  
21 what happens is the scales tilt to then you have  
22 a very strong dominating school board, who then  
23 begins to blur the distinction between policy  
24 and operations, and then you begin to see school  
25 board members who become de facto

1           superintendents, who become entrenched in the  
2           operations, who begin to dictate beyond policy,  
3           begin, quote, what I'd call interference in  
4           operations. And so sometimes when you look at  
5           this issue, you've got to begin to balance both  
6           of those.

7           I still think that an appointed version can  
8           work best because I come from the corporate  
9           world. I believe the corporate model of a  
10          board -- sets policy, hires the best candidate  
11          to run the system, and allows -- steps back and  
12          allows that person to run the institution, I  
13          think works generally best.

14          Now, size is a factor. If you look at  
15          Florida, generally the larger school districts  
16          have appointed, and you see the smaller school  
17          districts tend to have an elected. Not always  
18          the case. I think Polk is our largest district  
19          with an elected, I think, superintendent. And  
20          it's a pretty good size district. But,  
21          generally speaking, smaller districts have  
22          elected. Larger districts tend to have  
23          appointed schools -- you know, school systems.  
24          I think that that's important.

25          You know, one of the things I tried to find

1 out before I came here to speak is, you know,  
2 what does the academic research show us. I hate  
3 to say, there's really not much out there. And  
4 it kind of makes some sense because less than  
5 one percent have an elected superintendent  
6 across the nation, so no higher institution has  
7 really taken this on.

8 There's still anecdotal stuff. There's a  
9 group called SchoolMatch, which I think even  
10 Duval hired back when to do some work, and  
11 they've done a little bit of work. But, by and  
12 large, there's no real what I call proof of  
13 either system working better than the other.

14 And there are -- and there's actually a  
15 handful of Florida teachers who took this on as  
16 a challenge, trying to prove that the appointed  
17 version was better, and then they actually  
18 produced results that showed that the elected  
19 version actually produced better results.

20 But, then again, when you look at their  
21 data, you know, you're comparing a smaller  
22 district to a very large district. And I will  
23 tell you -- and I'll defend Duval in this  
24 case -- large districts generally have some  
25 bigger challenges than some of the smaller,

1 homogeneous school districts. Large districts  
2 have, you know, high urban populations with very  
3 high employment, very poor students.

4 And I'm not making any excuses there, but  
5 to reach that kind of a population, oftentimes  
6 with -- you know, we talk about single-family  
7 homes. Folks, we've got no-parent family homes,  
8 you know, where there's not a book in the  
9 house. And there is clear data that says that  
10 the number of books inside that home is a clear  
11 indicator of the chance of academic success, and  
12 so I think it's also important that you do -- we  
13 do a real apples-to-apples comparison. And,  
14 unfortunately, there really is no academic  
15 research that can tell you or guide you that one  
16 system is better than the other.

17 In the end, I think clearly what you want  
18 to do is begin to set higher qualifications for  
19 appointed or an elected superintendent. I think  
20 that that is the critical component.

21 When you see some districts where, you  
22 know, it's just somebody -- you know, it's the  
23 ex-football coach -- and I have nothing against  
24 ex-football coaches. I like ex-football  
25 coaches, but, you know, they become very

1 popular. Oftentimes they end up running for  
2 office, they get elected, and probably don't  
3 have the administrative skills or the -- maybe  
4 even the knowledge of education law or the  
5 academic side to be able to, you know, make sure  
6 they can run successfully a school district.

7 I think that size clearly does matter. I  
8 know -- I think I heard Senator Wise, briefly,  
9 when I was coming in, talking about size.

10 You know, there's a lot of talk about  
11 smaller class sizes. And do you know today  
12 we've undertaken this, you know, \$25 billion  
13 laboratory experiment on smaller class sizes  
14 with no absolute proof?

15 You know, there are -- there's been 400  
16 studies on class size. There is less than four  
17 or five of those studies that have any proof  
18 that smaller class sizes work. There's the one  
19 and only that everybody sort of hangs their hat  
20 on that was done, I think, out in Tennessee by,  
21 I think, the University of Vanderbilt called the  
22 STAR Report that bore out that smaller class  
23 sizes had an academic output.

24 Unfortunately, that was -- that experiment  
25 was undertaken with a huge infusion of money in

1 teacher development alongside smaller class  
2 sizes.

3 Where there is some absolute proof is size  
4 of a school, not the size of the classroom.  
5 Smaller schools work better. There is really no  
6 dispute over that.

7 Smaller school districts work better over  
8 larger school districts. Really is no argument  
9 on that point.

10 Now, clearly, we follow a county line  
11 system, 67 counties, 67 school districts. You  
12 know, you have -- on the one hand, you've got  
13 Miami-Dade with nearly 400,000 students, the  
14 fourth or fifth largest school system in the  
15 nation with I don't know how many schools, all  
16 the way down to -- I'm not sure which one is our  
17 smallest, but we have some literally where you  
18 have one elementary, one middle, and one high  
19 school, and that's it. That's the entire school  
20 system.

21 Clearly smaller systems work better.  
22 Smaller schools work better. Unfortunately,  
23 Florida leads the nation -- we are number one in  
24 the size of schools. I mean, experts would tell  
25 you that a high school should never be more than

1           1,200. We don't design high schools less than  
2           about 2,000 or 2,500. We have high schools in  
3           Miami with over 6,000 students. That's like a  
4           city. That's like a separate city. And because  
5           of that, you know, tell me that you can really  
6           know every student in that school. It's not  
7           possible.

8           Smaller schools work better. The perfect  
9           size, they say, for a middle school is 800. The  
10          perfect size for an elementary is 5- or 600. We  
11          simply don't even bother designing schools at  
12          that level. We design much larger than that.

13          Texas is the second largest, and they're  
14          half, again, the size of those schools. So we  
15          lead the nation in the size of schools.

16          If we really are -- want to be serious  
17          about reforming education, there's several  
18          things, I believe, that need to be done:

19          One, clearly we need to focus on a new  
20          funding formula. You know, we have a dinosaur,  
21          a prehistoric funding model that is based on  
22          what I -- you know, Senator Wise and I used to  
23          refer to funding butts and seats. That's the  
24          way we fund them. We fund them on an FTE  
25          basis. You know, the more students you can put

1           in a seat, the more money that you will get. We  
2           have got to change that to a model that funds on  
3           outcomes.

4           Now, that sends the hair up on any school  
5           person who, you know, has to manage a budget.  
6           That's a tough, hard thing. That's a -- you  
7           know, you want to be able to predict your  
8           revenue, you want to be able to predict your  
9           expenses because you're committing to salaries,  
10          and we know that salaries and benefits are  
11          virtually the entire budget. I mean, when you  
12          get right down to it, there's not a lot of  
13          discretion after you commit to pay wages and the  
14          benefits and all of the things that go with it.

15          When you look at debt service, wages and  
16          benefits, that's pretty much the entire budget.  
17          You have very little discretion after that, but  
18          if we're going to make progress, we need to  
19          begin to change the way we fund.

20          The State may have to figure out a way to  
21          make, over time, that change, you know, where  
22          maybe they can begin to wean off the old system  
23          by, you know, bonusing money for performance  
24          because the truth is we've got to be focused on  
25          performance. Students have to perform at a

1 higher level.

2 We don't compete in our own communities.  
3 We don't compete across county lines. We don't  
4 compete one state against another. We're  
5 competing against -- across people from across  
6 the world, and we're not competing well.

7 In what's called TIMSS, the Third  
8 International Math and Science Symposium, we  
9 ranked pretty good in elementary. Out of the  
10 40-plus industrialized nations of the world, we  
11 actually ranked pretty good at grade four. By  
12 the time we hit grade eight, we're dropping  
13 precipitously. In high school, we rank near the  
14 bottom. As a matter of fact, they took  
15 Miami-Dade and treated it as a separate nation  
16 and they were last, last of all the  
17 industrialized nations of the world.

18 Now, what happens? You know, what are we  
19 doing wrong? How can we start off so strong in  
20 maybe math, pretty good here, and science pretty  
21 good? How could we drop so fast?

22 Part of it, they would argue, is that we  
23 use this sort of inch deep and a mile wide  
24 approach to education in our country where we  
25 don't drill very deep, we spread too many

1 subjects out, and that we -- unlike the Japanese  
2 and even the Germans who continue to build year  
3 after year after year of drilling deep on very  
4 basic core parts of the academic structures and  
5 then they continue -- they actually continue to  
6 grow and increase.

7 Now, of course, the Japanese have a six-day  
8 school week, you know, and basically  
9 year-round. We still operate off the agrarian  
10 model that some day we're going to have to have  
11 the courage to bust up and get away from. We've  
12 got to begin to look at it.

13 To me, it's teachers, technology, and  
14 training. I call it the three Ts. We have got  
15 to create a professional pay plan for teachers,  
16 you know, merit pay, whatever you want to call  
17 it. I just call it a professional pay plan for  
18 teachers.

19 In every other profession -- and we call  
20 teaching a profession, but we don't treat it as  
21 a profession.

22 I come out of the CPA profession. You know  
23 what? We're paid based upon performance. You  
24 know, you have an opportunity to grow. You  
25 know, you start off as a staff accountant,

1        senior accountant, manager, senior manager, and  
2        hopefully make partner. And you grow, and at  
3        each part you have less requirements in terms of  
4        what we call chargeable hours because you're  
5        beginning to manage a part of the book of  
6        business.

7                Lawyers are the same way, engineers the  
8        same way, but teachers, what do we do? Start  
9        them in a classroom. Twenty, thirty years later  
10       you're still a classroom teacher. You might get  
11       paid more. It's a step pay increase, but you're  
12       really not paid based upon how your students are  
13       doing or how your school is doing, and so we've  
14       got to come to grips with that.

15               There's different models out there. One is  
16       called TAP. It was developed by the Milken --  
17       Michael Milken. It's a great model. There's  
18       different other models that are very good.

19               We've tried -- we've tinkered with it.  
20       Senator Wise did one, I did one. We experiment  
21       with it a year or two and then we drop it. And  
22       rightfully -- the system has a right to gripe  
23       about the legislature in that regard. We don't  
24       stick to anything. We try something, and then  
25       we abandon it. And so, you know, one of the --

1 we've got to come up with some kind of plan. It  
2 may not be perfect in -- we've got to stick to  
3 it. We've got to come up with something and  
4 we've got to stick to it.

5 Training -- you know, this whole debate  
6 over whether we should try to use the education  
7 system to provide some employable job skills,  
8 get over it. We need to do it. There's this  
9 debate where we just stick to pure academics, we  
10 don't want to subsidize the industry by doing  
11 all the training for them. We need to get over  
12 that debate.

13 We've got to get serious about -- at some  
14 point -- you know, some of these darlings aren't  
15 going to become a doctor. Okay? I mean, Johnny  
16 just ain't cutting it, guys. And let's don't  
17 pretend that Johnny is going to suddenly change,  
18 be a rocket scientist, get it, and be able to go  
19 on and be a doctor. Johnny's not going to  
20 become a doctor.

21 But we need to make a commitment to Johnny  
22 and Johnny's family and everybody else that you  
23 aren't going to leave this system -- either  
24 you're prepared for post secondary or you're  
25 going to be prepared with an employable job

1 skill, and we've got to get serious about that.

2 And then technology. We aren't harnessing  
3 technology. Guys, every business has been  
4 transformed in America. But, you know, I  
5 guarantee you, if you take a teacher -- if you  
6 froze them in time 30 years ago, if you thawed  
7 them out today, and you popped them into the  
8 modern classroom today, there's not a lot of  
9 difference. And we may have an electronic white  
10 board, you know, but we still have desks, we  
11 still have books, we still have lesson plans, we  
12 still teach the same way today that we did  
13 30 years ago. I challenge you to find any  
14 business today, if you flash back in time  
15 30 years, that's still doing it the same way.

16 You know, higher education has been totally  
17 transformed by technology. There's so much  
18 online opportunity, there's so many different  
19 ways to engage in higher education, yet K  
20 through 12 still operates the same way. Same  
21 governance structure, same operating structures,  
22 no change. So we've got to change technology,  
23 we've got to harness, we need to use it.

24 You know, yeah, there are some pretty cool  
25 things going on. It's in pockets, though,

1       folks. It's in small pockets. There's a place  
2       in -- near Orlando, got a really neat school.  
3       It's a middle school, it's fully wired,  
4       one-on-one. You know, they'll conduct the  
5       classroom out under the oak tree with a laptop  
6       or some kind of hand-held device.

7               We've got a lot of new assessment tools,  
8       and that's great. I'm big on accountability.  
9       We need to assess and we need to assess -- you  
10      know, I'll have to stand here and admit to you  
11      that I'm the creator of the FCAT. If you want  
12      to throw something at me, you can, but I believe  
13      in the FCAT. I believe in accountability. I  
14      believe in standardized tests.

15             I think we need to evolve the FCAT now to  
16      not necessarily being just an end-of-the-year  
17      test, that we need to evolve it into a timely,  
18      ongoing assessment. You know, we have the  
19      technology, we have the ability to be able to  
20      assess in real time and have immediate  
21      feedback. We don't need to get the feedback at  
22      the end of the year to decide now what the  
23      prescription is. We've lost a whole year. We  
24      need to be able to come up with a remedy much  
25      earlier than that, so --

1           But dial this back to governance because I  
2           know that's kind of the issue you wanted to talk  
3           about. I believe, I mean, that you can go  
4           either way in terms of an appointed versus  
5           elected, but if you stay with an elected, I  
6           think we need to raise the qualifications. We  
7           need to set that bar high because I do know that  
8           if you look at high-performing elected  
9           districts, they tend to have a good credential.  
10          They tend to have the kind of training that you  
11          would expect even in an appointed version.

12                 So we need to set that bar higher. We need  
13          to make sure that we get the most qualified  
14          people. We need to also -- in conjunction with  
15          that, we need to make sure that school board  
16          members know their proper role. And in most  
17          cases they probably do, but in some cases they  
18          become political animals too and they begin to  
19          usurp some of the authority. Particularly if  
20          you have a weak appointed superintendent, they  
21          begin to engage in interference, and we need to  
22          stop that. We need to make sure that that  
23          doesn't happen.

24                 The question of whether a mayor should take  
25          over an education system, I generally don't

1 think that that's a role for mayor, except in  
2 the extreme cases where you have mass failure.  
3 And in those cases, then I think the mayor  
4 should. I think the mayor is the titular head  
5 of a community, the political structure, and I  
6 think that in certain cases -- there should be a  
7 trigger point if there is a certain amount of  
8 failure, that the mayor has the -- you know, the  
9 right, with some kind of oversight, to step in  
10 and sort of begin to make things happen because  
11 a community cannot allow the education system to  
12 fail. A community that allows the education  
13 system to fail is a community in decline, that  
14 won't last long. And so I think that it's clear  
15 that you have to do that.

16 Size of a district, I would absolutely  
17 agree with Senator Wise that, you know, at some  
18 point we need to look at that. We need to make  
19 sure that we can function and operate the best.

20 Now, there will be some detractors from  
21 that who think that -- when that happens,  
22 suddenly the affluent communities kind of  
23 extract themselves -- you know, higher property  
24 taxes, and they sort of become segregated. And  
25 I don't think that we want to do that. And then

1           you -- then some fear that your core, maybe  
2           inner city becomes a district of only poor  
3           schools with poor children with not the  
4           resources to be successful.

5                     We would have to absolutely guard against  
6           that. I mean, that's not what you want. That's  
7           not a progressive city that would allow that to  
8           happen, but we do need to figure out a way to  
9           get parents closer to the people who influence  
10          these decisions, and oftentimes a smaller  
11          district is the best way to do that.

12                    I wouldn't even pretend to tell you how you  
13          would divide it up and how you would ensure that  
14          you don't have some of the bad kinds of  
15          consequences from doing that, but we do know  
16          that smaller districts generally perform much  
17          better. At the end, we've got to do better.

18                    Today -- if you look at a ninth grader  
19          today -- about 25 percent of our ninth graders  
20          are going to make it. All right? If there's a  
21          statistic that should shake you up, that is a  
22          statistic that should shake you up. Such a high  
23          percentage disengage, they become a casualty,  
24          they generally end up in either the juvenile  
25          system or the adult criminal system.

1 Middle school is where we fail. It's where  
2 we fall way -- woefully short. You know,  
3 there's big talk about middle school reform and  
4 high school reform. If they survive  
5 successfully to high school, they're probably  
6 going to be successful.

7 Middle school, you know, is where we lose a  
8 lot of students. So many ninth graders don't  
9 make it. They might make it to the tenth grade  
10 or they may fail and then make the eleventh  
11 grade, but they're -- they're not going to  
12 graduate.

13 Stephen Goldsmith, who was the mayor of  
14 Indianapolis, I believe -- he's a professor at,  
15 I think, Harvard. Great guy, great education  
16 reform- -- Democrat, but great education  
17 reformer. In a speech recently, he -- and then  
18 in a private conversation, he told me,  
19 interestingly enough, if a young person  
20 graduates high school, gets married, and has a  
21 child, but has it in that order, they will never  
22 be on welfare, they'll never be poor.

23 Now, that's oversimplification, I would  
24 agree, but it is a powerful statistic to focus  
25 on. So if a student will graduate, get married,

1           and have a child, but have it in that order,  
2           they will be successful.

3                    So while we talk about often graduation  
4           doesn't really matter because the diploma  
5           doesn't mean much, it still does. You know,  
6           granted, we probably need to strengthen that,  
7           but a diploma still matters, and so we've got to  
8           do more, we've got to be better, we've got focus  
9           on outcomes.

10                   It's not easy. Anybody that will stand up  
11           here and try to tell you, just do this and this  
12           and we'll be successful, is not being honest.  
13           It is a very tough job.

14                   I talked to lots of teachers when I was  
15           Commissioner of Education. We decided that the  
16           hierarchy of the deal -- we needed to go out and  
17           go into the classroom, to experience what the  
18           classroom was like. So we picked different  
19           schools and different grade levels. And, of  
20           course, I picked fourth grade because my wife  
21           said, "At least you should know more than they  
22           know at fourth grade." So I picked a local  
23           school in Tallahassee to go out and teach fourth  
24           grade.

25                   Now, my wife, who is a homemaker, not an

1 educator, but probably the most influential  
2 unpaid lobbyist in the state, said, "Whatever  
3 you do, don't lose control of the classroom.  
4 Make sure that you don't lose control."

5 Folks, I went in there and I barely turned  
6 the light on, I lost control of the room. I  
7 mean, you would have thought they let them out  
8 of an insane asylum. They just went crazy. And  
9 I did everything I could to gain control. You  
10 know, they're little. I'm pretty big. Okay?

11 The teacher came back in, and I bet she  
12 couldn't have been more than 98 pounds dripping  
13 wet. And when she walked in that room, those  
14 students immediately changed their behavior.  
15 And I'm sitting here going, well, I'm twice the  
16 size of this teacher and I'm big and imposing  
17 and I was talking pretty tough, yet I couldn't  
18 gain control and she could.

19 And one thing was always clear to me, is  
20 that a teacher -- a very effective teacher is  
21 something that's -- you almost can't teach.  
22 It's something that becomes, I think,  
23 instinctively -- and we have got to, I think,  
24 reward the teachers who do this work. It is a  
25 tough job, it's a hard job, they're

1 professional.

2 A teacher and then the principal -- and I  
3 will leave the last thought -- because I'm  
4 really big, you know, on the management of the  
5 school side.

6 I think that while I'm -- I believe that  
7 you need a great superintendent. The best  
8 superintendent can hire the best principal, and  
9 leave them alone and provide the resources for  
10 them to make decisions.

11 Back when we first started grading schools,  
12 I remember bringing in three or four principals  
13 from schools in Duval County that had Ds or Fs  
14 and I asked them, what would you do -- what do  
15 you need to be successful? All of them were  
16 from the North and Westside, some of them fairly  
17 close to each other, and each one of them had a  
18 different thing that they wanted to do. There  
19 was no commonality to it.

20 One of them actually wanted a little bit  
21 extra pay for some Saturday -- to do Saturday  
22 classes. Another one wanted some parent --  
23 money to bring parents in to do some parent  
24 training because they said, you know, a lot of  
25 these children, they really -- the parents don't

1 know how to help them.

2 The point of it is that we've got to train  
3 our teachers, give them control of the  
4 classroom, allow them to do their thing, but  
5 we've also got to empower principals and we've  
6 got to get out of their hair.

7 We overengineer -- and I'm sure some of  
8 them will come up here and say the State, you  
9 know, has got 247 unfunded mandates and the  
10 State does this and the State does that, the DOE  
11 promulgates from on high. And you know what?  
12 They're probably right. We do all that.

13 Some of that is a knee-jerk reaction  
14 because we aren't performing the way we need to  
15 and somebody feels like they've got to do  
16 something, but we need to empower principals and  
17 give them the ability to do the job.

18 You know, at the end of the day, you know,  
19 governance is very, very important, but  
20 governance alone won't do it. You know, and  
21 governance has to be pushed down. Okay?  
22 Certain governance level, at the top level of  
23 organization, but even that won't be enough  
24 unless that governance pushes down even more  
25 governance to the school site. That's critical,

1           being able to do that.

2           If you do all those things, I think we can  
3           begin to make a difference. It won't happen  
4           overnight. You know, it's probably like turning  
5           an aircraft carrier around in a bath tub, it  
6           won't happen very quickly.

7           We didn't get in this mess overnight. This  
8           is 20 or 30 years in the making, and it will  
9           take 20 or 30 years, maybe 40 or maybe even 50,  
10          I think, to turn it around completely where we  
11          produce the kind of results that we need to do.

12          And if the system was built on it -- we  
13          were going to basically produce 25 percent of  
14          our students with a world-class education  
15          system, it would go on to higher education, go  
16          on to our universities. And, guys, we've got to  
17          change that around on a dime. We have to  
18          actually -- I believe that we have to produce  
19          75 percent of our student population to be able  
20          to perform at a world-class level in higher  
21          education. Not 25 percent, but 75 percent.

22          That other 25 percent has got to exit the  
23          system with an employable job skill. And even  
24          for them, there's elements of post secondary  
25          that should be designed for them. Our community

1 college and state college system needs to be  
2 able to be equipped, to be able to bring these  
3 students in, and not necessarily have everything  
4 fit into a degree or an AS, you know, there  
5 needs to be occupational completion kind of  
6 certificates and all that.

7 We need to make sure that we can -- quit  
8 making the students, you know, fit the square  
9 peg. The education system has got to go to the  
10 students. We've got to take it to the  
11 students. We can't make the students come to  
12 the education system. We've got to change that  
13 all around.

14 I probably talked all over and all around  
15 and whatever, so I think I'll end here. And I  
16 believe you wanted us to stick around and then  
17 do a joint Q and A; is that right?

18 THE CHAIRMAN: That would be very helpful  
19 if your schedule allows that.

20 MR. HORNE: Absolutely.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

22 MR. HORNE: Thank you.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Perrone.

24 (Mr. Perrone approaches the podium.)

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Perrone, I had hoped

1           that Commissioner Barrett would be here in order  
2           to give a brief introduction of you. I  
3           apologize. I do not know your background, so if  
4           you'd like to give us a brief background, I'm  
5           sure that would be helpful to the members of  
6           commission.

7                     Before you do that, though, we'd like to  
8           have our court reporter swear you in.

9                     MR. PERRONE: Okay.

10                    THE REPORTER: Sir, would you raise your  
11           right hand for me please.

12                    MR. PERRONE: (Complies.)

13                    THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the  
14           testimony you're about to give will be the  
15           truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
16           truth?

17                    MR. PERRONE: I do.

18                    THE REPORTER: Thank you.

19                    MR. PERRONE: Good morning.

20                    THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

21                    MR. PERRONE: I'm Mike Perrone. I'm the  
22           chief financial officer for the school  
23           district. I've been with the district, it will  
24           be six years in October. I come from out of  
25           state, from -- I was in school districts, public

1 schools in Connecticut and Massachusetts prior  
2 to this.

3 We have a little, brief PowerPoint  
4 presentation for you. I was asked to go over  
5 our budget and -- although it's a large budget,  
6 I'm going to try to do that in a brief fashion,  
7 so it's a -- it's a high level, but I'll try to  
8 explain where all of our dollars go and some of  
9 the restrictions and requirements we have with  
10 a -- certain fund sources, and bring you back to  
11 what really is left for discretionary spending.  
12 So that's the goal of the presentation, and I  
13 have copies of -- hard copies.

14 We'll give a minute for that to set up so  
15 we can -- if there's any extra copies, we might  
16 be able to pass them out. I do have some extra  
17 copies being run over from the -- from the board  
18 office.

19 The first slide is simply -- and, again,  
20 I'm trying to simplify a rather large budget,  
21 but our budget for the -- the proposed budget  
22 for this coming year is \$1.7 billion. That is  
23 reduced from two years ago, roughly  
24 160 million. We were at \$1.87 billion two years  
25 ago.

1           So we've had some major reductions in our  
2 budget, as everybody is seeing with the economy  
3 the way it is, but the second slide -- what I'm  
4 trying to do is just start peeling off the funds  
5 and what we use those for.

6           On the next slide we have the capital  
7 projects. That is \$288 million, and those are  
8 local dollars that we use for new building  
9 structures, improvements and renovations of  
10 buildings, infrastructure, noneducational  
11 software, major maintenance projects, and we use  
12 that for our payments on our loans when we fund  
13 new buildings. We also use that for portables  
14 and certain vehicles. So that's restricted  
15 funds that we could use for those types of  
16 items.

17           The next slide, we go into our special  
18 revenue. These are our grants, our federal  
19 grants, 231 million. The main dollars there are  
20 Title 1 and IDEA. Those are earmarked for  
21 specific students. The Title 1 is free and  
22 reduced -- based on a free and reduced figure,  
23 so those are funds for those students.

24           And IDEA is our special ed or ESE,  
25 exceptional students. And those, again, are for

1 students -- a particular type student throughout  
2 the district.

3 So those have their restrictions and  
4 requirements that we have to use those funds  
5 for. So that totals 231-.

6 And your remaining funds, what I have in  
7 the blue there -- I'm going to start bringing  
8 these numbers down and we're going to be left  
9 with our operating budget.

10 The next one is our internal service fund.  
11 That's 156 million, and that includes our  
12 Workmens' Comp -- these are funds that are  
13 self-funded programs, so our Workmens' Comp is  
14 30 million. Our health insurance -- which we  
15 just went to self-funding -- is 124 million.  
16 And we have a print shop that we run with an  
17 internal service where copies are made at the  
18 school. The school is charged, and it's all  
19 done through the internal service. So that's  
20 the -- another 156 million, which then leaves us  
21 60 percent left in the budget over in that --  
22 the blue pie chart we have.

23 The next slide is our debt service funds.  
24 These are the funds we set aside. It's a  
25 smaller amount, but it's still 29 million. It's

1           only 2 percent, but it's 29 million of the total  
2           budget. And when we go out and take debt for a  
3           new building, we set aside money from the  
4           capital, put it into the debt service, and pay  
5           from there.

6           So that leaves us with 58 percent of the  
7           budget, and that is the operating budget, that  
8           last blue -- if you just go back one. The  
9           remaining 58 percent there is our -- what's left  
10          for operating.

11          And the operating budget, again, has its  
12          restrictions and requirements with some of the  
13          funds that we get either locally or from the  
14          State.

15          The previous speaker mentioned something  
16          about salary and benefits being a large part of  
17          our budget, and that's very true, and this is  
18          where this comes into play.

19          We have salary and benefits out of the  
20          general fund for 688 million. Now, that  
21          40 percent is of our total budget. We're up  
22          towards 80 percent when you look at the  
23          operating budget. So that does not include our  
24          custodial, which is a contracted service. So if  
25          we did not contract that out, that number would

1 be higher, but we have that somewhere else. But  
2 when you take all -- all of it together, it's  
3 roughly 80 percent of our budget.

4 The remaining 318,000, which is 18 percent,  
5 again, has -- we are -- we start whittling that  
6 down.

7 The nonsalary categoricals. We get  
8 categorical funding from the State, and I took  
9 out the salary piece and put it over in that  
10 688- figure, but the nonsalary categorical are  
11 funds that -- such as Safe School funds. We  
12 have 4 million in that for our SROs.  
13 Instructional materials is 10 million. And  
14 Teacher Lead is in there. We have 1.6 million  
15 in there. So those are categoricals. We have  
16 to spend them in the way that the State says,  
17 and that leaves the 268 -- 268 million, which is  
18 15 percent.

19 Now, if you go to the next slide, what I've  
20 done here is take out essential operating  
21 expenses, which total 136 million. If you look,  
22 we have to pay our electric bill. JEA is  
23 roughly 20 million. Minor maintenance is  
24 approximately 30 million. We pay substitutes in  
25 the tune of 11 million per year when our

1 teachers are either out sick, on professional  
2 development, or whatever reason they're out.

3 Thirty million is for charter schools and  
4 our McKay scholarships, so that's a big chunk  
5 that we pay out. We have charter schools in the  
6 district. We get the money, but we funnel it to  
7 the school.

8 And then community and extended day is  
9 14 million. So that leaves us with  
10 approximately 7 percent or 132 million.

11 That hundred and -- well, let me just --  
12 let me talk a little bit about the 132 million.  
13 So that really is -- when it comes down to what  
14 we say is discretionary. Some of the things we  
15 have in there are -- we spend approximately  
16 50 million on transportation. So 30- of that is  
17 transportation because we get 20- from --  
18 roughly 20- from the State. So that is one of  
19 the big line items in that 132- that's left.

20 We spend approximately 13 million on  
21 professional development, and we have a large  
22 chunk -- I didn't -- it's 40 million, but I  
23 broke it down -- I couldn't break it down and  
24 give everything, but that's our supplies,  
25 travel, equipment, and maintenance contracts.

1           So that's a large ticket item, but it is  
2           obviously discretionary.

3           And, lastly, after that, we were left with  
4           approximately 50 million that we rolled into our  
5           fund balance, and that was a decision by the  
6           board knowing that in a couple of years our  
7           funding could be worse off than it is now. They  
8           talk about the funding cliff, so we have about  
9           a -- budgeted 50 million for those out years.  
10          Again, that's discretionary. That's money we  
11          can use other ways, just being proactive.

12          On top of that, the State is saying that  
13          the superintendent has to maintain a 3 percent  
14          balance. This gives us 5. So we've overdone  
15          what we need to do, but we think it's being  
16          fiscally conservative.

17          And that's -- that's it for the overview.  
18          Again, as I said, it's, you know, high level, so  
19          again -- are questions after?

20          THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I have one question  
21          just to clarify something you said.

22          Tell me again your dollar figure for health  
23          insurance, that's in your internal service  
24          funds, dollar figure.

25          MR. PERRONE: A hundred and twenty-four

1 million.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 MR. PERRONE: Sure.

4 Could I -- I didn't take as much time as I  
5 needed, I think, or I had. Could I request that  
6 the board -- we have some board members here --  
7 either Mr. Hazouri or Ms. Priestly-Jackson speak  
8 on either some of the budget or some of the  
9 earlier comments? Is that --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I would prefer not to do  
11 that. They've spoken to us already. We've  
12 heard from them already. If any of the  
13 commissioners would like to ask them questions,  
14 I will certainly allow that. They're welcome to  
15 speak at public comment, but this is really  
16 designed to be more --

17 MR. PERRONE: Financial?

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. PERRONE: Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: All right.

22 MR. CATLETT: (Inaudible.)

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, Commissioner Catlett.

24 MR. CATLETT: How much of that -- how much  
25 of those dollars come from the Lotto?

1           MR. PERRONE: Our lottery dollars went down  
2           from probably 32 million, 15 years ago, to about  
3           6 million this year, actually, under 6 million.

4           MR. CATLETT: What other funds are coming  
5           from the State?

6           MR. PERRONE: We get our FEFP and all those  
7           categoricals that I talked about. We get  
8           roughly 20 million in transportation, 10 million  
9           in textbooks or instructional materials. We get  
10          29 million in supplemental academic  
11          construction. That's SAI funds. I said Teacher  
12          Lead for 1.6. That's -- what they want us to do  
13          with that is -- we cut a check to each  
14          teacher -- that's a full-time teacher -- for  
15          \$250. That's been coming to us for supplies to  
16          help them in the classroom. That's been -- that  
17          came down, so we're -- we give 175 per teacher  
18          this year.

19          So those are the bulk of the funds. The  
20          FEFP, obviously, is a large one. It's about 3-  
21          or 400 million.

22          MS. KORMAN: Mr. Chair.

23          THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

24          MS. KORMAN: Can I ask a question, please?

25          THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

1 MS. KORMAN: It might put you on the spot,  
2 but I wasn't at the last meeting and so from  
3 what I've read in the minutes, some newspapers,  
4 just kind of second-hand -- one of the reasons  
5 that (inaudible) --

6 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Commissioner Korman, the  
7 microphone.

8 MS. KORMAN: Sorry.

9 One of the reasons that Commissioner  
10 Barrett wanted you here is to explain the fact  
11 that technically the school board only has -- I  
12 think the quote was \$200,000 --

13 MR. PERRONE: Two hundred million.

14 MS. KORMAN: It says \$200,000 here. I  
15 wasn't here, so I'm just reading what the  
16 minutes said -- that are unfunded mandates --  
17 that are not unfunded mandates.

18 Can you explain to me, I mean, just how --  
19 how much money you guys really have in your  
20 budget after you fulfill all of your  
21 requirements from the State left to make  
22 decisions on how you want to use that money?

23 MR. PERRONE: Yeah.

24 If you go back -- well, I don't have these  
25 pages numbered. The third -- the second to last

1 page. If you see remaining funds, 268 million,  
2 that's where -- and I believe that may have been  
3 misquoted, 200,000. I think it meant to say  
4 200 million, of the \$1.7 billion budget.

5 MS. KORMAN: And so you said that part of  
6 it goes to -- we'll call it the rainy day fund,  
7 the reserves, and you have 5 percent. And the  
8 State requires 3 percent. And so the rest of  
9 the money goes where?

10 MR. PERRONE: Well, if you go back one more  
11 page, the bulk of that -- if you see the  
12 688 million, salary and benefits for the general  
13 fund --

14 MS. KORMAN: Uh-huh.

15 MR. PERRONE: -- that's all our teachers,  
16 staff -- support staff at the schools,  
17 administrative staff. So the bulk of our  
18 dollars go to staff. That's --

19 MS. KORMAN: So that's -- that's not --  
20 yeah. I mean, I guess it's not --

21 MS. MILLER: (Inaudible.)

22 MS. KORMAN: Right. I'm talking about the  
23 remaining funds of the 270- from the --

24 MR. PERRONE: Okay. From the 270-, I said  
25 we have a bunch of expenses that we need just to

1 keep the doors open, which is -- such as the JEA  
2 bill that we spend 20 million on. That would  
3 come out of that -- those funds.

4 MS. KORMAN: Right. So let's go back to  
5 the 132 million.

6 MR. PERRONE: Sure.

7 MS. KORMAN: The 132 million, you take  
8 5 percent of that for your rainy fund --

9 MR. PERRONE: Well, let's go -- let's take  
10 the 130- first.

11 Okay. Yeah, the 132-, if you want to start  
12 there, we took off 30 million in  
13 transportation.

14 MS. KORMAN: Okay.

15 MR. PERRONE: Okay?

16 Thirteen million in professional  
17 development.

18 MS. KORMAN: Okay.

19 MR. PERRONE: And we have 40 million, which  
20 covers all of our supply, travel, leases on  
21 copiers, service contracts, such as the MOSH  
22 contract we have and the zoo contract that we  
23 have, all those contracted services that we have  
24 outside the schools, maintenance agreements on  
25 all the copy machines we have.

1           So all those total roughly 40 million, and  
2           that leaves 50 million that we designated to  
3           find balance.

4           (Ms. Barrett enters the proceedings.)

5           MS. KORMAN: Ironically enough, I have to  
6           do a site review on MOSH, so I know --

7           (Simultaneous speaking.)

8           MR. PERRONE: Okay.

9           MS. KORMAN: -- (inaudible) \$47,000, I  
10          think, for \$26,000 --

11          MR. PERRONE: Yeah, it was cut in half.

12          (Simultaneous speaking.)

13          MS. KORMAN: -- (inaudible).

14          I guess I'm just trying to figure out --  
15          because there's always this huge, you know --  
16          you know, rumor that says once the State hands  
17          you over money, you guys have no control, and so  
18          I'm trying to understand that and really follow  
19          your -- you know, how that is true when I can  
20          see right now there is a substantial amount of  
21          money that you guys do have a choice on.

22          Now, granted, they may be things that pay  
23          the lights and the whole thing, but there is  
24          this decision-making authority.

25          MR. PERRONE: We have discretionary funds.

1           It's a lot lower than, I think, what the public  
2           normally perceives it to be. I think that  
3           that's the point.

4           THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

5           I have a question that I would like to  
6           direct to Senator Wise and Mr. Horne, if I could  
7           hear from both of you about this, and it is -- I  
8           know that in New Orleans, after Hurricane  
9           Katrina, the State, I believe, created a -- what  
10          they call a recovery school district where it  
11          simply had (inaudible) off a significant number  
12          of schools from the New Orleans school strict  
13          and created a separate charter school district.

14          And I know it's been probably not long  
15          enough to get meaningful data as to the outcome  
16          of that decision, but as a model that Duval  
17          County can look at -- I was shocked to -- I knew  
18          that -- we do a good job of talking about how we  
19          have two of the best ten high schools in the  
20          country, two of the best. I was shocked to  
21          learn that we also have two of the worst ten,  
22          and so I'm -- I would like to get your thoughts  
23          on whether you see any potential in creating not  
24          just one or two or five or ten charter schools,  
25          but a parallel charter school district.

1           SENATOR WISE: I think where we're going to  
2           be -- in ten years I think that half of the  
3           instruction will be delivered virtually. I  
4           think that we're going to be looking at a  
5           virtual education as a charter school statewide,  
6           and it's not only for the best and the brightest  
7           but is also credit recovery, it's in the  
8           detention centers. We're looking at a  
9           governor's school for math, science, for the  
10          best, the brightest in the state of Florida that  
11          would be virtual and also have some  
12          residential.

13                 So I think that there's some options that  
14                 we're looking at, that could be charter and  
15                 delivered in a different way than what we're  
16                 looking at right now. We're in the throes of  
17                 moving the school districts into virtual  
18                 education whereas the universities have done it  
19                 for years and the school districts have done the  
20                 usual butt in the seat funding. And I think  
21                 Senator Horne is exactly right, I think we're  
22                 going to have to look at how we pay for outcomes  
23                 rather than for inputs.

24                 I don't -- Senator Horne.

25                 MR. HORNE: I think that -- clearly that

1 model has some merit. And that may be, you  
2 know, a possible -- I hate to use the word  
3 "compromise" between possibly splitting up a  
4 large district into smaller pieces. And I'm a  
5 big charter school proponent. I mean, Duval  
6 County -- and I'm going to, you know, probably  
7 hear from some of my good friends when I say  
8 this, but -- is not considered a  
9 charter-friendly school district.

10 Now, likewise, I would say that maybe  
11 there's a reason for it because in the early  
12 days we had some pretty lousy charter schools  
13 here in Duval County, and that is now changing.  
14 There is -- with KIPP coming in and there's  
15 some -- I think some new, emerging higher  
16 quality charters, I think that -- you know, with  
17 the passing of times, I think there may be a  
18 greater acceptance of a charter as more of a  
19 model or a way to operate. Maybe, you know,  
20 they look at experimenting --

21 You know, too often we look at charter  
22 schools as being sort of a private school light,  
23 you know, and looking at it with this completely  
24 detached and independent board. It doesn't have  
25 to be. I mean, the school system -- or the

1 school board members could actually take a  
2 couple of members of the school board and put it  
3 on a charter board with some other private  
4 independent members. You can have a hybrid.

5 And I -- no one has done that yet, and I  
6 have suggested that for years, that we look at  
7 embracing it as a way to get maybe a better  
8 buy-in from a particular part of the community  
9 and having more attachment than detachment from  
10 the school system itself.

11 But I think that what they have done after  
12 Katrina has been a great thing, yes. I don't  
13 think that we've seen the data yet, and time --  
14 only time will tell, but I believe it's a great  
15 model. I believe it has merit. I think that  
16 it's something that they certainly could begin  
17 to look at, and I would encourage you to look at  
18 it as a hybrid with kind of a -- almost like a  
19 subsidiary of the school system in Duval County  
20 and not as a detached -- you know, go do your  
21 thing; we'll kind of provide a little oversight  
22 from afar.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

24 And also I'd like to get both of your  
25 perspectives on an appointed versus elected

1 school board. I appreciate the insight on the  
2 superintendent, but at the governance level of  
3 the board as well, I'd be interested to hear  
4 what you have to say about that.

5 MR. HORNE: Yeah, let me -- I'll take the  
6 first stab at it.

7 I mean, somebody needs to be elected. I  
8 mean, you know, I wouldn't think you'd want an  
9 appointed board and an appointed  
10 superintendent. I mean, I think somebody has  
11 got to be appointed. I think the board is the  
12 better option. It needs to be an elected  
13 board.

14 Taxpayers need to be able to go to someone,  
15 you know, they voted for. You know, they need  
16 to say, "I voted for you. I don't like what  
17 you're doing. This is what you need to do."  
18 They need to be able to have that kind of an  
19 access, and I think the board is the proper  
20 place, to have an elected board.

21 And I did say before that I think if -- if  
22 there are circumstances in a community where  
23 schools are -- have a mass failure, then there  
24 can be a takeover by an even higher elected  
25 position, maybe a mayor or something like that,

1 but I do believe you should have an elected  
2 board. I think that that's important. I think  
3 that that gives access to the taxpayers, who --  
4 you know, it's the number one issue. You know,  
5 right now maybe it's economic development, maybe  
6 it's jobs. Right now maybe it has superseded  
7 education, but over the last 20 years,  
8 education, number one issue. You need to give  
9 the voters access to the people who are setting  
10 that policy.

11 SENATOR WISE: Well, I mean, when you look  
12 at the school boards around the country or you  
13 look at the universities or the community  
14 colleges or JEA or -- I mean, you just kind of  
15 go through the -- the issue is  
16 multimillion-dollar corporations as well as  
17 systems have both an appointed CEO and appointed  
18 board members, so I think that you can do -- I  
19 think it could be done, and I think that's an  
20 issue that's probably above my pay grade, but as  
21 you look at -- right now where we are is that --  
22 I think the -- that we ought to look at less  
23 salary and -- you know, I know the board members  
24 are here, but we have the largest -- the highest  
25 paid school board members in America. And this

1 is a public service kind of a thing, to make a  
2 difference in kids' lives, and maybe we're not  
3 here to get paid big salaries, and that may be  
4 what we -- you know, a recommendation that you  
5 might want to make.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
7 Commissioner Catlett.

8 MR. CATLETT: I'm pretty familiar with  
9 what's going on in our school system, and we  
10 have some of the very best schools and some of  
11 the worst performing schools, so -- it's under  
12 the same school system. The same people are  
13 making the decisions. So what is it we can do  
14 about the poorest performing schools that we're  
15 not doing today to bring them up?

16 And I ask you two because you're not on the  
17 school board. You're -- both been in the state  
18 legislature.

19 What ideas to bring up the poorest  
20 performing -- I think the charter school is  
21 great on this end, do all the right things  
22 there, but the ones I'm worried about are the  
23 guys and gals that are ending up in jail because  
24 they don't get a good education. What can we do  
25 better there?

1           MR. HORNE: I'll take a stab at it.

2           Well, you know, the first thing you want to  
3 do is look at why the two that are successful  
4 are successful. It's certainly -- if you look  
5 at those schools' history, they were two schools  
6 that nobody wanted to go to. I mean, let's not  
7 kid ourselves. I grew up here in the west side  
8 of Duval County, Stanton. I had two brothers  
9 that went to Paxon. And, of course, we -- Paxon  
10 went downhill, and that -- my parents moved me  
11 over to Ed White High School. Okay?

12           You changed it because you created a  
13 magnet, you created choice. And I believe, you  
14 know, we ought to take a page out of that and we  
15 ought to look at creating some kind of something  
16 to magnetize every school, something that would  
17 attract the best and the brightest. You know,  
18 whether -- you don't have to duplicate exactly  
19 the same thing in each one.

20           I mean, granted, we have put a tremendous,  
21 probably, amount of resources in both of those  
22 schools to attract from every part of town to  
23 those, but you could, you know, emphasize math  
24 in one or fine arts in another or science in  
25 another, but I think that you need to just

1            simply take a page out of the success book and  
2            try to figure out a way to duplicate pieces of  
3            it in other places.

4            Now, having said that, I'll go back to  
5            teaching and leadership. I don't think we  
6            should make any excuses for any school and any  
7            student anywhere. All children are capable of  
8            learning. Now, we have some that have special  
9            needs, granted. Okay? We've got children with  
10           autism. They're not going to be able to be  
11           successful academically, like all other -- but  
12           put that aside for a minute. All students can  
13           learn.

14           You know, for too long, I believe -- and  
15           I'll be challenged on this -- the dirty, dark  
16           secret is for 30 years we have known which  
17           schools didn't perform well. Okay? We knew  
18           that. We knew that those were "those" schools.  
19           We chose to do nothing about that for 30 years.

20           And the problem is then we built this  
21           accountability system that put a bright  
22           spotlight on all schools. Suddenly all of those  
23           imperfections came to light. And the problem I  
24           think still is that, you know, we haven't  
25           committed to put the best teachers in these

1           hardest to serve schools. And if you're a  
2           teacher, why would you want to go there? Yeah,  
3           I want to go to this brand new school out in  
4           this affluent area that's got all these kids  
5           from wealthy parents, whose parents are parents  
6           and who are trying to encourage them and helping  
7           them at home versus going to be a teacher in a  
8           school where there's no parents and there's  
9           certainly no encouragement at home.

10                   And we need to take our best teachers --  
11           and if we have to give them combat pay or  
12           whatever it is, get them in these schools, okay,  
13           and help.

14                   I mean, you need to take that little  
15           teacher that I experienced over in Tallahassee,  
16           that 90-pound, you know, dripping wet teacher,  
17           who I will tell you is a master teacher. I  
18           mean, she has the respect -- and this was a --  
19           you know, if there is such a thing as an inner  
20           city in Tallahassee, it was kind of an  
21           inner-city school. It was poor children. It  
22           was children that generally won't perform well.  
23           She's getting results in that classroom, and so  
24           I know that you can do it, but several things  
25           have to happen. You've got to put a little

1 recipe of something there to make it neat and  
2 different and cool, and you need to make sure  
3 you commit some of these master teachers, pay  
4 them whatever you have to pay them.

5 See, I -- I'm a little different. I'll  
6 tell you, teachers aren't paid enough. I would  
7 try to create a model where our best master  
8 teachers can make \$100,000 a year. And we don't  
9 need to create a system where to be successful  
10 you have to leave the classroom. I mean, that's  
11 the system we have. You know, hurry up and get  
12 out of the classroom and be part of the  
13 administration. Now, I hope I don't offend all  
14 the administrators who are here.

15 Teaching is not a -- just a vocation or an  
16 advocacy. It is a mission. I mean, when you  
17 find -- I mean, be honest. If you stop for a  
18 minute and said, okay, what's that -- give me  
19 three people who have influenced your lives. It  
20 might be a preacher, but I guarantee one of the  
21 three is going to be a teacher. There's a  
22 teacher somewhere out there.

23 For me, it was a Mr. Hayes at Ed White High  
24 School. Meanest son of a gun you ever met.  
25 Taught math. He made you study so doggone hard

1           and -- it's kind of hard to explain why he meant  
2           so much in my life other than I was at a point  
3           where I really kind of wanted to kind of goof  
4           off. He wouldn't let me. You know, he'd call  
5           my parents and say, you know, "He's capable of  
6           doing this." Put me on the math team. You  
7           know, Ed White was kind of new at the time. We  
8           went up against some of the top schools and we  
9           won. And for the first time that old -- crusty  
10          old man, he even had a smile on his face, and  
11          that was the greatest satisfaction I got. He  
12          proved to me that hard work pays off.

13                 Everybody -- we know that there's a teacher  
14          out there that's meant the difference in  
15          someone's lives. That's -- we've got to find  
16          those teachers, we've got to put them in those  
17          schools that we know -- you know, that aren't  
18          performing how they could perform, then you'll  
19          change the system.

20                 SENATOR WISE: Well, part of the issue  
21          is -- nothing is impossible if you don't have to  
22          do it. I mean, I can stand up here and tell  
23          you, you know, what I think in theory, but let  
24          me tell you something, when you get down trying  
25          to manage the thing, it's really tough and

1           you've got to have consensus. You just can't do  
2           it without consensus.

3                       We're working with one of the school board  
4           members and looking at the kids in DJJ and  
5           what's going on and the kids that have failed  
6           and how do we make a significant difference in  
7           their lives. The question that one needs to  
8           ask -- and I don't know what the answer is, but  
9           how do you allow kids to fail four and five  
10          times? That's the question. And what do we  
11          need to do with that group of kids? Because  
12          it's a significant number.

13                      Now, we're honing in on a population that  
14          nobody wants to talk about. It's the secret.  
15          Okay? The secret is -- when I sit in my  
16          committee and I ask a question and they give me  
17          the data on African-American kids, well, let me  
18          tell you, the issue is not the African-American  
19          kids; it's African-American boys.

20                      And when you disaggregate the numbers in  
21          which we're forcing the school districts now to  
22          disaggregate the numbers in order to earn A, B,  
23          C, D and F in your ratings, you're not going to  
24          get an A if you're leaving out the disaggregated  
25          numbers of the African-Americans or Hispanic

1 boys because they're an enigma of what's going  
2 on.

3 I don't know how to do it, but I think that  
4 one of us is not as smart as all of us and we  
5 ought to be able to come up with a solution. I  
6 don't have -- I don't have the silver bullet,  
7 but I will tell you that if you sit around with  
8 groups that deal with prisoner reentry or --  
9 what do you do -- we got rid of the zero  
10 tolerance policy statewide. Let me just say  
11 what that did to the kids.

12 Did you know if you throw a water  
13 balloon -- it's the guys. Okay? Not the  
14 girls. The girls sit there and behave  
15 themselves. They're boys having fun, man. And  
16 they throw a water balloon. It's a third-degree  
17 felony. All right? That's going to be on your  
18 record all your life. You might be an A student  
19 and throw a water balloon, you're going to go to  
20 the detention center, it's going to go on your  
21 record, and I will guarantee you it will never,  
22 never, ever get off your record, so --

23 All your sins are forgiven when you're 18.  
24 That is a bunch of hooey because they will be  
25 able to track that thing and you're not going to

1           be able to get in the Naval Academy, you're not  
2           going to get a good job because you have a  
3           third-degree felony. And I'm telling you,  
4           throwing an eraser is throwing a deadly  
5           missile. I mean, let me tell you something,  
6           I've been gone, you know, and I think we've  
7           changed -- the culture in America has changed.

8                     And I don't have a silver bullet, but I  
9           will tell you that -- that there is an issue,  
10          and if we all work together for the good of the  
11          kids, knowing what -- we test them on the front  
12          end, test them on the back end, and, by golly,  
13          there ought to start being an improvement. If  
14          not, then where do we go and how do you get the  
15          parents engaged when the parents think that they  
16          can sue you all the time?

17                    You know, you see the ads on the  
18          television. You know, it's not going to cost  
19          you anything. You know, just come to us and  
20          we'll sue you and you'll get money at the end.

21                    It's a society that believes that my child  
22          does no wrong, the teacher is wrong. And it is  
23          a cultural thing that has happened over a number  
24          of years, and I don't know how to change that.  
25          I'm as frustrated as everybody else.

1           I'm the guy that has -- I sit on the Policy  
2           Committee and I sit on the Appropriations  
3           Committee. Hey, listen, it isn't fun to cut  
4           \$880 million out of the budget and know that you  
5           don't have the dollars to do the kinds of things  
6           that you want.

7           And I'm constrained by -- I can only budget  
8           what they give me. Mr. Perrone can only budget  
9           what we give him and I can only budget what I am  
10          given to deal with that. So we all have these  
11          constraints, but I will tell you if we work  
12          together with the right folks and quit, you  
13          know, everybody pointing in a circle and say  
14          it's their fault, maybe we can get something  
15          done because let me tell you something, we have  
16          a major, major problem in this town because the  
17          prison is sitting 60 miles away and the bus  
18          stops here, and they get off and they -- and  
19          they can't get a job, and they're fathering  
20          kids, and then the kids are without parents. I  
21          mean, you just go on and on. I mean, it's like  
22          give me a break.

23          And so, you know, that's -- you know,  
24          that's just kind of my thing.

25          And I'm working very, very hard with the

1 school board on dealing with the black boys, the  
2 lost black boys of Jacksonville because we  
3 cannot look at and have that going on in our  
4 society because we're in deep trouble if we  
5 don't do something.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Commission Catlin.

7 MR. CATLIN: Back to the issue of elected  
8 versus appointed superintendents, not trying to  
9 get you off base.

10 SENATOR WISE: That's all right.

11 MR. CATLIN: Of the 23 appointed  
12 superintendents in the state of Florida, are  
13 there different processes on how they're  
14 appointed? Is the mayor involved in some of  
15 them, is the City Council involved? Are there  
16 different ways that's happened throughout the  
17 state?

18 SENATOR WISE: No, it's all the same.

19 The school board is elected. The school  
20 board makes the appointment. They hire and fire  
21 them.

22 The problem is that you can't have three,  
23 four and five people on the payroll getting paid  
24 because you fired him and they have extended  
25 contracts. That becomes a real, real problem in

1           some of the school districts.

2           We have about eight school districts right  
3           now that are about to go belly up and be  
4           foreclosed on, if you will. They will be taken  
5           over by the State because they don't have the  
6           3 percent cushion or the 5 percent, but I will  
7           tell you, it's less than one percent. They may  
8           not even be able to make payroll. That's how  
9           bad it is at this point because they -- the  
10          school board and the superintendents weren't  
11          paying attention to the salary discussions.

12          I mean, I told the business folks that --  
13          let me tell you something, folks. This isn't  
14          the year to give everybody pay raises, and yet  
15          we have school districts in this state that are  
16          at an impasse with a school board member for pay  
17          raises.

18          Now, let me tell you something,  
19          \$1.8 billion in the budget is stimulus money  
20          that isn't going to be there, folks. And I'm  
21          telling you, the budget isn't getting any  
22          better, and so we've got a real problem.  
23          There's [sic] going to be belly up.

24          So the school board members need to appoint  
25          the superintendent and then not give him a --

1           you know, a golden parachute and continue to  
2           fire him and then continue to have to pay him  
3           and have three superintendents on the payroll at  
4           the same time. It's ridiculous.

5           MR. HORNE: Let me try to take a shot at  
6           that.

7           I mean, I think that formally the answer is  
8           no, there's no formal, different process from  
9           one district to another.

10          I think informally -- you know, I certainly  
11          hear that there is outreach to different parts  
12          of the community, whether it's business or the  
13          mayor or other places. I mean, you know, you --  
14          especially in places like Miami-Dade where you  
15          have 34 different jurisdictions. You know,  
16          here, fortunately, we have one overarching  
17          consolidated form of government, but I think  
18          informally -- and that makes a lot of sense, to  
19          set up a -- you know, some type of informal  
20          process to get buy-in, and I would think that's  
21          a -- certainly something we -- if it's not  
22          already up on your list, maybe that's something  
23          you put there as a recommendation.

24          THE CHAIRMAN: Commission Thompson.

25          MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Commissioner

1 Duggan.

2 Senator Wise and Senator Horne, we have two  
3 schools that are in the top ten (inaudible) and  
4 fails FCAT. And, Senator Horne, you were one of  
5 the advocates of the FCAT. I don't understand  
6 how we can have two schools across the street  
7 from each other and they fail every year and  
8 nothing is being done.

9 MR. HORNE: I'm not sure which two you're  
10 talking about. You said two of the best that  
11 fail FCAT. I don't -- I didn't understand  
12 that. Are you talking about --

13 MR. THOMPSON: Raines and Ribault have  
14 failed FCAT.

15 MR. HORNE: Right. Okay.

16 MR. THOMPSON: They're in the same part of  
17 town, across the street from each other.

18 Why does it keep happening year after year  
19 and we hadn't done anything drastic to make  
20 changes over there?

21 MR. HORNE: I think that's coming. I mean,  
22 I think there's -- they allow for time, you  
23 know, the years -- several different hammers.  
24 You know, they're -- I think the DOE calls it  
25 its toolbox or something like that, that -- I

1 think if you fail two out of four years and  
2 suddenly -- you know, vouchers kick in. Parents  
3 can take their voucher and move on.

4 I think in the fifth or sixth year -- and I  
5 know the superintendent came in and he might can  
6 answer that.

7 There's -- they have to go before the state  
8 board and produce a school improvement plan and  
9 what they're going to do, and there's  
10 a -- sort of -- they force them to remake the  
11 governance at the school site with new  
12 principals. I think in several cases that --  
13 we've already cycled through a couple different  
14 principals at both those schools, I think, and  
15 then some new teachers.

16 At some point the state board actually will  
17 come in and take it over and make it a charter  
18 school or give it to a -- you know, a private  
19 school and a private school contract. I know  
20 Edison does some of that stuff. They come in  
21 out of Philadelphia. They came in and took over  
22 a bunch of schools.

23 And so I don't know where we are in that  
24 time line, but I suspect we're getting very  
25 close to a trigger being pulled that will be a

1 dramatic change there. I mean, I think we're  
2 probably -- my guess is that we're maybe in the  
3 last year of the system being able to control  
4 the destiny of those schools. And after that,  
5 it's going to -- it will be a big change.

6 So I guess my long answer to your short  
7 question is that there are various triggers,  
8 various time lines. And I don't know the  
9 history and how long they've been failing, but  
10 I -- my sense of it is we're probably getting  
11 close to the end of the road where the district  
12 will have full authority over what happens  
13 there. At some point the State is going to make  
14 something happen.

15 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Youngblood.

17 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: I guess it's not really a  
18 question, but it's not being stated anywhere.  
19 We've spoken of management, we've spoken of  
20 money, but no one has spoken of morals, and I  
21 want to bring to the table the moral issue.

22 If what we're teaching our children -- if  
23 we say you came from apes and they start acting  
24 like apes, we get really frustrated. If we say  
25 you're worth seven to ten dollars worth of

1           chemicals, but yet they start acting worthless,  
2           we seem surprised.

3                     Now, this is something that's taboo, that's  
4           not communicated in the public circles, but it's  
5           an issue that we have. What more is legislation  
6           doing to help what we teach, not how we teach?

7                     And this may be something off topic, but  
8           it's something I think I have to bring up  
9           because it's just bizarre.

10                    SENATOR WISE: Yeah, well, it's tough.

11                    I will tell you that probably the finest  
12           speech that I've, you know, ever heard -- I  
13           won't say "ever heard," but it was at one of the  
14           two schools. School Board Member Jackson, who  
15           is here, gave it. Okay? She's probably the  
16           only one that could say the kinds of things that  
17           you cannot continue as parents, not care what's  
18           going on, and think that less is better, and  
19           that -- it comes from the home. And if -- she  
20           could say things that I can't say to that  
21           crowd. I mean, there -- you know, it was over  
22           the budget and where we're going.

23                    But I will tell you that it's a long way  
24           around. I've run the bill on intelligent  
25           design, and -- you know, on ape man and

1 chromagna man and a whole bunch of things.

2 Nobody wants to get into the debate.

3 I mean, I think young people need to be  
4 able to have a debate, a discussion over what  
5 versus what, not -- you take sides, but have the  
6 ability to make decisions and seek decisions.

7 I'll tell you what, when I was out at the  
8 Kennedy Space Center with the 18 smartest kids  
9 in the state of Florida, rising seniors, let me  
10 tell you, I couldn't even answer -- I didn't  
11 know what the question was, let alone what --  
12 the answer the kids were given, and it was  
13 taught by an astronaut.

14 These kids can learn and they can have  
15 serious debate over issues. It's not personal,  
16 but they need to know both sides of the story.  
17 And if you only give them one side of the story,  
18 of course -- and I think -- I think our failure  
19 nationwide -- this is not a -- on the school  
20 district, but nationwide, is that we're afraid  
21 to allow children to engage in healthy debate  
22 and seek two sides of the story and -- and not  
23 saying this is better than the other, just have  
24 them have a discussion, and I think teachers  
25 have the ability to do that if they want to.

1           But, you know, you -- we used to get in the  
2           classroom, and it's -- I used to always say  
3           this. This is kind of -- the last dictator  
4           you'll ever know will be your college professor,  
5           you know, because they can control your life and  
6           they can fail you for goofy things. And because  
7           you didn't bring in your homework, I can get you  
8           an F. And that may -- you never recoup from it,  
9           or you treat somebody some -- really bad, and  
10          you say, why should I even go to school? Nobody  
11          gives a rip. And it changes their life.

12                 So if you have a great teacher in a  
13          classroom, I'll tell you, it will change your  
14          kid's life, and we need to be able to make sure  
15          that we have the very, very best in the  
16          classroom.

17                 MR. HORNE: I didn't take your question as  
18          being just an evolution question.

19                 I mean, I --

20                 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: It wasn't. It wasn't  
21          because -- that's just one of the stems of it,  
22          which, obviously, is a taboo question that no  
23          one wants to speak to --

24                 MR. HORNE: Right.

25                 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: -- but also the issue of

1           dealing with -- there's accountability. And if  
2           there's accountability, then where is that  
3           accountability?

4           MR. HORNE: Right.

5           Well, accountability, character is real  
6           important. We've got quite a few good character  
7           education programs going, and I suspect in Duval  
8           as well, and -- you know, we've gotten silly  
9           about these -- you know, trying to avoid being  
10          religious or whatever, but Judeo Christian  
11          principles are kind of universal. And we're now  
12          sort of being governed by a small fringe  
13          minority that -- on these things, you know,  
14          where you can't pray before a football game and  
15          you -- there's just -- we've gotten just  
16          ridiculously silly about some of this stuff.  
17          And, you know, we need to bring back some common  
18          sense to this.

19          Character -- hey, thou shalt not steal, to  
20          me, is not necessarily a religious thing. That  
21          is a good character issue. It's a very good  
22          principle, and I think that, you know, we just  
23          need to bring back character. I mean --

24          And, yes, I don't want to say that we have  
25          one more mandated thing, you know, because

1           we're -- already have a lot of difficulty with  
2           all these things that we were asking them to  
3           teach, but I think you can infuse character -- I  
4           mean, just common sense character into  
5           everything you do, and I think it's the right  
6           thing to do.

7           I think we're doing a lot of that now. It  
8           may not be enough. If we could just stop some  
9           of the silliness that's -- it's all adults doing  
10          it, honestly. It's not the students; it's the  
11          adults that are creating that problem for us,  
12          and we just need to tell them to shut up.

13          MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Well, thank you for your  
14          stand.

15          And, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry to take you to  
16          the weeds like that, and -- but -- I digress, I  
17          understand, but I had to speak to the issue  
18          because I thought it was something that was  
19          being left out of the conversation.

20          THE CHAIRMAN: That's no problem. You're a  
21          member of the commission.

22          Commissioner Miller.

23          MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, thank you,  
24          Commissioner Horne and Senator Wise.

25          As you know, the City of Jacksonville is a

1 consolidated city/county government and we're  
2 unique in the state in that regard, and that's  
3 why we're here. As the Charter Revision  
4 Commission, we're appointed to really do a -- as  
5 the council -- then Council President Fussell  
6 asked us to do, is really to do a full -- full  
7 checkup, full checkup on all aspects of our  
8 government.

9 And at the time of consolidation our  
10 schools were failing or disaccredited. We were  
11 at a time of crisis, and there was more  
12 accountability in the original charter between  
13 the school district and the consolidated  
14 government. Over time that has -- that  
15 accountability, that relationship has eroded  
16 away and there's been a difference. We've made  
17 some progress. We're not a disaccredited school  
18 district anymore, but we still have some very,  
19 very serious challenges. We don't want to lead  
20 the state or the nation in the dropout rate, in  
21 the -- or be the lowest in the state or the  
22 nation in graduation rates, but we're there.

23 And so if you could -- in this commission,  
24 we have an opportunity to make some  
25 recommendations. We can't fix all the problems,

1 but we're in a unique position to make  
2 recommendations. If our political leaders have  
3 the political courage and the political will to  
4 adopt some of those, then -- then that would go  
5 on to the legislature to pass a J bill, a  
6 specific bill that would change our charter.

7 So we have a unique opportunity that  
8 probably no other county/city government,  
9 charter government in the state of Florida has,  
10 maybe the nation.

11 So with that context, if you could design  
12 the best -- taking the best of what you know --  
13 and we've heard some of it. Maybe we -- we take  
14 a -- create a charter school district or  
15 something like that for the poorest performing  
16 to bring them up. If you -- and I'd like to  
17 hear more about the hybrid model you proposed.

18 If you could design the best, if you could  
19 recommend to us two or three points that we  
20 could effect at this level, maybe in terms of  
21 that governance -- we've heard a lot about, you  
22 know, the different aspects of it, but what  
23 are -- what are some of the best and strongest  
24 recommendations you could recommend to us that  
25 maybe we could actually try to implement here,

1 ask the legislature to pass as part of our  
2 charter, and -- and to see if that would work.

3 SENATOR WISE: I, personally, think that  
4 the Police Athletic League and the police  
5 department ought to be able to set up a charter  
6 school on some of the facilities they have or  
7 the City owns or -- or what have you, the  
8 ability to give them rent space, buildings and  
9 so forth for their charter school, and have the  
10 police -- especially the -- I would have  
11 single-sex schools for the boys because, see, I  
12 believe that boys act different than girls.

13 I also think that what was wrong before --  
14 and it never made sense to me, was having the  
15 purchasing for the school district come through  
16 the City. It seemed like it was just a  
17 duplication of whatever, especially also their  
18 legal office. Why does the City need to handle  
19 the legal stuff for the school board? That  
20 never made a lot of sense to me either, but, you  
21 know, I don't know. Maybe there's something  
22 else that the City can do in order to help them,  
23 but --

24 When the head of the City Council appointed  
25 Ginger Soud to have a commission to look at

1 education, we looked at the dropout rates in  
2 Pinellas County and how could the City of  
3 Jacksonville be involved. There's a report done  
4 by that committee that is -- I think it's  
5 terrific that the City could become involved  
6 with and fund certain kinds of activities. I  
7 think they're doing some now, but I --

8 I keep going back to DJJ. We've got to  
9 reduce the number of kids getting in the  
10 system. We have the third largest population in  
11 America in prison, and it's going to get bigger  
12 if we don't do something, and I think the City  
13 could continue to do -- help with some of the  
14 activities for in-school suspension,  
15 out-of-school suspension or what have you that  
16 they may be able to fund. They get the pastors,  
17 they get the community folks involved in that,  
18 and that the City put up some of the dollars to  
19 do that. We say, gee, where are we doing that?  
20 You know, everybody is in straits.

21 I don't know. I think there's some  
22 foundations that we -- interested in doing some  
23 things right now, and -- but what we have to do,  
24 I believe, is do longitudinal data collection  
25 because if you don't know where you are and

1           where you're going, any way you get there is  
2           great. You know, you don't know where you are  
3           and you're not sure if you got there, and I  
4           think that you have to have -- you know, pretest  
5           and post test.

6                        We have the best data system in the United  
7           States, seriously. We can track kids all over  
8           the place, and it's no secret right now that we  
9           can do that. And it will give you the data,  
10          whether or not what we did with these young  
11          people make any significant difference. It's --  
12          do the kids learn, do the kids get jobs, and,  
13          you know, do they go on to school, do they get a  
14          national certification and so forth because we  
15          can't have them on the street.

16                       I think the biggest disappointment that I  
17          had this year -- and I'm going to tell you what  
18          it was, and it was that the NAACP forced us to  
19          take off on the zero tolerance bill the ability  
20          for the school system to say you can't have your  
21          pants down in the school system.

22                       Now, you can walk around with your pants  
23          down and all that kind of stuff. It wasn't  
24          on -- it wasn't that -- but the NAACP stopped us  
25          from doing that because the governor said he'd

1 veto that piece of amendment that we had on the  
2 zero tolerance bill, and -- and I think that was  
3 a travesty.

4 And we've got to have culture, you know,  
5 couth in the schools, and it's how you dress and  
6 how you look and how you behave. And if you  
7 look at the data, when you have dress codes, the  
8 kids -- all you have to do is look at Osceola  
9 County and see the number of offenses in the  
10 school that happen when -- from the time before  
11 they had dress codes to when they didn't have  
12 them. And I will tell you, it's a big  
13 difference, and the kids behave better when they  
14 have a dress code. You know, so I would do  
15 that.

16 I'd have a charter school that did all  
17 those kinds of things, that it was part of --  
18 the City help fund it.

19 MR. HORNE: I think there's three things  
20 that I would do. First, it's more of a  
21 school -- purely system piece, not so much City  
22 of Jacksonville, but it would be to create a  
23 path or a way that -- as you put a  
24 high-performing principal in one of these  
25 failing schools, they can self-select their

1 teachers without any interference from the  
2 union. Okay?

3 They've got to be able to recruit. Just  
4 like anything, if you're going to be put in  
5 charge, you want to -- you want to be able to  
6 hire the people that you know or want that can  
7 help be successful there, so you've got to  
8 create that kind of mechanism in place.

9 The second part is -- I think that the  
10 City, in partnership with the school board,  
11 ought to look at a type of a charter school  
12 district mechanism that's -- you know, I call it  
13 a hybrid, but it's where -- it's not just a --  
14 sort of a loose confederation of little schools  
15 that are operating independently, but something  
16 that's -- you know, has its independence so that  
17 it -- you know, it's -- it's deregulated.

18 I mean, the whole idea behind a charter  
19 school is it's deregulated. Okay? It doesn't  
20 have to deal with all the crazy rules and  
21 regulations that we've heeked [sic] on the  
22 school system and -- so that it can, you know --  
23 and I would --

24 The third piece would be -- you know, we  
25 have brownfield areas and blighted areas and we

1 give all kinds of tax benefits and whatever.  
2 I'm telling you, failing schools, if there is a  
3 blight or a problem, that's it. And we need to  
4 create, you know, enterprise zones or structures  
5 around schools, not just economically-depressed  
6 areas, but around schools and provide some way  
7 to create some -- I don't know, incentives or  
8 dollars that, honestly, could be used for what I  
9 call the combat pay to help pay -- to recruit  
10 the -- so that when the principal does  
11 self-select, or if it's a charter school, it can  
12 recruit these top, you know, master teachers,  
13 and try models there where --

14 You know, quite honestly, the master  
15 teacher may not teach every period of the day.  
16 They may teach four out of six. And those other  
17 two, they're in a classroom with a new, young,  
18 kind of a rookie that they can help bring along  
19 because that's another thing that amazes me is  
20 that we take brand new teachers, and what do we  
21 do? We toss them in the most hard to serve, you  
22 know, schools, and then we kind of scratch our  
23 head three years later and go, "They quit. Why  
24 did they quit?" Well, there's no real huge  
25 support mechanism for them.

1           You know, in any other profession, you  
2           know, you don't -- I mean, as a CPA, I promise  
3           you, when we hired a brand new accountant, we  
4           didn't put him on our most difficult client. We  
5           put them -- you know, they were supervised on an  
6           easy assignment, and that's the way I think I  
7           would approach it.

8           Those three things would be to -- you know,  
9           figure out a way to free up principals to  
10          self-select without any interference. Two, sort  
11          of a charter school, kind of charter district,  
12          subsidiary of the school system, maybe it's a  
13          joint hybrid between the City and the school  
14          system. And the reason for that, I think, is  
15          that the City can also bring resources, can  
16          bring business relationships, can bring some  
17          other kinds of assets to the table.

18          Plus, I think the school board would like  
19          to have as much help as they can. You know, I  
20          don't think that the school system is just  
21          trying to hoard all the problems. I think that  
22          they would love to share some of that burden  
23          and, you know --

24          And then the third would be to create, you  
25          know, some mechanism that kind of encourages the

1 rest of the community to race over there and  
2 help and be part of the solution. And money  
3 talks, folks. I mean, money changes behavior,  
4 and a lot of money changes a lot of behavior.

5 And so I think if we can create that  
6 mechanism, then you have -- you know, you do  
7 have the ingredients for success.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Vice chair O'Brien.

9 MS. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

10 I was going to a point that Senator Wise  
11 brought out. I think in today's society, you do  
12 have that very litigious atmosphere out there  
13 from the parents that their children are always  
14 right. I don't know if there is an example out  
15 there to draw from, but either as a charter  
16 government or going to the state legislature, is  
17 there a possibility of creating a program or, I  
18 guess, tort reform in some manner -- you may  
19 want to call it something else -- that actually  
20 gives school systems more authority to enact  
21 disciplinary action?

22 I'm not talking about corporal punishment  
23 or anything along that line, but when you look  
24 at certain aspects of the government -- a  
25 military. We are able -- our military is

1           enabled to discipline their recruits, I guess I  
2           must say.  And some of the things -- you can  
3           dock pay, which isn't a possibility with  
4           students, but I do feel that oftentimes the mass  
5           or -- you know, the 30 students in a classroom  
6           suffer because there are one or two characters  
7           who are distracting the teacher, taking away  
8           that valuable teaching time, and so you're  
9           suffering for one, you know, you're missing out  
10          on the other 28 or 29 students that are in the  
11          class, and -- and I totally, you know, feel for  
12          those teachers and the principals because they  
13          are being asked to be not only a teacher or a  
14          principal but also a disciplinarian, a moralist  
15          and everything along that line and --

16                 MR. HORNE:  A social worker.

17                 MS. O'BRIEN:  -- a social worker, exactly.

18                 And, quite honestly, I think that -- to me,  
19                 I don't want to lose that one, but, to me, it's  
20                 more important to save the other 29 in the  
21                 classroom than to save that one at the expense  
22                 of the 29, and I didn't know if there was  
23                 anything we could do charter governmentwise to  
24                 give them that legal protection to enforce  
25                 discipline.

1           MR. HORNE: Well, we just need to take  
2           everything you just said and go enact that. I  
3           think you would get -- there's agreement between  
4           Senator Wise and I. I mean, we both would  
5           agree. Discipline is a huge problem. And, you  
6           know, we know these stories. They're maybe sent  
7           out of the classroom and they come right back  
8           and everybody knows nothing has really happened  
9           and -- and there is this fear of litigation or  
10          just lack of respect or esteem.

11          I mean, I think we all -- I think  
12          everybody's -- you know, many of you are younger  
13          than I am, but, I mean, I grew up at a time  
14          where, you know, the teacher was right even  
15          though the teacher was wrong. I mean, you know,  
16          it doesn't matter. And you would get more  
17          trouble at home than you got in trouble at  
18          school. Okay?

19          But today, you challenge the authority of  
20          the teacher and then the parent comes, gets in  
21          her face, and we -- you know, the teacher used  
22          to be on a pedestal. They aren't today. Part  
23          of that is because we haven't professionalized  
24          it, and we need to go back to work on that.

25          I mean, I can remember -- go to even a

1 grocery store. You'd point, "There's a  
2 teacher. Wow, there's a teacher." Well, today,  
3 they're, you know, not respected like they  
4 should be. They're not held in esteem, and  
5 that -- a lot of it is just discipline. And,  
6 you know, I think we used to call them --  
7 creating second-chance schools or last-chance  
8 schools or whatever. I mean, you know, we need  
9 to -- I think we need to remove them from the  
10 classroom.

11 If they're disrupting four -- you know, you  
12 can't sacrifice the other 28 or 29 for the sake  
13 of some grand social experiment to try to keep  
14 them in the classroom. You know, at some point  
15 you could say no more, can't have that. You  
16 know, and try to -- you know, we have  
17 alternative schools. I mean, I think Duval has  
18 got quite a few of them. And, you know, we need  
19 to maybe have more and we need to be able to --

20 You know, that's why I think we need to  
21 empower that principal. Hopefully they'll, you  
22 know, have a good group of teachers, and they  
23 make that decision and off they go. I wouldn't  
24 allow that to be an upstream decision by  
25 administration. It ought to be by the

1 principal.

2 SENATOR WISE: It goes back to -- look at  
3 the manual for Children and Family for  
4 preschool. Have you ever read it? Let me tell  
5 you what it says. Do not use any negative  
6 words. The kids run with the scissors, you're  
7 not allowed to say, "Stop. Drop those scissors"  
8 because that would hurt their psyche.

9 Now, let me tell you something, that's a  
10 test that they take. All you have to do is read  
11 this stuff. We start the indoctrination real  
12 soon. Okay? And we change the whole culture.

13 This is not just Florida, this is not just  
14 Jacksonville, this is America, and we've changed  
15 the culture with the little kids, and that's  
16 what's happened. And then we give them the --  
17 the hotline number. "You me touch me, Mom, and  
18 I'm going to call Children and Family."

19 Let me give you the statistics so you  
20 understand when we take the kid away from the  
21 family. In the state of Florida, one-third of  
22 all the prisoners in the state prison are foster  
23 care kids, came through the foster care system.  
24 Every one of the people on death row are foster  
25 care kids.

1           Now, something is fundamentally wrong with  
2           what's going on when you take the kids away from  
3           their parents and you take the authority away  
4           from the parents.

5           Now, that's our problem in the  
6           legislature. We caused it, not you guys, not  
7           the school board. We caused the problem, and I  
8           don't know how to get it back. I sit on that  
9           committee. I mean -- of Children and Family.  
10          Let me tell you, it's discouraging at best.  
11          That's why my hair has turned gray. You know, I  
12          sat on it 12 years. I'm telling you --

13                 MR. HORNE: You were 6'4.

14                 SENATOR WISE: That's right, I was 6'4.

15                 But those are the problems, and I think  
16                 that it -- to come back to the issue, I'd love  
17                 to deal with that if we could get some words  
18                 down on paper that we can -- word (inaudible)  
19                 and we can put it in bill drafting, and then  
20                 that's where the debate comes on.

21                 And, you know, election time, everybody  
22                 gets scared and -- this is about public policy,  
23                 and it's not easy to pass any piece of  
24                 legislation, and that's why I commend you for  
25                 sitting here and listening to this stuff, but

1           it's -- it's tough.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman and then  
3 Commissioner Barrett.

4           MS. KORMAN: Two questions. One is for  
5 Secretary Horne.

6           You guys keep on talking about -- I'm going  
7 to call it performance pay for -- you know,  
8 bonuses for teachers. And even when the economy  
9 was -- we had money in the economy back then, we  
10 tried to do that, and we couldn't because  
11 there's never enough money, according to the  
12 school districts or the State or whatever, so  
13 how would you propose to somehow get combat pay,  
14 whatever?

15           (Ms. Herrington enters the proceedings.)

16           MS. KORMAN: The second question is  
17 following up on your charter district.

18           I recall -- isn't there one, like, in  
19 Pembroke Pines or --

20           MR. HORNE: Yes.

21           MS. KORMAN: -- one of the areas that we --  
22 that was created? And how is that one doing as  
23 a result?

24           MR. HORNE: The last question is a little  
25 easier to answer.

1           I mean, it's really not a charter school  
2           district. It's a city that has a collection of  
3           schools where they've almost -- just about the  
4           entire city is all charter schools. The City  
5           itself, I think, funds all of the administrative  
6           stuff, I believe. I might -- don't hold me to  
7           that, but it's a good model. It works and it's  
8           been successful, and what's interesting there is  
9           that where --

10           For example, city parks then operate both  
11           as a play field for a school and the city park.  
12           I mean, libraries are joint use. Libraries for  
13           the city, libraries for school. Kind of a neat  
14           concept where they've actually made it work  
15           financially because they're using sort of a  
16           blended kind of use of resources and  
17           facilities.

18           That's a great model. I'm glad you pointed  
19           that out. I mean, it's a perfect -- something  
20           that ought to be looked at, mirrored more.

21           You know, it's completely detached from the  
22           Broward County school system, and they would  
23           tell you they actually have a problem getting  
24           charters approved even though they've got a  
25           great track record, you know, because the

1 normal, you know, kind of tug and pull of  
2 control, and that's why --

3 You know, it would be nice to see some way  
4 to remove that kind of knocking of heads and get  
5 focused on the students and quit playing the  
6 politics game. That's why, you know, the hybrid  
7 is kind of appealing if you -- you know, again,  
8 it might not work and you may have to go back to  
9 knocking heads and doing it the old fashioned  
10 way.

11 So that -- that was it.

12 You know, you made a great point. We --  
13 you know, back when we had lots of money, we  
14 tried and didn't do a whole lot. You know, I  
15 would say, you know, the legislature still  
16 didn't get it right, you know.

17 I don't think there's ever been a serious  
18 commitment to go do it. You know, there's been  
19 wanting to experiment with it a little bit, but  
20 part of it is what I said, there's never been a  
21 stick-to-itness. You know, the legislature  
22 would try it, you know, and -- you know, you get  
23 some union opposition to it, you get -- you  
24 know, politics get injected.

25 The problem with, you know, 160 members of

1 the legislature, there's -- all 160 have a  
2 different idea how to do it. And, you know, we  
3 ought to quit trying to get in the kitchen and  
4 take politics like I do cooking where I just  
5 keep putting stuff -- start with something  
6 really good and by the time I finish I've ruined  
7 it by putting too much stuff in.

8 We need to keep it simple and work on a  
9 model that's worked somewhere else. Okay? It's  
10 worked in places like Denver, it's worked in  
11 pockets of little, smaller areas.

12 I'm telling you, if you want to  
13 transform -- accountability is great. I helped  
14 start a lot of accountability, but if you really  
15 want to make change, you're going to do it by  
16 creating this professional pay plan. And it's  
17 not just -- by the way, it's not this teacher's  
18 kids score really good on the tests, so we're  
19 going to pay them a bonus. I mean, because  
20 there's a camaraderie of teachers. It's not  
21 just about a single teacher doing her job or his  
22 job with a little group of classroom teachers  
23 because it's really -- it's a group of teachers,  
24 a collection of teachers, and what you want to  
25 do is not create individualized bonuses

1 exclusively. You want group bonuses because you  
2 want teachers collaborating because that's the  
3 great --

4 The most powerful thing about a teacher is  
5 collaboration, and you want groups of teachers  
6 to sit down and say, "This week we really want  
7 to push fractions. So, Coach, you need to help  
8 us with what you do," working fractions in. You  
9 know, and so you want, you know, the school to  
10 receive a bonus. You want groups of teachers to  
11 receive a bonus. You do want individual bonuses  
12 because it gets all the way down to that  
13 personal level and --

14 You know, where's the money come from? You  
15 know, I could tell you a few places where I  
16 think there's money to be had. You know, we've  
17 missed opportunities with new sources of  
18 revenues that we just dumped into the black hole  
19 of education that at the end of the day gets  
20 allocated and hardly you see a difference, and  
21 we need to take those moments in time where  
22 there is a new chunk of revenue. And when the  
23 economy starts to turn around -- and it will --  
24 dedicate some of that to this reason, instead of  
25 just saying, okay, we're just going to flow this

1 billion dollars of money because when you factor  
2 all the way down to every school district, based  
3 upon some crazy old formula, it will just get  
4 lost. And so where there's a will, there's a  
5 way, and we've got to make that a priority, you  
6 know.

7           Unfortunately, you won't hear a lot of  
8 people saying what I've said, that that's the  
9 number one thing we ought to do because you're  
10 going to get lots of different views on what we  
11 should be doing. And, unfortunately, that's  
12 probably not going to be the prevailing one.

13           SENATOR WISE: Let me give you one that you  
14 guys can do.

15           Take the model that's already here in  
16 Duval County, the only school -- I mean, the  
17 only county that's done it. It's with JEA, it's  
18 with the community college, it's with the school  
19 district, it's with the University of North  
20 Florida, and it's JU, and Edward Waters, and  
21 basically what it says is this -- think about  
22 this a second.

23           If you take the Take Stock in Children  
24 model, which is that in the sixth grade, that --  
25 if you sign the pledge that you are going to --

1           that you are going to stay out of Juvenile  
2           Justice for six years. Two is that you're on  
3           free and reduced lunch. Three is that you have  
4           a 2.0 grade average.

5           I think there's one other, Martha, but --

6           MS. BARRETT: Those are the main ones.

7           SENATOR WISE: -- those are the main ones.

8           Then, if you can do that for six years, at  
9           the end of six years, you're guaranteed a  
10          prepaid that -- you can go to a community  
11          college and then you can go to the university.  
12          Every kid in Duval County would have a prepaid  
13          guaranteed for them.

14          Now, let me tell you something, I have put  
15          together the pieces to do it statewide. It's  
16          about an \$11 billion endowment that I want to  
17          put together, and I don't have enough time.  
18          It's a 20-year plan. I've got three years  
19          left. I've put the structure together to be  
20          able to do that, but you're so much further  
21          ahead.

22          I sat down with the governor and said,  
23          Governor, can you call in all the utility  
24          companies and let's have them be able to put it  
25          on your electric bill and your water bill that

1           you can put a dollar a month or what have you  
2           and run it in and then begin to set this  
3           endowment up.

4           And think about this: If you give -- if  
5           you give a child the opportunity that says here  
6           is what's available to you if you do these kinds  
7           of things, stay out of trouble, and -- I think  
8           you can cut crime down, Juvenile Justice, by  
9           25 percent.

10           Now, we gave one out at Florida Community  
11           College to a sixth grader from Communities and  
12           Schools, and I'll never forget what the mom  
13           said. They gave him the thing, they signed it  
14           by mom and by the child that they would adhere  
15           to these things for six years. And mom says,  
16           "If you screw this thing up" -- she says, "I  
17           brought you into this world. And if you screw  
18           this up, I'm going to take you out."

19           See, now that gives the parent the ability  
20           to say, I am tired of this -- let me tell you  
21           what you have ahead of you. You have the  
22           ability to get something that I couldn't afford  
23           for you and you're going to screw this up by  
24           going out with these guys, with their pants down  
25           out in the street and they're drug dealing over

1 here for -- or -- you know, or whatever. I want  
2 to have some -- you know, going out to a keg  
3 party. Let me tell you, you're not going.

4 It gives them an ability to say no to their  
5 kids without being fearful that the kid is going  
6 to turn on them, and I think that's something  
7 that -- if you guys want to do something to put  
8 together a plan for the City of Jacksonville is  
9 to be able to make a commitment that we get the  
10 foundations, we get the business corporations,  
11 we get the individuals to make an investment in  
12 our children and Jacksonville, and we can set  
13 the way for everybody in the state of Florida  
14 because Jacksonville can do it, everybody else  
15 can do it.

16 So that's -- you know, I just recommend  
17 that you might consider doing that because I  
18 think it will make a difference in the kids'  
19 lives.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Barrett.

21 MS. BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Again, I'm so sorry I'm late. I have this  
23 T-shirt on because I was flipping pancakes this  
24 morning for the United Way.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you bring us some?

1 MS. BARRETT: You wouldn't want the ones I  
2 made.

3 First of all, the charter schools and --  
4 and, Senator Horne, you're right. We did close  
5 some, but, really, the ones we closed -- when I  
6 was on the board. I can't speak since I've been  
7 on -- I've not been on the board since November  
8 of 2008, but we actually had to close them  
9 because most -- the ones we closed were  
10 either -- they were broke, they couldn't pay  
11 their teachers, the teachers had no  
12 certification. They were really good reasons.

13 On the other hand, we have many good  
14 charter schools here that we have opened. The  
15 science charter school, I think I was still on  
16 the board when we opened it. I think last  
17 year -- there's a new charter school for Russian  
18 students. Tiger Academy, the YMCA is doing out  
19 of the Johnson Center. And, of course, a KIPP  
20 school is coming this coming year. And there  
21 are others, so I think the charter schools and  
22 the Duval County school system are fine.

23 Secondly, with an elected school board -- I  
24 appreciate you liking that since I'm running for  
25 the school board as well.

1           But, at any rate, I think people have got  
2           to understand what a school board does. You  
3           can't liken it to the JEA board or the JPA  
4           board, the JAA board. Those people meet once or  
5           twice a month maybe. I'd love for the --  
6           Chairman Hazouri to invite all of you to  
7           several -- to all of their workshops. I mean,  
8           they not only meet on Tuesday nights, but then  
9           they have two and three meetings a month, and  
10          they will go on maybe all day.

11          So you're not talking about people that  
12          just run in and then run out -- and then they're  
13          in schools, they're going to meetings, parents,  
14          and so on. It's a tremendous amount of time and  
15          a tremendous amount of dedication that the  
16          school board does have in this city -- in this  
17          county.

18          Now, as far as pay, first of all, you have  
19          to understand that in Florida, it's 67 counties  
20          and 67 school boards. There are not -- like if  
21          you go to Missouri -- I went to school in  
22          St. Louis. Every mile is a new school board, is  
23          a new school superintendent. Well, that's  
24          different.

25          So, yes, school systems, set up by the

1 State, the school boards are paid.

2 Now, are they paid too much? I don't know  
3 because I've never heard anybody from the school  
4 board or myself say, "Gee, I don't make enough  
5 money." If we wanted to go down on the money,  
6 fine too. We aren't in it, really, for the  
7 money, and I believe that this year the  
8 school -- our school board did take a reduction  
9 in salary, and I'm sure they would again. I  
10 don't think that's the point of why people run  
11 or are on the school board.

12 So I think you have to understand the  
13 context of Florida, which is a very unique  
14 situation in how it's set up with their school  
15 boards.

16 The fourth thing is -- Senator Horne talked  
17 about the magnets and so on, and I do think --  
18 about teachers, and some good things are  
19 happening. You know, the Lastinger Center for  
20 Learning at the University of Florida, they're  
21 really taking teachers -- they're teaching them  
22 how to teach in Title 1 schools. They're --  
23 Dr. Henry Thomas is here from UNF. UNF has done  
24 a tremendous job in taking those students -- and  
25 they're going to -- they're in Woodland Acres

1 and they're in many of our schools. JU, the  
2 same thing.

3 There's lots of really wonderful things  
4 going on in our schools, which we call  
5 turnaround schools. The superintendent is here,  
6 he's very dedicated to making sure the top  
7 teachers are in -- the top principals are in  
8 these schools. And we know, like anything else,  
9 as a principal goes, so goes the school.

10 Lots of safety nets now put in the middle  
11 schools: Learning to Finish, Achievers for  
12 Life. The school system has really been -- in  
13 the years I was on the board, certainly was able  
14 to partner with the Community Foundation, with  
15 all sorts of people.

16 I don't think the school system anymore is  
17 in just a -- sort of an island of its own. You  
18 cannot run the system like that.

19 And also, Senator Horne and Senator Wise, I  
20 was thrilled to hear you talk about volunteers.  
21 Since I've been off the school board, I went to  
22 Long Branch and I'm a volunteer. And Long  
23 Branch is in the lower east side of  
24 Jacksonville. Very, very challenged area, where  
25 most children don't have two parents, live with

1           granny, grampa, auntie, uncle, maybe mom or  
2           maybe dad. Very poor school, but a wonderful  
3           school. Poor maybe in money, but not poor in  
4           great love.

5                   And now the Southside Rotary and the  
6           Downtown Rotary are going to really take on the  
7           school, and that's going to change that school.  
8           That will change that school.

9                   And just what you-all were talking about,  
10          if -- and, Senator Wise, my hat is off to you  
11          about Take Stock in Children. That is exactly  
12          what we need to be doing. Communities and  
13          Schools, as we know, runs it here in  
14          Jacksonville. Various other groups run it in  
15          various parts of the state.

16                   But if people did adopt -- take on and  
17          mentor, a mentee, it could change the school  
18          system. And the problem is people blame the  
19          school board or the school system, but it's the  
20          whole system. You know, what you're saying.  
21          Are they -- are we -- they, it's not me. I'm  
22          not on the board, but are they responsible for  
23          every single problem or is the superintendent  
24          responsible for family problems? No, but the  
25          school system has taken it on to make sure that

1           those systems are in place.

2           For instance, this Achievers for Life, they  
3           have them in Fort Caroline Middle and in  
4           Arlington Middle and now some others, where if  
5           they can take a child and they see a child  
6           struggle, and so they're able to then call the  
7           parents in and say, can we help you? Not to be  
8           intrusive, but to say we have services for you  
9           to help you and your child, to keep them in  
10          school, because the studies show that a child is  
11          going to drop -- as already figured, they're  
12          going to drop out in middle school. That's  
13          where you lose them, so now everybody is really  
14          into middle school. And there's no doubt that  
15          we have to really, really go into our high  
16          schools.

17          But I would make a prediction, Senator  
18          Horne, that the two new principals that are in  
19          Raines and Ribault this year -- if anybody can  
20          change that around, they will. And I'm so  
21          excited about what's happening out there now,  
22          and I'm sure Ms. Priestly-Jackson would feel the  
23          same way since one of her schools is -- it's  
24          Ribault.

25          But, at any rate, I just wanted to thank

1           you, but I do -- I really agree with you about  
2           getting those volunteers in the schools.

3                     Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4                     THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Commissioner  
5           Barrett.

6                     Commissioners, any other comments or  
7           questions?

8                     MR. CATLETT: (Indicating.)

9                     THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Catlett.

10                    MR. CATLETT: I just want to make sure I  
11           had a consensus. If I understand it right, both  
12           of you believe that an elected school board and  
13           an appointed superintendent, generally speaking,  
14           is a better system than the alternatives; is  
15           that correct?

16                    MR. HORNE: I don't know that Senator Wise  
17           is the -- on the elected board.

18                    I do, I mean, because something is going to  
19           be politicized one way or another, and I don't  
20           know -- the other version would be, say, a mayor  
21           making appointments, and I -- you know, again, I  
22           think I'm going to go with what I know and I  
23           have seen it works best, and that's an elected  
24           school board closest to pockets of the community  
25           that can have that interaction, but I would be a

1 strong supporter of some kind of threshold of --  
2 if you have failing schools or a significant  
3 number of failure, that there would be some kind  
4 of trigger that -- you know, either the State  
5 takes it over -- and I don't think that's a good  
6 thing because the State doesn't have a good  
7 track record doing anything like that. In this  
8 case, I think a mayor --

9 I know, for example, the City of Hialeah, I  
10 know that the mayor is looking at doing that.  
11 He's talking about -- there's 40-something  
12 schools that are in his city that are -- a high  
13 percentage of them failing, and he's looking at  
14 working at trying to take that over.

15 I don't know that the city or a mayor has  
16 got the resources or the ability to do that  
17 either. I mean, then you end up politicizing it  
18 so much -- now, of course, they could go in and,  
19 I guess, replace all the elected with some  
20 appointed business people or something like  
21 that. Business people get real frustrated  
22 because they're used to being able to make  
23 decisions and, you know, find out that there's  
24 regulations and bureaucracy and things like  
25 that.

1           So I would have it a step -- tiered  
2           approach towards something that dramatic. I  
3           think that there's ways that you can  
4           dramatically improve things with an elected  
5           school board.

6           SENATOR WISE: I don't have any problem  
7           with an elected school board. I was -- my  
8           contention is -- being the Appropriations  
9           chairman for K-12 and looking at my budget, is  
10          that we have the largest salaried school board  
11          members in America. And, you know, I hear a  
12          lot. I think that the issue is that they have a  
13          tough job, these are big school districts. And,  
14          you know, I don't know what the salary is, but I  
15          know this year we said it couldn't be any higher  
16          than the beginning salary of teachers. And so,  
17          hopefully, maybe we'll get the teachers'  
18          salaries up some day, if we ever give them any  
19          money, and --

20          But I think an appointed superintendent, or  
21          if -- what we probably ought to do is -- it's  
22          been brought to my attention from doing this, is  
23          that we need to put in law some specific  
24          qualifications if you're going to run, so Bubba,  
25          the peanut grower, who didn't graduate from

1 college -- high school, doesn't become the  
2 superintendent of schools because he may not  
3 have all the background or -- or whatever it is,  
4 whatever the criteria we ought to do. Maybe we  
5 ought to take that up in the legislature.

6 And after, you know, listening to -- in all  
7 the research that I've done, after dealing with  
8 this today, I believe that we ought to add some  
9 qualifications for elected officials. But, you  
10 know, all you have to do is look at the data.  
11 The data says there is no significant  
12 difference, and what we got is what we got.

13 To change it, I think it would just cause  
14 more trouble than what it's worth. And that --  
15 from a political standpoint, I don't think that  
16 that could be done, and I think where we are is  
17 where we are, and what we need to be focusing  
18 on, again, is coming back and putting together  
19 the community in groups like what's being done  
20 now.

21 I think the school board is on track and  
22 that the -- we're being measured. The school  
23 districts are being measured. I don't mean to  
24 say this -- is that we changed the law this year  
25 so that No Child Left Behind criteria -- here's

1           where we get in trouble: FCAT. We have the  
2           FCAT scores and we give a school grade for the  
3           school and they get an A, and then No Child Left  
4           Behind, you're a D. Now, how did you get from  
5           an A to a D?

6                     What we have done is we have merged them  
7           in, and the reason is because of what I said  
8           earlier, because we have -- we had cohorts of  
9           people within an A school that have not made any  
10          significant progress, specifically black boys.  
11          And if they're not making any progress within an  
12          A school, then you're not going to get an A.  
13          Okay? You're going to -- you're going to be  
14          measured just like the -- the No Child Left  
15          Behind, and that was what the piece of  
16          legislation -- so we have some congruency where  
17          we don't cause the population to say, okay,  
18          we're an A here and the Feds say that we're a  
19          D. It doesn't make any sense. What the heck  
20          are you guy doing, and da, da da, da, and so we  
21          have now changed that.

22                     And I think Senator Horne, Commissioner  
23          Horne, Consultant Horne, you know, said it  
24          right, and I think -- is that -- that we ought  
25          to deal with the teachers and to look at the

1           system that we have at the universities and the  
2           community college where we have an assistant  
3           professor, a full professor kind of thing, and  
4           that tiered section because somebody may just  
5           want to do one thing.

6                   And I heard you say it a hundred times,  
7           that, you know, all I want to do is just teach  
8           and I'm going to go home because I -- I got  
9           kids, I got family, I got young kids, and so  
10          forth, and I'm a single-family [sic] and I've  
11          got to do these kinds of things. And then to a  
12          person who's more mature is a different level,  
13          and we pay at a different level, and -- so that  
14          you make a -- a tiered system.

15                   And it made a lot of sense to me, and I  
16          think that, you know, we will look at it, but  
17          also that what we do -- and you alluded to it,  
18          was that -- it's the flavor of the month. I'm  
19          telling you that we didn't pass the legislation  
20          this year. We haven't been back and they're  
21          already figuring out how to have another piece  
22          of legislation to undo what we just did, that  
23          we're trying to do. And someplace along the  
24          line we've got to have stability, and we are now  
25          putting that process together to get some

1 stability, that we don't take up stuff that  
2 undoes things that we have no data on yet  
3 because we haven't even finished one year and  
4 we're undoing everything that we did, and so  
5 that's the frailty of the election process that  
6 we have.

7 But, again, I commend you all for looking  
8 at it because not a lot of people get an  
9 opportunity to unmask what's really going on,  
10 and you got -- and you folks have really done  
11 that.

12 MS. KORMAN: Mr. Chair --

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

14 MS. KORMAN: -- I have a question for them  
15 before they leave.

16 Do you -- since we no longer have term  
17 limits on our school board, is that a -- all  
18 across the state, or are you aware --

19 MS. BARRETT: Yes, it's all across. We're  
20 the only ones that have term limits.

21 MS. KORMAN: So we're the only ones?

22 Now -- then that's another question I  
23 have --

24 SENATOR WISE: That doesn't make any sense.

25 I mean, let me say this to you: I was for

1 term limits. Okay? I was for term limits, and  
2 then I get in there and I find out that I  
3 wouldn't be -- I wouldn't mind being for term  
4 limits with 12 years because I think most of the  
5 people are gone for 12 -- either you have to be  
6 independently wealthy or you have to be retired  
7 or you have to have another source of income  
8 because you can't live on 28 bucks -- 28,000  
9 bucks a year and go over there and be chairman  
10 of these committees unless you have another  
11 source of income coming in, and I think 12 years  
12 is enough.

13 I think we ought to get rid of the -- the  
14 same thing with school board members. By the  
15 time you -- if you had a new person -- she's  
16 going to win, but if you had a new person coming  
17 in, okay, that has never been on the school  
18 board, I'm going to tell you, it will -- even if  
19 you've been a teacher and an administrator,  
20 you're not going to know the kind of stuff  
21 that -- the finance piece and all this kind of  
22 thing. You really don't get it for a number of  
23 years, and that is what the issue is.

24 And I would be for, you know, a  
25 recommendation from this group that we either

1           make it 12 years or none. You know, go all --  
2           forever, if you want to do that because it makes  
3           a difference, I think. And I think the same way  
4           with the council. I think it's a real problem  
5           with eight years.

6           MS. KORMAN: Mr. Chair, can the secretary  
7           answer that too?

8           THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, absolutely.

9           MR. HORNE: And the question was, now,  
10          what? Was the --

11          MS. KORMAN: Well, the question ends up  
12          being now that -- since we don't have term  
13          limits, is that -- I mean -- and every -- and  
14          I'm not looking at just our school board. There  
15          will be a bad egg across the board somewhere in  
16          some county. When they don't have term limits,  
17          how do we address that? What do we do?

18          (Simultaneous speaking.)

19          MR. HORNE: Well --

20          THE CHAIRMAN: One at a time, one at a  
21          time.

22          MR. HORNE: I guess -- you know, I'm not  
23          sure how you would impose -- I don't even know  
24          if you impose it statutorily or if that's a  
25          constitutional question. I'm probably not -- I

1 can't -- someone else would have to answer.

2 I believe term limits are a good thing. I,  
3 mean, I would agree with Senator Wise. Eight is  
4 probably not right.

5 Now, we're seeing the -- you know, the  
6 final beginning impacts of that, which is a --  
7 sort of a really quick and constant turnover.  
8 And what I don't like is -- in the Florida House  
9 of Representatives, you have candidates running  
10 for office who are also campaigning to be  
11 speaker eight years or six years later, which I  
12 hate that because now everybody is reacting to  
13 that and not reacting to proving yourself before  
14 you could ascend to that kind of authority  
15 because the speaker is the second most powerful  
16 person behind the governor and you've got folks  
17 who have never served one day that are  
18 campaigning and yet they're already trying to  
19 become speaker.

20 Twelve is certainly better than eight. I  
21 do think you need something that purges the  
22 system at some point. Okay? I've seen what  
23 career politicians who grab authority and just  
24 hang in there forever and ever and ever can do.  
25 That's not good either.

1           Eight is probably not the right number.  
2           Somewhere in there, 12, 16, whatever, or  
3           something -- you need something that spreads it  
4           out because you're right, it takes a while to  
5           learn the system. I mean, I first got elected,  
6           I mean, in the first two years, I was still  
7           trying to find the men's room. I mean, it's not  
8           that -- how do you file a bill? How do you get  
9           a bill passed?

10           Now, if you're really good at it, you can  
11           move up the ladder very, very quickly, and so --  
12           but you need -- you need something on -- eight  
13           is too short, but you do need term limits is my  
14           opinion.

15           Now, some would oppose term limits of any  
16           kind. They say you have the right to vote them  
17           in, vote them out, and that's what you should  
18           do, but incumbency is a very powerful thing, and  
19           I think you need to have something that sort of  
20           purges the system at some point.

21           THE CHAIRMAN: Any other -- Commissioner  
22           Youngblood.

23           MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Thank you.

24           Through the Chair to Senator Wise and  
25           Senator Horne, thank you for all that you do

1           legislatively. I've seen in the past some of  
2           the bills you've gone through the very difficult  
3           task to get passed, and I see a lot of it didn't  
4           make it to the floor.

5           The charter is afforded the opportunity,  
6           this board is, to even revisit a section of  
7           election reform, recall by the voters. It's  
8           been brought up several times as far as elected  
9           over appointed, as you can hear, and also the  
10          ability -- once they're elected, there are term  
11          limits. So if we don't have terms limits --  
12          which it seems like you're in favor to not have  
13          the term limits on these positions, but there  
14          needs to be some mechanism -- you made the  
15          statement of answer -- an accountability back to  
16          the people in the event that they need to be  
17          removed.

18          Would you feel that this particular area of  
19          the charter -- which thanks to Steve Rohan, the  
20          General Counsel's Office, he went through the  
21          task of ripping apart and determining, here's  
22          what it takes.

23          Would you be in favor -- because we have to  
24          present this to City Council. City Council  
25          takes it to the Duval Delegation, Duval

1 Delegation takes it to our legislators. Being a  
2 legislator, can we do this or is it an  
3 impossible task to have an easier process of  
4 recall of an elected official? And if that's  
5 the case, then let's remove the term limits  
6 because there will be an easier way to recall.

7 Can we make it easier? Not easy, but  
8 easier?

9 MR. HORNE: Well, I'm glad you said that  
10 last.

11 You know, certainly it needs to be easier,  
12 but it shouldn't be easy because, I mean -- you  
13 know, too often I think elected folks now just  
14 simply -- just react to -- you know, wake up the  
15 next morning and reading the newspapers, they --  
16 just totally reactive, and they're not being  
17 truly representatives of the people. And  
18 sometimes you've got to make a very tough call,  
19 tough decision. And sometimes the general  
20 electorate is not even aware of all of the facts  
21 that are before someone who's got to cast a  
22 vote. And that, you know, is a very, very tough  
23 thing.

24 So it needs to be maybe easier, but it  
25 certainly shouldn't be easy. I mean -- and I

1 don't know what that threshold is.

2 I would correct you. I am for term  
3 limits. I think the school board ought to have  
4 term limits. I don't think it's eight, maybe  
5 it's twelve, but, I mean, I do believe in term  
6 limits because I believe that eventually we need  
7 new blood, we need to purge the system, and  
8 people need to get out and honestly need to live  
9 under these rules they create. Okay?

10 And so, you know, I'm a big proponent of  
11 term limits, still am. You know, I can live  
12 with eight if that's what we decide, but, you  
13 know, I think twelve is probably a better  
14 number, but I believe in term limits.

15 And then term limits, in conjunction with  
16 some reasonable recall law, would work really  
17 well. But if you aren't going to have term  
18 limits, then you probably need a -- maybe a  
19 different threshold for recall that gets even  
20 easier because, you know, you do, at some  
21 point -- I mean, sometimes people just become  
22 obstinate and they need to figure out a way to  
23 get them out and -- but it shouldn't be easy.

24 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: I agree with you.

25 And the reason I bring up the question --

1           and also we'll get to Senator Wise -- but the  
2           difficulty we're having in Duval County with the  
3           recall process, in reading through the very  
4           difficult understanding of that recall process,  
5           a -- 20 percent is what's needed to truly recall  
6           someone of -- say, if it's a citywide race such  
7           as the mayoral race. Twenty percent of those  
8           that are registered voters it takes to remove.  
9           The difficulty we have is the amount of people  
10          that are truly voting. Registered voters may be  
11          600,000. The true people that vote are maybe  
12          10 percent or 12 percent.

13                 We are outnumbered as a citizenry by the  
14          labor unions, the teachers unions, the police  
15          unions. We're outnumbered. They will vote  
16          because they have a vested interest, so then the  
17          people aren't heard. And so that's kind of  
18          the -- the opposite side of the coin.

19                 In the event we do have the recall ability,  
20          will it be the unions, then, that control that  
21          recall ability if it's too easy? And that's the  
22          dynamic I think we sit here for, is to better  
23          understand that.

24                 Now, Senator Wise, if you would --

25                 SENATOR WISE: I have to have the wisdom of

1           Solomon to answer that question, pal. It's a  
2           tough one.

3           I really don't know, and I'd have to, you  
4           know, sit down and think about it a lot. I just  
5           know, like in Dade County, the school board  
6           employs 60,000 people. And so when you look at  
7           what they employ and then you look at the --  
8           their spouse and then their parents of the  
9           spouse, it's about an eight-to-one deal. Okay?  
10          And if they all decided that they wanted a  
11          school board member out, I will tell you they  
12          have done it, and just take them out in the next  
13          election because the teachers union decided to  
14          do it or what have you.

15          They can -- well, all you have to do is  
16          look at the elections that we have going on  
17          right now. Probably 10 percent to 15 percent  
18          will show up, we hope, in that election. In the  
19          Senate race, a person with 26 percent of the  
20          vote out of the 15 that show up -- 15 percent  
21          that show up wins.

22          And so I just tell you that it's -- it's  
23          difficult to sit down and just off the top of  
24          your head, you know, say where you are on the  
25          thing. And we're probably pretty good at that

1           sometimes; it gets us in a lot of trouble. But  
2           I just really don't know the answer. I just  
3           have to think about it a while.

4           MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Thank you.

5           THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, gentlemen.

6           I appreciate you coming down here.

7           MR. HORNE: Could I -- I wanted to clarify  
8           because Commissioner Catlett asked the lottery  
9           question, and I just -- it's not a correction,  
10          but it's just a clarification.

11          And I don't doubt that the numbers that  
12          were mentioned -- from 32- down to 6- is  
13          probably correct, but basically the way the  
14          lottery works -- the lottery generates about  
15          2 billion in revenue. By law, 50 percent has to  
16          go out in prizes, so that nets a billion to the  
17          state. The lottery keeps 12 percent to  
18          administer the lottery. So it's about  
19          880 million, 850 million left over, 180 million  
20          comes off the top to pay for the bonds.

21          Back in '97, '98, there was a crisis in the  
22          classrooms. The State bonded and got about  
23          \$2.8 billion that was distributed to the school  
24          districts to build facilities. So about  
25          180 million of that 850 million comes off the

1 top for that, then another 450 million comes out  
2 to fund Bright Futures, and then what's left is  
3 split 70 percent to school districts, 15 percent  
4 to community colleges, and 15 percent to  
5 universities.

6 So when he talked about that reduction,  
7 that's why that was a reduction. It wasn't the  
8 lottery came down. It wasn't somebody decided  
9 to swipe the money and spend it someplace else.  
10 I mean, that's -- that's kind of why that is the  
11 way it is.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you both. I  
13 appreciate it. I know you are both busy, and I  
14 appreciate you coming up here and having to  
15 stand the whole time. I apologize for that.

16 Mr. Perrone, thank you as well for your  
17 testimony. I appreciate that.

18 I would like for us to have time to hear  
19 public comment. I know Commissioner Oliveras  
20 would like to direct some questions --

21 MR. OLIVERAS: To the school board members  
22 and the superintendent, if possible.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Commissioner Oliveras,  
24 go ahead.

25 MR. OLIVERAS: I'll see who comes up first.

1           (Mr. Hazouri, Ms. Priestly-Jackson, and  
2 Mr. Pratt-Dannals approach the podium.)

3           MR. OLIVERAS: Good morning.

4           It always seems like we run out of time  
5 when we get to you folks, and I've got so many  
6 questions and so little time.

7           What I'd -- I have a question -- actually,  
8 probably Ms. Priestly-Jackson would be the best  
9 to answer this one.

10          Since the -- our initial conversation --  
11 and I was present at the school board meeting  
12 after that -- oh, Mr. Hazouri is here.

13          MR. HAZOURI: (Inaudible.)

14          MR. OLIVERAS: Well, either one.

15          I've been trying to process this,  
16 communication, because I think -- I mean,  
17 obviously, this is your bailiwick, but I believe  
18 the mayor's office has a stake in our children,  
19 I believe the City Council members have a stake  
20 in our children, and my question really is, is  
21 there effective communication between these  
22 governmental branches?

23          And not so much, you know, formal, you  
24 know, can we sit down and have a meeting type  
25 communication, but when issues arise -- the

1 formation of this commission, when it was being  
2 processed, were you a part of that?

3 You know, I get the sense -- we all have  
4 the same concerns, you know, and I -- I would  
5 argue that everybody at these tables have the  
6 same concerns about our children. I've got  
7 three in the system, so I've got skin in the  
8 game, but are our governmental agencies,  
9 branches in Jacksonville, do we communicate? Is  
10 there something that this body could do --

11 And I'll tell you what my thought is. My  
12 thought is some sort of advisory committee to  
13 facilitate communication between the school  
14 board, the City Council, the mayor, back and  
15 forth on issues that are -- you know, present  
16 issues, upcoming issues.

17 But I guess my question to -- to stop going  
18 on about it is, do the governmental agencies or  
19 entities communicate effectively now?

20 MS. PRIESTLY-JACKSON: I don't think we  
21 have communication as effective as we should. I  
22 think we objectify each other. I think we've  
23 created fiefdoms. You know, we think that, you  
24 know, this is your lane, this is your lane, this  
25 is -- it's our community, and -- and one of the

1 actions that we recently took as a board was we  
2 were going to have what we call these major  
3 stakeholder assessments, and one component of  
4 that was to invite the other elected officials  
5 into the schools that are in their geographic  
6 area to give some feedback and input on how the  
7 school is progressing in terms of administration  
8 and leadership.

9 So I think what happens is there are a lot  
10 of rumors that get afoot about what we're  
11 actually doing and what's actually going on, and  
12 so I -- I am very open to ways that I think pass  
13 that, that we can make it a bit formal -- more  
14 formal in terms of actually, in policy,  
15 requiring the engagement.

16 I mean, there are several voluntary  
17 components that Ms. Barrett mentioned earlier.  
18 You have SACs at schools, which is statutorily  
19 recognized, or you could have, you know, an  
20 elected official on the SAC. You could have  
21 anybody else, but I -- I don't think right now  
22 we're having the dialogue to understand the real  
23 challenges that are faced.

24 So, for example, if you hear -- and I just  
25 want to go back -- earlier the conversation was

1           made about Ribault and Raines High School, and  
2           we also have Andrew Jackson and North Shore.  
3           Well, I have the distinction of representing  
4           three of those schools. My son is actually a  
5           senior at Ribault High School. He's also at the  
6           top of his class. He's also -- his class is  
7           responsible for a 10 percent increase in the  
8           students that are proficient because of programs  
9           the superintendent and the board put in.

10                 Folk don't understand that. People move  
11           with their feet, you know, so -- believe it or  
12           not, we don't have captive audiences in schools,  
13           which means I can't make you stay in a school.  
14           And I believe parents have a right to choose.  
15           So if you want to put your child on a bus at  
16           5:30 in the morning and travel 25 miles away,  
17           you have my full support because that's your  
18           decision.

19                 I think what other -- what happens with  
20           other elected officials, they don't understand  
21           the very nature of that -- the whole system in  
22           terms of why do folk leave, why do folk stay,  
23           what are the challenges that the school deals  
24           with. It's not a community that is clearly  
25           defined like it might have been when I went to

1 Ribault 25 to 30 years ago and it was my  
2 neighborhood school that was a viable school, so  
3 I -- I think as much as we can share  
4 information, memorialize it, and require it, I  
5 think it's great.

6 An advisory committee I would not be  
7 opposed to.

8 Your question earlier relative to the  
9 charter commission, we didn't know. I remember  
10 when I got the notice in my board run, I said,  
11 well, who is that? Who are they, you know, and  
12 what's going to happen?

13 Would have loved to have had a little more  
14 engagement and involvement just for ideas, not  
15 for picking -- clearly understand whose  
16 authority it is to pick the commission members,  
17 but what's the profile? What (inaudible)  
18 profile are people on? What's the type of  
19 person or individual or characteristics or  
20 traits you need in a particular position? I  
21 would have loved to be a participant in that  
22 balance.

23 MR. HAZOURI: I think -- and just to  
24 piggyback on what Vice Chairman [sic]  
25 Priestly-Jackson said, it has improved

1           tremendously since the years I've been on. And  
2           Martha can tell you, she was there before us, so  
3           was Brenda. Betty Burney and I got on --

4           But the transparency, first of all, to the  
5           community was our prime concern, making sure --  
6           and we just passed some legislation or -- I call  
7           it legislation -- an agenda item the other day  
8           that Ms. Priestly-Jackson submitted to help  
9           encourage that even further when we're making  
10          appointments to different schools and to make  
11          sure that the community is involved.

12          You can never do enough. I mean, we're not  
13          in the PR business, obviously. PR you get  
14          usually if -- the graduation rate or somebody  
15          didn't pass or somebody had an accident or  
16          whatever. You never really get to the bowels of  
17          what's really going on in the school system, and  
18          I --

19          I ask all of you all -- I don't know how  
20          many -- you said you did. You have three  
21          children. How many have children in the public  
22          school system? It is different. It is  
23          different than Bolles and Episcopal and all. We  
24          do get 123,000 kids from every walk of life.  
25          You can't send them back. They come in all

1 sizes, shapes, and education abilities, but we  
2 know that all of them can learn, and that's what  
3 our motto and that's what our goal is.

4 We have a strategic plan. I'd invite all  
5 of y'all to come next Tuesday with Preston  
6 Haskell, who helped chair this committee -- he  
7 did our garbage tax too for us, but he does a  
8 lot of things. And Preston put together a good  
9 strategic plan that we had never had before,  
10 elected -- or voted on by the school board, any  
11 school board. It has data collections in there,  
12 you see where we are with the achievement gap,  
13 dropout rates, different schools, disaggregated,  
14 not so, the whole gamut.

15 We're having our first official  
16 presentation -- it's been about a year now that  
17 it's been in place -- next Tuesday. There will  
18 be something for you as a candidate too, but  
19 more importantly to see where we've been and  
20 where we're going and what our goals are. We're  
21 having to extend some of those goals because  
22 we've met a lot of them already.

23 And knowing, again -- I know that the  
24 senators have left, but they are not without  
25 sin. And I'll tell that to them, they know it.

1 I was in the legislature for 12 years. I  
2 understand, and I chaired the Education  
3 Committee. They do dictate a lot of things, the  
4 federal government, the state government, and  
5 then we're there waiting to take whatever they  
6 give us and try to budget those items, put the  
7 programs in that work.

8 We are accredited, probably the  
9 fullest -- most fullest -- fully accredited  
10 public school system in the state of Florida  
11 today. I mean -- and their only suggestion to  
12 us is what we've been crying all the time and  
13 saying all the time, programs that work, we  
14 enhance them and move them forward. Those that  
15 don't work, you throw them out and move  
16 forward. And that's what we're doing.

17 But as far as communication -- and just  
18 take you back -- we did meet with the mayor, the  
19 superintendent and I, the chairman does, once  
20 every month or once a quarter, but more  
21 importantly we have constant contact.

22 The superintendent, others from the  
23 administration meet with the sheriff, the State  
24 Attorney -- what is that committee called -- the  
25 Criminal Justice Coalition -- to talk about

1 discipline, to talk about what we can do. We  
2 work with the sheriff's office constantly on  
3 safe schools and safe students.

4 So all of these things take place, and when  
5 I heard -- I guess it was Senator Horne talking  
6 about it earlier, and I think I mentioned this  
7 briefly when I -- when we spoke for, like, about  
8 ten or fifteen minutes a few months ago, and  
9 that is the community usage of everything,  
10 parks, pools, wellness centers, whatever it  
11 might be, joint-use facilities. That's always  
12 been there, and I am a very -- and I think the  
13 board is a big proponent of the joint-use  
14 facilities.

15 We meet with the City Council on Interlocal  
16 Agreements once a year. We're getting ready to  
17 have one -- we meet with the community college  
18 once a year, but we have a constant, ongoing  
19 conversation. And every board member serves on  
20 different entities around the county.

21 The biggest problem that I see -- and I've  
22 always said it. You look at all the  
23 not-for-profits and the different things that  
24 we're doing -- it was like that when I was in  
25 the legislature. What they're doing -- and

1 money is going to drive this thing differently  
2 now -- and the duplication that goes on, whether  
3 it's with drug abuse, whether it's with preK,  
4 whatever it might be, is that there's got to be  
5 some coordination so you're not falling over  
6 each other and there's not a lot of turfism out  
7 there.

8 I used to go down Parental Home Road, being  
9 on the Appropriations Committee. It was one  
10 health agency after the next, drugs, whatever it  
11 might be. It was -- Parental was notorious for  
12 that, but they talked to every legislator, but  
13 they're right in a row.

14 What you need to do is kind of consolidate  
15 those, know what these programs are about, know  
16 who's doing what, and try to, you know, pool  
17 your resources, and that's what we're doing. It  
18 does take a while. There is a lot of turfism  
19 out there, not intentionally, because they have  
20 ideas that they think may or may not be better,  
21 but you need to see what is going on and --

22 And, you know, we didn't talk about parents  
23 very much. If you heard Ronnie Duncan on Face  
24 the Nation Sunday, he'll tell you. You know,  
25 it's not just the principals and the

1 administrators, it's not just the teachers, it's  
2 not just the students, and the parents are the  
3 ones that have to be a player in all of this.

4 Communicating with the parents. All of  
5 them can't do what they do at Mandarin, for  
6 example. Mandarin High is in my district, yes.  
7 Fletcher High, a lot of them have -- almost  
8 ad nauseam, but I love that. But some schools  
9 don't because they don't have the parents, as  
10 was mentioned earlier, they don't have the  
11 guardians, and they don't have those that are  
12 waiting on them to come home, so that's why we  
13 try --

14 And we do put programs in. And the  
15 superintendent can tell you what we put in  
16 there, from what we hear out in the community,  
17 to know what we need to do to keep these schools  
18 from failing and to keep the State from taking  
19 them over -- which is what they'll eventually do  
20 if we don't do our thing, but it's not just us.

21 When you're an urban/suburban, rural school  
22 district, unlike St. Johns County, unlike some  
23 of the others where you have three different  
24 entities that you have to deal with is a much  
25 bigger area that you have to address, much --

1 many, many more needs than you would see in a  
2 St. Johns County. So when you see St. Johns  
3 doing a little bit better in certain areas, it's  
4 because it's mainly a suburban district.  
5 Suburban districts usually do succeed. Suburban  
6 schools usually succeed. But when you have  
7 850 square miles to bus people, to educate over  
8 160 schools, it is a big operation.

9 And, believe me, I've been mayor, I've been  
10 on the school board, you don't want that job.  
11 It's a lot easier being mayor than it is to be  
12 on the school board because you could make  
13 decisions, you could make them instantly, right  
14 or wrong. Here, you don't have that luxury  
15 because of the state and the federal government  
16 dictating a lot of the programs and dollars that  
17 come your way.

18 And it is a slow process, it's a  
19 never-ending process. Everybody knows about  
20 education, everybody has an opinion about  
21 education, so to try to placate each parent,  
22 each student, it's very difficult. But I think  
23 we've taken -- with our professional development  
24 and by listening to the community and being more  
25 and more involved in the community, we're

1 getting there in leaps and bounds.

2 Do we have a dropout rate that needs to be  
3 improved from our 65 or 66 percent graduation  
4 rate? Absolutely. Do we need to do things with  
5 the -- our gap? It's a different name.  
6 We'll -- achievement gap. You know, you said --  
7 we call it --

8 Our goal is to eliminate the achievement  
9 gap, not just to close it, and that's tough.  
10 And we don't have the same problems that some  
11 others do. It's not just, you know,  
12 African-Americans and the white community. The  
13 Latinos in Houston, the African-Americans, the  
14 others, they have even a bigger gap than that,  
15 but you're seeing progress. Sometimes it's only  
16 one or two percent a year, and we'd like to have  
17 more than that, but while working with the  
18 Preston Haskells to come together with a plan,  
19 looking at our budget to see how we can do --  
20 Project Invest is what we did too -- how we can  
21 best spend the dollars that we have, it works.  
22 We do have a relationship out there, and I think  
23 that's become very -- a very effective [sic] for  
24 us.

25 And, bottom line, finishing with this, you

1 talk about governance to the person -- except  
2 for Stan Jordan and W.C., they were the last two  
3 on the board, Martha included, each of us  
4 participated in what they call the Broad  
5 Institute, Eli Broad, where they train and  
6 reform governance. They pay our way, we go  
7 places, we read case histories of all the --  
8 from 7 o'clock in the morning till 9 or  
9 10 o'clock at night. You could put us in this  
10 room, tell us we're in Texas, and we wouldn't  
11 know the difference, but that's how we learn to  
12 be -- to know where to draw that line, to do  
13 reformed governance, to let -- and we -- they  
14 don't -- they can cross over, we don't, and --  
15 and it works. It's getting better and better.

16 Now, if you go back to old guard and try to  
17 do it the way it used to be, it wasn't like  
18 that, and you have your Tuesday night fights  
19 that y'all used to see on television. You don't  
20 see that anymore, but I think it's because we do  
21 have that reformed governance and we are moving  
22 in the right direction to do what today's school  
23 boards need to be doing.

24 If you compare us with other school  
25 districts -- New Orleans of two years ago, to

1 look at them, you would never recognize probably  
2 what they do today and what they did back then,  
3 with the audience -- yelling at the audience,  
4 screaming at the audience, they're a distance  
5 away from you. The communication has improved  
6 tremendously. Still have miles to go before we  
7 sleep better.

8 MR. OLIVERAS: Thank you, sir.

9 One more quick question probably for  
10 Superintendent Pratt-Dannals.

11 Can you -- I'm really excited about the  
12 response to intervention process that's  
13 beginning in the district. It kind of parallels  
14 what my graduate work was in.

15 Can you tell us about that? Can you tell  
16 us about the implementation time line and what  
17 it does and how it's better than what we've had  
18 in place in the past?

19 MR. PRATT-DANNALS: Sure. I'll be glad to.

20 In the past -- this really ties in with  
21 what a standards-based education system is  
22 about. In America, we used to have a norm  
23 reference system; that is, if you were to look  
24 at a bell curve, we had about 20 to 30 percent  
25 of the students being college ready; about 50,

1           60 percent in the middle, would graduate from  
2           high school, but may or may not have job skills  
3           they needed; and then another 20 or 30 percent  
4           didn't even get a high school diploma.

5                    What's changed is the nature of work, and  
6           so -- in the past, everybody got the same  
7           thing. You got the same amount of minutes, you  
8           got the same instruction. Typically, teacher  
9           talking, students listening, students taking a  
10          test.

11                   What's changed is -- we need to get 80,  
12          90 above percent to that level that before we  
13          only got 20 or 30 percent. So that's called a  
14          standards-based education; that is, we expect  
15          all students to meet certain standards, and what  
16          we adjust is time and effort and resources. So  
17          whether or not that's a student who's not  
18          performing well in a high-performing school or a  
19          school that's in a low-performing school that's  
20          going to have a lot of students who are not yet  
21          meeting standards, we adjust time and resources  
22          accordingly.

23                    So response to intervention says that we,  
24          first of all, have very high quality initial  
25          instruction. And if we do that, 70 to

1           80 percent of the students will be able to  
2           master the standards.

3                   There are going to be students who have  
4           disabilities, have issues with their families,  
5           have whatever that gets in the way of them doing  
6           it. So for another next -- about 20 percent, we  
7           have to have some interventions. Those are  
8           called Tier 2.

9                   So Tier 1 is basic instruction. We've got  
10          to get that right. Otherwise, we've got too  
11          many students in Tier 2 and Tier 3. So a lot of  
12          our professional development is getting Tier 1  
13          really right, and they do some differentiation  
14          within that Tier 1. So they'll do some grouping  
15          within the classroom.

16                   The student -- these groups of students  
17          miss this concept on the last test, I'm going  
18          to -- while the rest of the group is working on  
19          some individual assignments, I'm going to pull  
20          them over here and do that.

21                   So all that's within Tier 1.

22                   Tier 2 may be a pullout during the day,  
23          maybe it's time before or after school, maybe  
24          Saturday school, something beyond what the  
25          ordinary classroom teacher can do.

1           And then Tier 3 is very intensive, very  
2           expensive interventions for about 5 percent of  
3           the students.

4           And so what we have to do is get real good  
5           at all three of those, and particularly helping  
6           student- -- helping teachers know how to  
7           differentiate instruction to help kids within  
8           Tier 1 so that the student who may in the past  
9           have gone fairly quickly into an assessment  
10          process for special education, there are other  
11          interventions that happen along the way to  
12          hopefully get them on track and get them  
13          successful without having to be referred to  
14          special ed.

15          Now, there are some kids who need special  
16          ed, so we don't want to go overboard on this and  
17          keep kids out who really need those intense  
18          services, and those are usually in Tier 2 and  
19          Tier 3.

20          It also parallels with what we've done with  
21          inclusion, which is serving special ed students  
22          within regular classrooms where the special ed  
23          teacher comes in and works with the regular ed  
24          teacher to help them, but they get the content  
25          from the regular ed teacher because --

1 particularly the secondary level, before we're  
2 expecting the special ed teacher to be able to  
3 be an expert in English, math, science, social  
4 studies, and they help the students with their  
5 exceptionalities, but they couldn't cover the  
6 bases, and so those kids were losing out in  
7 terms of mastering the content.

8 So this is kind of the best of both  
9 worlds. You've got your content expert and you  
10 have your teacher who specializes in helping  
11 kids with disabilities figure out how to  
12 approach and understand the content with -- with  
13 that special help. So both of those two have  
14 gone kind of together, inclusion and response to  
15 intervention.

16 MR. OLIVERAS: With the Tier 2 --

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Wait --

18 MR. OLIVERAS: I'm sorry.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, Commissioner  
20 Oliveras.

21 What I would like to do, since we're  
22 getting short on time, there are other members  
23 of the public who have sat through, I would like  
24 to give them an opportunity to speak. After  
25 they have done so, we can bring the members of

1 the school board back up to finish, if that's  
2 the will of the commission, but I want to be  
3 fair to other members of the public who have  
4 been here all day.

5 Mr. Scott, would you like to speak?

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

8 (Audience member approaches the podium.)

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Scott, if you'd just  
10 give your name and address for the record.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

12 Stanley Scott, 8734 Dalton Drive.

13 I was concerned about the charter school.

14 I do approve of the charter schools, and I think  
15 the charter schools are very important because  
16 they -- we talked about the kids falling  
17 behind. There are numerous reasons why they  
18 fall behind, and we need to address that through  
19 the charter schools.

20 We are not able to address this through the  
21 school board, being the size of the school board  
22 and the structure of the school board and the  
23 continued program that the school board continue  
24 to implement without giving the real reason why  
25 the ones that they have are failing. I think

1           that's very important here. I think they need  
2           to have a little more accountability with the  
3           program that they already have and give a  
4           program enough time.

5           I'm disappointed also with the situation  
6           with Raines and Ribault. There's no way you  
7           could turn a school around in a year, but they  
8           take the principals out after one year. I don't  
9           understand that, especially when the principal  
10          make a commitment to the community.

11          Now, we're talking about having the parents  
12          involved, but you have to have that commitment  
13          from the community first. Once you establish  
14          that commitment from the community to work with  
15          the principal -- everybody can work with the  
16          students, and that's something that I have a  
17          disappointment with.

18          We need to look at -- now, with the FCAT.  
19          In 2002, the passing of the No Child Left  
20          Behind, the FCAT went from being assessment to  
21          being a qualification for graduation. You need  
22          to take a look at that. That's very important,  
23          the FCAT, because the way it is now with the  
24          FCAT here, if we continue down that road, all  
25          we're doing is setting up a system here for

1 failure.

2 Magnet program. When you go into a -- the  
3 magnet program, especially on the Northside over  
4 there, took out the best and the brightest  
5 students.

6 I went to Ribault. As a student, when I  
7 look up and see other students doing good, that  
8 motivate me. But if you take out all the best  
9 students, leave level 1s and level 2, what you  
10 think the result is going to be? Where's the  
11 motivation? That's very important.

12 With the evolution of technology -- you  
13 take the technology school in the low income  
14 area and turn it into a magnet school where the  
15 people in the area cannot go to school. Where  
16 is the logic behind that?

17 One-third of the -- if we say that  
18 one-third of the foster care children are in --  
19 one-third of them are in prison -- well, let me  
20 back away from that here.

21 With this education here, everything in  
22 this country is based off of education. I don't  
23 care if you're digging ditch -- a ditch, you  
24 have to know how far to dig the ditch, how many  
25 feet. So if we're not going to make education

1           very important in this city, we're not going to  
2           be able to move forward.

3           Now, our best and our brightest students go  
4           to college. The question we share, why they do  
5           not come back to Jacksonville? That's important  
6           because if I went to school with a fellow, he go  
7           off to college and come back and successful in  
8           the city, that motivate me to do better. He can  
9           talk to people in his community. But when you  
10          have so many students that's doing good in  
11          college and go off and don't want to even come  
12          back to Jacksonville, we need to take a look at  
13          that issue.

14          They talk about money. Money is not the  
15          number one issue. It's -- spirit of education  
16          is number one.

17          I mean, regardless of what nationality you  
18          are, you're concerned about education. No  
19          matter how good your kids are doing, if you able  
20          to achieve prosperity, you need to be  
21          concerned. If you love your city, you put money  
22          back in, help the ones less fortunate to come up  
23          in education.

24          Overcrowded schools. Overcrowded schools  
25          have never been a positive. Too many programs.

1           Elementary schools, something I've been  
2           talking to the school board for almost two  
3           years. We talk about the fourth grade being the  
4           point -- the cutoff point where the change take  
5           place. My point is, why are sixth graders in  
6           middle school? Once they go into middle school,  
7           that -- those young minds going to middle  
8           school -- where you have kids smoking, some are  
9           drinking -- those fresh minds are disrupted.

10           Elementary school is very important because  
11           it set the foundation. If the foundation is not  
12           set, you're going to have a problem.

13           Now, we have -- I have been asking the  
14           school board to review that. You see where --  
15           the change that they made from -- moving the  
16           sixth grade to middle school, how has it  
17           affected education? I still have not received  
18           that report.

19           We talked about taking stock in school.  
20           Everybody in this city should be concerned about  
21           education. Why? Because it cut down on crime  
22           when we give back.

23           And everything is not about money. Time is  
24           important. Just going by, sitting by a -- going  
25           to a school in your area and let the kids know

1           that you care. Every time we save one, we save  
2           three because they got friends. Friends see  
3           them motivated, they become motivated.

4           I remember -- and I'm using this for  
5           example. I see my friend last year failing.  
6           Six months later he doing good. That motivate  
7           me because I can say, if he can do it, I can do  
8           it too.

9           And because a child is failing this year  
10          doesn't mean he going to fail next year if he  
11          gets a -- but the problem that really bother me  
12          is the thing that the sheriff department had  
13          with the school system. They are tracking the  
14          kids from school to prison. Now, what -- what  
15          sense does that make? That is not an  
16          intelligent thing there, to be tracking your  
17          kids. So you're saying if I make a mistake as a  
18          child, it going to follow me forever?

19          I remember (inaudible) was wild and crazy.  
20          Yes, last time, before he got his act together  
21          and made his discovery.

22          So it's very important here. Everything  
23          that evolve in this city is based off of  
24          education, so we need to take a very serious  
25          look at education and what we can do on all

1 levels.

2 The second thing, before I end this here,  
3 is these skill centers. When I was coming along  
4 in school, from middle school right on up to  
5 high school, we had skill centers. If you look  
6 around now in the school system, I hardly ever  
7 see any skill centers. That's very important.

8 There's two education -- I may end on  
9 this -- one teach you how to get a job and one  
10 teach you how to live. In Jacksonville we are  
11 failing on both.

12 Have a good day.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,  
14 Mr. Scott. I appreciate it.

15 Mr. Nooney.

16 (Audience member approaches the podium.)

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello.

18 My name is John Nooney, 8356 Bascom Road,  
19 Jacksonville, Florida 32216.

20 You know, when you talked about  
21 communication -- you know, I attended the first  
22 Charter Revision Commission meeting. Here's the  
23 agenda (indicating), and on the agenda, omitted  
24 was an opportunity for public comment.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: What's the date of that

1 meeting?

2 MR. NOONEY: Pardon me?

3 THE CHAIRMAN: What was the date of that  
4 meeting?

5 MR. NOONEY: July 16th.

6 And today, we have it. And I'm elated  
7 because I wanted to speak with you on that  
8 meeting, on July 16th, because one of the  
9 speakers was Jim Rinaman, General Counsel, and  
10 he spoke about, you know, this -- the JCCI  
11 study. Our money, our city, and financing  
12 Jacksonville's future.

13 Now, Mr. Clements, he was also a  
14 participant.

15 And what I wanted to share with you are  
16 just a couple of headlines and then hopefully  
17 just tie it together, and especially when we're  
18 talking about education, right now, at this  
19 time.

20 And this is in 2007, Florida Times-Union,  
21 gym teacher's neglect charges dropped. What  
22 happened? A Paxon middle school teacher was  
23 accused of encouraging a parent to whip his  
24 13-year-old stepson. What's next? The school  
25 board says the district investigation is

1 separate and will continue with plans to fire  
2 him.

3 So think about unions and collective  
4 bargaining.

5 Now, here's another headline. Again in  
6 2007, front page, Times-Union. Council member  
7 puts her name on the line for an old friend.  
8 Councilman goes to court -- person who stole  
9 \$95,00 from the City fund. He stole \$95,000 of  
10 our taxpayer dollars.

11 Now, when you read into the story, the  
12 State Attorney wanted to prosecute. What  
13 happened? The adjudication for this was that  
14 the judge gave probation and ordered him to make  
15 restitution.

16 Now, restitution, what does that mean? And  
17 then who's it for?

18 Now, we go back to this study. You know,  
19 our money, our city, and then financing  
20 Jacksonville's future.

21 Now, some of the resource speakers that  
22 were participating in this, Sheriff John  
23 Rutherford, you know, Cindy Laquidara from the  
24 General Counsel's Office. And my question was,  
25 if somebody was arrested -- stole taxpayer

1           dollars, is there anything that you can do to  
2           recoup those dollars?

3                   And specifically, if that person is  
4           receiving, for example, let's say a pension or  
5           was receiving taxpayer dollars -- now, I don't  
6           know any of these people, but the answer was  
7           that nobody could do anything, and that's where  
8           this Charter Revision Commission comes in  
9           because you can do something. You have the  
10          ability and the power to assist the office --  
11          well, more specifically, the State Attorney's  
12          Office.

13                   And you look at it as a clawback. I mean,  
14          there are -- I just shared these two examples  
15          with you. There are doz- -- there's hundreds of  
16          them. And when the general public opens up the  
17          paper and sees this all the time, you have to  
18          say to yourself, you know, what's wrong?

19                   And so for the next -- if nothing happens  
20          with this commission, and for the next ten years  
21          when you read any of these -- and it could be  
22          across the board -- in my opinion, it would have  
23          to come back to this commission for not taking  
24          action to do something.

25                   You have the ability to create a J bill,

1           and then even working with the legislature  
2           because it can't be done, or at least my  
3           interpretation or opinion, maybe it can.

4           But you do have the ability in that if you  
5           were to change it so that the State Attorney's  
6           Office could then use a clawback -- and as  
7           Senator Wise alluded to -- and even with the --  
8           everyone's going to be looking for funding. And  
9           if that person -- and I haven't had a chance to  
10          talk to Ron Barton. This -- this came from JEDC  
11          funds, and so now in his budget, has he received  
12          any of this money back? Should it go right to  
13          his budget?

14          So, anyway, I just will know -- and I just  
15          really welcome the opportunity to speak, and I  
16          am just so elated that -- attending the first  
17          meeting that public comment wasn't on the  
18          agenda, but at this meeting it is on the  
19          agenda. And that part of transparency is huge,  
20          and that is one of the primary recommendations.  
21          It's right here, the public trust. It's been  
22          destroyed in this community. You really have  
23          the ability to bring it back, and slowly I think  
24          it's happening.

25          So, anyway, like I said, I've asked

1           everybody, Sheriff Rutherford, Cindy Laquidara  
2           and others -- and if I haven't conveyed what I  
3           was -- been trying to share with you -- and  
4           Mr. Clements, not to put the pressure on you,  
5           but I was bringing the -- you know, when you are  
6           in future discussions, this commission, I feel,  
7           has the ability to make that change happen. And  
8           if it doesn't, then, in my opinion, I can look  
9           back to this commission for the next ten years  
10          and say you had your chance.

11                   Thank you for listening.

12                   THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Nooney.

13                   Anybody else from the public wish to  
14          speak?

15                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Right here.

16                   THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

17                   (Audience member approaches the podium.)

18                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you for giving me a  
19          moment.

20                   My name is German Vivas. I reside at 1378  
21          Rensselaer Avenue, here in Jacksonville, 32205.

22                   I'm a former Job Corps schoolteacher,  
23          14 years of age [sic], certified in  
24          North Carolina teacher.

25                   Unfortunately, my health went south and I

1 had to come down here with it to get better, and  
2 I thank the Lord for the city of Jacksonville  
3 for having so many great health places to get  
4 healed up.

5 I feel very personal when I see a whole  
6 school system quaking at its foundation, but  
7 I've seen solutions when I was working at the  
8 Job Corps center, dealing with 16- to  
9 24-year-old young men. These folks were much  
10 bigger than I was, and I was that little  
11 98-pound woman, except in a male form, and it  
12 was very, very menacing at first, but certainly  
13 a master teacher can certainly give some best  
14 practice, and my best practice is what really  
15 saved our school.

16 We went from less than 10 percent to the  
17 top 10 percent in the Atlanta region, and it was  
18 really a team concept, but a team concept is  
19 sort of old. Now I have a new term for that,  
20 and it's called mission versus task because --  
21 the gentleman at the right-hand side, all the  
22 way at the end, he asked a question, how can we  
23 have ten of -- one of the -- two of the top ten  
24 schools in the nation, and how can we have two  
25 of the least? So, from my perspective, we have

1 a mission. We're lacking mission all the way  
2 around.

3 And I believe one of the other council  
4 members very wisely said that the entire program  
5 or the entire system is really -- has the  
6 opportunity to either do or not do. So, from my  
7 perspective, translate instead of bricks and  
8 mortar into mission where you have no longer  
9 interdepartmental conflicts.

10 And I understand the gentleman's viewpoint  
11 on faith. I hold that strength in me because  
12 I've survived this many years with my health  
13 issues, but some other folks don't share that  
14 same viewpoint, unfortunately.

15 The bottom line is, please emphasize  
16 mission versus task because if you take a school  
17 in the least wealthy community somewhere -- and  
18 I lived in the Appalachian mountains most of my  
19 adult life. And, believe me, we have some  
20 pretty good, wise folks up there that can  
21 outspit you, outfight you, and outthink you.

22 So bricks and mortar, not necessarily does  
23 it make a wise student. What it really does  
24 is -- when you have the -- the community come  
25 together as a mission and everyone in those

1 components consider that mission and not be  
2 territorial where, you know, this is my part  
3 versus someone else.

4 Thank you.

5 That's my -- been my experience.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. Thank you  
7 for your comments and thank you for your  
8 patience. I appreciate it.

9 Commissioner Catlett, I know you had a  
10 request.

11 MR. CATLETT: The reason I asked those  
12 questions earlier of Senator Wise and past  
13 Senator Horne was not to in any way criticize  
14 our school board -- I think they're doing a  
15 wonderful job -- but to get a different  
16 perspective because we all have our perspectives  
17 and we had some great questions today, I  
18 thought, but I want to have a reaffirmation of  
19 faith.

20 So in view of what they brought us in  
21 writing and discussion, I'd like to move that  
22 we -- recommend that we keep an elected school  
23 board and an appointed superintendent. That  
24 seems to be the best system, and both men agree  
25 on that, except for the pay issue, which is not

1           what we were talking about.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Catlett, I feel  
3           that motion is premature at this time. This  
4           isn't the only meeting we're going to have on  
5           this issue. There are other speakers that I  
6           think the commission could benefit from hearing  
7           from, and we also have several commissioners who  
8           are either absent or had to leave because we've  
9           gone over time, and I certainly don't want us to  
10          be taking dispositive votes without everybody  
11          being around the table.

12          MR. CATLETT: That's fine.

13          THE CHAIRMAN: So if you would indulge me,  
14          there will be time when we will move toward some  
15          closure on some issues, but I don't think this  
16          is the appropriate time on that issue.

17          MR. CATLETT: I'd like to withdraw my  
18          motion.

19          THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.  
20          Commissioner Flowers.

21          MR. FLOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22          I have one concern that the school board  
23          might strengthen the activities in their  
24          (inaudible). Very rarely have I seen students  
25          attending those, and that's where they learn

1 citizenship and that's where you get your  
2 ombudsman or spokesman for the school.

3 If the school is good enough for those that  
4 attended, certainly they can prevail upon their  
5 friends to come and we wouldn't be losing  
6 students at that school just because of that.

7 These children are not (inaudible)  
8 decision-making. They're old enough in high  
9 school to participate in the decision-making in  
10 those schools. And I won't call the names, but  
11 some of them changed the hours so that certain  
12 constituents can't be there, and they have --  
13 should have minutes to reflect this. And I was  
14 just wondering how often does the school board  
15 review LSAC or SAC minutes so that we could get  
16 an interpretation for that.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Before we get that answer,  
18 our court reporter has to go, so -- she has  
19 Planning Commission at one o'clock, so -- Diane,  
20 you could go ahead and go. You don't need to  
21 stay.

22 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Should I motion to  
23 adjourn?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I do want Commissioner  
25 Flowers to get an answer to his question.



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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA:

COUNTY OF DUVAL :

I, Diane M. Tropa, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

Dated this 22nd day of September, 2009.

Diane M. Tropa