

10th Annual Gesu Symposium on Inner-City Education
Inner-City Education: What's Old? What's New? What's Next?

November 1, 2007
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Panelists: Christine S. Beck, *President and CEO of Gesu School*
James W. Brown, *Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Casey's Office*
Winston J. Churchill, *Board Chairman of Gesu School and the Gesu Institute*
Kathleen M. deLaski, *President of the Sallie Mae Fund*
Juan Williams, *Senior Correspondent for NPR's Morning Edition, Anchor for FOX News Channel, and Regular Panelist for FOX News Sunday*

Moderator: John J. DiIulio, Jr., Ph.D., *Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society and Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania*

Transcription of Proceedings

Performance by the Gesu Gospel Choir directed by H.L. Ratliff

This is the Day that the Lord has Made, Rejoice!
You Raise Me Up

Student Asia: Good afternoon and welcome to the Gesu School. My name is Asia West. I have been at Gesu since I was five years old. This June I will graduate. Next fall I hope to go to the Springside School for Girls. I enjoy attending Gesu. I enjoy the teachers, the afterschool programs, and I especially like choir and art. I like my friends. They keep me focused and help me set my goals. When I grow up, I would like to be a pediatrician because I think it is important that those of us who have a good education use this education to help others. I want to help children be healthy. Thank you for coming. [Applause from audience]

Win Churchill: Good afternoon again. I'm Win Churchill, Chairman of the Gesu School. I want to welcome a lot of familiar faces and some new faces to our 10th annual symposium. It's the second time that we've been able to have the symposium in this beautiful hall, the Sherrerd Gymnasium. And I think many of you are very familiar with the Gesu story, which is a really unbelievable story at this point. It's a little fashionable I guess in society now to be pessimistic, particularly about big cities and the inner cities. But if there's any reason for optimism, and there's plenty of reason for optimism, you just saw it here with the choir and our kids. So we say "Gesu Works" and we believe that and I think we absolutely think that that's demonstrable. So why does it work? If you look at the symposium topic there are three question marks in the topic. So the first thing I think that's very important in these matters is to ask the question correctly. Can you get the question right? So much of our public debate these days is about the wrong questions, demagoguery and so forth and doesn't really amount to a hill of beans in terms of any wisdom. So here we constantly ask ourselves questions and try to get the questions right. And we started with this year's topic with fewer questions, and it was "What's new in inner-city

education?" And then in discussing it we said, "Well, unfortunately, and maybe Gesu is an exception, a wonderful exception, there's a lot more that's old in the situation with respect to education in our inner cities than that's new." There are a lot of news stories that come out of the Gesu every year, and for a lot of good reasons, but we don't know all the answers. So the purpose of our symposia is not just to talk about Gesu and the purpose of the Gesu Institute is not just to talk about the Gesu, because we think here for many reasons we have it substantially right. Gesu does work for our kids and for our families. So why do we have it right? Are we able to abstract from the experience here some more general principles that can be applied in other schools? I was out at Immaculata University earlier this week, and of course the IHM sisters along with the Society of Jesus are our sponsoring orders, and thank God for them, with very few Catholic kids of course in the student body. So this is a wonderful tribute to the founding principles of those two great orders. And David McCullough had been there a few days earlier talking about his great book *1776*. And a few days after that David McCullough was at Carpenters' Hall, which is of course where the Constitution was debated and framed, and that's about six miles from here. O.K., so there's a whole set of principles that were adopted for our country by that great group of men and women more than 200 years ago. And then about 100 or so years ago, John Dewey and others decided that equality and justice demanded that there be public education, so that people would have a fair shot at rising through the ranks of what was becoming a very complex society and now is even more so. So equality and justice are still the basic principles of what we're about here. And there are a lot of different ways to skin the cat and we don't propose or kid ourselves that we have all the answers here. So the purpose of these symposia and something like the Gesu Institute is to try to first ask the correct questions, gain some wisdom from experience and also from the founding principles that you're operating on, and try to spread that knowledge into other schools. If we were all to walk the six miles between here and Carpenters' Hall, we would pass about eight schools that unfortunately do not work as well. Some of them don't work at all. O.K. And I said here before, it's not about money. I also had the benefit of a meeting with the Secretary of Education on Tuesday, Margaret Spellings, a great public servant, a wise woman, you know, and has done an tremendous job. No Child Left Behind, she's essentially the authoress of that legislation. And that's now been effected in all 50 states and there are a lot of political issues about that in terms of intervention by one bureaucracy, in my view, onto other bureaucracies, so you know you get the battle of the bureaucracies and people going nose to nose, debating very often the wrong questions. Right? But the budget for No Child Left Behind for this coming year is, take a guess, \$24.5 billion. Billion. So it's not about the money. It's not about the kids. It's not about our families. You know, there's something that, we need to crack the code, we continue to have these sessions. We do it here. We do it annually. We do it every day really. What is it exactly that's necessary to make these schools work? And it's not a real simple answer, but I don't think it's rocket science either because here we have an example of a school that does work. And you know, I think it has to do with the care, it has to do very much with what goes on in the classroom, the love of the teachers for the kids, the love of the kids for the teachers, the participation of the families, and people like yourselves who care enough to ask these questions, and try to learn about the answers. So we're very very grateful always for anytime we can get anybody down to the Gesu, we try to have everything here. And we're lucky and we're fortunate and we thank God really for all of you and for this great school. And now I'm going to introduce the panel, which is another great pleasure. You have fairly long bios of all the members of our panel, so I'll say a few more personal words I think.

On the left end is my partner Jim Brown. Jim had been a trustee of the Gesu for many years and had been a partner in our firm for twelve years, and then was called back to public service, so he's presently Chief of Staff to Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania. Prior to that he was Chief of Staff to Governor Robert Casey, Bob's father, and served for many years in that role. Jim was the man that held the meeting at Carpenters' Hall. Typical of Jim and of the way we try to do things in a conciliatory fashion, is that they had Chiefs of Staff not only from the Democratic side but also from the Republican side in one room. Amazingly, it reminded me of Dr. Strangelove – you know you can't fight in here, this is the war room. [Laughter from audience] So we miss Jim very much up here, but the republic is better for having him where he is in Washington.

Kathleen deLaski is the president of the Sallie Mae Fund, which is the nonprofit organization connected to Sallie Mae. She has a very very distinguished career prior to that. Of course Sallie Mae is very very important in higher education and in other aspects of education – college preparedness and that sort of thing. Kathleen was a correspondent for NPR for some years. She was the first female spokesperson for the Department of Defense, under I think President Reagan, and then President Ford the first, yes?

Kathleen deLaski: Actually Clinton.

Win Churchill: And Clinton, briefly. A brief encounter with Clinton. So Kathleen, thank you very much for accepting our invitation.

And Juan Williams probably needs even less introduction. Juan is the correspondent at NPR that you hear every morning if you listen to NPR, and you probably should, also the author of a recent book on the Bill Cosby matters, and he's in our opinion on the right side of all of these issues. So Juan, we thank you very much for taking time to be here today.

John DiIulio [moderator] again needs no introduction. He's the Fox Leadership professor at Penn, formerly head of the Faith-Based Office at the White House. He's been a Gesu trustee, I guess, virtually from the beginning, John. And one of the wisest men we could ever call upon.

And then Chris Beck is of course our president. Along with the teachers and other members of the staff, she's spending her life in these halls, and that's where it really comes from. I think that's the distinguishing factor – it's the love and the care and the judgment and the concern that's telegraphed everyday from Chris and the staff and our teachers to our children, and vice versa, and to our families. So that's kind of the distinguishing feature I think of this kind of education. It's not just about testing for math and testing for reading and where are we. The objective things, which are about the only things that government can do, is to allocate money and to say in order to be responsible with the allocation, we have to have some accountability, so now we have to have objective tests and you know, you have all that debate are they really a) objective, and b) meaningful, more importantly. But here it's about character formation, in addition. And that's long in the tradition of the IHM sisters and the Jesuit order, because the formation of our kids' character is the most important thing that we can convey here. As you know, Gesu is open admissions, so it's a neighborhood school, first come first served, and that's

a bit of a challenge sometimes in the classroom because you're teaching, you know, to a very spread out kind of academic population. But the common factors have to do with the character formation, and basically you know, what is the meaning of life, and what is the meaning of life in the 21st century in a country that was founded six miles from here. So these are the kind of questions that we like to promote. And now I'm going to stop and turn it over to John.

John DiIulio: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. [Applause from audience] Thanks everyone for coming out. It's a special privilege today to be back for the 10th Gesu symposium and to have such an incredible group of people to be here with us to discuss issues related to the health and well being and future of inner-city children. It's a real treat to be with Win, obviously, and Chris our Gesu colleagues; with Jim our Gesu colleague always and forever; and with Kathleen; and with Juan, who is, along with Gesu's own Tim Russert, the best, most thoughtful, most truth-telling voice there is in national politics and media affairs. So it's a real privilege to be with you all.

My job – and I'm really glad for the new gym, because with this table, you can't see the rest of me, huh yeah. [Laughter from audience] I lost about sixty pounds since last year. I gained seventy. But in any case, [Laughter from audience] but I did lose sixty.

Let me try to just very quickly frame these issues. And then I want to turn – I'll pitch a question, a bit of a focus, going first to Chris, and then to Jim, then Kathleen, and then Juan, with Chairman Win there to jump in at any point in time. You don't tell the chairman when to jump in, he just does. Let me try to frame where we're at, because this is our 10th symposium, and ten years ago when we assembled in the basement here at the Gesu with Tim Russert, we had a lot of questions, a lot of aspirations. And I think for the Gesu School, as Win said, we've met, largely, if not exceeded, our aspirations, in terms of our children achieving, in terms of this incredible space that we're in now for our children. But then as now, we were about the question of the children who are not in, if you will, our own life boat, and how do we reach out and help and sort of Gesuize the world, if you will. And the Gesu Institute with our great Executive Director Letitia Biddle, who I know is here somewhere, and also with the help and support of our friends in the Fox program at Penn, has really made an effort to sort of spread the good news, if you will, about how to lift up and improve inner-city education more generally.

And I think if you step outside of Gesu and Philly and you look nationally, you will find that some good things have happened over the past ten years. Since the first symposium was held, for example, there has been an increase – pretty significant increase actually – over the last five or six years in the amount of money that the federal government supplies to schools that teach inner-city kids. Title I funding, so-called, is up about 25% over the past five or six years. And while money is not the answer, it's always better to have more, especially if you do good things with it. That's the good news with respect to public funding. With respect to nonpublic schools, however, in finances, the independent school sector, the Catholic school sector that serves inner-city kids, has struggled. Bottom line is there are fewer Catholic schools serving poor children today than there were ten years ago when we had our first symposium and that's a real real concern. I say, Jim, the debate about vouchers will be over and we'll have vouchers the day the last Catholic school closes in urban America, when there are no schools left hardly to supply the quality education. Also since '97 there have been some educational gains. If you look at the

standardized testing, there have been some gains. And they're not trivial gains, but and as you know I am a social scientist which means I do engage in the elaborate demonstration of the obvious by methods that are obscure, I would tell you that the only real gains that can withstand sort of tests of statistical significance are among nine-year-olds in K-12 math. And those gains are national. Those gains do not apply, per say, to poor children, to low income children, to children as we would have so many here concentrated in North and North Central Philly. Among the poorest children in urban American, extreme rates of educational failure and stubbornly high drop out rates are as bad as they were a decade ago. And in fact, if you saw the report the other day about these schools, 12% of the schools – I don't like the title – “Factories of Failure” – but 12% of them are schools where, in places where, in school districts where, only 60% of kids will graduate from high school. That obviously is a sad statistic and unacceptable. And then quickly, a few months ago the Jack Kent Cook Foundation put out a report – and truth in advertising, I was a coauthor of that report – but the Jack Kent Cook Foundation put out a report which documented something that I never prayed so hard that the findings would come out differently than they did, and was disappointed. We looked at the nation's highest-achieving quartile of students. And then we broke it down by income. And what we found is that if you look at kids who are in the bottom quintile, or the bottom two quintiles of the economic distribution, who are in the top quartile, the top quarter, in terms of test scores and achievement – so the high-achieving children – they are lost to what we called the “achievement trap.” What happens to those children is, the children who are high academic achievers, who are also however low-income, drop out of school and fail to graduate and fail to go on to college at about the same rate as lower-achieving low-income kids, which means that we're not doing a good enough job in lifting up and supporting even those kids who are naturally gifted, naturally talented. They're getting lost in the shuffle. They're falling in between the cracks. We're not doing our job. We do have this achievement trap.

Now, all that said, as Win indicated, we here at the Gesu and the Gesu Institute believe and hope in the unseen. We even occasionally believe and hope in the seen. We believe that all children can succeed. And we believe that no matter what their reality, we should do all that we can and if necessary die trying. There are things that are happening out there to lift up and support inner-city children in inner-city schools. There are ways and means and strategies. There is a greater general consciousness even though we are still unfortunately leaving millions and millions of kids behind.

So to begin to talk about what's old, what's new, in inner-city education, from a standpoint of somebody who is up close and personal, and where the rubber meets the road, our own Chris Beck. Chris, why don't you give us first a little bit of assessment, and then, a couple of - I hope - hopeful assessments of where we might go over then next ten years.

Chris Beck: Sure. Well, obviously, everyone has said so far that Gesu School works, so that's my starting point. And we do have open admissions. Our mission is to serve this neighborhood, the children who live here. I venture to say every one of our children in the building has had a personal experience of gun violence at some level. It is not unusual for family members to be incarcerated. These children's lives are not beautiful, but the children are. And I know that each and every one of you agrees with me that every one of them deserves a fair shot at a quality education. It's the only way we're going to break the cycle of poverty and violence in our cities.

Two statistics of Gesu's graduates I'd like to put on the table here. One is from Gesu's graduating class of 2003: 91% graduated from high school in June, on time, in four years. And we all know how dismal our city's overall high school graduation rate is. Of our [Applause from audience] Yeah. We're proud of that. Of our last year's 8th graders who have all begun high school, 30% of them are in highly selective college prep schools, whether Catholic, independent, or magnet schools. That too is amazing when you think almost all of them started with language deficits way below grade level. That same group of 8th graders improved their Terra Nova test scores an average of 68% over their scores in 4th grade. [Applause from audience]

It can be done and I think part of the reason how it can happen here is we have a really strong infrastructure. We have a fabulous board of trustees. We have amazingly committed and mission-driven faculty and staff and volunteers. We provide so much remedial work it's amazing. Two full-time special ed teachers, an after-school literacy program for 1st through 4th graders who are below grade level. But at the other end of the spectrum, we provide advanced math and advanced writing, across the board. The single-gender classes that earlier we were talking about, the problem with black males in the inner city – our single gender classes in 3rd through 5th grades have kept our boys in school – with male teachers, mind you, great male role models – have kept our boys in school, achieving and caring about learning. Because of this infrastructure, I think we're able to take risks. We're able to try things that are innovative. Yes, we have to raise a lot of money to do it, but it really makes a difference. As we've been exploring the Gesu Institute and seeing how that's evolving, and thanks to Letitia Biddle who John mentioned, with her wonderful creativity and high energy to make this work, to reach out to meet the needs of nonpublic schools that really want to strengthen themselves and better educate their children. But as we're seeing, this lack of strong infrastructure is one of the biggest problems. With limited funds there are no options. You can't take risks. You can't try new things. You can't keep full-time music and art teachers and computer teachers. So it's a big problem. We're excited that in June, Letitia has arranged a partnership with the Office of Catholic Education to host a week-long intensive leadership training initiative for school administrators. This should be the start of something really important. And if I could just have one more minute to focus on what's next...

John DiIulio: You absolutely may. You absolutely may.

Chris Beck: What I hope is that we will all start opening our thinking and stop thinking of ourselves in these little boxes. Here's the box of parish schools. Here's the charter schools. Here are the independent schools. We have all got to start talking to each other and learning from each other. The public schools will never have nuns as principals. We know. However, there's a lot public schools can learn from Catholic schools: classroom management, values, behavior modification, behavior expectations. There's a lot that we faith-based schools can learn from public schools. Should we require that our teachers be state certified? Should we extend the school day? Should we extend the school year? I don't know the answer to these questions. But I think we should ask them and talk about them. The KIPP model is outstanding – intensive college-preparatory, extended day. They go 7:15 to 5 p.m. with a required three-week summer session. And those children earn the highest test scores in the city. 91% of them exceed the advanced or proficient and they're all low-income children. And then there's Young Scholars Charter School just a few blocks from here. The school had took 14 teachers and staff to Boston

to visit the very successful Excel Academy Charter School. They came back and revamped the entire operation: curriculum, assessment, classroom management, schedules, discipline. They're requiring that every student track whoever is speaking in the classroom, whether it's a teacher or somebody else. Follow with your eyes. What a great idea. They're using noise level monitors and they require, require, peer observation, I think six times a year within the classroom. So many good ideas. And I really hope moving forward we will just keep sharing them.

John DiIulio: Thank you, Chris. Thank you. [Applause from audience] Thank you, Chris. And Jim, you, as I say, are a member of the Gesu family. And Senator Bob Casey – and as you all know, I am a strict non-partisan – but I love the sound of that. Senator Bob Casey taught here, in a 5th grade class I believe, when he was in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. From the standpoint now though of your perch in our nation's capitol, what can we hope for?

Jim Brown: Well, thanks John. I just wanted to say in the beginning as Win said, I was a member of the board of trustees here for 12 years, I think, and had to resign when I went to Washington in January, but amazing, ten short months later, I am back as an expert from out-of-town. [Laughter from audience] And it was a great time and I was sitting here and I was reminded that Win always attributed to me the idea of having SCP sponsor the scoreboard, so that whenever anybody, lest anyone forget. But as John said, I have a long history with the Gesu and Senator Casey, actually as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corp when he was first out of Holy Cross, taught for a year here. He taught 5th grade and he coached the 8th grade basketball team. We'll not disclose the record of the basketball teams. I hear they're doing well these days. At any rate, I think if there's any audience in any place where I feel that after being in Washington for almost a year, both the Senator and I, to this group and in this place, I think we owe an account of our stewardship, as they say in the Bible. So I'd like to talk for just a couple minutes about what we've been up to.

One of my first assignments as Chief of Staff – you know we had to hire an entire staff – one of the first assignments was to hire a legislative assistant who would do nothing but work on children's issues. And we managed to find a very senior person that we stole from the Children's Defense Fund, but she had specific credentials, including having been taught in grade school by IHM nuns and in high school by Jesuits. [Laughter from audience] So, but at any rate, we have worked on a number of things that are related to education in the broad sense and specifically to working with children to make them prepared to receive the kind of education they can get at, hopefully, places like the Gesu School. And I'd just like to mention a couple of them as we're going. First we've worked an awful lot on the CHIP program. You've heard all about it, I'm sure. There's a major dispute in Washington. Senator Casey has been way out in front on that. And it's basically trying to extend children's health care to more kids who are not the poorest of the poor, but rather the children of the working poor. And that's an ongoing battle. We also have spent a lot of time and have introduced a pre-K, early childhood education bill. We worked actually quite closely with Senator Clinton on that. And the theory of it is that Headstart provides pre-K education for the poorest of the poor, and this would take it from about 135% of poverty to 200% of poverty, again, the slightly less poor kids who could benefit greatly from a pre-K education. Senator Casey – I think there are probably a lot of people in this room who know him – and he's usually a fairly calm and reserved person. But I will tell you that I did witness his first tantrum as United States Senator, and appropriately, it was over the subject of children's

nutrition. He's a member of the Agriculture Committee and we've been doing the Farm Bill this year and one of the big issues, of course, in the Farm Bill is funding for Food Stamps, School Nutrition, the School Fruits and Vegetables Snack program, that sort of thing. And in a meeting of the senators, members of the Agriculture Committee, he did turn red and start yelling over proposals to actually to cut nutrition programs, and I am happy to report that at least so far what came out of the Senate adds 3 billion dollars to the Food Stamp program, and also significantly more money for some of the snack programs that hopefully we may see showing up at the Gesu. Our next big project is a Very Early Childhood Education Bill and that harkens back to some of the discussions that I heard last year at this seminar, about how developmental issues and other issues for kids can be identified very early, very early, sometimes when kids are six months to a year old, and you will be seeing us come out maybe before the end of this year or early next year with a bill that would address development and diagnostic issues and funding for those kinds of things for children ages 0-3. We've also done a lot of things, or proposed to do a lot of things on strengthening families, from nurse visitation to coaching of first-time mothers, mental health treatment for kids without dropping them into the child welfare system but allowing them stay with their families, something I think Chris would be very interested, which is a bill which provides financial assistance for grandparents and other relatives who happen to be the primary caregivers for kids.

Chris Beck: Outstanding.

Jim Brown: And obviously, we've been talking a lot about violence. I mean you only have to read *The Inquirer* this morning to see how horrific that is and what affect that has on our kids. Some of the things that have happened so far: progress on adding more money back into the so-called COPS program, the community policing program, which I think can be very effective. And we have had a lot of below-the-radar discussions already with the prospective new mayor of Philadelphia, so more there. But I just end with saying that I think that every one of the issues I described has its supporters and it has its detractors. And everything seems to be a battle in Washington and coming as I do from the tutelage of Win and the venture capital world, I will say that so many of these programs that I'm talking about for kids, particularly kids early on, can be defended on purely financial return on interest grounds. There's plenty of significant evidence that says that shows that money spent on the Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program, you spend a dollar now, you save \$6 on programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and chronic disease treatment, that sort of thing. It currently costs \$40,000 a year to house someone in prison in Pennsylvania. Think about what you could do with \$40,000 per kid in anything. The preschool program that we've been talking about as an addition to Headstart, academic studies, depending on which you look at, go from for every \$1 spent, a return of either \$7 to up to \$15 on money you don't spend on special education, on remedial education, on drop out issues. I mean, you know, a 17x return I think is one that even Win would accept. [Laughter from panel] So we defend these and push these kinds of programs both on moral grounds first, but also, on as I said, pure financial investment grounds. And hopefully, and I would finally note that every single one of the programs that I just mentioned doesn't make any distinction between public and private schools. Every single one of them is available to the kids from the Gesu and from other schools like it. So stay tuned, but we are, as I said, hopefully giving a reasonable account of our stewardship.

John DiIulio: Thank you, Jim. [Applause from audience] My suggestion for all the contention in Washington is – especially when they have the hearings and there are all those food fights – is we’re going to have the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart make a Marine-style landing on Capitol Hill and straighten it all out. [Laughter from audience] Where is Sister Ellen when you need her? She’s somewhere.

Chris Beck: Right there.

John DiIulio: There she is. You ready Sister?

Kathleen, you’ve got such a breadth of experience, I don’t even know which way to pitch the question to you because you’ve seen this from the vantage point of school finance. Obviously, you’ve seen it from the vantage point of someone who has been very very deeply involved in other aspects of government and governance, and also as a journalist. From each of those perches, what do you think about the possibilities of lifting up and supporting kids in inner-city schools, low-income kids, at this particular point in the country’s history.

Kathleen deLaski: I’ll leave the journalistic comments to Juan because that’s old history for me.

John DiIulio: Old history. All right.

Kathleen deLaski: I, first I want to say that this is a magical place. When I walked in the door, the kids, they’re watching us, and happily watching us, and they’re modeling, and you don’t see that when you walk into a lot of schools. They’re interested in us, which to me is an excellent sign of engagement, so I applaud you for what you’ve done already. I know that Win has mentioned to me, and I’ve heard Chris and John say this today that you do worry about the fact that you can only create this magical place for 450 – is that how many students we have at Gesu? So I’d like to, I want to make two points and the first one is really sort of how, as a funder, as a foundation – the Sallie Mae Fund is a foundation, and sort of as a corporate foundation – we approach this issue of inequity in inner-city education really kind of from a business perspective. And you know the two buzz words in business that spring to mind to deal with this thorny issue are scale and leverage. So let me give an example of one thing that our corporate foundation got involved with in Washington, because while the cities are not exactly the same – we’re based in D.C., so that is our laboratory – we got very involved in the charter school movement, as I know the Institute is, we also have been involved in supporting Catholic schools. And a group of people like yourselves got together about five or six years ago and tried to develop something they called the three sector strategy, so traditional publics, charters and the parochial schools in effect. And part of what came out of that is looking at ways we could leverage our investments and try to create a sort of a catalytic investment, was we were sort of assigned, because we were interested in charters. And let me just say why charters for us. It really came down to the fact that you could take the public dollars, because you were getting a, you get a per pupil spend that you can put towards, you know, running your school for every student. Same here in Philadelphia I understand. And we also had a facilities fund, so we basically could take the public dollars and create an almost a private sector school model. That’s what charters are doing everywhere. That’s not unique to Washington. But that interested us because the scalability of really a public-private partnership was particularly appealing. And a lot of us got involved in our particular

piece that we were assigned, to sort of Chris's point, of how do you provide all these services? We did the, we created a separate non-profit called Building Hope, which has really helped 15 or 16 charter schools in D.C. and is branching out to other cities now, on the financing, so basically the facilities challenges, which are big everywhere. You all have helped to solve yours with this fabulous upper two floors, but those kind of facilities challenges, finding space, expanding space, for all of the schools in D.C. was a, it was an impediment to even moving forward for the very forward-thinking charter school leaders. So we basically created an infrastructure to support all of the charter schools in doing that. And what started out as low-cost financing, credit enhancements, extended to being really running their back office for some of them, the ones who wanted us to. So I only throw out that example to suggest that there are ways, and I know that there are several organizations in Philadelphia too, to connect those dots, to sort of string the life boats together to use your analogy, to think about how to serve many schools at the same time. And the movement with charters here, which is very big as well, we were thinking about charters as at some point creating a tipping point, to either push the, at the systemic level, to push the traditional public schools to compete harder for the students, because we're now in D.C. we're 30% of the public school students are in charter schools – also public schools – but they've basically left the system and are over here in these independent schools. And we do see that pressure starting to build. Very similar situation in D.C., where we have a new mayor, who kind of you know came out of the city council. He's taken over the schools, and been allowed to in part I think because this charter system has become such a force of competition. You might say threat. But people are dancing around each other and trying to be very supportive, because the gains, the academic gains, are better in the charter schools overall. So that's one point I wanted to make, is about thinking about scale and leverage.

The second point is really more wearing the traditional hat of the things, our bread and butter at the Sallie Mae Fund, the foundation, is really working on college access. We focus on education about how to plan and pay for college, and also we do some early college awareness in middle schools around the country. But the point that I want to make there is that when you think about college prep in your schools and in the rhetoric that we all use about, "We're creating an environment where kids are preparing to go to college," is to think about college access also as college readiness, because I know in D.C. and other cities that we work in, we're so focused on getting them on that boat that's leaving for college, that that's the goal and that's the metric of success. And you know, the dirty secret about college access, particularly in inner-city education, is that the boat leaves, but many of the students are jumping off the boat not too long after it's left the harbor. And we saw that in D.C. We had maybe 20%, 30% retention rates. And we've had to address that. I've actually spoken with some of the groups in Philadelphia that are working on this issue as well, and starting to think about what can we do citywide about retention. How can we throw out those services or extend those services from the city to our students at the main colleges where the city kids tend to go? And there's a lot of work being done in this area. And, you know, I think that's something that we also need to think about for the students, particularly at the high school level. Are we supporting them beyond – you know, we're getting them to college – how were we supporting them beyond that point? So I'll just leave it at those two issues.

John DiIulio: Thank you, Kathleen, very much. Thank you. [Applause from audience] Last but not least, Juan Williams, who per the bio and our opening remarks, has probably given more

serious thought all by himself to questions affecting the quality of life in urban America in particular for African American low-income children, youth and families in the communities that are served by schools like the Gesu, probably than anyone else, certainly than anyone in the media establishment in Washington D.C. Again, it's a special treat and privilege to have Juan, so, I just want to ask him, what do you think?

Juan Williams: What do I think? That's pretty open-ended. It's a pleasure to be here. And I was saying to the group downstairs. And by the way, I just, I met so many people here, so many nice people, who come up and they say that they either watch FOX, and thank you for watching FOX, [Laughter from audience] and then they immediately say to me they wish my arms were longer so that I could punch some of those guys. [Laughter from audience] But then I meet other people who know me from NPR and thanks for listening to NPR. It doesn't sound, John, like the people who watch FOX listen to NPR though. And the people who listen to NPR say it's nice to put a face with the voice. And I must tell you, I have to bite my tongue in those situations, because my instinct is to say, "Hey, I didn't know what you looked like either. Big surprise to me. I was sure you'd be taller, thinner, and have more hair."

What I think is, you know, from a journalistic point of view when I look at Gesu, when I look at the issues going on in big cities with regard to education, I have a tendency to put a historical frame on the picture. And when I put that historical frame on the picture, obviously, I go back now more than 50 years and think about the *Brown* decision and the idea of doing away with segregation in public schools in this country, with the very specific idea that there would be more equity in terms of funding, leading to more equity in terms of educational opportunity for people of all colors in American society. That was the idealistic goal behind *Brown*. And then I come forward in time and we all as a nation just commemorated 50 years after Little Rock. And again, there was the President of the United States, President Eisenhower, in that case, sending federal troops, again to emphasize that government was on the side of making sure that equal educational opportunity was available to children across racial lines in American society. And now I come forward yet again and you look at the idea of the reality of closing gaps in terms of education, achievement gaps, graduation rates, over the years, progressing pretty much from the 50's up until the 1980's in American society. But then by the middle to late 1980's, what you see is increasing rates of segregation begin to take hold again, and you see more and more in terms of that achievement gap as we call it, begin to spread across the lines. John must know some of this from his research. And we come forward to the point where just recently of course the Supreme Court has ruled that even voluntary plans to achieve school integration are unconstitutional because they're a violation of individual rights, to judge people on the basis of merit as opposed to placing them in a school on the basis of skin color. And that would take us back in history a little ways, you know to the arguments over bussing for school integration.

I think, if I could just depart here for a second to say I wrote a biography of Justice Marshall, who was so key in terms of the *Brown* decision as the lead counsel for the NAACP. And I remember once at the, going up to the court, I had written a magazine piece about him before I had written the book and I went up at the end of the conversation, we had been having conversations for several months, to ask him about what he thought regarding the state of America's public schools, this was in the early 1990s. And you know, he was an elderly man, and I sort of saved this question for the end because I feared that it would be upsetting, and he

was a cantankerous guy anyway, so I really didn't want to upset him, and I said to him that, you know, if I look at, the first thing I said was, there was a Law Review article in the *Howard University Law Review* that said you made a mistake, Justice Marshall, by focusing on racial integration in *Brown*, because you should have focused instead on school quality. And it would have saved us all of the pain and distress caused by focus on race and you know, race being such a hot-button issue in American society. And I didn't know it at the time, but that article was written, by the way, by Clarence Thomas, who of course, was to be Justice Marshall's successor on the Court. And then I said, in addition to which if you look at the way the courts had been ruling, increasingly they were undoing court mandates ordering school integration. They were saying, "There was so much residential segregation in American society, why do we put that weight on schools and expect schools to solve all sorts of social and cultural issues in American society?" And then finally I said, I had been out, I'd been doing some reporting and I was in Oklahoma City and there you had black parents standing up and saying "Hey, wait a second. We want neighborhood schools. We want to be able to go to our children's games and be involved in the PTA. We want to have some community pride in our school. And we're not so crazy about putting our kids on busses to go off for half an hour, forty-five minutes, and often times be greeted with hostility as if they are, you know, being patronized, or they have low expectations for our children. We don't like it." So I said all this to him, and you know I'd been talking for a long time to a man who's a Supreme Court Justice and American icon. He was kind of looking at me and then looking away and then finally he looked up and he said, you know, with regard to that Law Review article, he said he wasn't trying to create some Norman Rockwell picture of America where you had black kids seated next to white kids and the Asian and Hispanic kids. He said it was a result of white supremacist politicians and school boards that had not been equitable in terms of putting funding and resources, facilities at the access, open them to children of color, and that the idea was if you focus on integration, that those institutions, school boards, politicians, would have to do a better job of funding and making those facilities available to children of color, because if they didn't, then the poor and the black kids could go to the same schools that their kids went to. And he said it was a matter of leverage and it was a strategy with just such intent. And then he went onto say that he was disappointed in the higher levels of segregation that were reoccurring in America's schools. He was very disappointed in the quality of schools especially for poor, black and Latino kids. But he didn't see that there was any choice in terms of forcing the historical moment back in the 50's and the way that it had played out subsequently. Now, I left that conversation, I remember walking down those white marble steps to the court, and I went into the D.C. public, in the city of District of Columbia, Kathleen was talking about a moment ago, which is what I think people like John refer to as a hyper-segregated school system because it's more than 90% black and Latino. And it's not just a matter of color. It's a matter of performance that you know these schools are dysfunctional. These schools do not produce young people who are able to function in American society and go on to do great things. They don't produce young people who can go out and be American leaders. And we just know this as a statistical reality, and especially as compared, if you think of the District as the hole of the doughnut, we know what's going on in the rest of the doughnut in more affluent counties there, like Fairfax County, Montgomery County, where you see much better educational outcomes. That kind of, that's kind of the historical backdrop.

Now when you look and think about this history, what strikes me is that all along people are making excuses. People are making excuses for educational failure. People are making excuses

that say, “Oh well, the achievement gap is a result of tests that require black kids to think like white kids.” Or “Guess what, there’s more resources available in those suburban schools. We have inequities in terms of funding and the like.” They have arguments over control of community schools. Those of you who remember arguments over Ocean Hills-Brownsville back in New York City in the 70’s, who controls schools. All sorts of arguments that to my mind ignore what should be central about schools, which is educating children and putting children first. And the other day I wrote a piece in *The New York Times*, and I said, you know, there’s some sadness attached to the recent Supreme Court decision because the recent decision really is to large extent a repudiation of *Brown* and the ideal of achieving school integration in order to assure that there is equal opportunity, equal educational opportunity. But at the same time, I said, it really does speak to the political, social, and cultural realities of this moment, in that right now, we understand, I believe it’s that, the average white child in America goes to a school that’s 80% white and the average black child goes to a school that’s almost 70% black and Hispanic. And we also understand that there’s this difference in terms of educational outcomes, and that the real imperative for this generation in this moment of history is to make schools work for children, wherever they are, and to find the way to really speak to those children so that we really can save them. That we don’t talk about what can be done in 20 or 30 or 40 years but we really do something to help young people in this moment in this time. I think, as I was saying to some board members downstairs, I think that if we truly have the Christian spirit that fills the halls of Gesu, we would understand that we have been given life – an opportunity – and if we were really to repay that opportunity, to really act as Christ in this moment, we would act in the spirit of saving lives, saving those young souls, and we would not get locked into kind of adult arguments over theory or school integration, but we would be helping these children in the immediate sense.

So that’s why, for me, we come down then to theories about what is it that you can do? What makes Gesu work? Why is this place different and how could we replicate it in terms of the larger public school structure, not only in Philadelphia, but nationwide? And what we know from research more and more, and you heard just a moment you know all the discussion about, Christine was talking about, we can do things in the KIPP model. We can have longer school days. We can have different kinds of standards for behavior, different expectations – everything from noise levels to interactions, peer review and the like. But so much of it, it seems, comes back to something that’s so basic, and that comes back to family units, to family, and the idea that your parents are maybe your best and most important teachers. It comes back to the idea that when you are leaving that family unit, you are leaving it to go to school already with a certain level of preparation. And that too often, what we’re seeing among poor children, and of course, disproportionately those are black and brown children, especially in a city like Philadelphia, those kids have less preparation in everything in terms of vocabulary to experience to analytical thinking. So they are less prepared before they even get to the school door. So we’ve got to be honest about what’s going on in terms of family unit, family formation in this country. And in that regard, I think that we have a real crisis on our hands, and one that requires us to speak truthfully. That is to say that it’s a crisis when now more that a quarter of the white children in America are born to single mothers. That’s a real crisis. And I think it’s a horror show when you realize it’s 50% of the Hispanic kids are born to single moms at this moment. But I don’t even know what adjective, John, to apply, when it comes to the idea that 70% of the black children are born to single moms at this time. And you could, you know, look at me from the audience and say, “Gosh, what are you doing? You’re preaching and you’re being like moralistic.” But there’s

a real connection, a statistically provable connection that says that children who come out of these kinds of families are less prepared for school. These are the children who will contribute disproportionately in terms of that achievement gap. These are the children who are more likely to drop out of school. These are the children who are more likely to end up in contact with the criminal justice system and end up in jail. There is a clear, demonstrable connection, and yet people are reluctant to engage in this conversation. But it's a reality and it impacts the young people who show up at the schoolhouse door. And it impacts our ability, no matter what the structure and system we put in place, to help these young people. So we have to, I think, acknowledge that family is part of the picture. And much the way that we would acknowledge that family is part of the picture, then we also lead to suggestions such as Chris was talking about. Then you have a longer school day. Then you may have to have more intervention and more a sense that the school has to augment – she was talking about remediation – but really what you're talking about is the school playing more of a parental role in the lives of young people and taking a stronger stand and not being apologetic about it, not making excuses, but saying if we're trying to help this young person be the best that they can be, we have to take these steps, and again I think that's where the KIPP model, I think that's where more and more people are coming to understand and I think pressures are coming to bear on public schools nationwide to take just such steps, that we have to intervene.

Philadelphia's Bill Cosby – I wrote a book about Cosby's famous speech – again I'm given to the historical framework, but Cosby's speech on the 50th anniversary of *Brown* in which Cosby talked about the alarming dropout rate, now more than 50% for black and Hispanic kids nationwide, so that's even higher than here in Philadelphia. You think you've got a problem. And talked about the idea that you've also got this terrible achievement gap, talked about the idea that you've got a 25% poverty rate that's just kind of fixed in black America and people aren't escaping from it and that people aren't taking advantage of opportunities to get out of that poverty. And of course Cosby was widely criticized for speaking to these issues. It was said that he was giving ammunition to people that don't care about dealing with these issues. I don't think I'm speaking to you at here Gesu, I think you guys care and I'm telling you here is what someone like a Bill Cosby is saying in all honesty. He's not trying to embarrass anybody. He wasn't airing dirty laundry, but speaking directly to cause and effect. And similarly, Cosby went on to talk about, you know, the troubling issue of that out-of-wedlock birth rate. To talk about parents who allow drug use in the community and say, "It's O.K., not a big problem," if the cousin or somebody down the street selling drugs, make excuses, "That guy's out of work, he needs the money," without asking about the kind of example that provides to young kids, or that young kids are used as pawns in that larger game. And again, in the City of Philadelphia with the terrible black-on-black murder rate, you understand how it has real consequence, that again, we're not talking theory here. We're talking about reality of lives and reality of lost lives.

So this is some of the necessity then to come to something that I think that Chris was talking about, which is that as we talk about what schools can do, increasingly I think we have to talk about ethics and values as part of the message, and not just in parochial schools, not just here at Gesu. That you have got to talk to young people about positive role models. I didn't notice what you noticed, Kathleen, about people looking at us as we were coming in, but modeling is a legitimate function. That's how human beings learn. We look at each other and we look at people who are successful. And don't have any doubt, those kids are looking at T.V. and what do you

see when you look at T.V.? This is something that I was talking about downstairs. I'm a dad. I have two boys and a daughter, but I'm particularly concerned about the boys in all honesty. When they look at the T.V. and they're looking for an image of a strong, capable black man, well too often, what they see is you've gotta be threatening, you've gotta be, you know, covered in bling, you've gotta have grille on your teeth, you've gotta have a do-rag on your head. You're supposed to dress like you just got out of jail with your pants hanging off your butt because you don't have, the warden didn't give you a belt. That kind of thing. Does anyone put this together and say, "Oh, you're supposed to dress like a convict, that's the image of the black man in America." Or "You're supposed to be a minstrel, and have a big clown hat on your head and be using the N word willy nilly as if you have no historical knowledge about this degrading language." This is the image of black people, especially young black men. Now, bad enough it's put out to you, a mostly white audience, in terms of perpetuating stereotypes, but to me as a black dad, I think it's utterly pernicious that this image is put into a young black man's mind as, "Oh, I can get attention." [Applause from the audience] You know, that's what they're saying. "You get attention, you get glorified, you get to be famous, you get money for behaving in this way." Well, how destructive is that? That's the cultural message being sent that you have to deal with when those young people again show up at the door. That's – I mean – cause remember, we're talking about kids who are often coming out of broken families. They have not a male in the house. The T.V. is playing a disproportionate role in raising that child, and influencing the child's sense of what is important, and what counts, and what it really means to be a black man. And I think it's absolutely, as I said, criminal. I think it's just terrible. So when it comes to things like teaching self-discipline, when it comes to teaching patience or delayed gratification, when it comes to teaching something like, well, being adaptable, being flexible. These now become critical issues for any school. Gesu does this, I think in a large part, by the religious overlay. But for public schools, this has to now become a critical component as well. I think the KIPP model is using this and saying, "No, these are the standards. If you buy in, parents and children, you gotta sign a contract that buys into just these modes of behavior because that's the way the deal is gonna go down here, and we're not gonna make excuses for it. You know coming in the door that's what's going on." Well that has to happen now I think in terms of our public schools. No more excuses. Let's know what works and let's apply what works. And let's make the resources available. As John said, resources are always good, but lot's of times people are using resources as an excuse, saying, "Oh well, we don't have as much." But you do in terms of per pupil spending have as much. And then they'd say, "Oh, but we have kids who are coming from poorer backgrounds, have more educational problems." At some point you have to do what you can with what you have and not make excuses. And part of that is holding to high expectations for those young people, and delivering concrete messages about those expectations.

At the end of the book that I wrote where I picked up on Cosby's speech, I said that it's shocking to me that there are such simple messages that need to be delivered that go unsaid. And one of the things that inspires me about Gesu as I think I'm hearing them here today, but one of them very clearly is, you were bragging about a moment ago, the number of kids who come out of this place who graduate from high school in four years. You might think to yourself, "Oh, well, what's the big deal?" It's a big deal. It's a big deal because we know if you graduate from high school in four years, not a GED but get a high school diploma, in terms of your outcomes, your earning potential, your ability to form a successful family unit – out of this world, off the charts, huge difference. We know that if you stay in the job market, if you don't say, "Oh you know

what, the only black men I see on T.V. are rap stars or NBA stars, so I'm gonna be a rap star, I don't need education, I'm gonna make it. I can hustle. I can get on the corner and make some money." That is such a trap. So if you graduate from high school, stay in the job market, get the references, the recommendations, develop the kind of contacts that allow you to know when opportunities open and then step through those doors of opportunity, again, we know this makes a huge difference in terms of outcomes. We know that it makes a huge difference in terms of outcomes if people get married. And again you might say, "Oh what are you doing preaching about marriage?" But, hey, we know marriage makes a difference in terms of everything from your economic stability to the good outcomes for children who are born into two parent families. But people don't want to say, I think people have been a little bit tongue-tied, but guess what. It's good stuff. Marriage is good. It's good for children. It's important to say that. [Applause from audience] And the final thing is, don't have a child before you're married. Don't have a child until you've finished your education, developed yourself professionally. These are important things. But oftentimes there are things that don't get said. I think people get up tight. Downstairs I was mentioning that I look around this room and it's mostly white people. You look up on this stage, it's mostly what people, the leadership of the school. So I'm thinking to myself, you know, I bet there's a lot of self-consciousness. There's a degree of – we're in America – if you're not racist, you've got to be race conscious. That's just the reality. But I think there has to be in your hearts a degree of confidence that you are taking the right steps in this generation, using your powers, using your consciousness, your abilities to try to help people, and a willingness to step up and say, "Here is what works, here's what's good, and we believe it." And it may make you uncomfortable, you know, "Oh you're what, what do you know what it's like to be black or in this neighborhood? What do you know about what it means to be poor?" They in essence, would want you to sacrifice your power. They want you to shut up and you have got to have some level of confidence and that confidence has to extend from the doors of Gesu into the doors of public schools, and the political conversations that take place in Washington and the political conversations that take place here at City Hall. There has to be a confidence by saying we know what works. It's not a matter of morality but it's a matter of what's right if we truly care about these young people. So we got to be able to say that. And I must tell you, as I was saying downstairs, that they said about Bill Cosby when he pointed out the high drop-out rates, when he pointed out people speaking in slang that is useless anywhere else but somehow people think is cool, when he talked about these rappers who put out these negative images of black people, not to mention these pornographic images of black women. They said, you know, Bill Cosby was self-hating. They said that, you know, he was someone who did not understand the power of systemic racism and larger racism in the society that was weighing down on poor people and poor people of color. So they tried to shut Cosby up, too. So they're going to shut you up as white people. They're going to shut black people up who want to raise these issues. They'll shut up anybody who's Hispanic or Asian, with you know, "You don't understand what's going on between black and white people in this country for centuries, so stay out of it cause you might get labeled a racist too." But that, there's a degree of fearlessness that's required of us in this time in history in speaking to these issues honestly, if we are to save this generation of young people, much as you have intervened in this neighborhood to save a generation of children, who otherwise - imagine this community without Gesu. And I ask you to understand, therefore, the necessary commitment, the fearlessness of spirit required to extend that now to the broader conversation about education in this city. Kathleen was talking about how the mayor in D.C. just took over the schools. I cannot tell you the flack that he's taking.

And of course he takes it not only in terms of well, you brought in an Asian woman to be – what’s her title? Superintendent chancellor?

Kathleen deLaski: Chancellor.

Juan Williams: Chancellor. Race got into it right away.

Kathleen deLaski: Yeah.

Juan Williams: Then the unions go into it. “Oh, what about the people who have been here? How can you treat people like this?” Nobody says, “Hey, wait a second, you weren’t educating the kids. The kids were dropping out.” I mean, for me, as a, you know, tax-paying parent, there was rampant failure, and yet there’s every excuse being made. So, my hope for you is that again, you speak to children with love and high expectations. We speak to this culture that is so defeatist. We speak to the issue of families and strong families, leading to strong children who are prepared to come to school and learn. This is what the challenge is for all of us in this generation, be you black, white, middle class or poor. That is what we can do in this time to make a difference.

Let me just end by saying that lots of times people ask me why did I write a book about the Civil Rights Movement called *Eyes on the Prize*, and I tell them that that title comes from an old gospel song that goes “Keep your eyes on the prize. Hold on. Hold on. I know the one thing I did right was the day I started to fight. Hold on.” And what I’m saying to all of you is that you have to understand that you are in a fight. You’re in a fight of course for Gesu, and the young people here and in support of Chris. Win, thank you for your leadership. Thank you so much, Jim, for the scoreboard. [Laughter from audience]. But you have to understand that you’re in a fight, and that just as you’re saying to young people, education’s important, graduation’s important, there’s this cultural force out there that’s saying, “You know what, it’s OK to get high, hang out, OK to be looking like a convict. A black man goes to jail, it’s just a right of passage. A black man studies in school, he’s a nerd, he’s a jerk, he’s acting white.” We’ve got to understand those cultural messages are out there and they’re trying to defeat these young people who come through the doors, as well as the young people who go through the doors of Philadelphia public schools. So I hope that all of you don’t get intimidated, don’t lose your energy, don’t decide somehow, you know, “I don’t want to say the wrong thing or take the wrong step and somebody says I’m a racist or I’m this or that.” You guys really have to stay in the fight. It’s absolutely required of us at this time that we keep our eyes on the prize. Thank you very much.

[Applause. Standing ovation from audience].

John DiIulio: Well, Juan, ten years, that is the first time that ever happened. And we’ve had a lot of wonderful people at this symposium. Mr. Chairman, do you want to say a word, or do you want me to toss my first bomb, as a question?

Win Churchill: I just want to say one more thing. There’s a, and Evie McNiff is here, who’s the chairman of the Children’s Scholarship Fund of Philadelphia. It’s just one other factor here along the lines of what Kathleen was mentioning about catalytic forces. You know, the Children’s

Scholarship Fund is funded nationally by the Walton Foundation and Teddy Forstmann I believe. And then it has branches in other cities around the country, including a very significant one here that Evie and Ina Lipman, who I see over there, run. And we don't say the word vouchers, you know, but if you think of the leverage that's attached to a scholarship when it comes to tuition-based schools, the scholarship and the ability of the parents and the family, along the lines of what Juan was saying, to decide which school it may be possible for their child to attend with the scholarship following the child, it's a very very powerful model and a stimulant. So that's a major force. And in the case of Philadelphia, I think 70% of the private schools, which are attended by Children's Scholarship Fund kids, are historically Catholic schools, because the very sizable private education system in Philadelphia, as in many of the other older cities, is the Catholic, you know, the parochial school system. So that is a wonderful thing, and it helps to keep alive many of the Catholic schools that are tuition-based models and is a, you know, real positive thing in the picture in Philadelphia and other cities. So I think we need to mention that.

John DiIulio: Thank you, Win. And you know, I think we're channeling each other. And it's been long enough that, 'cause that's where I wanted to, just one question/comment to the panel for comment or noncomment as you might choose. Beginning with the fact, you know a thread running through all of the comments, and the incredible commentary that Juan just gave us, you know, we're here at the Gesu School, which was going to close, and you know, we almost, thanks to Win and others, that terrible possibility, prospect of the Gesu not being here in this neighborhood was very much a reality and thanks to Win and others didn't become a reality. But throughout Philadelphia and other cities, we are having many of these schools close. I see Sr. Jeanne there from LaSalle Academy, one of the newer entrants to not only keep it alive, but keep hope alive, another neighborhood of Philadelphia serving very very very poor children. Sister, I should have said Sisters of Saint Joseph can make a Marine-style landing as well. I don't wanna, I know my nuns and I don't want to get messed up here with my nuns. [Laughter from audience] So here's the question. O.K. And it really does to back to Evie and Ina Lipman and the Children's Scholarship Fund. Let me just very very quickly give you the backdrop to the question. I've been down to New Orleans a half dozen times since the floods, since the levees broke. And this is not an advertisement for Spike Lee, but if you haven't seen that, it's true, just the way he tells it. And among the many remarkable things about that I have discovered about New Orleans with all of the service work Penn students and all have done down there is the Catholic schools. The Catholic schools, within a year down there, when a majority of the public schools had not yet literally been mucked out, that is physically they were still mired in the flood debris, the Catholic schools had dug themselves out. They had suffered incredible damage. And the bishop down there basically made a pledge, and he made it within two weeks of the flood. He said, "We will reopen, I don't know where we're gonna get the money, and we will open to all children without regard to religion or ability to pay." And within that year and a couple months, the Catholic schools in New Orleans had over 40,000 children back in school. Now the public schools have come along and our own former public school chief Paul Vallas is down there in one of their really three or four different public school systems, a really complicated system they got there in Louisiana and New Orleans at this point. So the Catholic schools open, and then just to cut back here to Philadelphia, Win mentioned the Children's Scholarship Fund, one of the, to me, most interesting facts about the Children's Scholarship Fund is one that isn't as widely know is that while 70% of the children who get one of these partial scholarships to attend the school of their choice, destination neutral, you can go to Catholic school, independent school, nonpublic

school of your choice, low-income families obviously. This fund, thanks to the Children's Scholarship Fund National and the late John Walton and other supporters of the Fund here in Philadelphia, the Fund can only supply a few thousand scholarships because the funds are limited – Sallie Mae [panelist laughs] – the funds are limited. And if you ask, how many families in Philadelphia have ever asked to be put into that lottery, and Evie and Ina can direct me, it's 70,000, a total of 70,000. Now, 70,000 people are saying, if you give me a partial scholarship, I'll take my chances because poor, inner-city families are looking for some kind of true private choice because they care about the education and the debate about government and vouchers always kind of quickly get sidetracked into other issues. But so here we have a reality, in New Orleans, in Philadelphia, where people are obviously desirous of a better education and hence better life prospects for their own children. Putting aside, or tacking if you wish, the question of vouchers, how might it be possible to get greater private finance in behind, or public-private partnerships in behind? Getting children from families where parents, again, predominantly African American, predominantly Latino, very poor, want to exercise the same choice that I exercise when I sent my kids to three different, very expensive, private schools. The same choice. How can we get greater private finance or public-private financing behind them, or how else ought we go about addressing that very very much of a crying need? Anyone. Jumpball.

Kathleen deLaski: I'll jump on it.

John DiIulio: O.K. Kathleen.

Kathleen deLaski: We actually tried this experiment in D.C. where the Sallie Mae Fund did a scholarship program with the Archdiocese, and we took some flack for it because the parochial schools were not, you know, the feeling was we shouldn't be funding parochial schools. But in the three sector spirit, the spirit of the three sector strategy, we were trying to fund all sectors. And our problem was that families were not applying for the scholarships. The target audience, we were actually targeting Latino families in certain parts of the Archdiocese, because it's D.C. and Maryland, and the problem was is they couldn't make up the delta between the partial scholarship and the five or six thousand dollar scholarship. And I think ours was paying for maybe half of it. So but \$3000 a year was more than these families, when they looked at the, you know, cost-benefit analysis, they couldn't make that commitment. And I know that the federal voucher program, which is being experimented with in D.C. through the Washington Scholarship Fund, is having the same problem. I'm not an expert on their experience, but I know in discussions with the director there, they're having the same issue. They can't get at the audience they really want to target because those families can't make up the difference. The word partial is the killer.

John DiIulio: Is the stopper. Yeah.

Kathleen deLaski: Yeah.

John DiIulio: Chris.

Chris Beck: In Pennsylvania, I do want to mention that we have this wonderful EITC program, which in effect is vouchers. It's a tax credit for companies who pay taxes here in Pennsylvania.

And I think we are able to give something like, close to \$400,000 worth of scholarships to our children because of this program. There's always the risk that it will disappear. Hopefully not. We're going to be in big trouble if it does. But I also want to mention Juan's point of 80% of our children here are raised in single-parent, or single-adult homes. And so the importance of the Catholic, the faith nature of what we do here is very very important in our, the results we get. It's a safe, caring, nurturing place. And it makes all the difference.

John DiIulio: Jim.

Jim Brown: I'm just going to describe a dilemma that I remember from the time I spent in the governor's office in Pennsylvania, and although you kind of gave me a pass on this, I will address the issue of vouchers, at least the general theory. And the fact is in Pennsylvania that when you get outside of Philadelphia, the public schools work pretty well, and people perceive the public schools as working pretty well, or very well, depending. And as a result, when you come to budgeting, I can't speak for D.C., I haven't been there long enough for the federal government, but, Pennsylvania's budgeting, which as everyone knows is a significant portion of the public schools – when it comes to budgeting for education, what happens is that 80 to 85 percent of the legislators take the position that our public schools work pretty well, never seen a charter school, don't care about vouchers, we're doing fine. The consequence of that – it's not a particularly racist position, in most cases it's just they're there to protect their own constituents – and so their attitude, well, what that establishes, honestly, is a finite dollar amount for the City of Philadelphia. And then it puts the public officials, starting with the governor and working down to those who represent the City of Philadelphia, in a position of recognizing, in reality, that what I take out, that's going to go into charter schools, or vouchers, or whatever, in reality is going to come out of the hides of the public schools in Philadelphia. Is there a racial element to that? Yeah, probably. Is it mostly people protecting their own turf and their own constituency? I think so. But as a result, when you talk about that issue, it is at least in my experience playing with budgets in Harrisburg for eight years, it is in essence a zero sum game. That may be wrong, but that happens to be the fact. And I think that's what causes people to try to work around the edges. And the things I was describing and what we're trying to work on in Washington, they do not go directly to the issue of paying for public schools, but they try to, you know, work on kids before they go to public school, on Saturday, in the afternoon, when they need healthcare, you know, when they need care from their grandparents, et cetera, and it is a dilemma that I cannot answer to this day because I helped work with Win and Chris and I saw Lars here before, in setting up a charter school, which is very successful, and honestly, the operating budget for a charter school is a dream compared to the Gesu School. It just is. But yet I keep coming back to that reality that you are playing in a zero sum game in Harrisburg and I suspect that's also the case in Philadelphia. I'm in Washington. So I honestly, you pick me different days, I have different answers to this because it is a dilemma which brings us back to working around the edges.

John DiIulio: Juan.

Juan Williams: Well, the one thing I would add is I think that if you look at it again from the journalistic point of view that I have, you would say that the president, President Bush, really wanted vouchers on a national level back in '02 when No Child Left Behind was put in place

initially. And he couldn't get vouchers through the Congress of the United States for much the same reason that Jim was describing the dynamics here in Pennsylvania. I think that those dynamics are true nationwide, and you also had opposition of course from not only teachers unions, but people who say, you know, "I went to public schools. Public schools should be able to work, etc." So then he went to No Child Left Behind and the whole kind of standards movement, and standards that then had involvement in things like failed schools, in that you could have a failed school and if you're a parent then you could opt out of a failed school and move to a better school. And we know that the arguments continue to this moment over No Child Left Behind, but I don't think there's any question, in terms of standards, it's been a plus for kids who were previously being pushed off the books or not counted or ignored as they were failing in the schools or dropping out of the schools. I think it's been a plus to that extent. And what it would suggest to me, just listening to what Jim was saying, is that again, we're going to have to find a way to really make schools work, because I don't think we're headed towards an increase in terms of either closing the delta that you were describing, Kathleen, between the monies that are available. I think in D.C. now they even have like a \$7000 voucher.

Kathleen deLaski: Yes.

Juan Williams: Which is extraordinarily high. Most vouchers don't go beyond \$2000. So here's one with \$7000 and you still have a gap that's required to be closed. So I'm not sure exactly how much more we can expect in terms of vouchers. I think what we have to do is say, "Wait a second, but we are paying very high taxes to support public schools. We have to find a way to make public schools work." That's why I think you have governors, mayors, the president stepping in and saying, "Here are steps we want to put in place to assure quality coming from public schools."

John DiIulio: Thank you. I have one suggestion before we open it up to questions. And we have some time as always for questions. I think all the folks who are trying to fund privately alternative schools, nonpublic schools, ought to give their money to Philadelphia, and we'll do the experiment at scale. [Laughter from audience] And then we'll see. And then we'll go somewhere else. That's what I think, but what do I know? Alright, the floor is open. And what always happens is, we start slow and then we get everybody wants to ask a question near the end, so don't be bashful. Don't be shy. And do we have a mic that's going to come around? So just raise your hand and you'll either have to talk loud or somebody will come with a mic. I don't know, but. Yes. And make it loud. Your outside voice. Your outside voice.

Audience member #1: [Inaudible]

Juan Williams: That's a great question. It's about if the religious model works here in terms of setting some kind of standards for behavior and expectations, what could work in public schools. And then you went on and said something about without violating constitutional rights, I think. Is that right?

Audience member #1: [Inaudible]

Juan Williams: That's what the argument would be. Well I think that, again, I think there has to be a very clear set of rules. And I think you have to ask people to buy into those rules. And we talked about that KIPP model where they actually sign a contract that says, "This is the deal that we're going to put in place here." I think what has happened is that there is no kind of explicit statement of expectations, but we know what goes on in public schools and has gone on for years. When you talk about something like a magnet school, you're talking about kids who are at a certain level of achievement and patterns of behavior, expectations, all the rest. When you talk about things like charter schools, the charter schools sometimes now insist on clear standards before you sign up to come in to their charter school. I think that there has to be, and I might add that we also know that when kids are troubled, that the school system will engage in tracking or find a way to push them out, to marginalize those kids. To say, "Oh yeah, we're just warehousing you. You don't really have to come. If you don't get pregnant, if you aren't doing drugs, you're a good kid." Young people know that's fool's gold. They know that it's worthless. They're not getting educated to have a role in this economy. So I think we have to become more up front in the public schools about setting, here are our expectations to come in our doors, and here's what we can do for you. I think if you're upfront with not only the parent, but with the student, you can get people to say, we'll sign on to this, no matter what legalism or somebody might say, oh this is wrong-headed or illegal. I think you can get around it.

John DiIulio: Terrific. Another question. Yes. Sir. And I think, is that a mic for us? For our use? So if you want to use that, you can. No "Volare." No singing "Volare." That's my shtick. Go ahead. [Laughter from audience]

Audience member #2: Good afternoon and thanks for all of you being here today. My question is for Christine Beck, just in terms of the performance of Gesu students. I know that you mentioned a 91% high school graduation rate, but my question is tied to Kathleen's piece about college readiness. And are you tracking how well the students are doing in college and their college completion rates?

Chris Beck: We, it's a very difficult thing to track because of this population, a lot of movement, a lot of changing phone numbers. It's hard to keep track of everybody. We are working much harder on it now than we use to. We're, we don't have any statistics, but there's a growing number of high school graduates going on to higher education. A lot of it's anecdotal, but I think once they start, they're doing well. I think they're pretty much staying. Fr. Bur has created a – I think I saw him earlier - a wonderful Ignatian program at Saint Joseph's University to identify even middle schoolers, children at Gesu now, who have the potential to go on and earn a scholarship at Saint Joseph's University. And we have graduates who are there now on full scholarships. So, again, it just takes a lot of effort, a lot of focus. But it's all worthwhile.

John DiIulio: Thank you. Another question, please. Yes.

Audience member #3: [Inaudible]

John DiIulio: O.K. Loud.

Audience member #3: [Inaudible]

John DiIulio: We've got a microphone right there if you want.

Kathleen deLaski: She doesn't want it. [Laughter from panel]

John DiIulio: That's alright. O.K.

Audience member #3: I went to Catholic school, so I was taught to be quiet, but I can be loud.

John DiIulio: That's it.

Audience member #3: My question is actually for Kathleen from the Sallie Mae Fund. I know that it seems you were successful in Washington D.C. giving scholarships, so are you going to go out to other cities then?

Kathleen deLaski: We have a lot of, we have several national scholarship programs that are geared towards different populations, but really are kind of focused on the populations that tend to be in inner cities, because our focus of scholarships is not for the top performers that are going to get full rides or get into those schools that have, you know like Princeton or Yale, that don't have even any, they don't need to have loans and that kind of thing. So our scholarships are focused on the middle, but people who have potential. We have scholarships that are earmarked for African Americans, Latinos, and then general unmet needs scholarships. We also did a specific, we helped start the CORE Philly program in Philadelphia, and we underwrote the administration of that for the first couple of years, and helped set up an endowment for that, so that's something we've done in Philadelphia.

Audience member #3: [Inaudible]

Kathleen deLaski: No, we don't have any K-12 scholarship programs.

John DiIulio: Has there ever been any discussion of a K-12 Sallie Mae, as it were?

Kathleen deLaski: Well, that's the experiment we did with the Archdiocese.

John DiIulio: Right. And what's, and so the bottom line so far from that experiment is?

Kathleen deLaski: That was not positive because of what I, we couldn't fund, you know it's harder for us to justify, you know, when we're putting all these dollars into excellent charter schools, it's hard to justify, you know, paying tuition bills for private schools, or parochial schools and that's...

John DiIulio: Come to Philly. We'll do it. We'll get it right. Believe you me. We'll get it done by next week. We'll get it done. [Laughter from audience]

Win Churchill: John, one thought that occurs to me in response to the question about tracking and also the scholarship question: our kids, when they get out of grade school, or middle school

in the case of the charter school, need scholarships very often to attend the high schools for which they are now qualified. OK? So the high schools themselves did not have sufficient scholarship money for our kids who are qualified to attend them. So we've taken it upon ourselves to try to look to that too and to build up funds that would provide scholarships for our graduates through high school. Hopefully, when they get to Princeton or Harvard, we're not going to need to be in that league, but this is another great need. So it's a matter of, you know, tracking somebody right through higher education basically, to finish the job as Juan was saying. You gotta keep your eye on it and finish the job and have a successful person. The other thing I would, a point that occurred to me is, we may have, particularly in the case of Gesu where we have open admissions, somebody that completes high school, and becomes, you know, a great police officer, a great firefighter, a great civil servant, you know, so higher education obviously is a boon for anybody that can get to it, but it's not the only thing, the only way in which we measure successful lives. So this really comes back to the character formation point. And the other point that occurred to me is, as a lawyer, you know, is ethics and morality are not unconstitutional. [Laughter from audience] We've got to remember this. [Applause from audience]

Chris Beck: Amen.

Win Churchill: There's nothing in the Constitution, you know, the separation of church and state does not extend to ethics and morality, and you know, being good people, and so forth and so on. So it's not wrong for the public schools to be doing that as we do here. And you know, we define religion here in I think a very broad way that we've very proud of. As I mentioned earlier, most of our kids are not, you know, registered Catholic kids. In fact, it's quite the opposite. I think it's maybe fewer than 5% who are members of the Catholic Church in a formalistic way. So, and in our classrooms, this ethics and morality is embodied in the person that's standing up there. And, you know, whether or not they be Catholic, Presbyterian, Jewish, whatever it might be. So we feel that catholic with a small "c" – it's a big tent – and all the great religions have some very common strains that are all about being a good person. So there's no inconsistency and it's definitely not unconstitutional. I'm ready to write an opinion on that.

John DiIulio: Saw another hand over there. And I agree, I just want to say, we are a place and we can have a system where you don't need to believe in God, and we're happy to figure out exactly what the God you don't believe in expects of you. [Laughter from audience] Go ahead.

Chris Beck: Can we say goodbye to Juan?

John DiIulio: Before we have a question, Juan, you have to get out of here. You have to dodge Philly because your train is awaiting and we're going to make you late. Everybody stay. We've got a little more time for questions, but before Juan goes, lets give him a heartfelt thanks because...

[Applause from audience. Juan Williams exits.]

John DiIulio: Thank you so much. Yes. Question.

Audience Member #4: Good afternoon. I'm a volunteer here and what really strikes me every time I enter the classroom is how thirsty the students are at Gesu for knowledge and for understanding data, historical fact, and things like that. And my plea is to the folks really from Washington D.C. especially, is how does one start a dialogue in the United States. For instance, I think the United States is very good at capitalism. We do that really well. At education, we sort of dumb that down and we consider it a little bit of an uncool enterprise. And what I'm searching in my own mind is to try to find how would one role model, if you will, education so that it's right up there with making money. Because we seem, as Americans we really like the whole idea of, we've hotted up to making money. Now we need to do the same thing to education. That's what I'm thinking.

Jim Brown: O.K. A couple things. I guess one of them is pay teachers more money. [Applause from audience] It's interesting. Again harkening back to the time I spent in Harrisburg, we did substantially increase the amount of money that we were paying to teachers overall in Pennsylvania. But I do believe that there is a social contract between our society and teachers that is getting frayed. And I'll just give you one example: this whole issue of pensions. You know there's been a lot of moves to change the way that pension plans are done for public school teachers, and I guess private school teachers to some extent, the so-called defined benefit versus defined contribution plans. Not to get too esoteric, but if you want to have, as Win said, you know, smart cops and brave firefighters and highly skilled teachers who take their job and stay there, one of the ways you do it is by saying to them at the end, "Part of the deal is that we're going to take care of you once you retire." And I do think that there have been several public attempts to walk away from some of those obligations and we're very much opposed to that. The second thing that I would say, one of the things that I've noticed – I have a son who's now a junior in college and I employ a lot of kids who are 23 years old or just out of college – and there is a huge reservoir of people coming out of college who want to be volunteers, you know, Teach for America, Jesuit Volunteers, to the point that my 23-year-olds tell me that it is now harder to get into some of these volunteer programs like JVC or Teach for America than it is to get into law school. That mismatch is bizarre, the fact that we are not paying to support every one of these volunteer programs for everybody who wants to do it. And the point about teaching is that what they'll tell you in programs like City Year or Teach for America is you get a certain number of kids who come in and they figure they're going to be teachers for two years and then they're going to get their MBA, and they get hooked and 15 years later they're great teachers and they're still there. So I think one thing we can do is provide more financing both on federal and state levels for some of these programs that will get some of our best college graduates into teaching initially and then some of them will stay and they'll be some of the best teachers. If I just say one other thing about how to do this, and this is not so much addressed to the question, but it's addressed to the folks in the white shirts standing against the wall in the back [Gesu students]. [Laughter from audience] And it's this: one of the ways that we make a lot of these changes that we've been talking about is to have people from the Gesu School, African Americans, people from backgrounds like that, to be in the room when these decisions are being made. The way you do that is you get involved in public service. A frustration to me since I've been in Washington is the fact that the best African American graduates of Penn or Villanova or Howard are going into private industry and I can't afford to hire them. And then the ones who are not making it into college, I never see them. So we established in our office something called the Leon Sullivan Internship. And so here's a promise to the folks standing in the back: if you

get yourselves into college, we have this internship program named after Leon Sullivan, a great Philadelphia preacher and civil rights activist, and if you get yourself into college you can come and intern for me, and we will pay you to do it, and you will be a Leon Sullivan Intern. So see me in a couple years. [Applause from audience]

John DiIulio: I can't think of a better way to end up. Can I do it? No. [Laughter from audience] O.K. He invented faith-based in a way. You know that? He really did. He was doing it before they called it that. I want to thank heartily Jim, Kathleen. Thank you so much. Chris, Chairman Win, and *in absentia*, Juan Williams. And thank all of you. Ten years. We've only just begun. God bless you.

[Applause from audience]

End transcription.