

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Gesu Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education**  
*Lessons in Leadership*

**October 31, 2008**  
**2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Panelists:** Christine S. Beck, *President and CEO of Gesu School*  
Lars Beck, *CEO, Young Scholars Charter School*  
Stedman Graham, *Chairman & CEO, S. Graham & Associates*  
Marc Mannella, *Executive Director, KIPP Philadelphia Schools*  
Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., *President, Fordham University*  
Daniel R. Porterfield, Ph.D., *Senior Vice President for Strategic  
Development, Georgetown University*

**Moderator:** Winston J. Churchill, *Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Gesu School*

Transcription of Proceedings

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

**Student Imani:** Good afternoon. My name is Imani \_\_\_\_\_. I am in the eighth grade here at the Gesu School. I have attended Gesu since Kindergarten. My three older brothers also attended Gesu. I guess you could say that I'm following in their footsteps. I love to participate in sports, such as basketball, track and football. I love to study, and to do my schoolwork. I have been nominated as a Lenfest Scholar. I am not sure what I want to do in life, so I'm focusing on going to high school, and college. My three choices for high school are Shipley School, West Philadelphia Catholic School and Westtown School. I am going to continue to get good grades, so that I can have choices in my life. One thing that I have learned at Gesu is education is vital to my future. If I work hard, I will succeed.

And now to show our Phillies spirit, [*leads cheer*] Way to go Phillies, let's go. Way to go Gesu, let's go. Way to go Phillies, let's go. Way to go Gesu, let's go. Way to go Phillies, let's go. Way to go Gesu, let's go. Way to go Phillies, let's go. [*applause*]

I hope you enjoy our panel today. This is also a special day because it is my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. [*applause*] I am proud and happy to welcome all of you here to the Gesu School. Now I am honored to introduce the Gesu School President, Christine Beck. [*applause*]

**Chris Beck:** We probably should have sung Happy Birthday to Imani, right? I am so glad to see all of you here. Of course we're proud and thrilled that the Phillies won the World Series. [*applause*] But right after the game ended Wednesday night, I got the first e-mail. Subject line: Cancel Symposium. [*laughter*] I said, "What?" Yesterday morning, it seemed as if the exchanges were endless. Back and forth. "How many people are gonna come after all?" "How are they going to get here?" "What if nobody comes?" "The Mayor can't make it now; let's try Senator Casey." "Nope, he'll be with the Mayor." "We won't get any press coverage at all." One e-mail

from Win was pretty heavy; he quoted Virgil, [*laughter*] ““They can conquer who believe they can.”” Another email said, “I am a fan, but it never occurred to me that the parade was a better deal than the Symposium. The game was wonderful, but the season’s over.” Suddenly a light went off. Our topic today is leadership, and this whole exercise and process yesterday was surely a leadership issue in action, getting input from lots of people, and slowly but surely, reaching a consensus. What made the decision clear for me is, I think, a key piece of leadership: the obligation to honor and recognize the commitment that others are making to your cause, our cause here. In this case, it was the panelists who have committed to give generously of their time and expertise, asking nothing in return, willing to come and discuss the challenges of inner-city education. In this case, it was the sponsors, who have made generous gifts to underwrite the costs of this event: invitations, programs, refreshments. And in this case, it was each one of you, who care enough about the inequality in our society, the lack of social justice in education, especially in our cities, that you committed to come today, and you found a way to get here. Cancel? How could we possibly do that?

Now it’s an honor and pleasure to introduce our panelists. Starting at that end, Marc Mannella is Executive Director of KIPP Philadelphia Schools. Mr. Mannella founded KIPP Philadelphia Charter School in 2003, and served as school leader for the first five years. Under his leadership, it has become the highest-performing charter middle school in the City.

Next to him is Lars Beck, and yes, this is my son, and I’m a proud mom up here, too. He has served as CEO of Young Scholars Charter School since 2005. His prior experience include management and marketing of both not-for-profit and for-profit companies.

Reverend Joseph McShane, of the Society of Jesus, has served as President of Fordham University since 2003. Previously, he served as President of University of Scranton, and as Dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill.

Stedman Graham is Chairman and CEO of S. Graham and Associates, a management and marketing consulting company that specializes in the corporate and education markets. He lectures and conducts seminars for clients worldwide, including huge corporations and many universities, where he has also taught. He has authored ten books, including two *New York Times* bestsellers, and we’re very pleased that you each have a book under your chair, which he’ll sign for you afterwards, courtesy of Win Churchill.

And Dan Porterfield is Georgetown University’s Senior Vice President for Strategic Development. He’s also an assistant professor in the English Department at Georgetown, and teaches courses on human rights, education and social justice.

Unfortunately, our traditional moderator, John DiIulio, has a horrible case of laryngitis and fever, and if anyone can follow in his huge footsteps as our moderator, it is surely the Chairman of our Board, Win Churchill. Win has been Managing General Partner of SCP Partners, a family of venture capital funds since 1996. He has over 25 years of experience in private equity investment, and he’s really responsible for Gesu School’s success as one of the, um, initial Board of Funders. He serves, has served, as Chairman of Gesu School since the beginning, for 16 years,

serves as Chairman of the Board of the Gesu Institute, as well as Young Scholars Charter School. So I know you'll join me in welcoming this wonderful, wonderful group of panelists. [*applause*]

**Win Churchill:** Thank you very much, Chris, and thank you all for attending on a day when there was an alternative site that might have been more attractive or more exciting, but, although we don't believe that. It took the Phillies 25 years, you know, to repeat in the World Series, and we've been at this project now for 20 years, so I guess one of the underlying themes here is "underdogs," and I had a little discussion with my friend, Fr. McShane, about the Yankees and the Red Sox in the hall, just before lunch, but, you know, go Phillies, and with all due respect, this is the championship site.

**Fr. McShane:** Absolutely, absolutely. [*applause*]

**Win Churchill:** So, I want to talk a little bit about what I think of as the mosaic of inner-city education in our city of Philadelphia, and just to give you a few numbers, the public schools have about 180,000 children, the Catholic schools have about 70,000 children, and the charter schools have about 30,000 children. So, we're talking about a picture of almost 300,000 children overall. And then you have Gesu. And at Gesu, when we started, basically in this space in 1988, Fr. George Bur and I – I was asked to come up and see whether or not we could help putting a cage back on what was then the roof. So the floor of what you're sitting on was the roof of the school at that time, and this was open to the sky, and in the '70's, the cage had been condemned by L&I as being unsafe, so after the conversion of this building from St. Joe's Prep to the Gesu grade school, there was no place to play basketball, so the initial seed of the project was essentially, "Can we restore a cage on the roof so the kids will have a place yet again to play basketball?" So George and I then looked at some financial matters respecting the school, and as Chris indicated, it was clear that the school was gonna need financial help, if it were to survive as an independent school without public funding. So the first thing we did was to form a Development Board in 1988, and then by 1992, because of what's happening to population shifts in these neighborhoods, the Archdiocese found that it was necessary to close the Gesu parish, which is one of the oldest and most distinguished parishes in the City, essentially for lack of parishioners. So the question then became, you know, what do we do with the school? So this is a bit like Chris's comments on the Symposium, you know, we're definitely not gonna not do it, I mean, you know, we are going to continue the school, as we continued the Symposium even in the face of the World Championship. So, the Development Board in 1992 became the actual Board of Directors, and Gesu was established as an independent Catholic school in the Jesuit and IHM traditions, but importantly, very few Catholic kids in the student body. That was true then, and continues now. I think it's 95% non-Catholic kids. So you had a cause, inner-city education for our 450 children, which would obviously appeal to everybody. This was not about a group of people taking care of, quote, our own, but it was about a broader definition of "What do we mean by our own, in this kind of a society, and in this world that we live in?" So our definition of "our own" is pretty expansive, and I think we can be justifiably proud of that. So, we then had discussions about "What should the mission for a school like this be?" And normally, when you have 450 children, in challenging circumstances with open admissions, a very important tenet of our philosophy, open admissions, non-selective, not academically selective, not financially selective, but open admissions, first come, first served, you have, already, something significant on your plate. But, is that the extent of the mission, or is there a second part to the mission,

which is basically what we call Gesu as a beacon, to show several important things? So, again, we go back to 1988 and 1990, and these things now seem a lot more obvious than they were then, and I think somewhat because of what we've been able to do here at Gesu.

So the first point is that it can be done. Right, you can come into the inner city, you know, with our kids, and you can successfully run a very, very good school, and you can educate children in these circumstances, and with all the challenges that they have in their lives, to have successful lives broadly defined. OK, it's not just that we can have five kids who get a scholarship to the Prep, and then a scholarship to Harvard, you know, coming out of the Prep, it's that we can take every single one of our kids and help them to prepare themselves for successful lives, broadly defined. So broadly defined means, essentially, a life where you're able to not only take care of yourself, but to give back, OK, because we feel that probably the greatest satisfaction and the key to successful lives is putting yourself in a position to give back, that is, to think of others, and not just be focused on yourself. But, for that, you need an important set of tools. So, you know, you can end up as a firefighter, a policeman, a teacher, a professor of law at Harvard, somebody working at the Federal Reserve, and we have actual examples among our graduates of all of these jobs. But, you have an attitude which embodies this broad definition of success, and it's an attitude of being prepared to have a life of service to others. And this philosophy essentially comes from the Jesuit and IHM traditions. So people say, you know, do you teach religion in the classroom? Or, what is this Catholic thing when you have no Catholic kids, and you're not very successful at converting kids to Catholicism because, you know, you constantly have 95% non-Catholics? And we say, you know, it's a big tent, and Catholic can be spelled with a capital "C" or a small "c". So, catholic with a small "c" has a broader meaning. So the second thing that, I think, that we've been able to prove is that not only can it be done, which was a question for some in 1988, but it can be done well. It can be done very, very successfully. You know, it's not rocket science. And the third question we asked ourselves, so if it can be done and it can be done well, what is the balance of our obligation, and that is the Gesu as a beacon. OK, to share what you've learned with others, to share, it's not rocket science, but there are some, you know, common-sense principles, and I think it mostly involves avoiding mistakes, and what I call non-stupidity. OK, so you've got to share your non-stupidity, because stupidity is contagious in our society.

Just a few more numbers, and I'm gonna not ramble on too much longer here. The cost per student in the public schools is about \$9,500 a year per student. The cost per student here at Gesu is about \$5,600 a year per student. The cost in the charter schools, and I'm using rough numbers, and Marc and Lars can probably refine this, is around \$6,000 per student. The tuition in the Catholic schools, the surviving, I should say, Catholic schools in the inner city is around \$2,500. And families like ours on average have the ability to pay about \$1,000 a year for their kids in tuition. So, obviously a huge spread in the sort of financial cost of things, and what does that tell me? It tells me it's not about the money, OK, because you could take the most expensive example of a public school and have a lower success rate, success as we define it, than in a Catholic school that's doing it for \$2,500 and somehow or another subsidizing the \$1,500 that the family can't afford. So, money is important, but it's not just about the money. So what's the second thing it's about, and that's why Stedman is gonna be so relevant to our discussion today, it's about attitude. OK, it's about the will to win. It's about wise and practical leadership. It's about non-stupidity, if I can continue to coin my own phrase here. So what is the attitude? It's

optimism, it's generosity, and it's the conviction that in the case of our kids' lives, success is the *only* option. OK, it's not just that failure is not an option, you know the sort of negative way to put it, it's that once we undertake the lives of these children, success is the *only* option, or we shouldn't be here, we shouldn't be doing this. So, these are the things that we try to teach to everybody that will listen, and cares about our inner-city kids. So, Stedman is gonna, is a ranking, you know, national, international expert on attitude, leadership, motivation, optimism, if you will, and we're so glad, Stedman, that you're able to share the afternoon with us. Fr. Joe McShane and Dan Porterfield, both very dear friends of mine, work at the university level in their day jobs, if you will, their full-time jobs, but if we say, to use a sort of physics analogy, that it's all about acceleration, which is sort of how I look at it, having majored in physics at Fordham many years ago, what we do is, we take our children as we find them, maybe it's Kindergarten or maybe it's fifth or sixth grade, and accelerate their path, OK, make it possible for them at a much greater rate to learn the tools to have successful lives. So, Joe and Dan work at the end of that curve, if you will, where it's this sort of third stage of things, where they're responsible for children in very, very significant universities and these kids, who make it that far, are in a position to do anything in life. Basically, there's no ceiling for those kids, but it's a huge responsibility and they find, I think, and they'll share this with us, that some kids are more difficult than others. You know, some people like to be accelerated, and some people don't like to be accelerated. This is why Ellen doesn't like to drive when I'm driving the car, you know, so people have a different attitude about acceleration. And then, Marc and Lars work in what, to me, is really the lynchpin, the fulcrum of this whole mosaic problem, and that is the charter schools. So, what is a charter school? A charter school is a publicly funded school, and the number, 6,000 is a number that I think is roughly correct, so they're economically much more efficient than your average public school, where the number is 9,500 or so. And why is that? Well, for various reasons, and one is non-stupidity, OK, because the structure does not subject them to, and I'm not against bureaucracies, and if we've learned anything in these market conditions in the past few months, it's that, you know, some governmental intervention is necessary to, you know, to sort of preserve the common welfare. So, I'm not just knocking bureaucracy per se, but the charter schools are a very wonderful invention whereby you can have public funding and private leadership. OK, so it's kind of the best of both worlds. So, I think their comments are going to be very instructive to us. And by the way, it's sometimes popular, again, on the stupidity end of things to blame the teachers, you know the teachers are lazy or, the public school teachers, it's a union, and they want too much money, and they want too many, you know, days off in the summer. Well, I was the financial trustee for the Pennsylvania teachers' pension fund, you know, appointed by the Governor, for many years, so I know a lot of public school teachers who are wonderful people. Right, we all do. I mean, this is a vocation, this is not a job. So, to teach day after day in the public schools is no easy task, and the same applies to the charter schools, and the same applies here. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our teachers who get up every day and go into that classroom, whatever the school is, and serve out their lives, you know, teaching our kids. So, it's not about money, you know, it's not about the teachers, it's, it's, it's sort of a systemic issue about, how do you, you know, preserve the system from excess stupidity. And I think the charter schools may well be the key to this puzzle. So our school is working, I'm happy to report, as I do every year, you know, we're still here, working at the old stand. It's working very, very well. It works better and better, thanks to Chris and her really dedicated administration, and thanks again to our teachers, and our children and our families. You know, the families make a huge sacrifice, essentially, to have their children here,

you know, because, for a lot of reasons. So it's a laboratory. The laboratory's working. We're, you know, it's not rocket science, we're not geniuses, we do have a certain amount of common sense, and, to come back to the beginning, we like underdogs. Here in Philly, it's about underdogs, and here at the Gesu it's about underdogs, right? So, we have a certain amount of expertise in being and dealing with underdogs. And just a final word of thanks, in memory to our great friend, Tim Russert, who's not with us this year, and had been with us for many years, and a member of our board for many years, and if you've read the book that he wrote about his father, if you haven't I'd certainly commend it to you, and that's really a story of what an underdog can do with the proper attitude. Stedman. So, I'm gonna first ask Stedman to make a few comments, and then I think we'll talk a little bit with Marc and Lars about the charter schools, and then Joe and Dan, if you would talk about it from the sort of university and your perspectives, and then Chris, if you can, you know, wind it up, and then we'll come back to Stedman, I think, for some parting thoughts, and then our usual question and answer session, which is very important. So, please ask the questions that come into your minds.

**Stedman Graham:** Thank you very much. I think, number one, this says it all: it says, "Lessons in Leadership" and leadership is the most important word here. A great leader said that, he said a couple of things. He says, "Take care of yourself, and then give back. To do that, you need an important set of tools." He also said, "It can be done." And both of those are by Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill, this Winston Churchill [*indicating moderator*].

**Win Churchill:** Finally!

**Stedman Graham:** And the musical director, I went upstairs and they were practicing, and I heard them practicing on the song they sang today here, and I asked them, "Can I have a copy of the words?" And it says, "Because of who you are, I give you glory. Because of who you are, I give you praise. Because of who you are, I lift my voice and say, 'Lord, if I can be strong, I know every mile will be worth my while. I would go most anywhere to feel like I belong.'" And, ladies and gentlemen, I think that's what it's all about. It is certainly what I try to teach when I speak around the world, to everybody, is you have to feel like you first belong. And the book that you have, *Who Are You*, is relevant to that song, and it's the foundation of my life, and it's why I'm able to take information and use that information to make my life relevant every single day. And, it's a very difficult process to do if you don't know how to do that, because 99% of the people are followers, ladies and gentlemen. There's not that many leaders. And the followers get up in the morning, they wake up in the morning, they wash their face, they brush their teeth, they get something to eat, they get the kids off, they go to work, work all day, come home in the afternoon, they have dinner, spend time with the family, watch TV, go to bed. That's Monday. What do they do on Tuesday? This is interactive, OK? Same thing. What do they do on Wednesday? What do they do on Thursday? What do they do on Friday? Saturday, what do they do? Sleep. [*laughter*] Sunday, what do they do? They go to church, they eat chicken dinners in the afternoon, they get ready for Monday, they start the process all over again. How long can they do it for? Their whole life. They have no more in the end than they had in the beginning after 30 years, and they say, "What have I done?" So, if you did the same thing you did yesterday, as you would do today, as you would do tomorrow, what have you done? Nothing.

The educational system, unfortunately, sometimes, teaches you how to memorize, take tests, repeat the information back, you get labeled with a grade. If I asked the students what they learned two weeks later, what would you say, students? Nothing. [laughter]

**Win Churchill:** Not our students. [laughter]

**Stedman Graham:** Not your students. So, nothing from nothing is nothing. So you're operating on nothing. And then you come to Philadelphia and this area, and I call my cousin Frankie, and I say, "What in the world is this?" I mean, I live in Whitesboro, New Jersey, Wildwood, Cape May, so I'm from the shore, and Philadelphia's my home. What in the world is this? This makes *no sense*. Am I in Vietnam? Is this a war zone? What are all of these boys doing walking around on this street doing *nothing*? And, so, what you have is, you have, I go back to when I said, you know what, this is a leadership issue ladies and gentlemen. This is the lack of leadership. What have these people been doing? And, so, I said, "Well, we don't have an education problem, we have an identity problem. You have no identity, you don't, do not know who you are." And when don't know who you are, you can't think. All you do is mimic. And you do what everybody else wants you to do. If a person has two earrings on, you wear two earrings. You know, if they listen to rap music, you listen to rap music. If they're doing something crazy, you do something crazy. Because you don't know how to think and take information and education and make it relevant to your heart and soul, transfer it to the American free enterprise system and then apply it to your own personal development every single day. That's what you're doing here. You're getting young people, number one, to stand up and walk into a music room and be quiet, doing it. Right, students? And not say a word because you have to focus. And whatever you focus on, expands. So, if you do it over and over and over and over again, you become good at what you do because you practice. And, like Michael Jordan became one of the greatest basketball players in the world, it's not because he, what, not because he just was a basketball player, because he practiced being good at what he does.

And so, you have to have the right habits to be able to practice, and so, when I teach the nine step process, which is in this book, I talk about the first step, which is based on your passion. You have to have a passion. If you have no passion, you have no energy. If you have no energy, you're bored. If you're bored, then you don't know what to do, except sit on the corner, and look for something to get into, because you're not connecting the brain with your possibilities as a human being. And, so, that's the freedom part. The other part is, that a lot of this is political, so it's set up that way. A lot of it's designed. So, it's based on how people want to deal with other people, based on somebody knowing more information than the other. So, it *is* about information, and it *is* about being able to develop a collective consciousness of learning based on leadership. And, so, that's part of what I teach. I teach it on the individual level, and try to get people to understand how to do that on their own through an independent process. This gets them to take charge of their own life and create their own possibilities. I'm just kicking it off, so that's the best I can do right now, and I'm gonna probably turn it over to somebody else to start that process, and I'm sure we will engage in those kinds of thoughts as we go along.

**Win Churchill:** Thank you, Stedman. Marc.

**Marc Mannella:** Thanks. So, welcome everybody. Thanks for joining us today. I did want to take a minute to introduce you a little bit to KIPP, which stands for the Knowledge is Power Program, and that's the organization that I've been working with since 2002. KIPP is a little bit different than traditional inner-city education, and for those of you who aren't familiar with this story, basically, KIPP started from two guys who were teaching as a part of the Teach for America program, in Houston, Texas, in the early '90's, and they were *mad*, basically. They were frustrated, they were fed up, they were appalled in a way from what it was that they were seeing in their classrooms, because in *their* classrooms, it was working, right? Dedicated teachers, working the hours, reaching the kids, making connections with them in their rooms, and the children are learning. And then, after their fifth grade year, when they were finished with these two teachers, Mike and Dave, they would then go on to the next room in the sixth grade room, and they'd fall apart. And Mike and Dave couldn't understand how that could happen, because, they were led to believe, you know, they went to public schools when they were children in the suburbs, and they were led to believe that, you know, OK, we did our job, sort of our cog in the educational machine has been fulfilled, and we got that fifth grade education, now someone else is gonna take care of it in the sixth grade. And what they found was that the other rooms in that building weren't getting it done. Then they got frustrated, and they got mad. And what they did with those emotions and what they did with that frustration is they created this thing called KIPP. And they basically petitioned their school to allow them to open up a separate program within their school, where they would be allowed to teach the children the way that they knew worked as fifth graders, but then also hang onto them as sixth graders, and then teach them as seventh graders also, and as eighth graders. It allowed them to sort of have their own team of teachers within their school that would then prepare the children to get into great high schools and basically to get out of the traditional system and to get outside of the neighborhood schools, and allow them to apply to Catholic schools, allow them to apply to independent schools or other charter schools. And, basically, Houston basically said, "Yes, you can do it," but they watched them closely, they harassed them, they gave them a hard time about it. And so, Dave eventually leaves, goes to New York. Mike stays in Houston, and now there's two KIPP academies, and this is in 1994. What happens in these schools, after they go on for a couple of years, is remarkable. The school in New York ends up becoming the highest performing school in the entire Bronx by the year 2000, and the school in Houston becomes the highest performing school in the entire state of Texas. And, so now people say, "Whoa! How are these barrio kids in Houston outperforming every other school in the entire state? Something's going on here."

So, Mike Wallace comes and does a piece for *60 Minutes*. They start giving more attention to them. They end up on stage here in Philadelphia at the Republican National Convention. I don't know how many Republicans we have in the room, per se, but if you watched it on TV, maybe you saw the KIPPsters that were on stage demonstrating the different methodologies that we use to teach. And, basically, what ends up happening with Mike and Dave is they're approached by tons of people who say, "You need to replicate, you need to do more schools, you need to do more." And they're not interested, because they didn't believe necessarily that it *could* be replicated. What KIPP was, it was about heart, it was about these individual teachers that were doing it day in, day out, and, you know, it's not like you can just put them on every single corner and just call it KIPP and paint the walls the same color and you'll have the same thing.

Well, Mike and Dave thought about it, and they end up working with the, what was then called the Pisces Foundation, it's now called the Don and Doris Fisher Foundation, Don and Doris Fisher being the founders of GAP, Old Navy, Banana Republic. They worked with that foundation because they said, you know, maybe there is a way to replicate. And what they decided to do was to invest in leadership, which of course fits right in with this, almost like I planned that out ahead of time. It's about leadership, right? It's about getting talented people, setting them up for success, taking the barriers away and supporting them to grow a school that's like a KIPP school in the community that they want to work it in. And, so, they did decide to replicate, and they said, we're going to find teachers who, like we used to be, who are ticked off, teachers who are frustrated, teachers who are getting it done in their room but can't deal with the fact that dysfunction is all around them. And, we're going to support them and train them and enable them to open up their own KIPP schools. Right now, there's 66 KIPP schools across the country, in neighborhoods just like our school here in Philadelphia is maybe 15-20 blocks away from here, and then we're in New York, we're in Chicago, we're in Los Angeles and every place in between. And, what we're proving is that, with great leadership, and with being able to have some of these bureaucracies, I actually *am* against bureaucracy, so get some of these bureaucracies out of their way, to get some of what we know *isn't* working out of the way, we're able to have some success, and we're able to educate children no matter what their neighborhood, no matter what their zip code, no matter what their family situation. We're able to educate our children in a way that is worthy of them.

Our school here in Philadelphia was founded in 2003. I did a year of training to open that school that was funded by the KIPP Foundation. I spent six weeks at Cal Berkeley's Haas School of Business learning all of the organizational leadership and the operations management. I certainly don't have an MBA, but I knew enough to know when I needed to ask a question. After that, I spent a month at a couple of different KIPP schools, learning, sort of, what it is to be a KIPP teacher, because I had only taught in dysfunctional schools. I taught in Baltimore through Teach for America in the late '90's, and then I taught here in Philadelphia, and I had only worked in schools that stunk, frankly. So, how am I going to open up a school that's any good if I've only seen schools that are lousy? So, that three months that I spent in three different schools enabled me to really see, OK, this is what this looks like, this is how you get a high functioning team all on the same page, all working for kids.

We opened up our school in the summer of 2003, because one of the things about KIPP is that we know that we have to take more time in school, in order to work with our kids, because they're coming to us way behind. We start with fifth graders. They're not on grade level, they're not close in most cases. And so, in order to get the results that we get, we know we need to work with them longer. So, we go to school from 7 to 5 every day, 7:30 to 5 every day. We go every other Saturday, and we go for a month in the summer. We do this because there's no pixie dust I can sprinkle over a child's forehead if they're three years behind by the time they come to us in fifth grade. We're going to have to roll up our sleeves and work harder than everybody else. Those students who entered, the 90 fifth grade students who entered in the summer of 2003 worked their tails off that first year, and the results on the PSSA tests were the results of them working their tails off. 21% passed the math, sorry, 21% passed the reading, 29% passed the math. We looked at that, and we were devastated. But then we looked at the neighborhood schools that we pulled our students from, you know. At that time, back in 2003 on the PSSA, our

neighborhood schools, actually, when we averaged the schools that we pull from, 12% passed that PSSA, so actually, we're doing OK. When those same students took that test at the end of their eighth grade year when they left us, 91% passed in math, 91% passed in reading. Now, to give you some perspective, that was in 2007. On that 2007 eighth grade PSSA, the average of the neighborhood schools had risen to 20's, in the 20's, 20%, the district average in the 40's, the state averaged in the 60's, and the average of the suburbs that ring Philadelphia is in the 80's, like 82, as we calculated it. So, now our students have 91% of them passing the state test. So what we did was, I guess, accidentally reverse the achievement gap, so the next thing we have to do is figure out how to get those kids in the suburbs a decent education. *[laughter]* Then, I guess, we can all be happy, and we can all go home and go to bed. What KIPP proves, though, is that with leadership, with a talented group of people, with a talented team, you can take any child, and yes, we are an open enrollment school that takes any and every child that comes to us into our lottery and we just pull names out of a hat. It's slightly more sophisticated with computers and everything now, but, basically, names out of a hat, and we're succeeding and we're working and we're helping our kids, as we say, climb the mountain to college. Our kids are at the Prep, our kids are at North Catholic, Cardinal Dougherty, our kids are at Malvern Prep, all over the place. We have a young lady at Westtown, actually, I heard Imani talk about Westtown. These are the places where our kids are going, and our kids aren't going to stop there. They're going to college, they're going to go to and through college, and they're going to have successful lives, with choices about what they want to be. And that's really what KIPP is about, and leadership is a huge part of that.

**Winston Churchill:** And, Lars.

**Lars Beck:** Thanks, I'm also thrilled to be here, participating in this important discussion, and I, just a minute or two on Young Scholars, just to frame what I'm going to say, and I'm going to sort of build a little bit on what Marc said, if I could. Young Scholars, we're in our tenth year as a charter school. We are also a few blocks from here. We're sort of in between here and KIPP, about seven or eight blocks from here. We're a small school. We're about 200 students, a middle school like Marc, and I'm not gonna dispute - yet at least - that he's the highest performing charter middle school in the city. Hopefully,

**Marc Mannella:** We argue about that. I don't believe that belongs in my bio. I want it out. It's not competition. *[laughter]*

**Lars Beck:** But we're a sixth to eighth grade school, also, and although we're in our tenth year, we sometimes refer to ourselves as being in our second year. My predecessor - this is my fourth full year at Young Scholars - and my predecessor, who founded our school, and helped us get off to a great start, had a lot of health issues in the middle period of our life, and he subsequently passed away, unfortunately. Stanley Wolfe was a great founder of our school, and we actually had a big slip in the middle of our school, in the middle of our life, and became maybe an average school, and I think, to build on what Marc said a little bit, average as in not very good, isn't really that great. So, and we've had a bit of a transformation, and in the last couple of years have begun seeing great results. Our reading PSSA scores last year were 78% proficient and above, our math scores were plus 61%, so we're seeing great results on the scores, seeing great results with our high school placement, as well, very similar schools to where Gesu's eighth

graders are going, KIPP's eighth graders are going. So I think one common theme today is that it can be done, and I think, as a school that's recently emerged to be one of the city's best, or is emerging to be one of the city's best, I actually think, as I think through my place on this panel, and I'm honored to be among this group, I think that we have a really important pla-, we share sort of an important piece in that, we can sort of show that, as a stand-alone school, who's struggling a bit as a school that's already open, that you can transform to be great. And I think that that's really important.

So I had a couple of thoughts as to how, how we've done that. And the first is one that I know Marc talks about - I know Jeff and Scott from the Mastery Charter Schools are here, and they talk about this a lot - and that's the importance of absolute success versus relative success. And I think there's a couple reasons why that's really important. I think it's really easy to become satisfied if you focus on relative success and become satisfied with mediocrity if you're outperforming what's going on around you. But that's just not good enough. I think Marc pointed that out well. It's also easy to be satisfied with that because, you know, many of our students, like what Marc described, students will come to us in sixth grade at third or fourth grade reading and math levels. So, in one way, if you get them to seventh grade level by the time they graduate from eighth grade at your school, you've accomplished an awful lot. But, have you really accomplished a lot? Because they're not where they need to be. So, we look at that as failure, just as I'm sure Marc does, and I know Mastery does, and I'm sure Gesu does, as well. And I think that it's really important, in terms of being fair to our children in our city, that we make sure that as leaders we focus on absolute success and not settle for being better than what's going on around us. And that's why it's great to hear people talk about - I loved your phrase - reversing the achievement gap. Actually, I think that's one I'm going to borrow, if you don't mind.

A second piece that I think's been important in our transformation is to be acutely self-aware of our strengths and weaknesses, and to relentlessly pursue solutions to things we don't know. We've been smart enough to realize what we don't know, and what we've failed on. There's a network of schools called Schools That Can, of which we're a member, and we've learned a lot, and through that network I actually stumbled upon a few schools in Boston that are performing at outrageous levels, and we went up to visit a couple of them, and really identified with one called the Excel Academy, which is a middle school. And we actually, after that first visit, said we really want to borrow a lot of what they're doing, and then we took 14 of our faculty and staff up to visit the school, so they could see, and be a part of, this decision to transform our approach. And we did. And two years ago, we really re-launched our model, based on this Excel Academy, and it's had tremendous results for us here. And I think the point is, to not be afraid to copy someone. I mean, we're really lucky in this education world, that it's not, sort of, in the for-profit world where all the secrets are patented or copyrighted or, you know, trademarked, and I've yet to go ask somebody to borrow something and they don't say, "Here." Marc can say I call him all the time and say, "What about this?" Jeff and Scott at Mastery, I'm calling frequently, saying, "How about this?" And we just, we copy and we try to give credit, you know, and let them know where it came from, but I think one of the things that we've done is build our own network as a stand-alone school through Schools That Can helped, but also here in Philadelphia, and really found those that are achieving and then we've said, "We've gotta go be sponges." And, a lot of times I think, in most organizations I assume, but I can assure you, that in middle school inner-

city education, it's really easy to say, "We're too busy to take the time to look outside and see what's going on." And I think that it's really, really critical that you do take that time, and it's something that's benefited us tremendously.

And then the third and final thing I was going to say is just that I think it's really key with leadership to be really focused, and to not be afraid to take risks, and do things to make sure you stay focused. We at Young Scholars, like a lot of the successful charter schools, charter schools in the city and around the region and country, have a very structured approach to how we do things. Our teachers create curriculum, under a very prescribed, inflexible approach. Our teachers use data to drive their instruction in a very rigorous way that's defined for them, and they use school-wide procedures and systems to both plan and teach their lesson, and then also to manage their class. We still believe there's lots of room for teachers to be creative in their classroom, but at the same time, we think it's really important that we be focused, and it's not free-form, that we have a focused way that we've learned from others and have made our own, and I think it's important that you stay focused on that. We, like lots of successful organizations, are willing to have difficult conversations when we're not all on the same page, and I think getting everybody on the same page has been really, really critical for our acceleration, and in our student achievement. And it's still a challenge, and still something we're working on, but I think that that's really, really critical. So I hope that adds a little bit to this conversation, and just supports that it can be done through the leadership ways that you are-, but also as a stand-alone school who's struggling a bit, if you go out and find those that are succeeding, I think with good leadership it can be done, it can be done that way, as well. Thanks.

**Win Churchill:** Thank you, Lars. *[applause]* Joe McShane is going to speak next, and I, just a few words, because I'm a Fordham man and Joe is President at Fordham now. But Joe originally was the president at the University of Scranton, and Scranton's the most distinguished town of all to be from until next Tuesday. *[laughter]* But, we're both, you know, really, really proud of a place like Fordham, right, because Fordham sits, the main campus is in the Bronx, there's a second campus at Lincoln Center, and for its entire history, Fordham has been a melting pot, I think it's fair to say, and a sort of port of entry for a lot of underdogs, to use my term, to have meaningful and successful lives, and it continues in that role. So Joe, I'm really glad you could spend the afternoon here with us.

**Rev. Joseph McShane:** Please, I wouldn't be anywhere else. Truly. But before I say a few things about inner-city education and its advances, I have been asked by Mayor Bloomberg, and the 8.5 million citizens of New York, to convey to you, the citizens of Philadelphia and greater Philadelphia, our heartiest congratulations on the victory of the Phillies. *[applause]* I think I see my cousin, Polly, over there. Nice to see you, Polly, Sr. Pauline McShain. She's a wonderful person but can't spell. They spell the name M-c-S-h-a-i-n, rather than -a-n-e, which is correct, as Polly admitted to me once. We, I'm going to go back to my greeting from the Mayor. The Mayor asked me to extend that, his congratulations and heartiest best wishes to you. We believe that we, we take a special joy out of your victory. You defeated the Rays. Who cares? *[laughter]* The Rays defeated the Sox. We *all* care. Thank you very much. *[laughter]*

Now I want to, if you don't mind, I want to talk about two, I was going to say that there are three major developments in inner-city, effective, successful inner-city education in the last 30 years.

One is the charter school movement, and that's been covered, I think, remarkably well, and eloquently, by Lars and Marc. There are two other movements that I want to focus on, and they are both, you know, I say this with, and you'll accuse me of having Jesuit pride when I say this, but Jesuit pride is an oxymoron; there is no such thing, as you know. These are two movements that are deeply connected with the Society of Jesus. The first is the Nativity School movement and the second is the Cristo Rey movement. One is middle school: the Nativity School. And the Nativity School model was born on the Lower East Side of New York, therefore, in our neighborhood, Fordham's neighborhood. It began about 30 years ago. It is, it's a movement that's only really taken off in the last, I would say, 15 years. The Nativity School model calls for this: In middle school, actually, you go out to the highways and byways. You bring in, it goes beyond being open admission; it's really searching admission. You bring in 20 students a year, that's it. The students are rescued from the street. They are provided with an educational experience that starts on Monday morning at about 7:30. They have class until about 3 in the afternoon, then they're sent home to change their clothes. They come back for organized activities, then they're sent home for dinner. Then they come back, and from 7 until 9, they have organized study hall. During the summers, they're sent away for a summer vacation, which is an educational vacation. The Nativity Mission on Forsyth Strip in Lower Manhattan was the birthplace of the Nativity School movement. It's highly successful, because it rescued kids from the streets. It saw the streets as toxic, and, therefore, what you gave to students in middle school was, in essence, a prep school education at home.

The second is the Cristo Rey model. The Cristo Rey model was born in the city of Chicago, in the Pilsen neighborhood. It was founded by a man, John Foley, who was a returning missionary. He was coming back from Peru, where he had spent about 25 or 30 years. When he came back, his Provincial said to him, "John, I want you to do something about inner-city education for Hispanics in Pilsen, which has the highest dropout rate and the highest teen pregnancy rate in the city of Chicago." John said, "Well, what do I do?" He said, "You figure it out." So, the loving care of a Provincial for his men. So John decided that something different had to be done. So he developed a model which is, in essence, a co-op model of high school education. Students go to school four days a week, but one day of the week, they go and work in a law firm, a corporation, a non-profit setting. The key here is that the corporation does not pay the kid. The corporation sends the money to the school. That covers tuition, so that for a private school education, a student has to pay \$2,000 a year, and most of them are still on scholarship. The magic here is that the students have a sense of responsibility from the time that they start as freshmen, they develop relationships with their employers, and by the time they're going to college, they're well-placed in college and they're well-placed for summer work.

One is a middle school movement; the second is a high school movement. Cristo Rey has really, I would say, it's roared out of nowhere. There are now 11 schools nationwide, about to become a network of 20 schools within the next two years. So successful, so highly creative that the Gates Foundation has given them \$16 million to develop guidelines for developing new schools. While one movement, Nativity, is on the middle school level, Cristo Rey on the high school level, they share certain characteristics. Number one, and this is, I think, important. They are community-based. And they're community-based in two ways. Number one, they are responsive to, they are willing to learn about the needs of the community that they serve. They do not come in with a cookie cutter approach. They listen, and are responsive. Number two, they're community-based

in a most important way. They create and they depend upon the creation of a community of concern for the school. Therefore, they expect and demand that parents, faculty and local entities, parishes, for instance, become deeply involved in the way in which the school is run. Third, the schools share a very important characteristic in that they, they refuse to accept mediocrity and they refuse to accept excuse. They will not make exception for their students. That is to say, they make demands on their students, and the demands come out of a belief in the students and the belief comes out of a love that they have for the students. Faculty that I've spoken to in Nativity schools and in Cristo Rey schools say to me over and over again, "The greatest insult that you can offer to a kid from an inner-city neighborhood is to expect little." Demand much. Demand out of belief and faith in the student, and let that faith be born of love. That's a very important thing. [applause]

Next distinguishing characteristic is the schools really, they were born of a vision of one person, but the vision was a compellingly simple vision, and therefore a vision that could be articulated easily and which was portable. So that it was not dependent on a cultic figure, but rather someone who had vision but wanted the vision to be shared and shared freely. The models, both of them, with all due respect, the models really come out of Jesuit education. They believe deeply in the sacredness of each student, and the, and from that belief is an utter refusal to see any student as a throwaway. There are no disposable kids.

Now, what are the challenges? Number one, no, last characteristic. All of them have created networks of support. Challenges, number one: money; number two: money; number three: money and number four: sponsorship. And sponsorship by whomever. Myself, you know, from my experience at Fordham I will tell you that these schools are highly effective because they are based on and born of love and a belief in individual students. They send to Fordham students who are adventuresome, students who are confident, students who are men and women of integrity. But, even when they reach the collegiate level, they're still students who have to have intensive community around them. So toxic are the streets that even after six or eight years, it's still important for the colleges to commit the kind of resources that are necessary to make it possible for them to succeed even more. At Fordham, we're fortunate. We have a state, somewhat state-funded program, the Higher Educational Opportunity Program, which we now, we match, and more than match. And the graduation rates for our students in the HEOP Program, who come from schools like the Cristo Rey schools, because they have intensive care, the graduation rates are almost the same as you have for the rest of the students in our student body, and a couple of years they have exceeded them. The students, from the day that they begin, at Nativity, at Cristo Rey or at Fordham, are reminded that they are the Talented Tenth. You all know the Talented Tenth from W.E.B. DuBois. These are members of a community to whom gifts and talents have been given, and therefore, it is their responsibility to be responsible for their community, to give back, to pay back, and the greatest payback is to infect the community with hope, so that from hope, the community can believe in itself.

Those are the movements that I just bring to your attention. Gesu stands apart. It was a pioneer before these other two movements got off the ground. It shares some characteristics, but is different. What it shares, importantly, is an utter belief in the sacredness of each individual student and an insistence on demanding more of students than they think that they can take, and they rise to the occasion. [applause]

**Win Churchill:** Thank you, Joe. Dan Porterfield is another dear friend down at Georgetown, and I think there's a baseball team in Washington.

**Dan Porterfield:** You'll be hearing more from us in another year or two. Thank you. It's great to be up here in Churchill land. Win served on our Board of Directors for 18 years, over the past 20 years, so that's obviously an entirely voluntary role that required him to come to Washington, D.C. four times a year, and then to be on the phone with us, and engaged with us in other ways on an almost weekly basis. And, it is sometimes said that institutions are the lengthening shadows of single great individuals, and that very much is the case for Win's leadership and impact at Georgetown University. There are three major, major transformations that have occurred at Georgetown over the decade that I've been working there. I can only tell you about one of them. It was the sale of our hospital. All three, though, required Win's leadership and engagement, and the institution enjoys the prestige and reputation that it has today because of incredible contributions that he has made behind the scenes in support of our institution and Jesuit education in general. So, it's really a big honor for me to be able to sit here at the Gesu, a place that Win's been bragging about down in D.C. for ten years, and finally I get to be here. So, thank you so much.

**Winston Churchill:** But there's a few problems. I want to talk to you later about a few things you didn't fix. [laughter]

**Dan Porterfield:** I want to start with two statistics, and they speak for themselves. The first one is that this big commission called the Mathematics Advisory Board compared the United States to 30 other developed countries in the areas of our students' ability to do problem-solving, computation and have mathematical literacy. This was done in 2007, and the United States ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of 30 developed nations. Second statistic: A couple of years ago, some scholars looked at the college-going rates of children in families that earn less than \$35,000 a year, and that's the bottom quartile, the bottom 25% of the American economy. It's a big group, and we found that 1 in 17 children from those families will earn a college degree. Now you put those two statistics together, and it tells a very scary story for the United States of America. If, in 1983, a legendary report on American education called us a nation at risk, those statistics and reams and reams more I could provide actually say that we are, right now, in terms of education, a nation in decline. And if we don't have a systematic effort to reverse that, the 21<sup>st</sup> century *will* be what many pundits are calling the post-American century. What I believe is needed is truly massive reform at the political level, the level of the city, the state, the nation as a whole. I think there are many promising practices out there, but let's not kid ourselves. We need national reform. We need accountability from elected officeholders at every level. We simply have to say as a society that we will not accept this kind of performance for our children. I come from Washington, D.C., where the mayor, Adrian Fenty, has appointed an extremely dynamic change agent as Chancellor of the schools. Her name is Michelle Rhee, and I'd be happy later to talk about the reform efforts that she is leading for our city. They are truly revolutionary.

In the kind of reform that I'm talking about, every sector of society has a role to play. And of course that means government, but also the private sector, the civic community, the faith communities, individual families, neighborhoods and yes, of course, universities. And, I want to

speak for a moment to the university role here, because we have to be accountable for doing more. It's just not good enough for American higher education to view itself as the higher, as the envy of the world in terms of higher education competency, and yet to be making such a negligible contribution to social reform. Everybody says, ok, so what's the university's role, and everybody says research, right? Research. And actually that's true, but not good enough. Yes, we can accurately diagnose the nature of the crisis, but we have to put more of a stake in the ground. People say, ok, good, so educate more kids from underserved communities. Absolutely. Couldn't agree more. There has to be more access to universities like Georgetown, Penn, Temple, Fordham, everyone. And, yet, that's not good enough either, because that kind of implies that you sit back and wait to see who else you can let in, and then educate. And actually, we have to be much more proactive. So, the third thing we really have to do in higher education is commit ourselves in a thousand ways to investing in people. That's what we have to do. We have to invest in people, communities, schools at the fundamental level, at the beginnings of education. We have to view that as part of our mission as higher education. I guess the good news is that there are a lot of ways that is working. It's just not being done systematically. And, I guess, I would say that maybe four quick examples from my own experience at Georgetown, where I have seen that a university can make a direct contribution to the education of at-risk youth, and of underserved communities. Sometimes it involves partnering with those grass roots organizations that are themselves the leaders.

And so, for example, we have an Upward Bound program that we identified in California that works entirely with families who walked across the border into America. And we have worked with this one program in California for ten years. And every summer, we bring 20 students from that program to our campus where they take courses and then enjoy a tour of college campuses up and down the East Coast. We're very proud that more than 90% of the kids in that program have gone to college, 24 have gone to Georgetown in that decade, 18 have graduated, 5 are students now, 1 transferred and graduated from someplace else. It's an example of a program that will work.

Another model: Fr. McShane mentioned the Cristo Rey network, and Georgetown is a part of an effort, with other universities, to help that network get good quickly. There will be 26 schools in a few years, including, hopefully, a school in Philadelphia. There's a feasibility study being done now, from a group of civic leaders here. I sit on the board of the Cristo Rey network, and we very much look forward to reviewing that feasibility study and hopefully being able to charter a Cristo Rey school in this city, which will then provide a direct next step for Gesu students who want to continue to have a Jesuit, Catholic education.

The third model is when you run your own program. Georgetown has run a program with an everyday school in northeast Washington where the college-going rate is 7%, for the past 12 years. What we do is we go and we meet with sixth graders, and their families, and we ask, "Does anybody want to work with us for six years?" And then we identify a cohort from that group of 50-60, and it's just an ordinary seventh grade class at an everyday school, Ron Brown Middle School, and we work with those kids after school, on weekends and summers, all the way through high school. No matter what school they go to, we guarantee if they're in the metropolitan area, we'll stay with them. That program has got a 95% college-going rate, and we just got a \$10 million grant last year to move from having one cohort at a time to having the

equivalent of a small high school, to having six cohorts, a group of seventh graders, a group of eighth graders, all the way through. That's a model that clearly works. What's required is sustained engagement.

And I guess the last of the four I'd mention is that universities have a role to play in how we educate our students and in what we empower them to go do. And there is a real yearning for change in education among this generation of 22 to 25 year olds. We see that at Georgetown every single day, and we've placed, as a result, a disproportionate emphasis on empowering our students to join the program Teach for America, which, as Marc mentioned, is the program that sends students out of college to underserved communities all around the country. There are 4,000 people starting their first year of teaching in Teach for America this year, in thirty different districts. At Georgetown, we are proud that we are the number one university in terms of schools with 10,000 students or fewer, we have 44 of our 2008 graduates who this, right now, are teaching around the country, including several in Philadelphia. That's a model that works, and it's a model that, ultimately, will help to transform inner-city education because it will put the best and the brightest out there, getting their, rolling up their sleeves, making a contribution and seeing these issues in human terms, and not just as statistics. Thank you. [applause]

**Win Churchill:** Thank you, Dan. Chris, please.

**Chris Beck:** I'd just like to add a few things to this wonderful discussion, from the Gesu perspective, about leadership. We like to say that "Gesu works." And I think everyone's familiar with the absolutely abysmal and unacceptable high school graduation rates in Philadelphia and in our, all big cities across the country. 50% range, 39%, I mean, really, just add to your statistics. It should not be acceptable. Over 90% of our graduates go on and graduate from high school on time, in four years, something we're very, very proud of. A couple things, also, in terms of leadership and governance, having a clear mission and a very equally unwavering commitment to that mission, I think are two extremely important things. Here in Gesu, at Gesu, our mission is to the children in this neighborhood. Because we have such a long waiting list, we can't accommodate all the children who want to come here, and we're getting increasingly more applicants from families outside this neighborhood, some of whom could easily pay, not only the tuition, but the cost, of educating a child here. We have put our highest priority, any open spots go to families who live in this 19121 zip code, and a couple just north of here, which we feel is extremely important.

Two, I think it's very important, and, with Sr. Ellen's wonderful help as a principal, we are always open to new ideas and innovations. I found a great quote about innovation: rearranging the known to create something new. Think about it. This year, in our classrooms, we're implementing, thanks, I say we, Sr. Ellen is, implementing Rigor and Relevance as a piece of the curriculum, which is from the Archdiocesan curriculum. And the point here is to stress cooperative learning, teaching children to work in groups, as a tool for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, and the reality of the workplace, as well. And, it's very difficult for our faculty, and it's difficult for our children, to function in small groups. So, we have a growing number of volunteers who come in regularly and help us in the classroom, and help our teachers, and what a difference that can make, in terms of success, with this different way of teaching. We also have volunteers who help with high school placement and applications, who mentor children. It's just wonderful. John

DiIulio did some research, he's a Gesu trustee, a couple years ago, that showed that very bright, young children who are from relatively poor families will fall through the cracks, even though they're very smart. So, as a result of that, sort of, depressing research result, we started, with his help, a very low cost, very quick implementation last summer, a program for pre-third, pre-fourth and pre-fifth graders who are very smart, from very poor families, and trying to focus, pointedly, on helping them learn critical thinking, small group problem-solving, etc. We hope to monitor the assessment of this, and hopefully it will become a useful model as we move forward.

One of the most important things here is that we're not working in a vacuum. We have a huge Board of Trustees, 60 strong, ecumenical, diverse, talking about the challenges of leadership, drawing consensus, getting input from this wonderful range of committed people, all of whom are involved because they care about our mission. Again, back to mission, clear focus, mission is so important. There are so many things that I'm proud of here at Gesu. Certainly our SmartBoards in every classroom; that's such a huge step forward. I'm really proud that everybody in this building is mission-driven, from teacher to principal to staff. Our teachers are amazing. There's a quote from Napoleon Bonaparte, "A leader is a dealer in hope." And that is every teacher, every volunteer in this building, for sure, and hopefully, everyone working in education. Everyone's involved for the right reasons, and I'm really proud of that. But, I guess there isn't anything that I'm more proud of than being able to host a group like this, today, for the 11<sup>th</sup> year in a row, to focus and talk about such an important issue in our country. If we don't make a difference in changing, making huge changes, as Dan said, in everything about education, and we're dealing with 463 children in this building. The numbers are huge. We have to talk together. We have to work together and find solutions. I am convinced that nothing is more important than education, especially elementary school education, in breaking the cycles of violence and poverty in this country and in our cities. To be able to open the doors for conversation, to learn from each other, from faith-based schools, Catholic schools, charter schools, public schools, universities, I mean is very, very exciting, and I think to make a difference, to make an impact, we really do have to explore all of these solutions together. Thank you all. *[applause]*

**Win Churchill:** OK and Stedman, if you have a few observations, we'd appreciate it.

**Stedman Graham:** Well, just to cap what we're talking about, I think we're talking about performance, and we're talking about performance based on every child we can reach. And, obviously, everybody's doing their part to make that happen, including all of you all. Marc, with KIPP, talked about how important teachers are in the program, and how important teacher leadership is, and how important it is to be able to work harder than anybody else. So, you know, your program works because you, they put the time and effort into practice, and work and work and work. With extended hours. Focus, whatever you focus on, ladies and gentlemen, expands, and that's what you try to do with KIPP. And you're trying to create and develop talent as much as you can.

Lars talked about getting great results, and again, he quoted Winston Churchill, which, it really can be done. So this is possible, ladies and gentlemen, to make it happen, based on what we're talking about. Folks you know, success, Lars talked about, he talked about strength, identifying,

being, having an awareness of strength and weaknesses and building a network of resources, and getting everybody on the same page.

Joseph talked about congratulations to the Phillies (*laughter*) and I won't go into the rest. And that there is a process, ladies and gentlemen, which is what I try to teach, a process for success. And I didn't understand the process of success, because I wasn't a thinker. And, most of you know, I'm in a relationship with a very powerful woman that reaches 20 million people a day in 115 countries, her name is Oprah, and I get defined, and put into a box and labeled. And so, every day, I'm trying to break out of the labels, and we've got many labels out there. We've got the woman label, we've got the black label, we've got the class label, we've got the entitlement label, we have the, all of the labels. And so, to get outside of the box, to break outside of the box and think, which is what, I think, Joseph, you talked about in terms of process for success. What is the process for not staying inside of the box? Staying positive. Big, big thing, having a great attitude, big thing, staying away from the negative, not going back to the streets, big thing. Being highly creative, having a network where you can create community-based programming and localized programming I think is extremely important. And building up collective consciousness where people work together around high expectations. Leadership is about vision, and Joseph, you talked about that, based on the most powerful word in the world, which is love. I mean I think that's it, I think that's why we all are here, because we love education, we love the people that we serve, and they have to begin to love themselves, so they can begin to develop themselves and their talents, based on their passions and based on their talents and based on their skills.

Daniel talked about our nation in decline, which is, you know, based on what has happened in the last couple of months, I think that's a big wake-up call. And it's a wake-up call based on, number one, you know what? I don't know if I'm going to trust the system. I don't know if I'm going to put my faith in corporations, because I may have 17 different jobs, I may not, may have to go back to work at 65, I may not have a pension, I may not have a social security by the time these young people graduate. And so, how do I take care of myself, and I'm going to live longer? I may live 'til I'm 100. And so, personal accountability, investment in themselves, I think is what Daniel talked about. He talked about, we're in a situation where we have to reform our policies and reform education, and everybody has to participate, and everybody has a role to play. Of course, this election will be a pivotal point in determining what direction we're going to go in this country. I'm not telling you who to vote for, I'm just saying that it is very pivotal, in terms of leadership, because leadership is everything. If the leader is bad, ladies and gentlemen, I don't care if you run a school, I don't care if you run a community center, I don't care if you run your family, I don't care what it is, if the leadership is bad, you've got a problem. And so, when we talk about reform, hopefully we have a leader that's going to help us do that and bring education to the forefront. Accountability, Daniel talked about accountability, and doing as much as we possibly can. And, I think that he said something very, very critical, which is, in today's world, you have to invest in yourself. Your security is not on the outside, it's not on the external side, it is on the inside. I think that's what all of us are trying to do, is get students to realize it's about learning, learning, learning, learning. It's about development, development, development, and then you can go to money, money, money, money. You can develop an economic base and then you can go to service, service, service, service. The more you have, the more you can give. Daniel also talked about building development models which are systemic, and making sure that

we can make an impact over, over a long period of time, and we can sustain that. And that's what I think has to happen, because obviously, television is systemic, and has allowed us to take away our focus. Universities, I think, have a great role to play because they're localized and they're in the community. So, they have the outreach, and they have the talent base to make that happen.

Christine, in talking about Gesu, having a clear mission, critical. Are you clear, and do you have clarity on where you're going and how you're going to get there? New ideas and innovation, ladies and gentlemen, critical. You've got to be able to think about how to get outside the box, and also how to reinvent yourself all the time because the world is changing. And we live in a global marketplace now that comes on us like this: we've got 800 channels, and it's very confusing about what you're going to pick, and we have an internet that is full of information. So the question is, how do you take that information and make it relevant to your purpose and to your mission, based on who you are? If you don't, if you're not clear, if you have no clarity, then you're not clear on what information you can use to create the ideas and sustain a long-term program. Christine also talked about new ideas and innovation, talked about that. She talked about stressing cooperative learning, the spirit of cooperation. Very, very important to get people on the same page, which is why all of you are here. Mentorship, and the challenges of leadership, you're constantly trying to figure out how to get people to go in the same direction and align themselves with the vision of the organization, based around the leader. So, that's kind of all I got out of it.

**Win Churchill:** That's a great summary, Stedman. Thank you. [*applause*] Now, some questions, because we're definitely not doing it all right, so how about some questions? Yes, sir.

**Audience member:** My question is for all of the panelists, but specific attention I'd like to be given to Mr. Stedman Graham, in terms of what I'm about to say and as well, ask. I'm a Philadelphia schoolteacher of 20 plus years, and came into the Philadelphia school system under the guidance and tutelage of Dr. Constance Clayton, who ran, to me, in my opinion, a rather impeccable school district. Fiscally, and as well as methodology goes, she ran a very well-kept system. Prior to coming into the system, though, is what brought me to this particular symposium today. We speak here, today, about inner-city education, and as I said, prior to coming to the school district of Philadelphia, I was a graduate of an institution that rarely ever gets mentioned in terms of higher education, outside of the city of Atlanta, and that school being Morehouse College. I am a living testament to the fact that inner-city education can work. It has done so for 100 plus years on the campus of Morehouse, and has done so under the past guidance of Dr. Benjamin Mays, which, during his time, was considered one of the greatest educators of his time. And it continues to do so today. But it behooves me that the Morehouse College phenomenon, or the Morehouse College philosophy, never, ever gets interchanged in discussion about continuing education for inner-city school students. Of course, we all like to see public school students go to the highest brand of higher education that's possible, and so we gear them, primarily, to that of the Harvards, and maybe the Yales and the Princetons. Morehouse never comes into play, and I think that's a regional issue, but I think it's also because of the fact that no one ever has taken the responsibility to look, to see how it's done at Morehouse. We gather the cream of the crop, we gather the brightest of any graduating class, and we get them together and for four years, we produce these thinkers, to use your term, Stedman, and we produce them in quantities that are traditionally unheard of, in terms of higher education turnout rates. And so, I'm wondering when

we have Dr. Robert Franklin, who is the current President of Morehouse, and happened to have been a classmate of mine, governing Morehouse today, he has made it his primary concern to go around the country introducing the fact that, not only can Morehouse thrive, but it must thrive from a bipartisanship of having parochial education involve themselves in training their students to want to aspire to be Morehouse men. And so, without that factor, we kind of skip over the fact of where inner-city students can actually go, and they can come to Morehouse with open arms. But they must be prepared, no different than they would be prepared for Harvard, or for Princeton or Yale, or Yeshiva or Brandeis. And so, it has to be in the future, whether it's Barak Obama or not, the gold standard of inner-city education, in my opinion, must be to attract students to non-traditional schools, such as a Morehouse, knowing that they'll get the same brand of education, in terms of professors, in terms of environment, and find a way of making it accessible for inner-city schools to realize that a Morehouse College exists. Now that's only Morehouse. I'm talking about Spelman, as well. We're talking about Howard University, but it has to come from the charter schools, Mr. Mannella, it has to come from the Gesu Schools, it has to come from a school-wide approach as to letting people know that there are schools out there that welcome their talent. In high school, in public education, and you must find a way to do that, if we're going to look at our future of education being in the hands of a young education our society that really at some points, are at crossroads. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

**Marc Mannella:** I can make a quick comment on that, and I think that I absolutely agree with you that, too often, the HBC's aren't entering into our conversation, by that, historically black colleges and universities. They're not entering into the conversation, and at KIPP Philadelphia, we make sure that it is. We name our homerooms all after the names of universities, and the universities, which, the homeroom names become the alma maters of their homeroom teachers. We currently have a Spelman homeroom, we have a North Carolina A&T homeroom, we have a Lincoln homeroom. And those are really, it's a powerful message to our kids, just in terms of the broader spectrum. Some schools will, some KIPP schools will just name them Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and we think it's really important that they see the full gamut. We also do end-of-year field lessons with our kids, and our fifth graders go to Washington, D.C., and part of that trip is a visit to Howard University. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders go and do a civil rights tour where they go to Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham, and they also go to Memphis, and on that trip, they visit the campus of Morehouse and Spelman. And, one of the times, our tour guide was actually from Philadelphia, at Morehouse, and he was a young man who went to Carver, George Washington Carver School, which is an engineering and science magnet school here in the City of Philadelphia, that's a school district school. And talking to him, and talking about other kids who went to Philadelphia, who are from Philadelphia and went to Morehouse, the thing that he said, and he brought it up, actually, and he said, "You know, we don't have any kids from charters, we don't have any kids from neighborhood schools. All of our kids went to the magnets. You know, there's a couple of kids from Central, a couple kids from Carver, you know, a girl I know across the street at Spelman went to Girls." And really, I think the critical issue here is that we have to make sure that our children are getting the education that they deserve so that they can access *any* institution of higher learning. And that's what we work so hard on at KIPP and at Young Scholars and at Mastery, and that's what I know that, too often, is missing. OK, there's a diploma, but, there's statistics out there that you may have, I don't know, but they say that, on average, kids in inner cities who are, even with a diploma who are graduating, are reading on an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. And that's what's unacceptable, because if they are, they're not going to succeed

at Morehouse, they're not going to succeed at Spelman, Howard, they're not going to succeed anywhere. And so, that's really been our focus as we're talking about that, so we absolutely agree with your point. It has to be a part of the dialogue, but we have to get our kids able to access *any* university.

**Stedman Graham:** Yeah, and I think it really is, it's a deep question, because, you know, I would say that, you've got 78% of black men who make up the prison system. It's a high number, whether 78 or whatever the case may be. Why are they in jail? They're in jail because they have no strength. Where do you get your strength from? Well, you get your strength from strong families, you get your strength from support, you get your strength from alignment, you know, you get your strength from education, you get your strength from another, number of places. And so, the question is, can you survive in an environment where you don't have all of those things in place. Now, that's why I go back to identity. I would be, I worked in the prison system five years. I didn't say I was in the prison system for five years. (*laughter*) So, I worked in the prison system five years. I know the, I know how the system works. And, I would have probably been in that system except for I played basketball. And as Frankie knows, basketball, and Wardell knows, basketball helped me, give me enough strength to go to, to survive. Now, I didn't like, you know, I blamed white America and I blamed government and everything, and I was a victim, on all of my weaknesses. And, until I learned how to assimilate, until I removed the rage inside of my soul, and started focusing on the glass being half full as opposed to half empty, which really translated into finding love instead of hate, I was never able to assimilate into the general society. What does that mean? What does that translate into? It translates into this: You've got to be able to get along with every single person. You've got to be able to transcend your race. You've got to be able to, to be able to recognize that everybody's equal, because everybody has 24 hours. So the question is what do you do with your 24 hours? So, once you put it in the right perspective, then you're able to go to Morehouse if you want to go to Morehouse, go to Spelman if you want to go to Spelman, go here, go there, but you have the freedom to be able to, number one, heal yourself, and then share in the resources of the world and not separate yourself just because you are a black person, and go in the corner because you don't want to deal with white America. [*light applause*] And so, then, you never have to apologize for who you are. The freedom is not trying to figure out how white America works or how to navigate, part of it's navigating the system. You're going to have obstacles, you're going to have discrimination, you're going to have people look at you crazy. But the definition of freedom is how you define yourself, not how other people define you. [*light applause*] So if you buy into the external definition of who you are, which if you're defined by your blackness, or defined, that's too small. You have to be defined by your talents and your skills and your contributions to what you bring to the table. So you don't fall on the civil rights. In this country, all of the people of color fall on the civil rights, and women fall on the civil rights. We don't want to fall on the civil rights, we want to fall on the human rights, which says you're a human being first, you have a right to the world's resources and opportunities. How you get them and how you execute and how you navigate the situation you're in, that's a different story, so navigation for some would be Harvard, navigation for some people would be Morehouse, navigation for some people would be a community college, navigation for some people would be something else, depending on where you are in your learning process. So the key is, is to, I think, is to figure out what that person needs. Every child in here, you two students are different; you're not the same, and hopefully, you don't think the same. And so, you want to create a localized

program that addresses the needs of those children, based on their potential as a human being. Once they find their potential, ladies and gentlemen, then you can't stop them. Once they change their perception about themselves, which is, I'm telling you, which is what, which is what, I want to stand up, which is what these young people have done, is they've been able to change their perception about their possibilities. In this school, because when you shake their hands and you look in their eyes, you say, you know what? You guys don't have dead eyes. A bunch of folks out there've got dead eyes, but your eyes are alive. That's what you're looking for. And when you find that, you want to be able to share that with the rest of the world, based on productivity, like someone on the panel said, I forget who said it, service, I know Winston Churchill's been talking about service, service, service. So you can serve the world. That's what it comes down to. [applause]

**Win Churchill:** The lady over here. I'm trying to take things as the hands come up. Yes, ma'am.

**Audience member:** Thank you very much, and good afternoon everybody. I am very, my name is Anna Hargrove, and I work as a community organizer for AchieveAbility, which is a self-sufficiency program, and they have taught me a lot about education and being motivated and doing things for myself. So, through that, today I am here to ask everyone to listen to this that I have to say. I need everybody really to listen. I work with people in my community, and so far, I have found children that cannot read, in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, can not literally read, can not read, that are being passed because they say that no child is left behind. But if you can't read, you *are* left behind. And what I'm thinking about it getting a program together, possibly a school at some point, where all our children that cannot read will be able to go there and learn under the conditions of how they learn. A teacher, basically, in a public school, has so many students she can not individualize her program for these type of students. We have no schools like this, and the only schools that we have like that are usually used as behavior schools. Well, the child doesn't have a behavior problem, he has a learning problem. And we need to be able to put some funds, get some volunteers, get some educators, to come out there and help these kids. Earlier this week, I was at a meeting with Jannie Blackwell and them, and they were putting, they were giving out information about the Youth Study Center. Well, guess what? This nine-year-old, if somebody don't grab him and get him straight, he's gonna be in Youth Study Center by the age of 12. And by 15, he's gonna be in jail. OK, and I don't want to see that. So I need for people to understand what my plight is. I want the program to be called Can You Hear Me Now? Can you hear me now? Because if you can't read, you can't talk, and if you can't talk, people don't want to listen to you. So I need for everybody to remember my name, I work for AchieveAbility, I really need some people to get on the board, to help me save the lives of these children, so they don't end up in prison. Thank you very much. [applause]

**Audience member:** Thank you. I have some good news. The way I found out about this symposium was through my son. He went to Gesu; he's a Gesu graduate. And then he graduated from West Catholic and he went on to Johnson C. Smith, been out of college since 2003, and he lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. And this has really been a blessing for me, because I stayed in the community, and I do a lot of volunteer work, but right now I work at Women's Christian Alliance where I work at the after-school program, and I know it's very important to be concerned about your children, you know, because all of them are our children. And I used to come here and volunteer at the Kindergarten, and it's really true here about giving back, because

when you give back, you truly give back, and when you see these kids, I mean, I can't sometimes wait to get to work, because it's so much love, you know what I'm saying? They give you a hug. I say, "How was your day today?" "I didn't have a real great day today." I say, "Well, it's all right; give me a hug, 'cuz I be needing a hug, too." But, just, wherever you are, just try to be of service to your people, you know what I'm saying? Because these organizations today, they just need people to come in and to give time, you know? Like the sister's talking about. We've just really got to take leadership role wherever it may be, you know what I'm saying? Working with the seniors, working on your block, you know what I'm saying? Just do what you have to do to make this world a better place. [applause]

**Stedman Graham:** May I say something in response to that? You know what's killing this neighborhood, and most of these kids around here? Rap. And you know where rap comes from? It comes from the gangs. And you know what they did, which is what Daniel's talking about? They're creating a systematic development process for training kids how to destroy their lives because they lose their focus at what age? They've got them dancing at three and four years of age. So, if you're dancing at three and four, you move that up to five and six, you don't really focus on anything else, but you can memorize, you know every word. So it says you can learn. So, it's a system, they've got concerts, they've got the music, they've got the BTs, they've got a delivery system that delivers negative messages and they've got the language that delivers negative messages, and if you're listening to that all the time, and your kid is listening to that all the time, which means they've got their earphones on all day long, they lose their focus. When you lose, when you have no focus, when there is no focus, nothing happens. And so, they lose their focus, they're thinking about something else, and they can't learn. And how early can they not learn? Well, they, you know, they're doing it as early as possible. So there is a systematic approach to doing that. Now, reform is about developing another systematic approach for learning. So, what's killing us is that we're fighting the television, we're fighting the radio, we're fighting the streets, we're fighting dancing, we're fighting everything that gives them energy that's negative. And what we have to do is understand that and figure out how to remove those kids from that culture, at least, explaining the process to them, so that they understand what's happening to them, so they can be more accountable to themselves. As opposed to asking other people, "Please give me freedom. Please help me." Help yourself. Start with your own kids and tell them exactly what's happening to them and save them, and that's the best way you can solve the problem. [applause]

**Audience member:** My name is Sister Mary Chamberlain, and I work in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, at a parish, but I appreciate all that the panel has presented here. Your talk on mission is very important to me, Mrs. Beck. First, I need to know if all teachers must be on board with that mission in order to get it across to the children. Is it a must?

**Chris Beck:** That's a really good question. I think yes. I think without a doubt.

**Sr. Mary Chamberlain:** Thank you. That was just the yes that I needed.

**Chris Beck:** OK, I won't say anything more.

**Marc Mannella:** Yes, we're all going to say yes. Are you going to say yes?

**Sr. Mary Chamberlain:** This was two-fold. Am I cheating?

**Win Churchill:** No.

**Sr. Mary Chamberlain:** All right, this question is basically to either Marc or Lars. I think it was you, Lars, who stated, "Teachers create their own curriculum." Is this done by that which is articulated from your students, from the community or from the teachers involved, and what is the assessment and accountability to that?

**Lars Beck:** Sure, our teachers use a fairly complex, but they, we would call it backwards planning. We start with the state standards, so the state standards and their eligible content anchors that are available to all of the teachers in all of the subjects, so we start with them. And those are the things on which we're accountable to making sure that our students need to know at the end of each year. So, we start our planning, and we start with a, what we call a "Scope and Sequence" document and create that. We use that to then guide, we create a long-term plan and then we use that to create units, and then from those units, we create daily objectives, so all of our, every single lesson, and at the beginning of every single class, the teacher is going to be going over what we call the SWBAT, which is the *Students Will Be Able To*. And they're going to have a very clear objective, so it's very much tied to the state standards. And sometimes we get asked, "Are you teaching to the test?" based on that. And I think, in a way yes, but in a way no, because I think we're doing a lot, and if you were to come to our school - and I'd invite you - but if you did, you'd see that we're doing a lot to build community, to build life skills, to build character, in addition to being very, very focused on that academic achievement. But, in a way, because our students are behind when they come to us, I don't mind if we're teaching to the test, because the test is based on standards that the State Board of Education has defined, need to be learned, by the end of each grade level. So they're very basic skills, so we're making sure when our students are entering behind that they're getting those skills necessary for us being a middle school, and this is one of our biggest challenges, is only having three years. So that they can go on to a successful high school where they can begin to perhaps learn more independent thinking than even we give them at our school, and that's something I would love to see us change somewhat, but we need to, we need to either have more years or have students enter at a closer grade level.

Just one quick story to, and I hope this is answering your question, but we have a student who graduated from eighth grade last year and is at the Shipley School this year. And she came to me - she comes back to our school very regularly - and she came and she said, "You know I really liked it." I said, "How's Shipley?" She said, "I love it. I wish Young Scholars was more like Shipley." And I think she was expecting me to say, "Oh, no, no, no." And I said, "Kaira," I said, "I wish Young Scholars was more like Shipley, too." Because frankly if Young Scholars was more like Shipley, we'd be able to be, we would not be doing as much remedial work as we are, but we believe it's really, really necessary to do. And I'm not even going to attempt to repeat it, but to do the things, and to allow individuals the freedom that Stedman talked so eloquently about just recently, so I think that what we believe, we believe that the teacher-created curriculum does focus on standards, is it allows us to be very, very focused on what skills our students are able to learn, and then we can be very, very, we as a lot of assessing, to measure,

you mentioned accountability, a lot of benchmark assessments that we do every six weeks. We do, based on those benchmark standards, benchmark assessments, we're doing mastery plans, and they can go on and on and on, but we're using assessments, extremely, extremely rigorously and frequently.

**Win Churchill:** I think we'll take about another five minutes, maybe, because I know people have travel schedules and so forth, so a few more questions. Yes, ma'am, in the back, please.

**Audience member:** [*inaudible*] ...teacher topic, but I think there's a lot of passion in this room for the group that is assembled here, for 11 years. My particular passion is teacher education and the work of those who are pounding away doing this job every day in the trenches, the amount of support they're getting, the pre-service training they're getting at our universities, the in-service training, the specialized skills that our teachers need to do the quality job that we're expecting them to do. And, I would love to hear, if not now, then maybe either in a later symposium or something, more from the charter school leadership that's here, and university leadership here, about some ideas that we can share. I know lots of good things are being done for teacher development, sharing resources, I know both Marc and Lars spoke about sharing resources, copying, cheating, you know, identifying master teachers in our charter schools, public schools, Catholic schools that have acquired the expertise, and the very special skill set that our teachers do need. So I just thought on that whole topic of teacher support, teacher education, maintaining and retaining our teachers, recruiting teachers, it's a very important topic in my passion, so if anybody would want to speak to that, but again, I know it's late, so I'm not, I won't be offended, but if you just tuck it in there for even another time, that would be great.

**Chris Beck:** I think that's the topic for a mid-year symposium, and I think we should start a second annual symposium with that topic, because it is so very important.

**Audience member:** And kudos to all the teachers who are here. You are just doing a fabulous job. [*applause*]

**Win Churchill:** OK, yes, ma'am, in the back, please.

**Audience member:** Happy Halloween everyone. Go Phillies and Happy Halloween. When Mr. - my name is Kirsten Echelmeier, and I'm honored to say that I'm one of the first grade teachers here, and Fr. McShane, I have to stick to my Scranton roots. Fr. McShane was there when I was there. And, I know about the Gesu now because I'm a teacher here, but also because my brothers went to St. Joe's Prep, and I always thought, "That is where I want to teach." And, I always, I'm the youngest girl out of five, and, out of five kids, and I used to always play teacher in the basement, and my younger brother is probably the smartest of them all, and I say, he went to Georgetown, actually, too. He just graduated and is becoming a doctor. And, I say that, this is my third year here and, to be honest, there's been times where I have just wanted to cry because I'm disappointed with myself, or I'm disappointed with another teacher, or I'm disappointed with a child. But yesterday we had a retreat, our faculty retreat, and I feel so blessed to be in a Catholic school. I could not deal with and, rather, respond to the children on a daily basis if I didn't have my faith and my spirituality and, I'm like shaking. But to know what some six-year-olds are going through in the world today, and that one came up to me on Wednesday and said,

“I *don't* believe in Santa.” And, like, I’m like, “But I still do, you have to.” And, you know, it’s just a little inkling of the innocence that is lost way too soon, and, but yesterday on our retreat, an IHM nun was speaking to us and, you know, she was saying this and that about Gesu, and there are so many wonderful things, and I think it’s so wonderful that you are all here and supporting it. And, please know that it’s not perfect. It’s not, and I think sometimes that can be, you know, a falsity that, like, something so wonderful is perfect, and it’s not. And I think that I have lost a little bit of my innocence here, but in a way that has forced me to grow up to be an adult. But I’ll still believe in Santa. The spirit is always alive. But, something that touched me yesterday at the retreat was that, after the nun kept talking about, you know, all the wonderful things that Gesu was, and I said yes and yes, you know but there are problems, and it’s not perfect, and then she said, “It is an act of hope.” And that resonated in my spirit, and I think that’s what we have to allow to continue to resonate in us. We cannot give up on the children, we cannot give up on each other, we cannot give up on goodness and kindness and love and individuality. And, you all being here today gives me hope, and refuels my soul for Monday, to go back into the classroom. And, so I just want to say it’s not perfect, but we can keep hoping. And so, thank you for being a sign of hope. [applause]

**Win Churchill:** Yes, ma’am. Last question, right, right here please.

**Audience member:** [inaudible] I just wanted to say thank you to the panel for being here. I’m a parent. I volunteer for a program at my daughter’s school. It’s called the Bright Light Initiative, and what this program does, it nurtures the children from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and it teaches them to be avid learners. It teaches them to have respect for themselves. It teaches them to have an identity. That’s something you said, and that’s true. A lot of our children do not have an identity. A lot of our children have extra stuff going on in their homes. You talked about the children being left, you talked about the children being left behind, the children that don’t have anyone. And the one thing I wanted to say is that I appreciate all of you on the panel, because as a parent, my children, and I feel this way, they’re bright lights, but they also have opportunities that I did not know was available. Just by me coming here. We have parents in our community who are interested in those type of programs that you have here for the children, because, like you said, there are a lot of smart children in the inner-city that are being left behind, because they don’t have the opportunities, because they don’t have the parents that’ll push them. But we at [inaudible] try to nurture those children from the beginning, and we believe, because they’re avid readers, they believe in reading, they believe in being committed to their communities, they believe in being committed to themselves first, and that’s where it starts. The parents at T.M. Peirce are some of the most awsomest parents because a lot of times people say parents aren’t involved. Well, I’m here to tell you, at T.M. Peirce, Stanton and Whittier, parents are involved. And this is the kind of thing that we need to see, because not only do we need reform, but we need the parent involvement. We need parents like these, we need opportunities. Like you said, we’re not blaming anybody any more. We need to take responsibility. We need to see what’s out there so that we can tell our children what they need to do for their futures. [applause] And as a parent, this is Miss Guise, and I need to say, she is a lovely woman. She has brought me on board with this Bright Light program that has taught our children to be proud of themselves, and you are giving our children the opportunity to go as far as they want to go. Thank you, as a parent in the inner-city schools. [applause]

**Marc Mannella:** I want to quickly comment on that, because this is the thing, right? And I heard it over here from the young lady who was speaking over here, and I heard it from Mr. Graham, and I'm hearing it right now, that there's a level of outrage. And the thing that's missing in the greater dialogue in our country around inner-city education is that people aren't ticked off enough. But there are people in this room who are ticked off. And so, I'm really glad that this happened today, and that we were able to convene this group, because that needs to spread. What needs to spread is a dissatisfaction with the status quo. We, I mean, and that's why we do what we do. We have, at our school, we have a monthly open house, where we want people to come in, and at the end, my thing that I tell them at the end is always the same. I said, "Leave here angry." Because the actual proves the possible. The actual proves the possible. These are our children, the same children that are next door at the district school, and what they're learning is totally different, the environment they're in is totally different. Leave here mad about that. And I hear the outrage in this room, and it needs to spread.

**Win Churchill:** Stedman is going to have the final word with a poem of his, and I want to thank you all very much, as in other years, for taking time. We are mad as hell in certain respects, [laughter] and we're not going to take it any more [applause, laughter], but in a constructive way.

**Stedman Graham:** Thank you so much. You know, all of you are special, and it's a pleasure to be with you. I'm humbled by your strength and your leadership. And, you know, sometimes it gets real tough, and when it gets tough, what do you have to do? You know, you fall down, you have to get back up. And so, in ending this consortium, this panel discussion and this gathering, I want to end this with a book called *The Race* by Dee Groberg. And, it's about this guy that's having a tough day, and the world's telling him, you know, the world wants to break his spirit, you know, because when you break your spirit, I've got you. All we have is our spirit. And, the world's saying to you sometimes, "Quit! Why don't you just quit? Why don't you give up? You're beaten."

[Graham recites the poem "The Race"]

Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate you all. Thank you so much.

- END TRANSCRIPTION -