

12th Annual Gesu Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education

Faith-based Schools? Charter Schools?

Renaissance Schools? Magnet Schools?

Is There One Answer?

November 2, 2009

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Panelists: Christine S. Beck, *President & CEO, Gesu School*
John J. DiIulio, Jr., Ph.D., *Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society; Professor of Political Science; & Director of the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program, University of Pennsylvania*
Honorable Bruce W. Kauffman, *Former Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania; Recently Retired from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*
Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Ph.D., *President, Bryn Mawr College*
Benjamin W. Rayer, *Associate Superintendent of Charter, Partnership and New Schools, School District of Philadelphia*

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

Ivory, Gesu School Student:

Good Afternoon and welcome to the Gesu School. My name is Ivory. I am in the 5th grade. I have been at Gesu since Kindergarten. My mother also graduated from Gesu. Some of the things that I like about Gesu are the kinds of schoolwork that they give us. I love to read good books. I love to do equations in Math. I especially love going to the Science lab. I love to go to Gym class. After school, I go to tennis and I joined the track team. I am also a member of the Youngest Scholars Program. We meet once a week during the school year and for 5 weeks in the summer. This is a really challenging, but fun program. When I grow up, I want to be an author. I want to write children's books that are funny, but also mysterious. My favorite author is Maya Angelou. I also like Barbara Park. She writes the Junie B. Jones books. My favorite book is *Junie B. Jones, 1st Grader*, by Barbara Park. Gesu is a special place because it makes learning fun. I want to take advantage of every opportunity while I am here. Thank you for being with us today.

[Applause]

Chris Beck:

Welcome to all of you. I'm Chris Beck. I'm President of Gesu School. I want to add a special thanks to our choir and to Mr. Ratliff, and, of course, to Ivory; and, to our sponsors, Cozen O'Connor, the Klehr's, and SCP Partners. And, I want to thank each of you for taking the time to

come today. Your presence shows that you care about the many challenges we face to serve all of our children more effectively and more justly. Your presence also shows how important it is that we work together; that we talk with each other and share ideas and share what works and doesn't work.

I'm very proud to say this is the 12th year we have hosted this forum conceived by our Win Churchill. I sat in the room, we said, "Well, 1st Symposium," and Win immediately said, "1st Annual Symposium," and we all cringed; "What!?" But, here we are; 12 years. Well, we know this country's entire education system needs on-going evaluation. We also know the topic here is transforming inner-city education. Gesu School is IHM and Jesuit-sponsored and an often used Jesuit phrase is, "service of faith and promotion of justice." It's the justice piece, or lack of it, that brings us here today. Two years ago, Juan Williams, on this panel, spoke about the fearlessness of spirit that's required to intervene and to tackle educational injustices. Fearlessness of spirit - not forgotten that one.

Today our panelists will offer more challenging thoughts from varying perspectives. On my far right is Honorable Bruce Kauffman. He's had an esteemed career as an attorney and judge, having served most recently on the United States District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania, previously as Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Next to him, Dr. Jane McAuliffe, President of Bryn Mawr College and internationally known Scholar of Islamic Studies. Before coming to Bryn Mawr, she was Dean of College of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown University and is renowned as an educator and an author. Dr. John DiIulio, we know well. A Gesu School Trustee for many years; now an Advisory Trustee, and at University of Pennsylvania is the Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society and Professor of Political Science and Director of the Robert Fox Leadership Program. He is nationally acclaimed for his social service in equality in education. I'll skip Win for a minute. On my immediate right is Benjamin Rayer, who's Chief Officer of Charter, Partnership and New Schools in the School District of Philadelphia. In this capacity, he manages a hundred schools with more than 50,000 students. Before this position, he was head of Mastery Charter Schools, renowned for his Charter School excellence and outstanding accomplishments.

As always, I am honored to be part of this panel. And, our Moderator today is Win Churchill, founding Board Chair here at Gesu 17 years ago and he still is Chair (*laugh*). In addition, Win is Founder and Board Chairman of Young Scholar's Charter School, not many blocks away from here. And, he served on the Boards of Fordham University, Georgetown University, among many, many other activities. I want to thank each of you for taking the time to participate in this important panel. Thank you."

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

So, I think many of us drove here along Girard Avenue as I did and I drove by Girard College on the way which is a wonderful, wonderful institution. I think we have President Adkins of Girard College with us today. So, I started thinking about Stephen Girard and, who, financed, among other things, the War of 1812. And, I started to think about regional conflicts as a result of thinking about the War of 1812, which, as you know, had to do with issues we had to the North, to the South, and

to the West with the various factions, if you will. And, then I started thinking about the Bronx for some reason (*laugh*). Now, I attended Fordham in the Bronx, so I don't want to say too many mean things about the Bronx. But, by coincidence, Ellen and I were at the movies in Bryn Mawr, Jane, yesterday and there's a wonderful film there called *Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg*. And, many of you are much too young to remember Molly Goldberg who was a wonderful, wonderful character on radio and television in the 40's and 50's. But, Molly Goldberg's definition of the Bronx went as follows, she said, "The Bronx is a place bordered on the East by the Atlantic Ocean and on the other three sides by the United States of America" (*laugh*). So, if we need that tonight, or, hopefully, we need it tomorrow night, I offer that for your use.

Coming in here, those of you that may be here for the first time probably saw 1868 on the sign above the entrance. So, we've been at it here at this school for a very, very long time. The square block on which this school sits and also St. Joe's Prep, was acquired by a wonderful Jesuit priest in 1866. So, right after the end of the Civil War, which was really the war that kind of resolved the conflicts that began to boil over in the War of 1812 and it was to have been the place where St. Joseph's University was, for quite a long time, the place for St. Joseph's University. So, there's a very distinguished history of what has gone on in this square block, and, of course, St. Joseph's Prep, the secondary school that I attended is now next door and when a bunch of us were at the Prep, it was in this building.

So, this is kind of a long way of giving the history of how we get here and why it is that we're still here. The Jesuits have a number of good philosophies that, they are kind of summarized in what's called "the Jesuit way of proceeding" and one of the most important parts of that is to initially ask the right question or questions about a given topic. So, the question here, given, "What happened following World War II, to this neighborhood?" When Stephen Girard was here, it was country and, prior to that, it was really wilderness; at the time of Revolution this was wilderness, and so Stephen Girard had a beautiful country house that now still sits at Broad and Girard. But, following World War II, of course, the demographics changed significantly. We had a very, very explosive growth throughout the United States, but not in the inner cities, including Philadelphia and the other inner cities, including particularly, I think, this inner city.

So, the issue, as Chris pointed out, and Judge Kauffman and the other panelists will comment on, I'm sure, is really social justice. And, by justice, we don't mean equality. I think we mean equal opportunity and, for those of us here, I think many in the audience, the key to breaking these cycles of injustices is education. And, we think that there are a whole lot of different ways to answer the question, but, our question in 1993, when the parish was forced to close really for lack of parishioners. And, so you have a traditionally Catholic school with Jesuit and IHM sisters, both wonderful teaching orders of the Catholic Church here for some 150 years. But, the parish, unable to sustain itself financially as a parish, and a tuition-based Catholic school model unable to sustain itself because the families now in the neighborhood were unable to pay even the very modest tuitions.

So, the question was, in 1993, "What do we do?" So, we were fortunate to privatize the school, in effect, and became what is now the Gesu School and through the generosity of many, many people from all the different communities, we've been able to sustain it financially, to do the expansion. This floor where you now sit did not exist. This used to be the roof; where we would play

basketball, on the roof of the building. So, the first question was: "Could we succeed?" I think the answer to that is clearly, "Yes." Second question that's always asked by the IHM and Jesuits is: "What did we learn, what did we learn in the experience?" And then, the third very important question: "How do we share that? How do we share that?" So, I think we've learned that there are many ways to address this; it's a very important issue to address and that there are many ways to address the issue. There's not just one, you know, sort of magic key to: "How do you do this? How do you do Elementary School education of a high quality in the inner city and with open admissions?" OK, so we're not engaged here in selecting the kids for academic potential. This is an open admissions school largely supported by the wonderful generosity of people like yourselves and many, many other of our benefactors over a period of some 20 years. Another question is: "Is this a model that can be replicated?" Ben will speak later. He's got a very, very important responsibility and, of course, Mayor Nutter, who attended St. Joe's Prep in this building, has been on our Board for as long as I can remember. So, it's a big tent, I guess that's really my point. There are many ways to skin this cat. And, the numbers are very important. There are 230,000, roughly, kids in inner-city schools, grade schools and high schools in the City of Philadelphia. Ben and his colleagues at the Public School System have, under their responsibility, about 165,000 of those, of which, roughly 30,000 are in the charter schools that are directly under Ben's responsibility. So, that's, you know, a large portion of the 230,000. Now, where are the rest? Well, they're not really in private schools along the model of the Gesu and why is that? Because it's a very difficult model. It relies on tremendous amounts of generosity from the IHM sisters, from the Jesuits, from our teachers, from Chris, and everybody else that works here and devotes their lives here; sacrifices from the families because we do charge a modest tuition and tremendous generosity from a wonderful, wonderful group of donors.

So, what's the difference? The difference is the kids who are in the remaining Catholic schools in the inner city of which there are 10 high schools and 73 grade schools, still mostly parish schools and many, many of those parishes have exactly the same characteristics that Gesu had in 1993. There is a paucity of parishioners; the families are poor, alright, they're not Catholic, alright, so they don't belong to the parish and they can't afford to pay even a very modest tuition. So, the reason we put, and I had occasion in looking at the program before coming up here, to say "Boy, we've got profiles in courage." I mean, the topics, Chris that we have dared to put on the agenda for these 12 years; they're certainly not defensive, alright. So, we're, I think, asking the right questions: "What have we learned?" We're prepared to share that at all times. And, "How can it be replicated across a broader number of our families and kids?" So, those, in general, are our topics and a little history. And, you know the Yankees; I'm going to have a few words later about them. So, John, can you help take up the...

John DiIulio:

You want me to comment on the Yankees, do you? There're children in this room, Mr. Churchill (*laugh*). And, some nuns, as well. And, I am still a bold and brazen article, so those of you who don't know that term, it takes more time to explain at some point. Sr. Connie, you will explain that term later? It's a delight to be back here. It's a delight to be with my brother, Win, and my sister, Chris. It's an honor to be on this panel with Judge Kauffman and with President McAuliffe and with Chief Rayer, as well. And, it's a real delight for me to be here because I was present for most of

those 12 years going back to the December 3rd, 1997, 1st Gesu Symposium, which was actually moderated by the late, great, our great friend, Tim Russert.

And, I want to start there briefly with my remarks because I want to just paint a very brief and, I'm afraid, not too positive picture of what's happened to inner-city education to the availability of opportunities for children without regard to socioeconomic status or demographic description or zip code to succeed educationally; to improve their life prospects by educational means. Twelve years ago when we met in December of '97, people talked, for example, about the high school drop-out problem. And, at that time, the conventional statistic used was that among low-income, inner city children, about 40% would not make it through 4 years of high school. Today, 12 years later, we know from lots of research, including some that I actually got involved in a couple years, with this report called *Silent Epidemic*, which report Oprah got a hold of. And, let me tell you, when Oprah gets a hold of something, it gets attention and it got a lot of attention, more than I had bargained for. But, we discovered that the actual rate of dropping out was closer to 50% for minority and low-income kids in places like North Central Philly, South Central LA, downtown Detroit, Four Corners, Dorchester, Boston and so on; and, not only that, in some cases, 50% if you allowed for 6 years. But, in some sense, that statistic has gotten worse as have all of the negative things that are correlated with dropping out. That is to say, the probability of dropping out, other things equal, leading to incarceration, the probability of dropping out leading to chronic unemployment. All the data confirmatory in a sad way, or affirmatory in a sad way, suggest that the problem is bigger than it was 12 years ago when we met and it is more costly in both human and financial terms.

Let me take a second one. Twelve years ago, when we met, members of the panel talked about the Achievement Gap and we're still talking about the Achievement Gap, the differences in the probability that a child will succeed educationally and go on to have a peaceful, productive life, and so on, depending on where they grew up, where they lived, and on factors that are, obviously, as Juan Williams told us, never to shy away from talking about factors related to racism and race, OK. But, today, we are talking about an even worse problem, not just the Achievement Gap, but the Achievement Trap. The recent evidence, and, again, I was involved in a little research on this a couple years ago in a report called Achievement Trap, of low-income children who are in the top quintile in performance on standardized tests, OK, the bottom decile in terms of income, but who succeed educationally through 3rd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade, and then, when they hit 6th grade, there are about a million of these kids, they, in America at any given time, they begin to fall off.

So, it's not just the difference between, you know, wealthy, well-to-do white suburbanites and poor African American and other inner-city children in terms of achievement. It's also the fact that even those children who are somehow resilient and succeeding against the odds educationally in the early elementary school years and into middle school are being lost. The data that were most stunning and disconcerting to me when we published this report about a year ago was that the children who were these high-achieving, but low-income children were about as likely to drop out of high school than otherwise comparable kids who were not high-achieving academically. Now, that's a, I won't use the "h-e-double hockey sticks" word, Chairman Churchill, but that's a heck of a sad statistic.

So, I would argue to you, I didn't come here to depress everybody; I'm going to lighten up in a minute, OK. I would argue to you that things are, in some ways, worse. Now, anybody, I think, Judge, you said this, we were just sharing before, anybody who thinks they have a solution to these

problems, it's like anybody who needs a management study, needs to do management. I don't believe that, but anybody who thinks they have a solution to this and to transforming inner-city education more generally, I think, is suspect. Obviously, at least to me, faith-based schools, not just Catholic ones - Quaker, Catholic, Methodist, Muslim, Mormon, you name it - schools have to be a part of this equation. Obviously, I would say, obviously, charter schools, even though some would say they've been mixed in their success, they have had many successes, must be a part of the transforming inner-city education equation. Renaissance schools, magnet schools; there's no one solution, in my humble opinion.

And, I would also submit to you that even though things have gotten worse, you must always ask the counterfactual question which is: how much worse than worse would things be in all the places I mentioned in inner-city education were it not for the tried-and-true efforts of people in the public school system; people who have experimented with charter schools; people who have tried to keep open and save, support and strengthen faith-based schools, and renaissance schools and magnet schools? How much worse would things be? I think that really is the way to frame that question. But, let me just conclude by telling you what I think if I had to, just from where I sit, the place I would go in search of a solution. I don't think there is a solution to this problem, to improving the life prospects of poor children educationally without the Catholic schools. And, I think there to, in some sense, the good news is places like the Gesu School, the miracle that Win and Fr. Bur and so many others, and many of those in this room, helped to effect back in '93. The miracle of places like LaSalle Academy, the miracle of places like Archdiocese schools like St. Francis de Sales, the miracle of those five schools that still exist in Camden, New Jersey, those five schools with about 1,000 kids left. That's the good news, they're still here. But, since we met in December of 1997, not here in this beautiful room, but in the basement, 900 Catholic schools have closed, 900 have closed; 200,000 seats have been lost, children displaced. And, I'm here to tell you that that has happened disproportionately and precisely in the kinds of neighborhoods where you had generations of, essentially, urban, white, working class folks, ex-urbanized African Americans, Latinos and others come in. And, I know it's, now I'm going to conclude by being a little controversial, Chairman Churchill, is that OK?

Win Churchill:

Of course.

John DiIulio:

I've never done that before.

Win Churchill:

I'm shocked, I'm shocked (*laugh*).

John DiIulio:

But, I thought I would just throw a bomb or two and then turn it over to the President. Look, look, there is a solution, I think. You're looking at one of them right here, which is how sacred places can

serve civic purposes if you pull people together and if you're willing to exercise a little wit and courage and think outside of the box with incredible leadership. It can be done. But, it's going to take more than we have traditionally given it. And, the "we" here has to include everybody from the Archdiocese, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, on which I proudly serve on their Domestic Policy Steering Committee. I got one of those letters, though, President McAuliffe, that says, "Thank you for your service." I didn't resign (*laugh*). But, I got one of those letters – "Thank you for your service."

Here's what, I'm going to quote an authority. It's a pretty high authority, the Pope, OK. So, I come to a Catholic school, I come quoting the Pope, OK. Pope Benedict, XVI, April 17, 2008 at Catholic University called Catholic schools an apostolate of hope that must be quote "accessible to people of all social and economic strata." He called a commitment to schools, especially those in poorer areas, a commitment that all Catholics must rededicate themselves, must renew their commitment to. Now, we got it pretty much from the highest authority if you're Catholic. And, if you're not Catholic, I think that was said by Mike Schmidt in 1982. But, it's a high authority. It's a good thought. Let me tell you, though, what I think the answer is, if there is a single answer to the Catholic school part of the equation, in addition to saving, supporting, and strengthening these schools.

There is a latent demand for Catholic education. We know that, and Win serves on the Board, as well, of the Children's Scholarship Fund of Philadelphia. Partial tuition, you've had over 50,000 households apply saying for partial tuition, we would be delighted to send our children to a Catholic school. Now, its destination neutral, but of all those who applied, 70% choose Catholic education. So, if you do the extrapolation, there are 50,000 people out there who said, "If you just give me partial tuition, I'll send my child to a Catholic school." That's a huge latent demand. The scholarship fund is only big enough to have actually given scholarships to 3 or 4 thousand children. But, there is a huge market out there for this, there's no question. The second point is universities. You know, it's interesting. Colleges and universities, including Catholic colleges and universities, have gotten bigger endowments, have expanded their buildings, have paid their faculty more, and, I'm all for paying faculty more, I think it's a moral imperative (*laugh*), in the shadow within blocks of Catholic schools that have had to close their doors. Now, somebody has figured out how to do development. And, somebody has figured out how to do professional development and alumni relations. And, somebody has figured that out all across the country. So, I think there's a little internal question that the Catholic schools, including the university sectors, needs to put on its docket, on its agenda, when you talk about social justice and for what and for who we serve.

Last point is: one great Catholic university that has done something that I think is the single most remarkable thing that any Catholic college or university has yet done, in this area, and that is the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame and the ACE Program, the Alliance for Catholic Education, which I have looked at up close and personal this past summer and I have been working with them and trying to learn more, has, since 1993, interesting year for birthing things, has, since 1993, turned out 1,600 top flight Notre Dame and other college and university students who have gone out and dedicated themselves to doing at least 2 years in a Catholic school as teachers. The stick rate for those kids, those ACE kids has been 99% after 2 years. The stick rate still actually in the classroom teaching is 70% after five years. The cost effectiveness of that program, as such, and I say this in *America Magazine*, and, I'm a Jesuit now, you know. Officially, I've said this: a dollar invested in

ACE yields 10 times the amount of teaching, actual classroom teaching, as a dollar invested in the very good, very laudable, Teach for America Program, OK. You cannot save and transform Catholic schools that serve the urban poor unless you have, on the horizon, a new generation of young people who are going to come in behind those great Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters and others who once manned, so to speak, those classrooms. So, to me, supporting programs like ACE and expanding their reach beyond the cities, the couple dozen cities where they are now, is a necessary, but insufficient condition for saving, supporting and strengthening the Catholic schools and, in turn, addressing the transforming inner-city education issue. I'll stop there.

Win Churchill:

Thank you, John.

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

John's not really a Jesuit. I feel the need to announce that because Jesuits are not allowed to complain about faculty salaries. We just cannot have that stuff, John. Jane and I were colleagues at Georgetown for many years and I am really delighted, Jane, that you could be here. And, Jane's now at Bryn Mawr and occupied with training a number of teachers to come into these schools. So, Jane, thank you for being here.

Jane McAuliffe:

Thank you, Win, and thank you for the invitation to be part of this panel. And, I begin with an apology because I have to leave shortly before 4 o'clock. I have a major faculty event at the college. I can blow off a lot of things. I can't blow off major faculty events, so I've got to get back.

I'm new to Philadelphia. I've been the President of Bryn Mawr, now, for about 14 months, but I was quickly introduced to the Gesu School by a Bryn Mawr alum, Louisa Dubin, a very dedicated volunteer here at the school and it was through her that I was privileged to meet and to speak with Chris Beck, your President, then, delighted to discover a mutual acquaintance in the Chair of the Board, Win Churchill, and in another Board member, Fr. Bill Byron, who is here with us this afternoon.

When I visited the Gesu School last year, it was immediately clear to me that this school has become an important and an innovative institution. You have genuinely dedicated yourselves to the common battle for educational equality for inner-city children. I admire your commitment to academic excellence which is palpable, here, but also for your willingness to be part of the policy dialogue, which is evident in a panel, such as this one and the others that you have geared up each year.

Win, in his introductory remarks, stressed the social justice mandate with which this school was, in a sense, re-founded in 1993 and I'd like to think that Bryn Mawr shares some of that same spirit, some of the spirit that I saw here when I first visited and what I am seeing here, again, today.

Bryn Mawr, too, was founded with a social justice mandate. It was founded in 1885 to provide access to education for a part of the population, in our case, women, who had been overlooked and under-supported by society. And, Bryn Mawr has, especially in the last several decades, really enhanced its emphasis on access; a much broader definition of access, it has remained single-sex in its drawing of students in the undergraduate programs, but it's become far more ethnically, racially and economically diverse.

Let me give you a quick snapshot of the Class of 2013, whom we welcomed this fall. Over 50% of our first year students are international students or American women of color. Our first year class is 17% international students and the rest of that more than 50% is African American, Asian and Hispanic; a big jump in Hispanic applicants. 65% of our students receive financial aid from the college itself, the average grant being about \$30,000. We are attracting an enormous number of very bright, but economically and, in many cases, educationally disadvantaged students. Among the highly selective Liberal Arts colleges, we are number 5 in the country in terms of the socio-economic diversity of our student body. I say that as a prelude to the point I want to make as an input to this conversation.

Part of the solution for inner-city education, for urban education, is continuing and building a robust teacher corps, interesting young people from very good schools, in seeing this as part of their life's mission. We're doing a good deal of that at Bryn Mawr and I'm finding that, increasingly, with students who, themselves, come, often, from inner-city educational backgrounds. Their desire to be educated, but then to return and give back to those very neighborhoods in which they had their initial academic formation, is strong. And, we're trying to meet that need in a variety of ways at a place like Bryn Mawr.

We're trying to do it in a curricular fashion with Haverford College; we have a program that creates a minor and a certificate program in education to prepare students to move into teaching jobs in elementary and secondary schools. And, as part of that, we have partnered with a number of schools in the Philadelphia area so that our students can get the kind of classroom training and internship training that they need in order to become effective teachers.

In our co-curricular work, most of the students who go to Bryn Mawr do significant public service as part of their undergraduate years and most of that public service, in turn, is in schools through various forms of mentoring programs. I'll point to a few of them. One that we have with a school in Norristown, an elementary school in Norristown, is called Playground Pals. It's students who go out to this school and interact with the elementary school students during the playground period to help them learn forms of cooperative play, forms of team-building on a one-on-one relationship with these students. We send a lot of students to tutor Math at Overbrook Elementary and High School here in Philly and we bring many of the students whom our students, in turn, go on a weekly basis to mentor, we bring them to campus so they have some exposure to the place where their mentors come from and where they become familiar and get an exposure to, a college campus and what this looks like and what the life of a college student is like. We do something similar with the Belmont Charter School and this is just a few small examples of the range of programs in which students at Bryn Mawr are involved.

Students who have an opportunity and an access to work with elementary and secondary school students in inner-city schools are captured by the need and they're captured by the possibility of genuine growth that they see in these students and that they then, in turn, in the cases of many of them, want to contribute to. I know that a dollar invested in the Notre Dame program, in John's mind, is far more valuable than one contributed to Teach for America, but let me put in a plug for Teach for America, which is a major post-graduation employer of Bryn Mawr students as it was when I was Dean of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown and that is becoming transformative. The experience of the students who do go into a program like Teach for America is transformative for several reasons. One, it's highly competitive, so the opportunity to teach in an inner-city or disadvantaged school suddenly becomes a plum to strive for. Many, many, many more students apply to be part of that program than can be accommodated, so it's a real prestigious post-graduation placement for those students who are able to secure that. More importantly, though, the students who do the 2 years of teaching in a program like Teach for America, they may not stay in the classroom, and, of course, many of them don't, but an extraordinary number of them stay connected with the needs of public education. They serve on school boards, many of them go on to take positions in work that connects them with public education both in its policy and in its actual performance. So, I think the spill-over effect of some of these programs that have suddenly made it very cool to be involved with urban education cannot be underestimated.

So, I speak to this Symposium from the perspective of somebody who's trying very much to enhance that sense of need, of urgency, and of the possibility of preparation for the very challenging environment that our inner-city schools represent and with deep gratitude for what a place like Gesu is doing to address that need. Thank you.

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

Chris, the importance of the teachers and, you know, the issues about recruiting teachers for the school and so forth, some thoughts, maybe?

Chris Beck:

I think that Teach for America, in fact, we have an alum sitting right here I talked with not long ago last week, it's a very competitive, very challenging and outstanding program. The ACE I don't know quite so much about. I know firsthand, and I think Sr. Ellen can validate it, that, here at Gesu, we do not have a problem recruiting teachers. They come to us; they want to teach here. Partly, it's a love of teaching, yes, and partly, it's the faith-based nature of the school. Nothing is more important, obviously, than the quality of teachers and, one of the things that I was thinking about hearing everyone talk, moving forward, what are we to do to correct these problems? Longer school day? Longer school year? Charter schools are already doing that effectively. How can we better prepare our teachers, which is what you are asking and Jane, you're addressing. It's a big question. There are no easy answers, but it surely has to be done across the board in many, many ways. We are blessed to have very committed teachers here with very low turn-over and they're innovative, they find new ways to teach all levels of children which they have to do because of our open admissions. But, does that mean that we can sit back and say, "Oh, everything's fine?" No way. All

of us have to work together to try to offer more opportunities to potential teachers and our existing teachers; professional opportunity all the way along.

Win Churchill:

Well, we benefit from religious vocations and have historically and teaching is a vocation. I was privileged for many years to serve as the Financial Trustee for the Public School Teachers Pension Fund in Pennsylvania and the public school teachers also have tremendous vocations and very difficult jobs and they're really putting the rubber on the road in terms of what's important for our society and for the kids. So, I give sort of the same big tent speech I guess with respect to that. The people that decide they're going to dedicate their lives in these classrooms, whether it's the inner city or elsewhere, but particularly in the inner city, have vocations. This is way more than a job, a very, very important thing. Ben.....

Benjamin Rayer:

Well, good afternoon, everyone. Before President McAuliffe left, I was hoping to get in my plug for TFA, too, but I'll start with my mother, may she rest in peace, desperately wanted me to go to Notre Dame, so I'll start the conversation with that as I plug for TFA.

John DiIulio:

Must have the same mother.

Benjamin Rayer:

I didn't and I'm sure she's turning over as we speak. But, just one thing to think about that I am one of those products of that Teach for America movement. I did Teach for America in its first year of existence and did it for two years and taught and left the classroom and never wondered, again, what I would do in education. But, went off and became a finance banker and did a number of things, but, the way, John, that I found my way back into these jobs, they don't have job descriptions for what I do for a living, but, yet, found a way to stay interested and engaged because of my experiences doing that. So, I thought it was really interesting.

This conversation has become about teacher quality and effectiveness. But, my job here is to just share with you a little about this idea of how do you transform urban public education and to think about that. But, first I want to make sure that I give a shout-out to our three charter school operators that I actually see in the room. I see Laurada Byers here in the front and she is the Founder and Chairperson of the Russell Byers Charter School which does phenomenal work in Center City, Philadelphia. And, Dr. Naomi Booker is over there and Dr. Booker used to be a School District Principal and Regional Superintendent and then agreed to take over one of our failing charter schools and has turned that into a true success story so if you ever want to see a charter school that was turned around and made to work, you should take a look at that. And, I see David McDonough in the back who is the Principal of one of the Mastery schools which I was formerly associated with and, as we were talking about the Achievement Gap, that Mastery group has not just tried to tackle the Achievement Gap, but has actually closed it and no longer talks in that frame; so, they're talking

about how to out-perform the suburban schools. Not how to close the gap, but how to out-perform. So, I think that's really exciting to have some of those people who decided to come here and talk about those issues, as well.

But, what I wanted to make sure I shared with you is just a couple of things in Philadelphia that you may be aware of or not aware of, but that, in Philadelphia, we have a very large movement of alternative providers running schools. And, I use that term because that means there are 67 charter schools operating in the city serving public school children every day, much like this school serving an open enrollment; children who come from low-income homes, mostly minority populations and doing some really outstanding work. In addition to those 67 schools that serve almost forty thousand students, we have a number of schools run under contracts with outside providers and those are all wonderful tools that the district has embraced. And, I want to talk a little bit about that for you. But, the other issue I wanted to make sure you are aware of is that President Obama and his Secretary of Education have raised the game on all of us. Those of you in this room, I am sure that you have been paying attention, but for those of us in the business, they've raised the stakes for us and they said, we want you to turn around the five thousand lowest performing schools in the country, so, those bottom of the bottom of the bottom of schools that haven't worked for years and years and years and years. And, I think we know what those schools look like, but if you have any one you want to see, you can call me and I'll take you out to see what that looks like. It is not a place that you would want your children or grandchildren to be in school and we're saying we want to change those schools.

And, so, in the School District of Philadelphia, we'd actually embraced that challenge in our strategic plan before President Obama came out and started talking about this, but we are taking on this challenge. So, we call that our Renaissance Schools Initiative and in renaissance schools, we're saying we're no longer going to accept that for children and that we're going to take our lowest performing schools and say, I'm sorry, it's nothing personal adults in the building, but it's time for you to change or leave and to let new adults come into that building; to let people like Dr. Booker or Dave McDonough who know and have a proven track record of doing this work, for great principals and teachers that we have inside the school system, to take a shot at running these schools because they have demonstrated they can do it. Places like this school would be phenomenal to take a crack at this. So, we're going to say, let's stop, let's start, begin fixing those schools and no longer have to talk about the Achievement Gap. It scares me to be working in this business and to think that we could be back here in ten years talking, again, about how to close the Achievement Gap. That's what scares me, personally, about being in this business is that we are continuing to spin on, I call it, the gerbil wheel, right, and we're not getting anywhere.

And, so we hope and we think that these movements, these, how do you expand charter schools, how do you get more children in more seats in high charter schools like the three I just mentioned. But, there are all kinds of them like that. How do we also take away students from schools that don't work? charter schools and district schools? And, how do we radically transform schools that haven't worked, not just a little bit better each day and each year, but wildly better? Children are reading at grade-school-level grades when they're in high school. They can catch up if they're given the right education. And, so we want to see these schools dramatically transform. So, in the School District of Philadelphia, that might sound a little strange to hear a school district talking about these initiatives. But, you're going to see more and more certainly in Philadelphia, but also around the

country, New York, Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles, lots of places are embracing this. We no longer run a school system, we run a system of schools. So, my boss, Arlene Ackerman, who I can hardly believe she would hire someone like me to come work for her, I mean, I am, talk about a flame thrower, working inside the school district. I'm a charter school operator and I believe in entrepreneurship and change, and markets, all that stuff, to change the world of education. But, I'm, allowed, under the tent, to begin talking about how do we use all the resources at the table, schools like this, and the people in this room, charter operators, great district operators, how do we put all the resources to bear on who can do what, right? And, I think caring more about the who do you do that? Who can actually produce the results in trying to do more work with them? That is my job is trying to figure out how we do more of that at the district to work with everyone in this town to get there.

So, we are really excited about the opportunity that could be there. I'd be kidding you if I said that was going to be easy. And, we will ask people, like the people in this room, to make sure that your voice is heard, that you listen to the issues and, when you hear us talk about expanding charter schools, and the debate gets framed, as we're trying to mimic growth of charter schools, to ask for you to participate in that debate because that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about trying to expand charter schools that work, not just charter schools, but charter schools that work. And, when we talk about renaissance schools, you'll see tonight we're going to have a community meeting to talk about what we're doing, we would welcome people like you coming to hear the conversation and to chime in on what we're trying to accomplish because it is going to be hard work. Sometime in November, maybe early December, we are going to announce the first set of schools we're going to transform so buildings don't close, children don't leave, but adults do and it is going to be a wild time. So, we're ready for that challenge, so, on the public school side, I think the tax-funded schools, that's the work that's going on for us in transforming inner-city education.

It's really exciting to be part of this panel because, I think, we were joking in the room before we came out, that is, John was saying, if you think you know the answer to this, you probably ought to leave the room because I'm not even sure what the question is, let alone what the answer is. So, I'm just excited that we could all be here at this time to talk about these issues and to hear from each other and to begin to get the juices of thinking going. So, that's really it from the public school side.

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

You know, listening to Ben, I was sort of thinking of some of the ingredients and, Chris and I have had a debate for many years, about what should the limit be on how many members of your Board there are for a school like this and we started with the Georgetown model, just because I happened to be there at the time, and we said, well, fifty-three. It's a completely arbitrary number; I don't know of any significance in iconography or anywhere else and then we counted up in the room beforehand and said, well, we slightly exceeded the number, but, you know, it's the rule of the reason and that's OK.

But, the point really is there are many, many people of good will who are prepared to come in and share some responsibility for schools like these and public schools have been really the key to the

success of America. I think you could probably say that, you know, fairly successfully. But, all of us as citizens sit back and say, that's Superintendent Ackerman, that's Mr. Rayer, that's the public school thing and we don't really have much responsibility, except to complain if we don't like what's going on there. So, when you have an operator running, whether it's a public school or charter school or a school like this, this so-called, operator, you have a Board of Directors and, in the case of Gesu and Young Scholar's, the two examples that I know best, and I'm sure the other charter schools, here, you benefit tremendously from the contributions, the sweat equity, the thoughts, the ideas, the caring, the love, and yes, the financial support, of members of the Board. So, somewhere in there, there's a piece that can be added to public education that will be very beneficial if it's done right.

So, when all is said, the other thing I noticed in looking at our Board list just right here, and, it's something that we tried to do, we have four graduates of the school who are fully qualified members of our Board of Directors. And, so, when you think about cycles and breaking vicious cycles and that sort of thing, this is one of the things we said to ourselves, what's the definition of a successful person? It's not academic success, it's not financial success, it's a broad kind of definition and it's a responsible member of society, a good family person, etc., etc. And, so we're really proud to be able to say that we have recent graduates of the school who are fully qualified to sit at the table that attempts to govern a school like this. In other words, it works. It does work and the definition of success is very, very important. What is a successful person in our kind of a society? It's usually too narrowly defined, I suggest. And, Bruce, I know you have thoughts on this and also the justice part of the equation.

Judge Bruce Kauffman:

I certainly do. You know, in this bitterly partisan world in which we live, it's rare to have virtual unanimity on any subject, but we certainly do have unanimity on the conclusion that we must improve inner-city education for our children. I agree with what Chairman Churchill said that the key to opportunity is education. Education is, in fact, the cornerstone of social justice. If we don't provide quality education for all of our children, regardless of race or sex or wealth, there's no way that we could build a safe, just, and equal society for all of our adults. And, too many of our schools, particularly in the inner city, but not only in the inner city, but particularly in the inner city, are failing our children. That's not fair not only to the kids, themselves, of course, but it's an enormous cost to society.

Education gives children hope for a future brighter than a life of crime and, in my experience, I have observed that, when hope is lost, kids conclude that they have nothing to lose. And, that leads, inexorably, to a life of crime. And, the cost to society is seen in prison expenses, lost wages, lost talent, and, of course, public safety. Simply completing high school increases expectant lifetime earnings by a quarter of a million dollars. It's not a question of whether we will spend money. We've talked about need for finances to provide the improvement and the transformation of inner city education. It's not a question of whether we will spend money. The only question is how we will spend it? Will we spend it educating our children or will we spend it incarcerating adults? I know that's a stark statement, but, from my own experience, have observed that we will face the need to spend millions of dollars in court and prison costs if we don't do something to improve inner-city education, as Gesu is well in the process of doing.

From the need to sentence, as I sit on the bench, I find it tremendously difficult to be faced with young children who have lost hope. When they lose hope, they tell themselves, I've got nothing else to lose. And they get lured into a life of crime, primarily dealing with drugs. But, you should know that three quarters of America's state prison inmates never finished high school. Children denied early education are five times more likely to become chronic offenders and nearly twice as likely to become violent criminals. One study has suggested that every dollar spent on free school programs can save tax payers up to seventeen dollars. As of 2006, Americans spent less than ten thousand dollars per student, per year, on education. Yet, we spent the national average of more than twenty thousand dollars to house and feed each inmate. As a nation, we spent nearly fifty billion dollars to incarcerate prisoners in 2004. I know these statistics sound a little bit dull, perhaps, but they're tremendously important to keep in mind.

In Pennsylvania, we spend about thirty-five thousand dollars a year to incarcerate a prisoner, while a full year's tuition, room and board at Penn State is only twenty-three thousand dollars. In Pennsylvania alone, a five percent increase in male graduation from high school would save one hundred and eighty million dollars in incarceration costs and eject another hundred million dollars in earnings into the economy. A ten percent increase in the male graduation rate would reduce murder and assault rates by an estimated twenty percent. More than a quarter of the ninth graders who entered high school four years earlier failed to graduate in 2006 and for black and Latino students, the number was closer to fifty percent.

Schools like Gesu are paving the way to improve the education system. Gesu, as it has been stated here today, opens its doors to all students, first come, first serve, including many well below his or her grade level. Ninety percent of Gesu's graduates go on to finish high school on time. It is not the only model and I do not presume to know really which way magnet schools, charter schools, faith-based schools, renaissance schools is best. What is most important is that we keep opening the doors to children from all backgrounds to children who have been denied opportunities in the past.

And, discussions like the one that we are having here, today, will bring the bearer full of energy, creativity, and determination to achieve justice in education. This school, with its inspirational ambition and extraordinary success provides an ideal forum to discuss the many creative strategies educators across the country have developed. We know the cost to society in prison expenses, lost wages, lost talent and public safety if we fail to study, imitate and even expand on Gesu's success. If we fail our kids, we fail justice for all. To educate our kids, to give them hope, to give them the opportunity to look forward to succeeding in life, we serve ourselves, we serve the children, and we promote democracy. And, Gesu is a wonderful example of the way that we must go if we're going to transform education in the inner-city.

[Applause]

Chris Beck:

Thank you very much for those wonderful words. It's really exciting to have this conversation and what I'm feeling, quite honestly, right now, is the need for the next conversation of what we can do; what we can do here at Gesu; what we can do at charter schools; what we can do in every school in

this city and this country to yet further improve what we're offering our children. We're doing a good job here, sure, but we can do better. Everyone can do better; that's the Jesuit idea of *Magis*, right? Seeking for the best and we're not stopping here and all of us should not stop here. So, I think that's the next topic tomorrow (*laugh*).

Win Churchill:

Well, the enemy is passivity, right? The enemy is pessimism. When we say, not only can you do it, there's a whole lot of different ways to do it and maybe it's a question of putting one foot in front of the other and getting on with it because we tend to be fairly cynical as a society, particularly about the inner-city public schools, and they're a mess and so forth and so on. But, that doesn't do any good; it absolutely does no good. This is part of all of our responsibilities as citizens and not to mention to our families and our children. So, it's an obvious thing and you need to proceed with this and there are a lot of different ways of going.

So, traditionally, we've had some questions from the audience and I think we are at that point and we're going to probably try to adjourn, in say, ten or fifteen minutes, or before, if there are no questions. Jerry.

Inaudible question from the audience.

Benjamin Rayer:

Thanks. It's a great question. The question was, in the initiatives that we have going on in the School District of Philadelphia around reforming public schools, are we seeking any external funding from, for example, the business community to do that work? And, the answer is: yes.

So, last week, we were lucky enough to get a small planning grant from the Gates Foundation to assign resources to do some of this work. So, the Federal Government, in addition to saying, we want the five thousand lowest performing schools in the country reformed, has put up five billion dollars to do that work. So, essentially, a million dollars per school, but it's a competitive grant. So, unlike a lot of federal funding, this money does not flow just based on your poverty level. It flows based on the quality of the application. So, that's one place that we're actively involved in applying and we think we have some really creative and innovative ideas that folks at the Department of Education will look upon favorably.

And, as some of you know, to the point that was stated here earlier by the Judge, that this is an issue that crosses left and right, Democrat and Republican. And, I got to see that about a month ago when the Secretary of Education came to Philadelphia, and came to Mastery Charter School and the School District of Philadelphia, in tow with Al Sharpton and Newt Gingrich. And, so, talk about a road show; it was really quite interesting.

But, the point really was, Judge, exactly what you said, that this is not a left and a right issue, this is an issue about importance to all of us. So, the second thing we're doing is, I go and meet with people like this guy right here and try to begin building some momentum around, what we call loosely, a center for school innovation. And, the idea is that this work that needs to be done broadly

and widely, that it's just not district resources that need to be applied to it, for two reasons. One, money is always helpful and the state budget and the city's budget are in terrible straits and no different than anybody else around the country. But, second is this idea of innovation. And, ideas come from a lot of people looking at these problems differently. So, you'll see in places that we're learning from, like Chicago and New York, they spend many millions of dollars working with external partners to develop systems just like this to help incubate and prepare people to take on these great challenges.

So, those are things that are in the early stages for us. But, we know that they're important. That not just folks inside these big school systems are the ones that should be thinking this, but how do you incubate people like Lars Beck who is running a phenomenal charter school and Naomi over here and other folks like that. How do you get the next generation of those folks ready? They may not be ready today, but how do you get them ready to do this work and how do you prepare the people who are ready to go in and take on the hardest schools we have in this country? How do you help them get ready? And, we think you need to put real dollars at that.

Win Churchill:

Yes, here comes the mic.

Member of Audience:

Hi, good afternoon everyone. I have a little different perspective to this. I am an international student with the Drexel University, and my experiences come from an education model and innovative school in Mumbai. And, as you are talking about drawing from external sources, I just like to bring about another perspective to this. How can we draw about from the internal resources? So, the school that I worked with, we drove on the strengths of the community members, the members of the community were trained to become teachers. And, this had set up a momentum for people in the community to become advocates of the school and this started with just one model school in a public school. And, now, we have seven set schools in the urban situation, so this probably could be a good option to pursue.

Win Churchill:

I'm glad you mentioned Drexel. That the Drexel School of Education and, initially under our beloved friend, Taki Papadakis, and we've been having a series of meetings with business leaders to address all of these sort of broader issues. So, Drexel is a very, very important part of this picture. And, we've mentioned Penn. I want to mention Immaculata, as well. So, the universities have a very substantial role to play here and they're doing it. Basically, somebody needs to go and ask and so, again, it's a question of putting one foot in front of the other and not sitting back and being cynical. I saw another hand, I thought, over here, but, yes.

Bruce Melgary, from the audience:

Hi. Bruce Melgary from the Lenfest Foundation and, Ben, good to have you back in town. I want to ask a question that actually came out of this program last year and then something else that

happened between then and now. If you remember, those who were here last year, a number of parents got up and, more or less in the form of asking a question, they made pretty passionate speeches about how it worked here, but they either had nephews or nieces or other children or people they knew that were going to a traditional school, and, what wasn't working there and they were angry and wanted to know why and how that was true and how it could be changed. And, I remember I was sitting next to Scott Gordon who is the founder of the Mastery system and he said to me, you know, the real issue here is how do you mobilize this parent anger?

Fast-forward about nine months or so, I was at a program of the Education First Compact and Arlene Ackerman was speaking on the district's new strategic plan and, to some extent, she talked about the same thing, how she had devoted a whole lot of time to meeting with parents because she thought, ultimately, the key to successful change was to have the parents on the side of that change and, I think, at the risk I don't want to quote her, that wouldn't be fair, but she actually was talking about what a wonderful thing it would be for Philadelphia if you had parents marching down the Parkway demanding that the schools teach children well because that would break down a lot of the barriers and put some political pressure on all of the adults that are involved in that need to change the way they view the world. So, I guess that's a long-winded introduction of saying, does some sort of mobilization of parents make sense as a strategy to solve some of these problems and, if so, how could the different groups that are involved in this issue, work together to make that happen?

Benjamin Rayer:

I'll take a crack first. So, I work for Arlene Ackerman, who I learn a tremendous amount from and I worked for Scott Gordon before that and one of the things that, I think, I learned and, it's always wonderful to learn something new in your job, is how important it is to engage community. And, I think Dr. Ackerman has been really thoughtful about that. So, in the case of what we're talking about doing in renaissance schools in the next month, kind of going on about how people feel about this work that we're about to do, closing lower performing schools. We've said we're going to be really intentional about that, Bruce, we're going to not just take the extra time to engage community. So, we have sixty representatives from the city helping us think about how to do this work well. We're saying that when these schools are transformed, and, to a lot of folks, the high charging, fast moving, high performing schools to have the need to go into communities and say, I have to convince communities that I have a solution that will work, feels frustrating. But, we think it's important because, at the end of the day, if a community doesn't buy into this work, and embrace it and support it and hold onto it, it won't work. I think that's the experience that Scott and I had at Mastery as we started doing turn around when we left the first school. It's hard work engaging parents, but I say now, if you were to try to take a Mastery school away and, Dave can speak better to this than I could, the parents would line up and lie down. There's just no way you would touch it. So, I think it's just building the momentum around it. So, we're trying to be really intentional in the work we do and I think the other think I would say is, I bet you, Chris would tell you the same thing about her parent engagement, while it's not easy, every great school seems to have that. Either it's in process or it's a work in progress, but it's something that's on the radar screen.

Chris Beck:

Well, yes, and I have to call to the Harlem Children Zone. What a great model there when they start with Baby College, really engaging the entire family and the entire neighborhood and the entire community. And, schools can't do it alone, that's for sure. We have to involve parents and get their commitment and participation. That's harder in our areas, it's harder in the inner city, but we have to keep trying.

Win Churchill:

And, I think what the school district is doing, just as an outside observation, Ben, is breaking down the problem. This is not a monolithic problem. This is a problem that can be broken down into units. And, so, the renaissance schools and the other approaches you're taking amount to getting on with it and having a place of engagement where people can engage without just protesting, if you will, this is a mess. It's not a mess by the way; it has discreet places where vast improvements can be made. That's the way I would put it. It has some incredible bright spots, not just to brag about this place, but the Byers Charter School, Mastery, Kipp, Young Scholars and the others and a good number of the public schools. So, it's not a monolithic problem and it's not, oh my God. It's, this is a great opportunity.

Judge Bruce Kauffman:

I think a great deal more focus ought to be on the cost of society, the enormous cost to society of failure to give our kids hope by giving them a good education and avoiding a loss of hope and, therefore, the feeling that they have nothing to lose by engaging in criminal acts. The cost to society is almost immeasurable and people don't stop to think about that when they don't provide what is necessary to have the kind of education that, particularly, inner-city kids are entitled to, is a matter of social justice.

Win Churchill:

I don't know if you really want to hear because, we've done this twelve times, but I think, oh, one more question.

Dr. Booker:

I'm Dr. Booker. How are you? I think you hit it on the head when you said that parents, how we mobilize. I think you also said that, when you talk about people who don't have hope, it's also our children, but it's also our parents, and, also, Ben, when you talk about what we need to do in the school district charter schools, work because we have parent involvement, we insist on it and we demand it. Schools like Gesu, Catholic schools, work because we have parent involvement. Schools that don't work in the City of Philadelphia feel a sense of hopelessness and, so, I think, part of what our next steps need to be is how do we mobilize the parents and the communities, not to walk down Broad Street because that's not really going to help, but to walk into their schools and hold folks accountable and then take an active part. So, since we know how to do that, maybe it's time for us to do some work around how we really can get our communities mobilized because we have successful things that are going on right within our own communities and it's time to share that out

so that, in our city where people don't feel that hope, they can learn from those of us that are making it work.

Win Churchill:

Here, here. That's very well said.

Inaudible question

Benjamin Rayer:

I think you're talking about a good friend of mine who did Teach for America with me, Michelle Rey, who is the new Superintendent there and is shaking things up. So, I think the jury's still out on what's going on in Washington. Two things that Washington has going, it has a very high penetration of charter schools; nearly thirty percent of the children who attend the school districts boundary the ten charter schools and the second thing that Superintendent Rey is taking on is the pay for performance question in a really challenging union environment. So, I think the jury's still out. She is still pressing ahead trying to get pay for performance for her teachers and working on trying to do a lot of the same work we're doing here with the choice, creating more opportunities, replicating positive schools, but still a work in progress is really my judgment. But, I don't pretend to be an expert of it, but, similar to the work we're trying to do here, creating more choice, trying to close lowest performance schools, replicate high-performing school, but, jury's still out, I think, is how I would describe it. If anyone would like to add to that.

John DiIulio:

I think there's a cross-cutting theme here. It has to do with, there is no one solution, but there are community-based solutions and I appreciate, I just want to say, I'm glad you did TFA, I'm thrilled. In fact, the young lady who created it was at Princeton when I was back in the day there and we support it. I want to be clear about that. But, I also want to get to this question of there's no one solution; there's no one way to do any one of these things correctly and, so, when you talk about community-based schools and community ownership of schools and parents involved in schools, there's got to be another way to mobilize teacher talent that goes into the community, where you don't need to be in one of those, you know, only three percent of these folks who are in the bottom quartile socioeconomically, attend any of the one hundred and fifty most competitive colleges and universities from which the twenty-five thousand TFA people get recruited. Which, by the way, if they were all still teaching in the schools, they would fill half of the elementary schools, public schools slots in New Jersey this year. Now, that's not an argument against TFA, but it is an argument against the notion that spending two hundred million dollars a year, that that's the solution. It's a great part of the solution, it's an incredible program, but there need to be others and they need to be community-anchored. So, as to mobilize talent from these communities where people actually live and have a stake in the schools, who can go, not to Harvard, but to community college, can work their way up and take ownership of the schools in the places where they live and they shop and they work and they recreate, whether they're public or Catholic or other, including people of color who are the people who live in the communities we're talking about by and large. I think there's not one solution, but I think we need to be, look, I need to be the skunk at some picnic at some point. And, so, I'm happy to be the skunk at this particular picnic to say, in the spirit of

comity, that there has to be a little more realism about, we have been debating this for ten years, and you know what, the conversation sounded much the same ten years before that and you know what, unless we, I mean the charter schools and so forth, the entire array of these solutions in tandem, I think, can make an incredible difference, the charter schools, what's happening in Philadelphia now is a model for the nation, there's no question about that. But, we got a lot of work to do and, I think a little bit more realism about the data on what all these various efforts have yielded will be required and you can rest assured that we, in the academic community, since we have nothing else to do, will be putting it forward (*laugh*).

Win Churchill:

Yes.

Kim Flaville, from the audience:

Hi. Kim Flaville with the Connolly Foundation. John, I'd like to follow up on your comment because my thoughts, as you were speaking, one when you started out and talked about the graduation rate at the fifty percentile. Anytime I hear that number, I get discouraged because, in my mind, and actually I had a little conversation with the William Penn Foundation about their annual report from a year ago when they quoted the same stat. And, I said, you know, that's the public school graduation rate in Philadelphia. That is not the Catholic high school graduation rate in Philadelphia. So, I think, just to take that a little bit further, I think there are tremendous stories in Philadelphia as you just talked about, but I don't think that they see the light of day often enough. I think Catholic schools are great and we hide our light under the bushel basket, as we say. So, I think, in addition to finding solutions, and there are already so many out there, I really think that they need greater media attention so that all the entire community of Philadelphia understand, parents, in particular, that there is a better answer here. It may not be in your particular school, but somebody else has figured this out, Gesu included, charter schools included, and so many of the Catholic schools and even the public schools, but to the extent that they can really advertise, get some good press about it, about how good their places are, then people will understand that if their child is in a failing school, that maybe it's time to move them.

Win Churchill:

Yes, one more.

Lori Springer, from the audience:

I think you said one more about five questions ago. I am Lori Springer. I am from one of the five remaining Catholic schools in Camden and I'm also the Director of Community-based Programs in Mt. Airy and we serve a lot of kids in Germantown and, so, I find myself struggling because I recognize the need for finances and so, I guess I have a question about the disproportionate way that money is spent between charter schools, public schools, and Catholic schools who really suffer on that end and if there's a resolution to that problem. But, then I also have a question about, for my kids who come to us and end up in schools in my area, like Germantown, and to feel hopelessness, how can we, as a community organization, grab a hold of those kids and help support them because

they're not getting into the Catholic schools, they're not getting into the Mastery's and Central and other schools like that and they are feeling hopeless. They know, they'll tell you, I'm at Germantown, that pretty much means I'm done. And, so, how can we as community organizations, support those kids who do have tremendous talent and don't have the supports around them they need to succeed in those schools?

Win Churchill:

Bruce and I attended the same law school, but he ranked much higher (*laugh*) and still does. I mean, there's obviously the constitutional question about the funding and its complex legally. I don't think that the solution to that is, it's not over yet with respect to that. But, it's very, very difficult and I think the charter school, and what Ben said earlier about the ability of the public schools and/or charter schools to accept private funding and to have mechanisms for deploying in a well, private funding is very important. You are coming at it from both directions, in effect.

Benjamin Rayer:

And, I think the last thing I would add is we're trying to get at that issue and one of the things you're hearing is, in these communities where schools haven't worked for forever, is we're going to create that opportunity for folks like you to get engaged and to say, we're raising our hand. You see this renaissance schools thing, we name Germantown High School or any other high school in the city and by the way, I didn't name Germantown High School, I want to be clear about that, but when those schools are named, some people are going to be really upset. We hope that people will see that as a great opportunity to make a change. We're going to try to strip away the problems that create change. That can only happen when a community embraces the people who live there, the parents, most importantly, who send children there, the students, if they're in high school and folks like you who are in the community serving them. And, then, that whole charter, district, Catholic issue in Philadelphia is a big one. I know that's a whole other conversation.

Judge Bruce Kauffman:

I think more emphasis has to be placed on the question of society and the failure to fund these schools that are doing a good job, these schools that show the way to go, a school like Gesu where ninety percent of the high school people graduate on time; they work. Funding the schools that work is necessary to show the way for everyone. Not only to give justice, social justice and constitutional justice and equal rights and all of the fairness to the kids, but the cost to society of not doing that is something that I don't think is emphasized enough. Every dollar that you spend on giving kids hope is money well spent and will provide for the entire society for the entire community more safety and less of kids turning to crime because they have, in their minds, nothing to lose. It's money well spent; it's money that you should spend just for fairness and for decency. But, if you want to get down to more pragmatic and practical solutions, you tell people, every dollar spent in a school like Gesu, where ninety percent of the students in high school graduate on time, and, with all of the kids, all you have to do is walk around here and meet the kids here, you see how they have hope and you know that the key to opportunity is education and they feel like they have opportunities. They haven't lost hope. I don't think enough public attention has been paid to the cost of not doing what needs to be done with regards to improving education in the inner city.

Chris Beck:

I guess I would just like to add that we work very, very, very hard at achieving this success. Sr. Ellen will vouch for that. We have three full-time Resource Room teachers to help with remedial work to get children up to where they should be. We have an after-school program with a remedial literacy, with children first through fourth grades and on and on and on. It's not easy and it takes a lot of volunteers. We're very lean budget here, but it does require a lot of hard work to accomplish what we are trying to accomplish.

Judge Bruce Kauffman:

For which you should be congratulated.

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

Here, here.

Win Churchill:

So, thank you all very much. We ask ourselves, should we continue with events like this, like the Symposia, as John mentioned, we've been doing it for twelve years and we have clearly not exhausted the questions, so, to me, I think the answer is yes. We thank you all for all the great questions and attention and for caring about this. And, Chris, we have a few gifts for the panel members and then we'll be adjourned.

John DiIulio:

By the way, Win, a dollar invested in Gesu yields thirty times the value of anything else you could possibly invest in. That's a conservative estimate (*laugh*) and that will be out next week.

[Applause]

Payton, Gesu Student:

Hi, I'm Payton and I'm in the 8th grade. On the behalf of Gesu students and faculty, I would like to thank each and all of you for coming today. As a token of our appreciation, we have a gift for each panelist for sharing your time and expertise with us today. Thank you, all, again.

[Applause]

Win Churchill:

So, we'll be adjourned. Thank you, all, very much.