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# STATE OF INDIANA

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DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD



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## Distressed Unit Appeal Board Meeting Memorandum

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Call to Order: A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeals Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was held May 18, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. CDT at West Side Leadership Academy, 900 Gerry Street, Gary, Indiana 46406. Members of the Board attending the meeting include Chairman Justin McAdam, Tracy Brown, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Rep. Vernon Smith, Rep. Jeff Thompson, and Sen. Liz Brown. Peter Miller, Executive Director, was also in attendance.

Chairman McAdam called the meeting to order and recognized compliance with the Open Door Law.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item 3 – *History of Engagement*.

Chairman McAdam stated that the Board is at a time where they must consider the next phase of the Gary Community School Corporation. He stated that they discussed how to proceed with the management contract with MGT at their last meeting. He stated that they invited MGT to the meeting today to present to the community. He stated that GCSC is approaching a point of financial stability and that the Board is interested in hearing from the community what the priorities should be for the district going forward. He stated that the General Assembly will have to determine the next chapter and that there is obviously work that still needs to be done and improvements to be made. He stated that public comment will be taken at the end of the meeting and outlined the procedures.

Mr. Miller overviewed his professional background and provided a detailed timeline of DUAB’s engagement with GCSC:

- 2015 - A financial manager was approved, and school corporation attempted to pass a referendum in May.
- 2016 - Another referendum was placed on the ballot in November.
- 2017 - An emergency manager was hired through a selection process.
- 2020 - Another referendum was placed on the ballot and the community supported the referendum by an overwhelming majority.
- 2024 - June is targeted as the end of the full transition period dependent upon legislative action.

Mr. Miller stated that the Board must look forward and consider what will need to happen in the upcoming years. He stated that at this time, there is no one to pass oversight to as the advisory board does not have statutory governing authority. He stated that the plan is to select the new governing body during the summer and fall of 2023 and that the new governing body would identify a new superintendent during the winter and spring of 2024. He then highlighted that over the last five years enrollment has stabilized after a significant period with decreasing enrollment, the operating deficit has been eliminated, there has been \$42M in planned or used for major renovations or improvements throughout the school district, the school day has been lengthened, assessment data collection has been made consistent, and teacher compensation has been increased. He stated that there is work to be done with academics and that the state as a whole has seen a significant learning loss as a result of the

pandemic, but that at this time they are already seeing positive early results from iReady assessments. He stated that the goal of DUAB is finish the job that we were assigned to complete. He stated that just because GCSC has a balanced the budget and is going to see a surplus, that only means that they've stopped digging the hole any deeper and that it will be important to start building up cash reserves. He stated that there are a number of areas that still need work, such as the standardization of operating procedures, completion capital projects that were previously outlined, and acceleration of academics. He stated that the Board has challenged MGT to bring additional resources to the table to assist with this and emphasized that the two-year target is only a recommendation from the Board, and it will be largely dependent on what the General Assembly does in the coming sessions.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item 4 – *MGT Presentation*.

Mr. Eric Parish stated that the MGT Team will be presenting tonight, but they asked Pastor Gardner to speak during a portion of their time. Mr. Gardner stated that he wanted to personally thank everyone who has shown up to this meeting. He stated that at this time, there is very little that is more important than the education of the children here in Gary. He stated that he is very excited to see phase three and that this is where we begin to discuss how we will transition control of the Gary Community School Corporation back to local control. Mr. Parish stated that MGT has been asked to present a vision and plan for the school corporation. He stated that they first asked whether our students, parents, and families are better off today than they were several years ago. He stated that assessment scores for student performance are starting to increase and that there is \$43M being invested in capital projects. Mr. Parish overviewed accomplishments that have been made over the past five years. Mr. Parish stated that GCSC's progress has required hard decisions that would otherwise not have been made, hard decisions that dismantled dysfunction. He stated that MGT is not here to be popular, but to do the hard work. He stated that they will build on the progress that has been made and work towards turning the school corporation over to a new governing structure. He stated that in 2017, GCSC had the shortest school day in the state, the curriculum was not aligned to state standards, and there were many teachers whose licensure was revoked for failure to meet state standards. He stated that progress reports were not provided to the community, that a lack of maintenance left many buildings out of repair and in general disarray, that the operating deficit was \$20M and the debt was \$140M, that the IRS was owed \$8.5M, and that enrollment was drastically declining at a rate of 700 students per year. He stated that upon the assignment of an emergency manager, the day-to-day decisions were made by MGT and that this change was necessary to address the dire situation that the school corporation was in. He stated that during phase two, they were able to focus on obtaining the metrics necessary to address the academic deficiencies present in the district and that the next and final phase will hopefully last only two years. He stated that MGT was asked by DUAB to present their plan and vision for the next two years. He stated that unlike in previous phases, their plan presented tonight was compiled by MGT, members of the school corporation, and members of the community and that their vision and plan achieve the common goal of exiting distressed status and transitioning to a new governing structure.

Dr. Paige McNulty thanked everyone for coming out and taking time to hear where GCSC is headed. She overviewed a number of GCSC's recent improvements including sports accomplishments, internship opportunities, improved wi-fi and broadband access, tools for teachers and parents to have real-time communication career center expansion, additional scholarship opportunities for students, and a terrific marching band with new uniforms. She stated that the elephant in the room continues to be academics; however, this is not a new issue and is something that the district has been facing for over ten years. She provided examples of efforts that have been taken including the introduction of new technology in the classroom, 4,500 Chrome Books to our students, more than 45 new teachers to fill

open positions, Bailly's recent STEM certification, and many community partnerships. She stated that they cannot deny the success being seen.

Ms. Kim Bradley stated that the district embarked on a journey of change five years ago and that the work on academics is not yet done. She stated that when the state took over, a comprehensive needs assessment was done, and they were then able to determine what was needed for staff. She stated that they developed professional learning communities and established work around the following key areas: (1) early literacy; (2) differentiated learning models; (3) collaboration amongst teachers; and (4) community engagement. She stated that they have seen marked improvements in our iReady assessments in both reading and math, have begun Project Lead the Way in all schools, and have begun parent camps at each school among other additions and improvements. She stated that Westside Leadership Academy has a graduation rate of 68% (during a pandemic) – which is higher than two of their neighboring districts – and that they have gone from 58 students to over 250 students in our CTE program. She stated that from 2010 to 2020, the special education department was on the state's watch list, and that they are proud to say they no longer are. She stated that they offer a variety of other extra curriculum academic activities and have engaged with community organizations. She stated that they will continue to be relentless in their work to improve the district for the betterment of the children. She stated that their local team is made up primarily of individuals that are a product of GCSC.

Ms. Denise Dillard discussed the importance of engaging community stakeholders throughout the work that is still to be done.

Ms. Chelsea Whittington stated that she stood on this stage as the valedictorian of her class and came right back after college graduation. She stated that she has seen what GCSC has gone through but can also see where they are headed. She overviewed communication improvements since the beginning of the takeover.

Ms. Nicole Wolverton stated that Gary Schools is a true success story. She stated that GCSC's buildings needed major repairs, that the HVAC, plumbing and heating that were in major disrepair. She overviewed improvements included in the \$43M of capital projects. She stated that a recent bond refinance resulted in a AA rating and that GCSC's ADM enrollment has increased in the first time in years. She stated that the referendum most importantly, has allowed schools to report a balanced budget. Mr. Parish stated that about two years ago DUAB asked them to present their plan for phase two. He stated that they presented a plan for academics, operations and fiscal. He stated that by the end of this period, nearly 95% of their outlined goals were or will be met. He stated that MGT has adapted throughout the phases to meet GCSC's needs and that will be no different in phase 3.

Mr. Andre Wright stated that he is looking forward to supporting the district in Phase 3. He overviewed some highlights for the academic plan for the next two years.

Mr. Rajeev Bajaj stated that he is a former educator and district leader from New York City and has a deep commitment to ensuring a smooth transition. He stated that he has supported smooth transitions to new government structures several times.

Ms. Whittington stated that their next actions are pending legislative action. She stated that they will enhance community outreach, merge existing advisory committees into highly structured groups, and standardize feedback and response processes. She stated that these items will be accomplished through individual accountability metrics outlined for each item and that they will continue to conduct monthly

PTO meetings at every schools. she stated that they will conduct regular community satisfaction surveys.

Mr. Parish stated that under phase 3 operations, they will work towards maintaining compliance with all federal and state audit requirements, have fewer audit findings than in previous years, continue to make prudent fiscal decisions to work towards necessary fiscal reserves, and continue to work with a balanced budget. He stated that all these metrics and action items will be available after tonight on the school corporation's website. He provided a recap of their discussed accomplishments including: (1) the ultimate proxy for community support with a passed referendum; (2) teacher have received over \$2M in pay increases; (3) the elimination of outstanding debt; (4) completed the IRS settlement; (5) removed special education from the watch list; (6) locally hiring and vendor policies were implemented; (7) many blighted and abandoned properties have been divested; and (8) engaged in the IUN certification program. He stated that at the end of phase 3, the district will be positioned for long-term success and sustainability and acknowledge that the next two years will not be popular or easy.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item 5 – *Results and Questions from Community Survey*.

Mr. Miller stated that they received 148 responses from parents, students, staff, teachers, and grandparents. He provided overviews on common responses to questions. He stated that several of the questions for MGT have been answered at the meeting. He directed the question of why students that are not performing at grade level not retained and instead moved on to the next grade to MGT. Ms. Bradley stated that retention happens on a case-by-case basis. She added that research and evidence show that retention is not always the best option for students for a variety of reasons – including disengagement and social emotion issues. She stated that they have students that may have already started school at an older age, so retention may further exacerbate the age gaps. Mr. Miller asked how many students graduated in 2022 and Dr. McNulty stated that they do not have that number yet, and there are a number of students that are still completing their course work. She stated that they will have those numbers soon and fully anticipate that the number will be over 200 students for this year. Mr. Miller asked what happened to the high ability program and Mr. Nathan Williamson stated that it is in operation at the secondary education level. He stated that state standards do require the school corporation to screen students for this at three separate times. He stated that they do have – for the first time in recent history – teachers that are certified in high ability programs. he stated that one of these teachers is at Banneker and there are ultimately only a small percentage of students that qualify for this program. Mr. Miller asked if GCSC still has arts and when the pool will open. Ms. Bradley stated that they have arts in the schools. She stated that they have theater programs in the elementary schools and middle schools, as well as the high school, and have digital arts, drama, photography, French, and Spanish. Dr. McNulty stated that the pool design has been completed and the pool restoration will take place during the upcoming school year. Mr. Miller asked what is being done about transportation issues. Ms. Wolverton stated that there is a nationwide bus driver shortage. She stated that what is unique to Gary is the level of community support to help with the situation. She stated that they had a number of religious leaders that volunteered to drive vans to help transport students. She stated that they have posted an RFP for a new transportation contract and have also engaged in a number of incentives to engage and retain drivers. Mr. Miller asked what the school has done to address discipline matters. Mr. Williamson stated that they believe as a school system they have to first focus attention on good behavior, and positive behavior systems have been shown to work. He stated that this does help in reducing negative behaviors. He stated that they still know discipline issues will come up, and for those areas they have implemented restorative justice. He stated that this allows students to identify what they have done wrong and learn to correct the behavior. He stated that the third piece relates to times when additional measures are needed and that in their student handbook they have outlined this level of discipline and the procedures that are

in place. He stated that often these behaviors are related to other issues and often students act out because they need some additional supports from the school. Chairman McAdam stated that the Board appreciates all the feedback that was received.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item 6 – *Questions from DUAB Board*.

Chairman McAdam stated that each Board member would have the opportunity to ask one question. Ms. Kubacki welcomed the new members to the education team.

Mr. Joyce asked MGT why they are the right group for this work. Mr. Parish stated that the first thing that comes to mind is momentum and a continuation of all of the work that has been done thus far. He stated that they know they have not been perfect and there are several things that need to be done, but that they have been able to accomplish what some thought could not be done. Ms. Whittington stated that for those of that know her, they know there is nothing she would not do to defend the honor of Gary. She stated that there is work left to be done with community education. She stated that she is a product of GCSC and she cannot stand by and not finish what they have started. She stated that she knows her capabilities and was selected by MGT. Mr. Bajaj stated that they have a deep commitment to students and a deep commitment to partnership. He stated that smooth transitions to new government take work and MGT has that experience. Dr. McNulty stated that she feels strongly that they have worked hard to build capacity and she sees in the hallways every day the progress they have made.

Rep. Smith stated that he would just like to point out that you are here to be a partner and not to be toxic. He asked for clarification on the point that MGT has achieved 95% of the goals identified for phase two. He stated that during the Board's last meeting it was discussed that a large portion of the goals in phase two were about communication and engagement, and he believes the chairman indicated that they failed on these goals. Mr. Parish stated that he would be happy to put the goals for phase three on the website and Rep. Smith stated that he was not talking about phase three. Mr. Parish stated that two years ago the presented phase two metrics. He stated that he would be happy to share that document and show what has been done. Rep. Smith asked if they have met any of those benchmarks. Mr. Parish stated that they have and Rep. Smith stated that they have not. Chairman McAdam clarified that they did meet several of the benchmarks. Rep. Smith clarified that he was not talking about the financial benchmark items, but instead was referring to the communications piece. Chairman McAdam stated that there were some of the engagement benchmarks that were not obtained but acknowledged that they were intentionally difficult benchmarks in order to set a high bar. He stated that does not indicate no progress being made. He stated that it is correct that they did not achieve all the academic benchmarks and they did not receive compensation for those unmet benchmarks. Rep. Smith stated that he would rather see a sermon than hear a sermon.

Rep. Thompson stated that he agrees that they all want academic improvement. He asked what MGT needs from the community to help improve academics. Ms. Dillard stated that the community is starting to have greater engagement. She stated that one of the first areas of engagement that she was brought in for was the concerns related to the workforce. She stated that there was a number of students not ready to proceed to the workforce because there was a lack of exposure for students. She stated that they looked at extracurricular activities like internships to help expose students and that they have also seen the reality of the pandemic where the workforce all throughout the state has had to change. She stated that they we have worked with Methodist, Franciscan and Community Health Networks on options related to internships. She stated that there were a lot of partnerships that were started with the school corporation to help bridge these gaps for students. Ms. Whittington stated that they need more of the positive from the community. She stated that they need more people that are willing to help direct

students away from violence. She stated that they have to tell their own narrative. She stated that other communities see their disunity. She stated that there are so many opportunities to engage with one another and they just continue to disrespect each other.

Sen. Brown stated that when they started this process, the \$100M of debt and an annual operating deficit of \$20M was the reality. She stated that now you are no longer operating an operating deficit, so you are operating on and spending only what you are bringing in. She asked if the capital projects are being completed because of the referendum dollars and if they have any reserves. She stated that when they look at other school corporations, they look at the reserves available. Ms. Wolverton stated that the \$43M investment in capital improvement is from ESSER III funds, HEA 1065 funds, and other funds. She stated that at this time they do not have any cash reserves or a rainy-day fund. She stated that the announcement of a surplus was monumental and a reserve is something for us to work towards. Sen. Brown stated that some might ask why DUAB is still engaged if GCSC has a surplus for the first year. She stated that there is still debt and still a greater need for reserves and a rainy-day fund.

Chairman McAdam stated that he would like to ask about academics and the request of the Board to lean into the issue related to academics. He asked how GCSC gets from where it is to where it needs to be and what the three to five things that are going to be done to increase academic achievement. Ms. Bradley stated that they are focusing on differentiated instruction, literacy and training staff. She stated that academics do not improve at the same rate as the fiscal situation because they are likely digging out of a much deeper hole. Mr. Wright stated that every state he has worked in has been in a deficit when it comes to literacy and this state is no different. He stated that they need to identify exactly what it is GCSC wants to accomplish and have the necessary infrastructure in place. He stated that they have to monitor exactly what it is they expect and have to ensure that the teachers can teach to what is expected. Kerchell Hobson stated that they have to provide our students with a curriculum that is rigorous to allow them to compete with students from other districts. She stated that they need curriculum that is relevant to the students so that they can look at our textbooks and see themselves. She stated that they need relationships with parents and families to support our schools and students. Ms. Esther Goodes stated that when they talk about becoming STEM certified, they are talking about a program that is centered on project-based learning. She stated that all of the skills in this program are things that they need to have to be successful in a global society.

Rep. Smith stated that he has not seen a document that indicates the needs of the students on academics. He stated that they must identify skills and subskills that students are deficient in and that he has provided several documents and materials on what a school assessment plan should like. He noted that he still has not seen anything that outlines what the children need. He asked what assessment is going to be done to determine what the students need. He stated that there is proof when surveys are done to identify weaknesses, a plan of correction can be made. He stated that it is not going to make a difference if they do not do this and that he wants MGT to be successful as they are dealing with the community's kids. Chairman McAdam stated that he believes the question is in regard to the assessment portion of the academic plan and what it will look like. Ms. Bradley stated that they do have a district plan and a school improvement plan. She stated that there has been a segregation of data and a needs assessment has been done, and from that needs assessment is where they began their work. She stated that they cannot change student behavior if they do not have the resources to do so. She stated that they did not bring the full plan today, but that does not mean it does not exist. She stated that they were not asked to bring that tonight. Chairman McAdam stated that he does want to be mindful of the real purpose of the meeting which is public comment. Ms. Kubacki stated that they talk a lot about words and what has been done but that you cannot fake smiles like the ones seen on those kids faces in the video shown. She

stated that activities that they have discussed are important because they are important to the kids, that these activities help students gain self confidence and self-esteem. Chairman McAdam stated that the members of MGT can exit the stage and that they will move toward public comment.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item 7 – *Public Comment*.

Rep. Ragen Hatcher stated that she wanted to discuss the legislators' role in this process. She stated that she met with Chairman McAdam and Mr. Miller at the beginning of last session. She stated that there are a number of steps that they have to do to get legislation passed. She stated that in addition to drafting a bill, they have to craft a bill that would get a hearing in committee. She stated that Sen. Eddie Melton is working on a bill for the Gary Community School transition. She stated that she heard MGT talk about their successes and that they showed the graph of the declined enrollment here, but what that graph did not show was the amount of charter school legislation that was passed by the General Assembly over the years. She stated that it makes sense that enrollment would decline when other options became available. She stated that the property tax caps were really the first thing that contributed to Gary's financial problems. She stated that Muncie and Gary were the two schools taken over by DUAB and that they also had the highest number of charter schools.

Sen. Eddie Melton stated that the Gary delegation has been meeting constantly on this and has made it clear that they stand with the people of Gary. He stated that they have heard loud and clear that the community would like to elect their own school board and superintendent. He stated that Gary and Indianapolis have a history where there has been a lot of legislation that has been very specific to the City of Gary. He stated that there was a missed opportunity to show the community how specific funds are being used and encouraged the community to stop fighting with each other.

Chairman McAdam asked that each person limit their comments to two minutes so that everyone has the opportunity to speak, that speakers refrain from personal attacks, etc., and that the audience remain quiet while people are speaking.

- **Mr. Dwight Suggs** he stated that he does not believe the Board can repair Gary since they are not local. He stated that the students need to be able to get to school, have food, and clean air.
- **Rev. Dwight Gardner** stated that his children are graduates of Gary and that he was a longtime sports announcer for the district. He stated that Gary was rated at 289 of 289 for ten years before the state took over and that events went from being family affairs to an area where even students felt unsafe in attending. He stated that he has seen teachers run to cash their paychecks and vendors charge the school at 300% of market value. He stated that he is a proponent of local control, but is not blind to the problems they have and that they cannot do it alone.
- **Ms. Linda Burns** stated that she is a graduate of GCSC and is now an employee. She asked the Board what their plan is when you no longer need a permit to carry a gun as that is a concern of hers. She stated that she would like a flyer put together to advertise the computer training course to grandparents. She stated that her daughter is now a GCSC teacher and thanked Dr. McNulty for the opportunity. She stated that she would like more men to get involved and for there to be more hands-on options for students.
- **Ms. Jackie Lee** stated that she is a proud graduate of GCSC. She stated that what DUAB and MGT are doing is wrong. She stated that they want MGT to go.

- **Ms. Josetta Shropshire** stated that she was born and raised in Gary. She stated that the community is dissatisfied with MGT. she stated that the children are the most important thing, and that the community is ignored when they reach out. She stated that GCSC was one of the best in the country and is now being taken apart.
- **Mr. Robert Coleman** stated that he has written to the Board for years with no response. He raised concerns about rats in the schools building and leaks when it rains. He stated that they have been asking for a functioning pool for years. He stated that MGT hands off questions to people on the payroll. He stated that at this point Jesus will be the one to fix GCSC.
- **Ms. Tracy Coleman** stated that she is a parent and that a sermon of Reverend Timothy Evans comes to mind when he said you have to choose between popularity and respect. She stated that popularity may feel better but respect last longer. She raised concerns about school bathrooms and food options. She stated that two more years of MGT is unacceptable and asked the Board what side of history they want to be on and stated that in America people have the right to govern themselves.
- **Ms. Lori Kuykendall** stated that she is the director of the Gary Literacy Coalition and that she is not on MGT's payroll. She stated that she is here to make sure students have a strong foundation in literacy. She thanked GCSC for partnering with them and letting them enter the schools to work with students. She stated that that because their partnership, students were able to take home books to add to their own home libraries. She stated that the focus needs to be on empowering the community and that is only done through education.
- **Ms. Pauline Tatum** stated that she is a GCSC graduate, that her grandfather was a GCSC principal, and that her mother wrote the West Side school song. She stated that she flew in from Texas to speak up for her community. She stated that they are hurt and tired. She asked what curriculum they are using for students as they are struggling. She stated that the community can run the school district.
- **Ms. Nikki Byrd** stated that stated that the Board came in October and have not been seen again until now. She stated that it is horrible the MGT was allowed to leave the stage. She stated that her purpose in life is to help young people get on the right path but that she is no longer allowed to volunteer in the schools. She stated that MGT is only telling the good things and that it is wrong to limit the public to two minutes. She stated that she was born in Gary and will not run from the problem.
- **Ms. Natalie Ammons** stated that there were people that had things to say but they had to leave. She stated that it was unfair for the Board to run through the slides so quickly on the survey results. She asked Dr. McNulty if she would move her kids to GCSC.
- **Ms. Sheletia Miller** stated that she is from Gary and has her CPA business in Gary. She stated that she worked directly with management for four years, and has worked with some good people but wanted to note that there was a lack of processes in place when it came to dealing with issues internally. She stated that people in the community would approach her about things like payroll questions and OSHA concerns related to boiler maintenance. She stated she attended an event where the police were called on her and she still does not know why. She stated that she



has asked management about putting policies in place on when police should be called and wants an answer for why there is still no policy in place.

- **Mr. Nicholas Vasil** stated that he received a flyer in the mail that says referendum tax dollars helped balance the budget and that they are committed to reduce our overall deficit as they move forward. He asked why it did not mention what the debt is, how the deficit was reduced and how they will deal with inflation in the budget going forward. He stated that he has sent three letters out in the last year and a half and has not gotten a response. He stated that he hopes to get a response to the letter he is planning to send the next morning.
- **Mr. Del Campbell** stated that the meeting is as much about politics as anything else and that those who govern receive their power from the consent of those they govern. He stated that it should be clear that the customer base has no confidence in MGT. He stated that the Board should not be thinking they have to continue with MGT. He stated that MGT will leave but that the community's memory and impression of the Board will stand the test of time.
- **Mr. Robert Buggs** stated that he is the president of the GCSC advisory board. He raised concerns about the handling of the debt and academics. He stated that as an elected school board official, it is my job to visit the schools, but Dr. McNulty said I can only visit the schools when they are closed.
- **Dr. Michella Spangenberg** stated that MGT was allowed to do a three-hour PR performance while the community is given two minutes. She stated that they came to the Board's community and did this, they would receive far less favorable treatment in their cities. She stated that it was disrespectful to allow MGT to exit the stage. She stated that the Board is basically saying that because the community will not choose people they like, the community does not get the right to choose their own school board.
- **Mrs. Lovetta Tindal** stated she is a resident of Gary and has the right to speak about and engage with GCSC. She stated that MGT cheats student out of a high-quality education. She stated that MGT promotes a prison pipeline, spreads false information, provides incomplete reporting, and disrespects the community. She questioned the number of working Chromebooks that were given to students. She stated that it is ridiculous that they want two more years and asked why parents are not allowed in the schools.
- **Ms. Deborah Holley** stated that she is a teacher at GCSC. She stated that she is concerned about MGT's academic plan. She stated that the extended school day is not being used as it was advertised. She stated that going forward they need someone who understands academics.
- **Ms. Caren Jones** stated that she is the executive director of the YWCA. She stated that the partnership they have with the school system has been great. She stated that in the after-school program they are able to fill in the cracks. She thanked GCSC for allowing them to be a partner.
- **Dr. Joel White** stated that since 1968 the biggest glitch in the system was when they shifted from a trade curriculum to a college-driven curriculum. He stated that they are a trade-based community and that they should return this area to a trade and tech-based area. He stated that most of the people who graduate from this system will go work in a skills program either industrial or tech based. He stated that they would like the Board to look at the curriculum and

try to put this type of curriculum back where it should be. He stated that 65% of the graduates will not proceed in academia.

- **Mr. Johnny Rucker** stated that he agrees with the successes that have been highlighted earlier related to sports and extra-curricular activities, but the items on the board related to the students was not advertised tonight. He stated that the rats, bats, bathroom issues were not discussed. He stated that at seven days away from the school year concluding they could not even get a tentative graduation number. He stated that they have teachers who have been sexually harassed by students and that is not being addressed.
- **Mr. Dwight Williams** stated that he is a council member for Gary. He stated that there have been a lot of fights in the schools lately. He stated that he has heard that a 14-year-old male attempted to hang himself in one of the schools. He stated that he believes in progress and asked how much sacrifice has to be made to regain control. He stated that what you permit is what you promote.
- **Mr. Bill Goldsby** asked why no one is allowed in the schools and stated that there must be something bad happening in the schools. He stated that you cannot lookup GCSC teachers to see their certifications.

Chairman McAdam thanked the community for participating. Rep. Smith thanked the Board for coming to Gary and stated that he hopes next time the focus will be on hearing from the community. Chairman McAdam adjourned the meeting.