

PUBLIC HEARING  
ON POTENTIAL SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION AND CLOSURE  
IN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MLK, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

June 27, 2006

6:30 p.m.

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2 MS. BASS: Good evening, everybody. My name is  
3 Mary Bass. I'm on the school board. I'm the director  
4 for district five, the school being Martin Luther King  
5 Junior Elementary School. I'm here tonight with board  
6 member Sally Soriano from district one. Thank you for  
7 being here. I think we're hoping to have director  
8 Darlene Flynn attend as well. To my left, your right,  
9 is Tracy Libros. He's the manager of our enrollment  
10 center. We have as our recorder this evening Yvonne  
11 Gillette. And she will be making the notes, compiling  
12 them. And they will be available to you either on site  
13 or hard copy. I'm not sure. But definitely on the the  
14 web site. Tracy is staff. Theresa. Excuse me. And of  
15 course, our ed director for this school, Pauline Hill.  
16 Thank you very much. And out in the audience, I believe  
17 Principal Dorcy, if you would stand for folks. If  
18 there's any other staff, just let me know. We do have  
19 bilingual staff available. The languages tonight are  
20 Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. If you want to stand  
21 up and let people know who you are.

22 If I may, I'll take a little bit to talk about the  
23 purpose of the meeting. The hearing tonight at Martin  
24 Luther King Elementary School is to receive public  
25 testimony on the superintendent's primary recommendation

1 on school consolidation and closure. This testimony  
2 will be available to the superintendent and school board  
3 members as they consider this issue. The  
4 superintendent's final recommendation is scheduled for  
5 public release on July 5th. The subject of this hearing  
6 is the Martin Luther King Junior Elementary building.  
7 The building is proposed for consolidation as part of  
8 the superintendent's preliminary recommendation on  
9 school consolidation and closures.

10 Now, for the hearing format. Testimony will be  
11 taken in the order of those who signed up. And we have  
12 two volunteers out in front. If you haven't signed up,  
13 please feel free to still do so. We will then start  
14 with the telephone sign ups followed by the walk ins.  
15 Each person, whether they are representing an  
16 organization or individual, will be given three minutes  
17 to speak. And our timer is -- do we have somebody to  
18 hold up the 30 seconds card? Okay. Thank you. So  
19 we'll be looking for that. We ask that you be  
20 respectful of time.

21 If you are speaking as an individual, please  
22 introduce yourself. If you are representing a group,  
23 please state the name of the organization and the  
24 mailing address. If an individual is ceding their time  
25 to another person, please acknowledge that at the

1 microphone. You must be present to do so. All  
2 testimony is being recorded and documented by a court  
3 reporter. Again, that's Yvonne sitting here in the  
4 green top.

5 This hearing is to receive public testimony only.  
6 Any issues or questions may be addressed in the  
7 superintendent's final recommendation on school  
8 consolidation and closure. No responses will be  
9 provided at the hearing tonight. We must keep the  
10 hearing to 40 speakers, and that will be the maximum  
11 number this evening. We will be confined to the 40  
12 speakers this evening.

13 With that, we're going to give Darlene a couple of  
14 minutes to come and circumvent the tables so we can get  
15 started.

16 I am going to call out the numbers. Our first  
17 speaker would be Mike Moore followed by Michelle  
18 Johnson, followed by Martha Collins.

19 The gentleman with the camera is here to film a  
20 documentary for the league of education voters, and  
21 certainly you can ask him any questions you wish.

22 MR. MOORE: Thanks. My name's Mike Moore. I'm a  
23 volunteer, proud volunteer--

24 MS. BASS: Mr. Moore, use the microphone, please.

25 MR. MOORE: -- at MLK Elementary. And there we

1 go. Is that all right? Start me over again.

2 MS. BASS: You know, Mr. Moore, I don't know if  
3 it's a legality or not. This is a legal hearing. I  
4 don't know if you have to be facing us.

5 MR. MOORE: So the side will work? My name is  
6 Mike Moore. I'm a volunteer at MLK. A proud volunteer  
7 at MLK. I been here since June of '04 through the  
8 present, two years, 24 months. And I am in favor of the  
9 consolidation.

10 And I got to tell you a little bit as to why. And  
11 to do that, I got to give you a brief brush on 24 months  
12 of volunteerism here. And that is, when we first  
13 started, we had 170. We went to 134. We went to 115,  
14 actually 107, and bounced to 115. That's our enrollment  
15 numbers.

16 So what we had to do when we got here, under  
17 Barry's direction, was build up our enrollment. And  
18 that was number one. So Barry and I created a job for  
19 me, which was enrollment, try to recruit people, try to  
20 get community support, try to get parent support, and  
21 raise money. And to that end, we put together a  
22 committee, a marketing committee that would have blown  
23 your socks off. We had parents, partners, some staff,  
24 and everybody on it. And we put together a heck of a  
25 plan that even Madison Avenue would have been proud of.

1 And we went out trenches, trenches, and trenches, and  
2 face to face, and started trying to recruit people in  
3 all these different venues.

4 And I got to tell you, the people did not come.  
5 The people did not come. We tried like mad. We have a  
6 real jam here in '04, '05. You could cut the spirit  
7 with a knife. You could stand in front of Barry's  
8 office. You could sense it when you walked in this  
9 place. And the teachers and everybody were in it.

10 I don't have any more time. So I'll end this with  
11 some suggestions that the board ought to look into.  
12 Number one, they ought to read this report over and over  
13 again. It is great. In fact, they ought to adopt the  
14 whole thing. It is as good as the Grace report, which  
15 was accepted by the U.S. government, put together by  
16 Peter Grace.

17 And, secondly, you got to concentrate on the  
18 principals. The principals are what make a successful  
19 school. There are four ingredients that make a  
20 successful school in my opinion of 24 months. And that  
21 is a strong principal, number one. A community support  
22 as strong as you can make it, number two. A strong  
23 parental support, as much you can. And lastly, you need  
24 some outside money. Thank you very much. My three  
25 minutes are up.

1 MS. JOHNSON: Okay. My name is Michelle Johnson.  
2 I'm a parent. I'm not representing an organization.  
3 Basically, I would like to say for those that are in  
4 favor of saving Martin Luther King, maybe we should form  
5 a save Martin Luther King committee and get some people  
6 who are familiar and skilled at getting grants. I feel  
7 we can find some type of grant or program. And  
8 basically, you might have to look for funding from  
9 federal programs. We need people to, you know, we need  
10 people familiar with grant research.

11 So basically that's about all I'm going to say.  
12 Maybe contact, you know, some philanthropist  
13 organizations or some foundations like the grant-- the  
14 Gates foundation, you know, and maybe look for funds.  
15 That's about it.

16 MS. COLLINS: Good afternoon. I usually don't  
17 write notes when I speak, but I had to, because this is  
18 unconscionable what we're doing here tonight. I'm here  
19 to request the preservation of a significant site,  
20 Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School in Martin  
21 Luther King Junior County, which historically affects  
22 the community, city, state, nation, and the world, built  
23 in 1913, with additions and its earthquake retro in  
24 2002.

25 Mr. William Gross was the first black African

1 settled in the Madison Valley. And the school was under  
2 the leadership of principal Dr. Louise McKinnis. For  
3 crying out loud, in the heart of the Madison Valley, for  
4 two acres, we keep the dream alive under the name of  
5 Martin Luther King.

6 I want to tell you another little short story. I  
7 just recently took a visit to Atlanta and visited the  
8 museum and walked in the walks of the areas of my  
9 ancestors. While I was there, I went to the Margaret  
10 Mitchell house, which wrote the book Gone With the Wind.  
11 At the grand premier of her showing, the Martin Luther  
12 King Church, Martin Luther King, his mother and his  
13 father was there. And they sung for the choir of the  
14 opening of Gone With the Wind.

15 And if you know the story of Gone With the Wind,  
16 the lady fought to save that property. And for the two  
17 acres that we have here, we need to fight for this  
18 property.

19 I got one minute left and now I am going to close  
20 with a point. Red, white, and blue. I assure you she  
21 be gone when she shows what she become, the land of the  
22 Dixie bugle horn. Take that cotton out your ears. The  
23 south has risen, you hear? Thank you.

24 MR. PHELPS: I'm a parent of a student here at  
25 Martin Luther King. And I'm opposed to closing the

1 school just because it's closer, and the kids enjoy  
2 themselves here, everything. And to me, all the schools  
3 that's on this list are all black. We need to keep our  
4 kids together and raise them up together and be a home  
5 for the community.

6 My son and his brother have been going to this  
7 school a while. His brother have been going here close  
8 to five years almost. They have been raised here, and  
9 his brother as he grown up. He's going to first grade.  
10 He been going here along with his brother. So they  
11 enjoy that. And to take them away from their home --  
12 this is their home, and to disburse them to wherever you  
13 all want to disburse them to, that's not good.

14 And like the lady said, Martin Luther King need to  
15 live on. This is the only school with his name. And we  
16 need keep it going on. Thank you.

17 MS. WALDEN: Good evening. My name is Reverend  
18 Harriet Walden. I'm representing myself tonight. I  
19 represent a lot of organizations. But tonight, I'm  
20 speaking from my heart. And I'm speaking with dismay  
21 and really sadness that the Seattle Public Schools would  
22 consider closing the Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary  
23 School. I wonder if the superintendent was in India  
24 right now, and someone was trying to close the Mahatma  
25 Gandhi school, who was the civil rights leader for

1 India, would he go along with that? That's how we feel.  
2 Dr. Martin Luther King Junior was the father of the  
3 modern day civil rights movement and made it possible  
4 for all the other immigrants to come to this country.

5 And the Supreme Court will end affirmative action  
6 this year. The Court is in place to do that. When they  
7 end affirmative action, and all of those things is going  
8 to happen, we're going to be back to the neighborhood  
9 schools. Our kids once again have to have bussing on  
10 their back. I mean, it has never been enough kids north  
11 of the Ship Canal. It's always been the kids in the  
12 south of the Ship Canal that is bussed and all of that.

13 So it really is time for us, Seattle, the most  
14 liberal city needs to really check itself out. There's  
15 a new research out that Seattle's one of the 10 most  
16 racist cities. And so the liberal Seattle once again  
17 shows itself how liberal it is, because it wants to  
18 close the schools that impacts the African American  
19 children or the poor children, while we make it easy and  
20 comfortable for the rich kids.

21 We need to look at that. We need to really look  
22 at that, and look at our ourselves. How fair are we?  
23 The reason why this school doesn't have any students is  
24 because every year, it's on the chopping block. It's  
25 never been allowed to thrive. I don't know if anybody

1 was around when they had to fight to get this name here.  
2 I don't know how many people here. Anybody here who  
3 remember the fight to get the name, raise your hand. I  
4 want to see the hands of the people who remember the  
5 fight to get this school named for Martin Luther King.  
6 It was not a cake walk. People had to fight for this.  
7 And we're willing to fight to keep this school open. We  
8 got a viable program in here. I bet the superintendent  
9 would be fighting right now if he was in India, and they  
10 wanted to close the only school in that area named for  
11 Mahatma Gandhi.

12 MS. BASS: The next speaker-- is there somebody by  
13 the name -- I think the last name starts with a B.  
14 Bader? Anastasia Samuelson, Andy Goulding.

15 MS. SAMUELSON: Yes. This is such an awkward  
16 position. Hello. And thank you so much for coming to  
17 King for this meeting. I know this is a hard meeting.  
18 My name is Anastasia Samuelson. I'm a teacher here at  
19 Martin Luther King Elementary. I'm the public  
20 Montessori teacher. I am here because I oppose the  
21 closure of Montessori at Martin Luther King. And it's  
22 very difficult because I also support the consolidation.  
23 I think that it's beautiful that our principals,  
24 that Dr. Gloria Mitchell and Barry Dorcy have taken the  
25 initiative to start, and we are the guinea pigs of this

1 closure.

2 Last year in July, the district decided to fund  
3 the Montessori program. In August, I was hired. In a  
4 matter of weeks, I set up a program and had 12 children,  
5 or six children, I believe. In the middle of November,  
6 I had 18. I had open houses. I received press from  
7 local newspapers. And word of mouth was spreading in  
8 private Montessori schools about this public offering.  
9 And people came. People were coming. People came to my  
10 classroom so frequently, and I was very open to that,  
11 and I always accommodated them. And this program was  
12 budding, and it was beginning to flow. And I know  
13 Mr. Dorcy will attest to that.

14 And Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and  
15 Dr. Maria Montessori really have something in common.  
16 They all fought for the underdog. They all have been  
17 nominated, and two of them have received the Nobel Peace  
18 Prize. They are three of a certain kind. And those  
19 three people have something, I believe, very special in  
20 common. We make decisions in so many ways. We make  
21 decisions with our heads. We make decisions with our  
22 guts. As women, we know that. And we make decisions  
23 with our hearts. And I believe that Mr. Gandhi,  
24 Dr. King, and Dr. Montessori all made decisions with  
25 their hearts, as I made the decision with my heart to

1 come here and invest in this program.

2 And this program was going to fly. Grant Hill and  
3 Daniel Bagley both have waiting lists in their  
4 Montessori programs. And my program also would have had  
5 a waiting list. And to invest in it and to pull it, to  
6 open it in July, and to announce a closure, potential  
7 closure in January, before-- you kind of hit me here.  
8 But I will unpack if you are willing to go the extra  
9 mile with me. And I believe sincerely in my babies. I  
10 love my children, and my children thrived. And so  
11 consider public Montessori here at Martin Luther King  
12 Elementary. It is a success story waiting to happen.

13 MS. BASS: Okay. Ms. Samuelson. I appreciate  
14 your comments. Thank you.

15 MS. SAMUELSON: Thank you.

16 MS. BASS: Andy Goulding.

17 MR. GOULDING: My name is Andy Goulding. And I  
18 tutor here at Martin Luther King Junior Elementary  
19 School, and I have for seven years. And I live in the  
20 community. And I'm really sad that the school is being  
21 threatened to close. And I am against the closure. And  
22 I would like to work hard to preserve the school. When  
23 I first heard about the consolidation, I thought it was  
24 a pretty good idea. It seemed like a proactive idea to  
25 consolidate with TT Minor. There didn't seem to be any

1 other ideas.

2 I understand Ms. Dorcy's problem with enrollment.  
3 I know that money follows the children. I understood  
4 all that. And I kind of went along with it. And now I  
5 regret that, because it seems to me that Martin Luther  
6 King Junior School is taking a bullet for the school  
7 district. And I feel really bad about that.

8 And a little after the time that we had a PTSA  
9 meeting, we talked about the school closure and  
10 everybody said, that sounds like a pretty good idea.  
11 And then another idea came up, and the other idea was  
12 there is a program -- there is a program that's looking  
13 for a home. It's a program of preschoolers. And they  
14 want to move into the central area, because most of the  
15 children come from this area. So that became-- was a  
16 good idea because then these children would come up  
17 through the system and would become kindergarteners and  
18 first graders. What we need is more of a feeder system.  
19 Like in minor leagues, we need feeder systems into the  
20 school.

21 That idea, we proposed it in front of the school  
22 district. And it was very hard to make it work. Nobody  
23 knew how to make it work. So it didn't go anywhere. I  
24 don't really see any action to make-- to do the kinds of  
25 things that would make this school succeed. But I would

1 like to continue to strive for that. And I will.

2 Is my time up? So we had two chances to keep this  
3 school open. The first was the Montessori program and  
4 the success that was there. And I think it was a good  
5 success. And the second was this idea of bringing the  
6 program to the school. If those two things don't work,  
7 then we'll have to reinvent the school some other way.

8 MS. WHITE: My name is Shaka White. I'm a parent  
9 here. I can't be the only one crying. My son has been  
10 here for five years. Our first year in the community  
11 was from Tacoma. We have been here ever since. And I  
12 just think it's terrible that you're closing it.

13 I love the small classes. I love the teachers.  
14 They know everyone. They know where you're supposed to  
15 be. There's no getting on the wrong bus or sending you  
16 with someone. It's just so safe here. I am opposed to  
17 the merger of TT Minor, just because I'm nervous if we  
18 do send our kids there, who's to say they won't be  
19 closed next year? Because there still needs to be a  
20 school picked from the central cluster.

21 I just wish there was some way we could stop the  
22 closure. I know it's late now. Everything's packed and  
23 ready to go to TT Minor. And I just want to say that  
24 it's just sad. Every month that I paid for my  
25 apartment, I don't know if I'm stupid or crazy, because

1 it's 787 square feet, and the rent is \$1,035. But  
2 that's what I'm willing to do to keep my kids close. I  
3 work at the UW. I want my kids to go to school in the  
4 cluster. And it's hard for my son who's in the fifth  
5 grade. He could have graduated not moving to any  
6 school. And now he has to go somewhere and find all new  
7 friends. I have a first grader who's nervous. And he  
8 doesn't know, are they going to like him, are the  
9 teachers going to be nice? It's a whole new setting,  
10 not only for the kids, but for me.

11 MS. BASS: Vanessa Lucas.

12 MS. LUCAS: Good afternoon. I'm against the  
13 merger also. We need to save Martin Luther King School.  
14 I attended -- and you can tell Raj this. But a comment  
15 I heard him say at one of these meetings that the  
16 African American community only wanted to keep the name  
17 of Martin Luther King. I had the unfortunate  
18 opportunity to be present when Mr. Manhas spoke last  
19 October to a group of national black engineering  
20 students where he kindly told us about growing up in  
21 India and being a part of Mahatma Gandhi's movement and  
22 learning as a boy about Martin Luther King, Junior and  
23 the movement and how what a wonderful experience it was  
24 to finally come to America and become a student at the  
25 University of Washington and to have the position that

1 he has.

2 Well, I happened to be a student at Harris  
3 Elementary School back in the '60s before it became  
4 Martin Luther King School. I was miseducated by some  
5 bleeding heart people, because in those days, you know,  
6 it was like oh, let's integrate. No, let's bus. Let's  
7 do whatever. If it hadn't been for my previous  
8 education before arriving in the Seattle system, I  
9 probably wouldn't have made it to college where I  
10 graduated from Seattle University.

11 I'm offended also that Mr. Manhas can't figure  
12 out, and you guys can't figure out how to keep the  
13 school open. It's not just about the name. It's  
14 family. It's about community. It's about the  
15 Montessori program. It's about our children's future.  
16 And I feel that if you look for that 34 million, you  
17 might not have a problem finding how to keep one  
18 building in one community open.

19 As the other person had said about the merger,  
20 next year it's going to be something else. I just think  
21 that Mr. Manhas, who's been part of this whole fiasco,  
22 should go. And I also feel if you guys close this  
23 school, then you need to be looking at not-- us trying  
24 to recall your levy. Because for our children to have  
25 to keep taking the brunt of everybody else's benefits

1 while we pay more taxes and get less service and have to  
2 be herded around like cattle when we can't figure out  
3 what we're going to be doing from year to year, this is  
4 wrong. It's cruel. It's inhumane. People of color are  
5 a diverse and welcoming group of people. But we are  
6 tired and past sick of being tired of having to be the  
7 one who make all the movements. So someone else wants  
8 to purchase the school. Go find something else to buy.  
9 Find the money. You got the money.

10 MS. BASS: Carl -- sorry. I couldn't make out  
11 your beautiful penmanship.

12 MR. LIVINGSTON: It's not good. Well, I'm happy  
13 to be here on this sad occasion to make some arguments,  
14 because I'm an optimist. And I have this feeling that  
15 it's still possible to save this school. I rather  
16 suspect that there are some rather independent thinking,  
17 strong people, particularly strong women on the school  
18 board who could stand up and hear our voices and make a  
19 decision which we think is really in the best interest  
20 of everyone, but definitely will be the kind of decision  
21 that finally makes us feel as though we have been heard.

22 First I want to say something about the merger.  
23 When it's understood that those two principals came  
24 together and went to someone else that has been  
25 respected in our community, Pauline Hill, to decide to

1 merge these schools, they did it because they felt like  
2 one or both of their schools were going to be closed.  
3 So I wanted to speak to that, because I feel like we can  
4 set that aside as a reason to even think about closing  
5 these schools, because they did it because they were  
6 under duress. If that's the case, it should not matter  
7 if they were African American principals. I look  
8 forward to hearing Ms. Pauline Hill, who's a little bit  
9 freer to say what she wants to say. She might have  
10 something to say about that. I don't know. I know she  
11 has a heart for the community. And I hope she feels  
12 free enough to say, we did it because she felt we had to  
13 do it. Somebody needs to say that to address what's  
14 going on.

15 The next thing I want to say, there were standards  
16 put in place about how to gauge schools. And there were  
17 zones, these quadrants put together. And there was an  
18 arbitrariness to the quadrants and the criteria that was  
19 set up. Our quadrants were set up with very little  
20 relationship to where most of the students are that  
21 populate the schools. When those quadrants were set up,  
22 we were already messed up from that point on.

23 Then they looked at how large-- the size of the  
24 students attending the schools. Well, comparing this  
25 school to other schools is like comparing apples to

1 oranges. This school has seen its reference area  
2 decreased. To compare a school which has a reference  
3 area that's been decreased to the other schools that  
4 haven't had that happen to them is like comparing apples  
5 to oranges. It's not fair from the the beginning. It's  
6 like cutting off a person's arm and then later judging  
7 them for being disabled. I am closing your program down  
8 because you got one arm. You cut my arm off. It's not  
9 fair to judge them for that. They had special programs  
10 which they have lost.

11 And then I wanted to say something about the  
12 savings. We are really not going to save all that much  
13 money compared to the cost of losing this school that we  
14 have fought for, paid for, and all that.

15 The last thing that I want to say is it's quite  
16 possible that a very wealthy school, Bush School might  
17 be buying this school. If that happens, it's going to  
18 be another time in which average folks representing all  
19 the people are playing to the hands of the wealthy  
20 giving them another facility and pushing our kids to a  
21 place where they got to go farther away to get educated.  
22 I hope you will make an independent decision in our  
23 interest so that we know we have been heard. And I  
24 believe you will do it.

25 MS. BASS: I did call out a gentleman's name,

1 Donald, and I couldn't read the last name. So if you  
2 are in the auditorium, please step forward.

3 MR. ALEXANDER: I'm actually representing Save Our  
4 Schools, SOS. And I was looking around the room. I  
5 took a count. And this is an awful white city. And  
6 some of you don't know that. And I see here more black  
7 folks in this room than white folks. That might be a  
8 heartening count, but it's disheartening as hell to me.  
9 Whereas, the numbers, the percentage is good. The  
10 numbers reflect very, very bad attitude toward our  
11 people.

12 Now, I read the newspaper, the media, the radio.  
13 And heaven knows that that newspaper, they do a  
14 wonderful job of saying what's going on in our community  
15 and attempting to get people out to support what's going  
16 on. And I know people listen to it, because I get the  
17 gossip, the feedback.

18 So I know that, you know, you colored folks are  
19 out there listening, but that's not reflected in here.  
20 And I use that word colored because we talk about people  
21 of color. I'm talking about colored folks. I am  
22 talking about people who are black or at least darker  
23 than white folks by many shades. And what happens here  
24 is we have done what we are supposed to do. So if this  
25 school is sold or traded or consolidated or whatever the

1 term might be, it's our fault. It's not these people's  
2 fault.

3 Most of them -- just so happens that there are a  
4 couple of them that do give a damn. And most of them  
5 don't. And us folks up here are not allowing them to  
6 know what our feelings are about this. We have a couple  
7 of people, principals who decided they were going to  
8 make some deal to consolidate. I been in this community  
9 a long time. I knew nothing about this consolidation.  
10 Is it supposed to come to the community? I knew  
11 nothing. I heard of people saying that they did, but  
12 who knows.

13 The fact that we who are here, we know this  
14 meeting was going on, but we apparently didn't have  
15 enough gumption or sense to have people come out here.  
16 So what we get is what we deserve. And that is a great  
17 way to get pregnant. Thank you.

18 MS. YOUNG: Raven Young. Hi. I have had surgery  
19 on my gums, so I'll try to speak as well as I can. I'm  
20 a parent of a child. This is real emotional.

21 First I would like to give you a quick story. I  
22 came from a pilot school. This is my first experience  
23 in the public schools. When I first came here, I wasn't  
24 going to stay here until I saw what I saw in my child  
25 happening. And it was -- I never seen anything like it.

1 I have a 13 year old who's been in the private school  
2 system all her life until this year. And I never saw  
3 what I saw with the teachers and staff and the parents  
4 that I saw here. And my husband and I decided to let  
5 her stay because we thought this is where she's going to  
6 do great things. This is where great things are going  
7 to happen for her.

8 Now that the school is closing, I let her stay in  
9 the Montessori program and go to TT Minor only because  
10 it was coming from here. And the teachers, I was  
11 promised, will probably still be connected. I didn't  
12 want to go to TT Minor. I want her here. I don't care  
13 about test scores. I don't care if the building is  
14 ugly. I care if my child is going to be loved,  
15 nurtured, and taught.

16 She can't fulfill her dreams at an institution  
17 that has 300 students, and they don't have time to get  
18 to her, or they don't know if she doesn't happen to have  
19 a good day. And maybe she wants to draw a picture for  
20 the teacher. So I made a call to TT Minor to find out  
21 how I could get involved in the PTSA, and they told me  
22 there wouldn't be one.

23 I thought the superintendent said this was  
24 supposed to be a good thing for the kids. And I don't  
25 understand how not having a PTSA is good thing. I don't

1 understand how going from a school that has 15 students  
2 in a class and going to a classroom of 30 is good for  
3 her. I see it as worse. I set a bar for her. When I  
4 walk into a school, I don't care about test scores or if  
5 the building is ugly. I care if they love and care  
6 about my child like I do. I want to leave her in a safe  
7 place.

8 I care about her education. And that's what's  
9 important here. I think too much focus is being put on  
10 test scores and not on these individual children.  
11 Granted we don't have 200 people here, but I think I can  
12 speak for most of the parents here. They like the  
13 school because it is small. They can trust the staff.  
14 The children do great things. I have heard the parents  
15 talk about that successes of their children.

16 And I would like to add one more thing. Make this  
17 a Montessori school. We need a Montessori school. Make  
18 it a K-5 Montessori. Do something with this building  
19 that's going to work for these kids. They are going to  
20 fall through the cracks. I don't think any child should  
21 be expendable at the cost of a test score or a few  
22 dollars that could be saved. I think they could find  
23 the dollars to keep these children here where they are  
24 going to do well.

25 MR. ORANGE: Good evening. My name is Tony

1 Orange. And I'm the executive director of CAMP, Central  
2 Area Motivation Program. And I, like others, am here  
3 tonight to show my support for preserving the Dr. Martin  
4 Luther King Junior Elementary School on this site.

5 I would like to first and foremost thank each and  
6 every one of you for being here tonight, for your  
7 presence and participation. Thank you so very much.  
8 And to the audience, I want to thank you for being here.

9 I'd like to thank the eloquent professor, Reverend  
10 Harriet Walden, whom I heard, and probably others who I  
11 haven't heard. Mr. Goulding, I really appreciate and  
12 support each and every one of the points that you have  
13 made. And with reference to the Montessori teacher and  
14 the parents that have spoken tonight, certainly we feel  
15 you.

16 So based upon that, we feel there needs to be a  
17 benefit burden analysis. A benefit burden analysis.  
18 And if you listen to and look at the points made so  
19 eloquently by the Professor Reverend Dr. Livingston, he  
20 made the case. There really is some bad things going on  
21 here. Anyone that understands the desegregation process  
22 and antics that go along with it, this particular school  
23 has been played with. And that's not using Don  
24 Alexander's language, which is a little more crass, but  
25 this school has been played with. And we have been

1 played with in terms of the community that is supportive  
2 of it.

3 The quadrants, as he indicated, came from where?  
4 We don't know. Maybe Denver. Hopefully not. The  
5 situation in terms of the transportation patterns  
6 historically associated with, you know, the south of the  
7 Ship Canal, none of those kind of things were taken into  
8 consideration. Most people that are aware of  
9 desegregation and desegregation strategies know that the  
10 first thing you do is you bring everybody back home. If  
11 you would have brought everybody back home first, you  
12 would have found there probably are more students that  
13 reside south of the Ship Canal than north, therein  
14 helping your benefit burden analysis.

15 So the thing that I would like to say in closing  
16 is, do you have the will? The savings are basically not  
17 existent. We have a picture on the wall, but it has  
18 something under it. He had a dream, and an entire  
19 nation woke up. The question we have is this, when will  
20 the Seattle Public Schools wake up?

21 MS. BASS: The next speaker is Katie Barthelow.

22 MS. BARTHELOW: Hi. I'm Katie Barthelow. And I  
23 am a recent graduate from the Bush School right up the  
24 block, I guess. And for the last three weeks of my high  
25 school career, I was here every day for six and a half

1 hours working in Ms. Oswald's third and fourth grade  
2 classroom. And the three weeks after I graduated, I  
3 came back and kept working there, because the kids and  
4 the school as a whole made such an impact on me. And  
5 it's something you can't explain, and you can't know  
6 without having been here for a period of time, I guess.  
7 And you see all these outside things that the school  
8 gets labeled with, but you don't see what the school is.

9 I kind of picked two that I can try to explain to  
10 people who hopefully are reading this or seeing this or  
11 however they are getting this. I remember my elementary  
12 school years very well, because they were not that long  
13 ago. And the two things that I remember most was that's  
14 where I learned how to read, and that's where I became  
15 the person that I am. I was molded into the person I am  
16 now as I grew up in my elementary school years.

17 And on the reading front, I have never met someone  
18 more dedicated to getting children to read than Ms.  
19 Bagsby, who is retiring from Martin Luther King this  
20 year. And her last words to everyone in this  
21 auditorium, which was filled, was learn how to read.  
22 That's the thing that elementary school teaches you is  
23 how to read. If you don't know how to read, you can't  
24 go anywhere.

25 The second thing was who I became. And I have

1       become proud of who I became because of my elementary  
2       school years. And I am so proud of my kids here. I  
3       think of them as my kids. And the things that they  
4       learn here is love and respect first and foremost. And  
5       love and respect are the same thing. You don't have to  
6       like someone to love them and respect them. The  
7       teachers, everyone in this school down to the custodian,  
8       they love and they respect each other. And they respect  
9       themselves. And I never been in a place where that is  
10      more prevalent and just there.

11                So just taking away this place for learning and  
12      for really developing a character is allowing our city  
13      to kill itself. It's allowing kids who are thriving,  
14      who are getting the attention they need, who are  
15      learning to become human beings that will affect the  
16      change of the country, you are taking it away from them.  
17      Yeah. Thank you.

18                MS. BASS: Are there any other speakers here this  
19      evening? Have you signed up?

20                MR. DAWSON: No, I haven't. I got here late.

21                MS. BASS: And give us your name.

22                MR. DAWSON: Thank you. It's incredible. I  
23      respect --

24                MS. BASS: Say your name.

25                MR. DAWSON: My name's Eric Dawson. I am not

1 going to be so kind. I'm disappointed that our  
2 community didn't fill this place up. And it hurts me.  
3 But I have a message. And my message is basically --  
4 they send the three best board members here. I needed  
5 my message to the other four board members, because I  
6 kind of know where your hearts are.

7 And it's this: This district is in a serious  
8 situation. We need leadership. Whenever you have a  
9 superintendent and-- that's what I have to call him now.  
10 That's my term for him now. He's a contingent. There's  
11 nothing super about the job he's doing. When we have  
12 the leadership at the top that won't even listen or try  
13 to do the best thing for the kids, and all the time  
14 saying, we're trying to do the best thing for the  
15 kids -- if we have closure plans that may be better, and  
16 you can't even look at it.

17 And that's what my message to this school board  
18 is, is put the brakes on this. This is not something  
19 that has to happen over this next month. There's  
20 other-- there's other ways. These decisions can be made  
21 in six months. But let's look at the thing a little  
22 closer, because Mr. Manhas is not trying to look at it.  
23 He's unreasonable at this point. There's no reasoning  
24 with him. And I see we're going to need the  
25 superintendent, but I need the board to at least be

1 professional enough to put the brakes on this. Stop it.  
2 Let's look at it, and let's do the best thing for the  
3 kids. The kids didn't create this problem. This is an  
4 adult problem. And we're -- nobody here -- you're  
5 showing signs. There's nobody who I know care more  
6 about the kids on that board than you three. And the  
7 message is, we're-- we need leadership. There is no  
8 leadership from the top. We're getting a song and dance  
9 and a show.

10 For the superintendent to lie to the public--  
11 seriously, there are things we need to do. We need your  
12 help. And you have the power to just say, stop, wait a  
13 minute, let's look at this. We're not making this  
14 decision that fast. We're going to take our time.  
15 We're going to look at this. And we're going to look at  
16 some options and really do the best thing for our kids.  
17 Thank you.

18 MS. BASS: Ms. Floyd, please come on up. Did you  
19 have a comment? So we're going to go ahead with the  
20 testimony.

21 MS. FLOYD: I will sound like a broken record,  
22 because for almost 50 years, I have been an advocate for  
23 Martin Luther King. My adult children have gone here.  
24 My grandchildren have gone here. And I will continue to  
25 say that Martin Luther King hopefully will remain open.

1 And we do what we can as a community to provide early  
2 childhood programs here.

3 Last year we worked very hard. Very hard. And we  
4 were promised if we had the program last year, each  
5 year, it would increase. So we're appealing for the  
6 community, for those who aren't here, all of those  
7 hundreds of people who aren't here tonight, appealing to  
8 you three board members hoping that you can encourage  
9 one more to vote that Martin Luther King school remain  
10 open and that we provide the programs here that they are  
11 going to see that our children learn.

12 My fourth grader who's going to fifth grade now  
13 reads at a ninth grade level here at Martin Luther King.  
14 And she just didn't start that this year. I am going to  
15 ask you, we're here, we're hoping this is not just an  
16 effort in hearing what we have to say. We ask you to go  
17 back and put some action to it and let our children  
18 remain here at Martin Luther King and keep it open for  
19 the public schools. Thank you.

20 MS. BASS: Any community members speaking to the  
21 issue of closure and consolidation?

22 MS. SIMMONS: Good evening. I attended the  
23 meeting where the community came to discuss what  
24 Superintendent Manhas, CAO Santorno -- who else was  
25 there? And Damon Washington, requesting that Martin

1 Luther King not be closed.

2 I was absolutely appalled at the response of  
3 Superintendent Manhas. He keeps insisting that the name  
4 will remain. Where we going to put it? Roosevelt?  
5 Hardly. The community was too nice. As Mr. Alexander  
6 calls many of us, we are Seattle nice. The community  
7 was too nice and let him off the hook.

8 Now, we have talked about disproportionality  
9 forever. We have talked about the school closures  
10 impacting certain populations, students of color,  
11 special education students, ELL students, free and  
12 reduced lunch students. They don't pay any attention to  
13 that. The only thing they may pay attention to is the  
14 cost that the board insists on a cost savings analysis  
15 be done on this closure or this merger and not take any  
16 action until the superintendent completes that or has  
17 his staff complete it. That's what they will relate to.  
18 They won't relate to our pleas or to the racism that  
19 exists by the closure of Martin Luther King. So please  
20 keep the pressure on. We must insist that we do it the,  
21 quote, white man's way and do the math. Thank you.

22 MS. BASS: Any other speakers? If not, we will  
23 have Debbie Cavitt come to the microphone.

24 MS. CAVITT: I'm here on behalf of Leschi. And I  
25 understand what this meeting was called for, but I am

1 still on the battlefield for Leschi, because in my mind,  
2 today is Martin Luther King, tomorrow is Leschi. Here  
3 today, gone tomorrow.

4 But I would like to say that in all of the game  
5 playing, I have heard this, and I thought it was just  
6 Leschi. So I'm getting ready to share with you  
7 something that has gone on here. I know some of you  
8 it's old news to you. And for some of you, it's new  
9 news to you. Here for years, they have been redirecting  
10 families to other schools. They have said there's no  
11 room at Martin Luther King.

12 I personally know of one family that is at Leschi  
13 that her daughter is going to second grade now. She was  
14 trying to get into King, and her kindergartener, and  
15 they told her it was full. And that was her reason for  
16 going to Leschi. That's where she is, and she remains  
17 there. The central -- whatever the name of the center  
18 is now. I don't know why. It's been going on for some  
19 years. Somebody from somewhere's telling everybody the  
20 same thing. It's not by chance. And I don't know who  
21 it is. I don't know who's passing that information  
22 around about our schools.

23 Um-hum. I heard hmm. Yes. So through the  
24 years -- I'm from Seattle, Washington by the way.  
25 Through the years, I have heard this about Martin Luther

1 King. So the numbers are down. And they will continue  
2 to go down, and they have continued to go down, because  
3 there's some under -- you know what -- going on. That's  
4 what has happened to King. That's what I have been  
5 hearing for the past almost 10 years at Leschi.

6 We have had parents that will say to other parents  
7 that come back and tell us that their children are  
8 there. This is what is happening. Our PTA president  
9 that was voted in this year, she was told that this  
10 year. I just happened to be talking to her. She moved  
11 from Los Angeles. She said she was -- her first choice  
12 was Leschi, and she went to the center, and they told  
13 her there was no room.

14 It was being directed to our principal. Our  
15 principal said that is not so. She got on it. They  
16 immediately let her in. Same thing happened with the  
17 family support worker trying to get his niece and nephew  
18 into Leschi. They told him there was no space. He  
19 pulled out his district badge. All of a sudden, they  
20 had space. Something is going on.

21 MS. BASS: Just take a moment. Joining us is our  
22 chief academic officer, Carla Santorno. Thank you for  
23 making it. Any other community members with regard to  
24 closure or consolidation? Please come up and give us  
25 your name.

1 MS. HORTON: My name is Elma Horton. I have been  
2 in this community for over 40 years. And I have been  
3 with the Seattle Public Schools for many, many years.  
4 And I have seen this circling like a jigsaw puzzle, go  
5 around and around. And it's really sad. And I'm here  
6 tonight because I'm really sad. I'm sad about the  
7 condition of the world for our children.

8 Ever since I can remember -- my daughter went to  
9 Bush. They wanted this property then. They want it  
10 now. I think that this school could have been saved if  
11 programs would have been put in here, and there would  
12 not have been a plan to tell people that it's going to  
13 be closed and there's no children going to be here. And  
14 that's wrong. Everybody knows it's wrong.

15 Many other parents that look like me, they work  
16 hard. They have burdens, and they are grandparents, and  
17 they don't come out to meetings, and our children have  
18 to suffer because their mamas can't come out. And I'm a  
19 great grandmother and I'm still coming out.

20 And to the people that got together and decided to  
21 merge the schools, that might be a good idea. But you  
22 should have let everybody know and everybody have a part  
23 in it. It's wrong for anybody to get together and  
24 decide about anybody's children. You know as well as I  
25 know that most of these children that come to this

1 school, a lot of them are African American. Their  
2 grandparents are raising them, and their parents really  
3 don't come out. But those of us in the community, we  
4 care, and we try to help.

5 And the decision made to close this school, merge  
6 this school is really hurting my heart. I want  
7 everybody to know it. You can put it in the paper, on  
8 the radio, any place. I am not saying it's not a good  
9 idea, but why didn't everybody have to be able to  
10 investigate and find out if it's a good idea? Why keep  
11 it a secret? And why not be truthful and the paper come  
12 out? Bush don't want to see the building vacant, and  
13 they are looking into something. What's wrong with our  
14 children? It doesn't have to be vacant. We can have  
15 programs in here for preschool and other programs in  
16 here.

17 And people talk about preserving the name.  
18 Dr. Martin Luther King would not want you to come and  
19 preserve his name and not treat everybody equal. He  
20 would not be interested in that.

21 I am just saying I'm really sad. I'm a taxpayer.  
22 It's not fair two people got together and said that  
23 everybody was aware. They need to ask God to forgive  
24 them, because it's not true. It was not in the paper.  
25 It was not announced at the churches. And a lot of

1 parents said they didn't know.

2 And thank you very much for allowing me to speak.  
3 I'm sad because little boys and girls that look like me  
4 are going to get the short end of what's happening  
5 educational wise, because their parents, many of them  
6 incarcerated, many of them are on welfare, many of them  
7 get up early and go to work, and many grandmothers have  
8 more than they can do, they can't buy their medication,  
9 they are having problems, and the little children have  
10 to pay for it. And I'm sad. Thank you.

11 MS. BASS: Are there any other sign ups in front?

12 I see a hand here. We will stay here for the  
13 allotted time if need be. Please give your name.

14 MS. LEWIS: Hello. My name is Phyllis Lewis. I  
15 grew up in this community. I went to school at TT  
16 Minor, Madrona. I did the whole central area thing.  
17 Currently I have my children at TT Minor. And I moved  
18 to MLK because I wanted to do something different. I  
19 worked at the YMCA. I wanted to change. I wanted to do  
20 something different and really impact children. And  
21 right now I currently serve as the supervisor of the  
22 before and after school program at MLK.

23 And I wasn't going to say anything, but I want to  
24 say that I think what's happening at this school is  
25 really beyond the people, the families. It has to do

1 with higher up. And I think that like how people were  
2 saying-- that there's other people that have other  
3 motives of what they want to do with this building. And  
4 because of that, the children have to suffer.

5 I'm a proud parent of eight children. And I think  
6 that it is real important for kids to be in the same  
7 environment, to have the same things that they do daily.  
8 I think that we make it dysfunctional for them, because  
9 we're always changing. We can't get something to work  
10 because we're always switching it up and changing it.  
11 How are we going to know the success of something if we  
12 always change it? I think that's one of things that  
13 they play on with African Americans. We're  
14 dysfunctional. But we're dysfunctional because  
15 everything's always changing. And we don't have the  
16 time to make it work. We don't take the time to make it  
17 work, and we don't see it through, because we want the  
18 changes in a year. We want the changes in two years.  
19 It doesn't take that long. It takes longer than that.

20 And I think there's something good at MLK. I  
21 think it's worth preserving. The small classes. It's  
22 just a different feel in this building. I go to TT  
23 Minor, and I get one feel, and I come here and get  
24 another. It's just different. And I think this school  
25 deserves to be preserved. Thank you.

1 MS. BASS: Step up and give us your name, please.

2 MS. WASHINGTON: Good evening. Sorry I'm late.

3 My name is Esbee Washington. I'm the PTSA president of  
4 Martin Luther King for the last couple of years. Prior  
5 to that, I have been an active member. I have three  
6 children. Two of them are current students at Martin  
7 Luther King. One of them is right now in Leschi at the  
8 Spectrum program. And she started this year there. I  
9 guess I'm pretty sure you have heard about save this  
10 school, save this school. I really am for it too.

11 I know that my daughter -- and I think I have said  
12 it over and over again. My daughter would not be where  
13 she's at if it wasn't for the community at Martin Luther  
14 King, the small classroom sizes. They don't fall  
15 through cracks. Teachers know their faces. I know that  
16 from firsthand experience, because every first day of  
17 the school year, I take the time off to take my kids to  
18 the school. And the first, she got tested for Spectrum  
19 every year, but we decided not to put her in there until  
20 this year. So this year, I was here for the opening  
21 breakfast, which we have always done the last three  
22 years. And I decided to leave because I wanted to bring  
23 her myself on her first day of school. And when she  
24 walked in at Leschi -- and I like Leschi. It's a really  
25 good school. But I know when I dropped her off, it

1 didn't feel like home to her. I mean, over here, the  
2 kids walk in, everybody gives a hug. You know, it's  
3 like they are so excited to come here. She went to  
4 Leschi, and the first day of school, it was just this  
5 cold feeling. Put your backpacks down, put your coats  
6 away, here's your curriculum for the day, and that was  
7 the first day of school. And that was really tough for  
8 her. And I know that she's thriving there. But every  
9 time there is an activity here at Martin Luther King,  
10 she always has to go.

11 The perfect assembly was the last day of school.  
12 I dropped her off, and I had to pick her up because she  
13 was crying. I mean, the PTSA is a very small community  
14 here, and there's about five or six active members. We  
15 have been doing this for years. And we all work full  
16 time, but we're here at the school all the time. And we  
17 put ourselves in it. And I just hope that part of that  
18 would help at least save this school. Because we  
19 wouldn't be killing ourselves working full time raising  
20 children and putting our time into a school that's not  
21 going to go anywhere. I mean, we did that with the  
22 Montessori last year. And they never gave us the  
23 chance. I mean, they told us to do this, and I think  
24 everybody knows we were never included in this process.  
25 They never-- the letter says we were, and I am telling

1 you no. Which to me is very unfair. And to do that in  
2 April, you know, most of us didn't get schools until  
3 later because we were hoping it's not going to close.

4 So that's all I wanted to say.

5 MS. BASS: If there are no more speakers, we are  
6 going to call the conclusion of the hearing.

7 MR. ORANGE: This is fixing to end?

8 MS. BASS: Correct. Unless there are other  
9 speakers.

10 MR. ORANGE: Let me have one minute.

11 MS. BASS: We're going to time you for the one  
12 minute.

13 MR. DAWSON: Don't time me. I just wanted to know  
14 something, because I got this from some district  
15 employees. When this merger was put together, the  
16 merger was supposed to be a one year situation. And  
17 then I heard Mr. Manhas, I heard him say that that was  
18 the agreement. And he talked as though they would live  
19 up to that agreement. If something that would happen  
20 that warranted this school being put back together, it  
21 would. But then in the district, there's been some  
22 e-mails being circulated by downtown that says they are  
23 going to get rid of all the books. They are going to  
24 make it impossible for this building to be inhabitable  
25 again, or they are going to make it very difficult.

1 Nothing is impossible. But they are going to make it  
2 very difficult. So in your wisdom, if you could check  
3 on that and make sure that things stay intact so possibly  
4 if this one year merger -- and that's the way I  
5 understand it. It was only supposed to be for one year.  
6 And that's the agreement that got made. So please just  
7 make sure the school gets preserved and they don't do  
8 those kinds of things.

9 MS. BASS: Thank you, Mr. Dawson. I think that  
10 does bring us to a close. I am going to close it at  
11 this point. I was handed this sticker to wear. I think  
12 a few people, daring souls -- and this would be after  
13 the hearing. So with that, I am going to remind  
14 everyone that the superintendent will present a final  
15 recommendation on July 5th with a public hearing  
16 regarding his final recommendation scheduled for July  
17 19th, 6 p.m. at the John Stanford Center auditorium.  
18 The school board will vote on the final proposal on July  
19 22nd. Again, this hearing is for taking your testimony  
20 and not for us to respond.

21 Thank you very much. Your input was very  
22 important and very insightful. And there will be follow  
23 up on all the requests. And thank you very much.

24  
25