

York residents air concerns about city education

The town hall meeting also got political at times.

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Roxanne Robinson Kinard said her daughter, a York City School District graduate, was unprepared and undereducated when she went to college. That was a shocking, tough and expensive lesson to learn, Kinard said.

"My kids aren't getting what they need," she said of the quality of education in city schools -- a point many other district parents agreed with Tuesday night.

Kinard and about 70 city residents were at a town hall meeting at Crispus Attucks in York that included several York City School Board members and candidates for school board.

Participants took turns at a podium and talked of issues, including low test scores, that students in the district face.

The Rev. Thaddeus Godwin, a local pastor and member of Citizens Coalition for a Better York, led the event.

"This is a concerned group . . . We want teachers that challenge the kids . . . We want our kids prepared," he said. "We want to get new members on the school board."

Many speakers complained that students in city schools graduate without being able to read or compete in a job market.

Tonya Thompson-Morgan, a district parent and wife of York City School Board member James Morgan, said there's no excuse for the district to provide students an inadequate education.

"We are capable of turning out doctors and lawyers," she said.

Clarence Allen, a York attorney, said parents and district residents must commit to improving the district.

"Something is definitely broken in the York City school system," he said.

Others pounded the Democratic party for naming school board member Thomas Foust -- who lost in the May primary -- as a candidate in the upcoming school board election. Foust was appointed to the ballot for one of two unexpired terms that opened as a result of a school board member being removed from the board and another resigning.

Foust attended the meeting but did not speak publicly. After the meeting, he said he was surprised to be singled out by speakers.

"I thought I'd hear issues that are important to the school board," he said. "I didn't realize it was a political campaign."

Foust also said the district has made many improvements.

"The school district is in the best financial shape it's been in for probably 20 years," he said. "We've done some substantial building projects without having to raise taxes."