My name is Niko and I am the founding Executive Director of SCC. Thank you to our chair, Seneca for your words about the School to Prison Pipeline. This is an issue that can no longer be ignored.

I would ask that everyone look around... be in the moment. There’s so much energy here today. Do ya’ll feel that? Look at what we can do, look at how the organizers came together to make this happen. A shift is starting, let’s not be like other groups out there, that will take this momentum and go home and do nothing. Let’s not leave here and it be over. Let’s not leave here and wear our t-shirts from time to time and look back on this day fondly. This day should not be only a memory, instead it is a call to action. Do your part.

I ask you all to work together and make REAL changes in your community. Here are some things that you can do... an official CALL TO ACTION from Sankofa Community

Get involved in your child’s education. If something is going on that doesn’t feel right. Question it. Make your presence known in the schools. You have every right to be there. Don’t let anyone tell you different. If you are not comfortable doing this, get someone who is to go with you...ADVOCATE for change.

• Find out about the school committee or boards- they are making the decisions and policies that affect our children. GET OUT AND VOTE. If they are a part of the problem use your voice and VOTE. Newport will rise up and vote in 2018

• Get together as a community include the youth, start meeting and support each other to:
  o Hold Schools and administrations accountable Schools without compassion or understanding occupy communities instead of serve them. We cannot
**build safe, creative, nurturing schools and criminalize our children at the same time.**

- Ban School Suspension- The higher suspension rates for black students (particularly black boys) have little to do with them committing more offenses.
- Adapt and implement restorative justice practices because Zero Tolerance Policies have to go.
- Advocate for No Police in Schools
- These are just a few, I can go on and on. WE have a lot of work to do.

- There is strength in numbers- come together within your communities, connect with other communities. We are a couple of bridges apart...I challenge you come over that bridge to Newport. I cross it many times to show my support to Providence. NEWPORT NEEDS SUPPORT TOO. Our kids are struggling too.

In closing, remember. WE HAVE A VOICE, WE WILL BE HEARD we HAVE to join together in community to amplify each other and help disrupt the school to prison pipeline.

Finally, I will close this out with a quote from Mary McLeod Bethune-

“I leave you love. I leave you hope. I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. I leave you respect for the use of power. I leave you faith. I leave you racial dignity.”

Thank you