
Public Hearing

before

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"State Takeover in the Paterson City School District"

LOCATION: Kennedy High School
Paterson, New Jersey

DATE: March 24, 1993
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator John H. Ewing, Chairman
Senator Leanna Brown
Assemblyman Jeffrey W. Moran
Assemblyman William J. Pascrell, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT:

Senator John A. Girgenti
District 35

Assemblyman Frank Catania
District 35

Melanie M. Schulz
Executive Director
Joint Committee on
the Public Schools



New Jersey State Library

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
142 West State Street
CN-068 Room 305
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

C O M M I T T E E N O T I C E

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools
FROM: Senator John H. Ewing, Chairman
SUBJECT: Public Hearings

The public may address comments and questions to Melanie Schulz, Executive Director, at 609-633-6787.

PLEASE BE ADVISED OF THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1993
5:00 P.M.
Pope Lecture Hall
St. Peter's College
Jersey City

The public is invited to address the Joint Committee on the Public Schools regarding State-Takeover in the Jersey City School District.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1993
6:00 P.M.
Kennedy High School
Paterson

The public is invited to address the Joint Committee on the Public Schools regarding State-Takeover in the Paterson School District.

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L A V A L S. W I L S O N, Ph.D: If you take your seats, we're about ready to start. Can we clear the aisles, please? Ladies and gentlemen, if you could take your seats, we are about ready to start. Could you clear the aisles, please?

I'm Dr. Laval Wilson, the State District Superintendent for Paterson. This is a hearing of the Joint Legislative Committee that's responsible for Jersey City and the Paterson school system. This is the first public hearing that has been held in Paterson since we became State operated.

We want to welcome Senator Ewing, who is chairing this hearing, and he, in a few minutes, will introduce the other members who will be joining him tonight conducting the hearing.

A couple of housekeeping items for you. Anyone who wishes to speak tonight will need to sign up on a sign-up sheet which is in the back of the auditorium. Even if you called the office of the Joint Committee in Trenton, the procedure is that the Senator who is chairing the meeting will not recognize you unless you are on the sign-up list. Those lists periodically will be given to Senator Ewing, and then he will call you from the list. So again, if you desire to speak, you must sign up on the list in the back of the room -- at the table, in the back of the room.

We have several people who are willing to translate in case you are not English dominant and need to speak to the legislators in Spanish. If you would like translations, we will have someone to translate for you. Ms. Mirta Sanz, who is our bilingual supervisor, is available. Mirta, would you please stand? The second person will be Ms. Magalys Carrillo. If you will let us know, we will be available to provide you with that assistance.

Again, we welcome the Joint Committee and will turn the meeting over to Senator Ewing and members of his Committee at the table.

SENATOR JOHN H. EWING (Chairman): Thank you very much, Dr. Wilson. We appreciate being able to use the facilities.

I apologize for being late. I left Trenton at 10 minutes to five because I serve on the Appropriations Committee, and we were having one of our hearings today. So that's why we're getting started late.

I know Dr. Wilson said about signing up in the back, but I really think we have to cut off that list because I understand we have a few over 100 names. Now, I've got to ask you, in all sincerity, to keep your remarks as short as possible. I hope there will be very little repetition, if any.

The idea of having these hearings is to get the input of the citizens in the district, as we have in Jersey City. I am delighted to see such a large turnout, because in Jersey City there was not the effort made to get the public to express their opinions, unfortunately. We had a few people there, but nothing like this. From these hearings-- We will be having another one about six months from now. We plan to have about two a year. If we find that the population wants more than that, we'll arrange more than that.

This Committee -- this Joint Committee on Public Schools -- was set up by the Legislature. It is also set up that there will be a management study done by an outside auditing firm. Arthur Andersen has been hired to do that, and they will be commencing shortly to do a management audit within Paterson. They recently completed the first annual review in Jersey City.

We will start introducing the guests here tonight -- not the guests, excuse me, but the members of the Committee who are here. We have Senator Leanna Brown, over here on my right, and Senator Girgenti. On my left we have Assemblyman Moran, Assemblyman Pascrell, who you certainly all know, and Senator Catania.

Senator Girgenti would like to say a few words.

-SENATOR GIRGENTI: Thank you very much, Senator, and we want to thank you for being here. As the Senator from the 35th Legislative District, I would like to welcome the members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools to the Paterson School District.

It is my hope that this public hearing will help all of us understand how State intervention has affected this troubled school district, and identify the needs that have to be met, as well as the means to achieve certification and return to local control. While I would prefer local control and would rather have the State working side by side with the people of Paterson, I completely understand the absolute duty of giving the children of Paterson the best educational setting we can. If this means State takeover, then so be it. However, over the last year, people in the district have shared with me many of their concerns. I have listened to all of them, and now with the help of the Joint Committee I hope to have these concerns addressed. The examples of what the people have -- or the concerns are:

- 1) How is the reorganization accomplished?
- 2) Why were qualified and competent individuals either removed from or demoted from their positions, when they received excellent evaluations?
- 3) Is the money being spent on programs for children?
- 4) Why hasn't the Superintendent moved to New Jersey?
- 5) Has the district shown signs of improvement with regard to test scores?
- 6) Are we better off now than we were two years ago?

With the contractual agreement between the Joint Committee on the Public Schools and the independent evaluation team from Author Andersen and Company, I believe that we may

finally get answers to these questions. I have not come before this Committee to cast aspersions or condemn anyone, but as an elected official, as well as someone who has spent all of his life in this area, it is my duty to ensure that the children, parents, and taxpayers of Paterson are getting the best we can give.

I encourage you, Senator Ewing, to hold as many of these hearings as needed in order that all interested parties have an opportunity to voice their comments. Again, welcome, and thank you for making the time for an evening meeting to accommodate the people of Paterson.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Mayor, do you want--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Yes, just very briefly, Senator. I want to thank you for bringing the Joint Committee. I've had the privilege of serving on this Committee now for a few years. It's serious business, it's nuts and bolts, and you are to be commended, Senator, as are the other members of the Committee, for pursuing a very practical application of what we call educational theory. There are certain things that I'm interested in. I was interested in Jersey City, and I'm interested in my own city, and interested in general.

These hearings need to be aired more than one or two times over the next two years, because the concerns of the people are what we're all about. Frankly, although having a background in education, I am convinced that as important as educators are in determining educational policy, it is parents and those people besides parents who pay the bills that should be addressed, and their concerns are equally as important.

I'm very concerned about the audit that is presently going on in the District. That audit, as you know, Senator, I worked very hard to get into this District by Arthur Andersen.

I understand -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- that the audit has started, has commenced, and will be over within the next week -- as I understand it.

SENATOR EWING: No, no, it's not my understanding. It's going to take quite a bit longer time than that certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Well, that's what I was told. Whatever the time that it's going to be done, we would like to know as citizens what it says.

SENATOR EWING: If you hold on a minute, we'll get the answer.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Where are they?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: October.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: October?

SENATOR EWING: It is going to be completed sometime in October.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: You're not going to have a preliminary report?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: In three months.

SENATOR EWING: Because it takes time in going around and doing the detail work and everything. This is not just a lick and a promise whatsoever.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Thank you for clarifying that.

That audit is an audit that will be presented to the Committee, since the Committee addressed the need of an audit, as it did in Jersey City. That audit will then become available to the citizens at large. Is that my understanding, Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR EWING: Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Okay.

I'm very interested also in the direction and goals of the new Commissioner. I think we're very fortunate. Commissioner Fitzgerald is a highly esteemed educator in our State, practically oriented, and is very, very much involved in terms of how parents view their kids' education in this State.

I believe very sincerely that she has taken a very new approach to the State takeover Districts, the State-operated Districts in the State of New Jersey. I think it's a refreshing look, from what I've understood, and what I've talked to her about. I think her concerns and her direction is something that we all need to know so that we're all going in the same direction, which I believe in the past has not been the case -- that's only my perception.

I think it's imperative on everyone's part, whether they have children in the school or not, that we want to know specifically and comparatively how money is spent in this District. I think that's a concern of all, not just bottom-line numbers, but how the money is spent so that we can make judgments about whether that money is best spent, or how it can be best spent. The cost of education can only be exceeded by the cost of ignorance. But the fact is, money thrown at the problems of education does not necessarily result in the solution of the problems that we all face. I think we've all come to that conclusion.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: No, we haven't.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: A review of the educational bureaucracy. Mr. Chairman, I believe Commissioner Fitzgerald hit the beach running. She has reduced the bureaucracy in the Department of Education in Trenton succinctly, not obliquely. I think we need to take a look at that bureaucracy in our own system. It may mean pro forma for all educational districts in this State, because I think, in my opinion, most educational districts in this State are top heavy. That's my conclusion.

Finally, I am concerned more with outcome than in process. Let me tell you, Mr Chairman, what I think about this, because I believe you feel the same way. What I mean by that is this: We can have all the reports in the world, and those reports can be glitzy, those reports can be shiny, and they can afford us all to dance around the issues. What we

want to know basically as laymen and citizens is what are the outcomes? What are the results of what we're doing? Need we wait five years to find that out? To me, that is unacceptable. I believe very sincerely that we cannot expect a district to turn around in a year and a half or two years, but I do believe that we can expect tangible change, and the citizens demand and are owed no less by the State of New Jersey.

Thank you for coming to Paterson. You know you are always welcome. It's not the first time you have been here, Senator, and I'm sure it won't be the last time.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Mayor.

The first speaker-- I will remind you again that we would appreciate not to have statements made. We want input from you people who are going to talk tonight as to what you think is right or what you think is wrong, not great long rambling statements about some philosophy you have.

The first speaker is Judy Moran. I also apologize to some individuals. I might not pronounce your names correctly, but bear with me.

J U D I T H M O R A N: Good evening. Prior to August 7, 1990--

SENATOR EWING: Excuse me just a minute. I would also appreciate it if each speaker would say whether they are a parent, a teacher and parent, or what they are, and where they come from in Paterson, so we can make sure we have the Paterson people here, because they'll tell you if you have the wrong address.

MS. MORAN: Well, I'm female, I'm a parent, and an active community member. I live at 110 Chatham Avenue, 10 blocks away.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

MS. MORAN: Prior to August 7, 1990, some of us believed that the only way to bring quality education to Paterson was the State takeover. During the past two years we have seen changes. The District now has a central office staff three times the size prior to takeover. I have with me the directories, or blue books, from the years '89 through '90. Bigger is not always more efficient. While people must be compensated for the jobs they perform, tripling the staff creates a budget high on salaries and a dearth of programs for our children. Raises have been extremely high. When raises are exorbitant and when there are a plethora of positions, programs, textbooks, and supplies cannot filter down where they are needed for the schools and the children.

If you examine the purchases during the first year of takeover, you will find that your textbook account was not fully expended and that supplies were not in our buildings. Similar problems exist this year, as was indicated by the Paterson Education Association's survey conducted earlier this year. The survey stated: facilities were not ready, stairwells were closed, leaking roofs, serious overcrowding, book shortages, textbook shortages, and supply shortages, and in some buildings staff was not in place. Personnel did not assign people where they were needed.

A number of perks have been granted to those central office staff placed in high positions. Persons have received moving allowances, extensive sick leave time, and additional life insurance policies other than contributory insurance given to the teaching staffs of the State of New Jersey. May I remind you that this is paid for by Paterson tax dollars and money from Trenton.

Since takeover, consultants have been hired regularly. Some of the consultants have been persons who were either former State employees or part of a CCI team. This, to me, represents a conflict of interest. Some of these

consultants who evaluated our central office personnel and our principals were part of the State team who evaluated the District. How can they perform an unbiased evaluation of these people when they already have preconceived ideas?

Another consulting team was hired to perform a facilities study. The former Board of Education commissioned a study of facilities in 1989, and it was completed in 1990. Why did they not use this study? Last summer, a consultant was hired in personnel to assist the personnel director and his assistant. During the last five years, one personnel director and/or assistant superintendent, depending on the year, staffed the whole district and people were in place.

We have been very fortunate in that the Paterson Education Foundation applied and received a large award for our libraries. Those schools that applied for the grant and were accepted had to supply matching funds by September of 1992. One elementary school -- it's in your record, I'm not going to mention it here -- received a grant. The PTA sent their matching grant fund, hand delivered to the Board office last September. After 90 days had elapsed, the president of the PTA asked Central Office about this check, indicating it had not cleared their account. Finally, the check was returned to the president uncashed, with the explanation that it was found in a drawer. On March 2, the president again reissued a check to match the funds for this library grant.

In reading the education literature of today, bigger does not make us more efficient. There is a move to decentralize responsibility and fix that responsibility at the local site. What we have here in Paterson is a larger bureaucracy that is sacrificing efficiency to create a dynasty.

On to education, more educational issues, Paradigm: A program started two years ago has a potential of causing many problems. In its first year, the freshmen encountered two periods, 80 minutes of reading and writing; two periods, 80

minutes of language arts; and two periods, 80 minutes of math. While time on task should increase productivity and outcomes, you will find that this program has created in the youngsters a lack of self-esteem and no sense of closure. Have they accrued the necessary units to qualify for graduation in our State? If they continue in the Paradigm in the second year or until they have obtained a passing grade, these youngsters will not have the necessary credits to move on to another high school year or to college. Moreover, if they transfer from East Side or Kennedy to a school in another town, will Paradigm course work satisfy the district requirements? More than likely the answer will be no.

We will either have five-year high schools or more dropouts or a vast dichotomy in attendance rates. In addition, Abbott v. Burke cited that districts such as ours are entitled to offer our youngsters the same courses afforded to the suburban districts. Yet, Paradigm denies them access to the arts, music, and shop. This is particularly evidenced in the elementary schools.

May I suggest to you that you visit our high schools, and check the master schedules of the Paradigm elementary schools. Perhaps you might speak to our teachers off the record and outside of their buildings, not in Paterson necessarily. You might have a better picture of what is happening in our schools.

While the faces in Central Office have changed, the business of education in Paterson has not.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

The next speaker is Anthony Vancheri, to be followed by Jerry Bello.

A N T H O N Y V A N C H E R I: Good evening. My name is Tony Vancheri. I'm a parent and a Home School Council member

here. I'm also the Chairperson for the PULSE Organization, which was started after the takeover, and before Dr. Wilson was here.

About a year ago, your Committee was presented through Mr. Catania, an over-500-name petition about the takeover and giving it back to local control. One of the things that we were concerned about before the takeover was where the money was being spent on new employees, and money was not going to education.

Well, the first thing, when the new Superintendent came in, was that he interviewed over 700 new applicants for teaching positions, and over 197 people were hired. We didn't have the money allocated in that budget. As a former Board member prior to the takeover, there was no money there for 197 new people. Dr. Nabere's staff at the time before takeover was 22 people in the administrative staff, costing \$1,565,000. Dr. Wilson presently has 40 members on his staff at a cost of \$2,516,000. This is documented by the fact that this comes from Dr. Laval Wilson's own papers.

One of the things we were cited for in the City of Paterson were teachers teaching in uncertified positions. The Paradigm Program has created a monster by putting teachers in uncertified positions, and yet the State Board of Education has allowed that to continue. Where is fairness, if the previous elected Board that was working for the public was cited for this, yet now under takeover it is allowed? We don't understand what's right and what's wrong here.

The Joint Committee, in July -- your Committee -- chaired by you, Senator Ewing, had a report of July 1, 1991, and I have a copy of that. One of the questions that was asked was: What are the solutions about takeover? It was one year after Jersey City had been taken over. I would like to quote: "However, a board which does not have an approval authority over the actions of the superintendent does not provide a

sufficient opportunity for review and oversight by the Committee. Therefore, this Committee recommends that the State takeover law should be amended to provide that one year following the establishment of a State-operated district, the board of education should become a voting board." This was a great opportunity to get local control back, with the State still here. Yet, it never came out of Committee. I was able to get this through your office down in Trenton, and we were puzzled why it did not happen.

Now we hear that the takeover would like to be extended from five to seven years. We feel that shouldn't happen with the amount of money being spent in this city, plus the 197 and the 18 staff members, an additional 210 monitors were hired in this city at a cost of over \$1 million, through Dr. Wilson's budget. Yet, those monitors that were supposed to be put into the lunchrooms to monitor and to take the teachers out of those lunchrooms so they can have their prep time are now not just monitors, they are security guards.

We believe that the total amount of employment at the cost that they're asking is unbelievable. Two out of the last three years on the elected Board prior to takeover, the Board of Education had a zero tax increase to the City of Paterson with the help of our City Council and the Mayor. Now, over the past two years, their budget has increased \$30 million. They want to add another \$119 million for rehabilitating the buildings. We have been asking that for years. For as long as when our Mayor and Assemblyman Pascrell was President of the Board of Education, he was trying to get funds to update our schools. We believe that this is unfair. Paradigm should not exist.

As a parent who had a daughter graduate from Kennedy High School, who now has a four-year scholarship at college through education, and a son who is graduating this year and

will also be attending the same college starting in September, we're proud of the education that's been going on. It was going on before the takeover.

Last night, the City Council of the City of Paterson voted 9-0, unanimously, to have a ballot -- a referendum put on the ballot in November, to hear the voice of the people and what they feel about the takeover, as they did in Jersey City. As you know, in Jersey City it was passed by almost 65 percent, about how they felt about takeover.

We don't want it extended. We also feel that with takeover we have representation -- well, taxation without representation. It violates everything that our forefathers fought for. Therefore, I ask that the takeover not be extended; that the elected Board be allowed to come back to serve next to the State, and we want accountability.

Parents, as PULSE has been for a number of months -- over a year-and-a-half -- we have sent much literature to your office, to the Joint Committee, to Mr. Catania, Mr. Girgenti, Mr. Pascrell, Mr. Rocco, and a number throughout the State, and we've attended many meetings in Trenton. We want accountability; we can't get accountability. If we want to ask for something, we don't get it. All we ask is that we want the accountability because it's our children, not the political ideas, not the parents; it's our children who come first. The moneys-- If you are going to spend \$70 million or \$30 million, put it into the program that's working for our kids, not to increase the staff, not to increase going to Israel.

Thank you very much. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Mr. Bello will be followed by Mary Fields.

I would also like to just state the interest in these takeover Districts-- Senator Brown has been up and visited schools, and Assemblyman Moran was here today and visited over five of the schools. So, you know, hopefully I certainly will

be up here in the future anyway, to go through as many of the schools as I can, so we can get an actual feeling. It isn't a question that we're sitting in Trenton just making up suggestions or ideas without coming to the spot and seeing the conditions of the facilities, which I realize are very, very poor.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. Chairman, may I just interject? I am State Senator Leanna Brown. People are going to be coming in and out, and as the Chairman said, we can't hear from everybody. But, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would just be curious if those people in the audience that think the schools are better since the State has gotten involved would be willing to stand just so we can get--

SENATOR EWING: Or put up their hands.

SENATOR BROWN: --or put up your hands, or whatever you want to do. I prefer standing because it's sort of easier to see. (members of audience comply)

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: If you feel that the schools were better before takeover, stand up please.

All right, thank you very much. Thank you

Mr. Bello, would you proceed, please? Go ahead, Mr. Bello. The clock is ticking.

J E R R Y B E L L O, S R.: It shouldn't be; I haven't started.

Senator, you had mentioned-- It is totally unfair, because I haven't started. But I hope the Committee does a little hands on. You're going to be spending almost a quarter-of-a-billion dollars this year in a new proposed budget. That's a quarter-of-a-billion.

Good evening. My name is Jerry Bello, and I've lived in Paterson all my life. I and my children are graduates of Paterson's public schools, and we all have college degrees. I am a professional consultant to the medical and environmental

field. My community activities include almost 10 years as a Library and Museum Board Trustee, and as a tenured, appointed, and recently elected member of the Paterson Board of Education. My area of expertise has always been finance.

I have always been against the State's intrusion into the urban Districts of Jersey City and Paterson, mostly for philosophical reasons, and as you know, that is somewhat of an indecisive discipline.

Time, ladies and gentlemen, is on our side. Time is proving to us that in Jersey City and Paterson, those Districts have become proof positive that State control has not markedly improved education to the students in State-operated Districts, while State and national test results and independent financial audits show two Districts replete with problems and noncompliance many times greater than the Level III scrutiny which brought in the State saviors. Ironically, State control extensions are presently being considered, while the question before this body should be the return of educational control to local parents and taxpayers through their locally elected Boards of Education. (applause)

In the State's haste to remedy the ills of urban education, a behemoth of a bureaucracy has been created. Rhetorically, I ask: Do you honestly believe a nine-member locally elected or appointed Board of Education in Paterson or Jersey City is the primary reason why children aren't learning in Elizabeth, Newark, Trenton, or Plainfield? Is it really that simple? We all know throughout history that the rights and privileges of the masses have been suspended or eliminated for a higher cause. However, such simplistic approaches to urban education is nonproductive.

In Paterson, for example, State takeover has disenfranchised our citizens from the educational process, as bureaucrats spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on ineffective task forces to win the mood of the people.

Administrators travel around the world to find that magic answer for Paterson's children, while expending millions of dollars for untried or unsuccessful and, many times fancy-named pilot programs, while the citizens have no recourse of accountability. Woe to those individuals who respectfully disagree with our State administration. Both employees and citizens at large, parents and community leaders, and yes, even elected officials, have been rebuffed and held to ridicule by these modern day carpetbaggers preying upon the fears and bias of our people to suppress constructive ideas. Is this democracy? And that's not being rhetorical. Would such pompous rebuke be allowed at any other district's meeting in our State? Of course not. Would the State dare intrude in Bedminster? How about Haddonfield? I doubt it.

Don't believe the answer lies in additional funding at the chagrin of our suburban neighbors. When you compare the cost of educating children in Paterson, it would be more economical to send them to a private school or to one of our neighboring districts. Under the guise of these elaborate and esoteric social programs which have become very politically correct, the State of New Jersey has spent billions of dollars this past decade alone in urban districts, without positive educational results. Then they have the gall to remove the voting privileges of the many poor and predominantly minority citizens, while sending in outsiders to tell Paterson how to educate its children. That's sheer hypocrisy. (applause)

By the way, Senator, by the way, these so-called experts send their children to private or suburban schools. Do you think they're trying to tell us something?

Takeover is educational genocide, and Paterson will not tolerate such bigotry. State law, by the way, requires, in districts or special needs or special education students-- State law requires for special education students in those districts that cannot provide that they will go to a private

school if there is no public program that can serve their needs. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the schools in Paterson do not appear to serve our childrens' needs for a thorough and efficient education. Therefore, I suggest we allow our students to attend schools in our neighboring districts. If Paterson remains a State district, our children should be placed, voluntarily, in adjoining districts, as a cost-effective, positive move to properly educate our children.

I'm winding it up.

Not to do so, am I to say-- Are we to be considered second-class? Meanwhile, while this is going on, Paterson deserves school management accountability to a locally elected body to heighten the process in improving education to our children, and more importantly, in bringing the teachers, the parents, the administrators, the local citizens, and our elected officials, the Mayor, the Council -- bringing us back into a citywide family, something that has been lacking, I'm sorry to say, since the State takeover.

Thank you very much. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Mary Fields, to be followed by Tom Rooney.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. Chairman, while Mary Fields comes up, could I just say as a resident of Chatham, since the former speaker was talking about moving us all around, that I am very indebted to some of the students from Paterson who came into our school district and just did an absolutely outstanding performance as far as the whole challenge of drugs and alcohol in our society. So, thank you from somebody who lives in another area.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Go ahead, please. Proceed, otherwise we are never going to get out of here until 6:00 in the morning.

M A R Y F I E L D S: Good evening to all of you who came today. We're so happy to see you. My name is Mary Fields. I'm the parent of three school-age children, two in elementary school, and one in high school. I'm the Home School Council President for School No. 12. The grades are K through 8. I also represent the NAACP Education Committee, of which I am the Chairperson.

I would like to read to you the parents' demands. We really don't want to call it demands, because we're all friends here, are we not?

- * We're asking you to hire more teachers that live in Paterson.

- * We're also asking you to get rid of the Paradigm Program, because it's destroying our children.

- * Provide book uniformity for all grades, for all schools; get rid of the outdated books.

- * Principals must give lists of all pupils per class roster to the Home School Council President or PTA person.

- * Return test papers to students for student keepsake. There should be no one keeping the student tests. After all, the students have worked very hard to get a good grade on that test, or even if they got a lower grade.

- * Refusal to permit early warning tests and HSPT to be the only determining factor for promotion.

- * Get our children out of the condemned schools, schools 10, 11, 14, and 17, which have been condemned, and it is on record. Why must our children be in a condemned school? The schools should be safe for them.

- * Install metal detectors in all the schools. As we know, many occurrences take place when students carry knives in schools, and also other weapons.

- * Return subjects back to our schools: health, science, art, industrial art, sewing, cooking, music to grammar schools, and foreign language and extracurriculum courses to the ninth graders. (applause)

* We would like you to build or locate a building for our alternative schools.

* Remove the policy of out-of-school suspension. It is not meeting anticipated goals.

* Make public information available to parents and the public. When you call down to the Superintendent's office you're referred to this one, this one, and this one. You can never get any information from them. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Will you give me your attention, please? If you want us to hear eight or ten people, and that's all you want to hear, fine. You can clap or do whatever you want. If you keep quiet, we can get through more people and get more information to try to help all of education in the State, because we are not going to stay here until 6:00 in the morning.

Go ahead.

MS. FIELDS: * Reduce overcrowding and provide class reduction in all schools in the City of Paterson.

* Establish a tutorial after-school service in all the schools.

* We would like to thank Dr. Wilson for providing recreation for all the schools. We saw that article in the paper today. We would also like to thank him for the Breakfast Program.

* Remove the policy of mimeograph/xerox student take-home assignments.

* Permit our children to take and books at home.

* Delete the in-school homework policy. Reinforce homework to be done at home.

* Cancel the Alternative Route Program. Our children are not guinea pigs for experimentation.

* Provide more creative teaching workshops to have teachers to enhance youths to stay in school and have an excitability drive in wanting to learn.

New Jersey State Library

* Establish a multicultural program, for all students. need to know about each other's cultural heritage. In addition to world history and United States history, add black history and Spanish history, too. If not, incorporate that into the multicultural program.

* Get rid of all State-appointed officials. They are giving themselves a promotion when they do not deserve it. Cancel the pay raises, Dr. Fitzgerald. I want someone to tell her before it's not too late. There has been minute progress in the State personnel since they arrived. As I told you, the Breakfast Program was a hit, but the high dropout/suspension is a miss.

* The last thing is to turn our schools back to local control; to the Paterson Board of Education and the qualified leaders that can do a better job.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Mr. Rooney, followed by Mark Reland, or Roland.

I would also like to advise you that the proceedings are being taped. There will be a transcript typed up eventually, and it will be distributed to the individual members of the Committee. Maybe there will be some other copies available for other individuals. Although we all might not all be taking notes constantly, it will be recorded.

Yes, please proceed.

T H O M A S C. R O O N E Y, J R.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Thomas C. Rooney, Jr., a member of the Paterson City Council. I'm Chairman of the Finance Committee, and former Mayor of Paterson.

Most of all I will have to say has to do with the finances, the dollars involved, because this is a major consideration for all of you when you decide on how much, if anything extra, to appropriate to the Paterson school system.

Now there is a massive, massive gap between those who are running the school system. They are over here, and all the rest of us are over here. Or, more accurately, we perceive them as being way up here. They perceive themselves being way up there, and we peasants are down here. Now, this is no good.

To touch on these numbers: In the first two graphs it shows the budget revenues. (displays graphs) In 1980, and this is 1992-- The current figures are being provided to me now, and I'll update the graphs for '93. In 1980, 37 percent of all of our revenues came from property taxes. Down below in 1992, 58 percent -- 57 percent comes from property taxes. Now, these were during the years when we were told that because of the income tax and the sales tax and additional State aid we would reduce the reliance on the property tax. Yet, as our official numbers show, our reliance on the property tax is far greater now than it was in 1980.

Next page, budget expenditures: Where does the money go? In 1980, 14.1 percent of all our expenditures went to schools. Down below, 1992, 24 percent of all our expenditures have gone to schools. So the percentage of our spending that has gone to education has not decreased, has not even stayed the same. It's increased massively.

The third sheet is a lot of data, but all it does -- and I would ask when you have time later if you could read it-- The key point on here is, because the dependence on our property tax is so great, that comes down to how our ratables are doing in the city, because you get your local taxes from your ratables. This shows that since our last reevaluation, which went into effect in 1972, over the last 21 years the value of our property which pays taxes has gone from \$630 million only up to \$632 million. That's an increase of less than one-half of 1 percent in the properties in the city which pay taxes.

In Fiscal '67, when I first became involved with Paterson's finances and government, the school budget was \$13.1 million total. Of that, \$1.3 million was State aid. Now, the school budget is \$219 million. This is an annual increase compounded of 11.5 percent. This means that in order for anyone to keep pace with the increase in school revenues and appropriations, that person would have to have been given a raise of 11.5 percent each and every year from 1967 until now.

A person who was earning \$13,000 at that time, compared to the \$13 million -- knock off three zeros -- in order to keep pace, would have to be earning \$219,000 a year, this year. The point is very clearly that school revenues have far, far exceeded the degree of inflation, cost of living, whatever you wish to determine.

They have had funds coming in beyond anything that we could ever have conceived at that time. Yet, at the end of these years, our school system was deemed so bad that for the first time in our history the State says, "We'll come in and take over." When the State did come in to take over, I had high hopes. I didn't like the idea, but I had high hopes. But after watching them in action, I see no way that this should continue. I don't see the improvement.

What I do see are two main things: First of all, a desire for spending more money, which will only accelerate this massive rate of increase we've had each year for two-and-a-half decades.

Secondly, and perhaps worst yet, is that instead of the closeness that we had before. We knew our elected officials -- or when I was Mayor it was a different form of government, the mayor appointed Board members -- but we knew each other. We could call each other up on the phone. We could ask questions. We could disagree. There was more of a dialogue among all of us.

in the classroom between the teacher and the students? What's different now? What's going to be different than what was done before?

Mayor Pascrell we've heard earlier: "You can't just keep throwing money at a problem." That's absolutely accurate. So whatever you can do to hold down costs to recognize that we absolutely cannot afford increases as are proposed. There is no way we can do it. Our city is in grievous financial trouble and getting worse. They have to do more with less.

I, frankly -- and I'm not speaking for the whole Council, although we did pass that whole resolution-- I would much prefer that, based on what they have shown so far, that we get local control back again. I would urge the State to maintain some degree of supervision, which it should have been doing all those prior years as things got worse and worse. Where was the State Department of Education experts in allowing it to get to the point where it was so monstrous that they had to shut us down and come in and take over?

SENATOR EWING: I think you're going to find, though, that there will be a very definite change with the new Commissioner of Education and her staff. What was down there before was incredible. What it did to education-- It politicized it in the Department down there, and it's unconscionable in my mind. I think with Dr. Fitzgerald you are going to see a new broom sweeping very clean. She has only been there, I think, 11 or 12 weeks. We've got to wait a little bit longer.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROONEY: But the one difference there is, we appealed that budget. The Council rejected it. Commissioner Fitzgerald overrode us, overrode our Superintendent that we hired as an expert, certified by the State, and said that there was not a penny could be cut out of the \$219 million budget.

The next column shows the value of our tax-exempt properties, which went from \$145 million up to \$305 million in those same years. So it shows that while our tax-producing properties in the city increased by only one-half of 1 percent, the nontax-paying properties -- the tax-exempt properties in Paterson, have increased by more than 100 percent -- more than 200 times as much as our ratables. Our ratable base is a catastrophe in this city. Any additional spending that you may require that is not taken care of by State aid will have to be added on to our local property taxes.

Two other figures which are key: In 1980 our tax rate was \$5.00 per 100. Right now it's \$15.32 per 100, which means that in those 13 years our tax cost has more than tripled. As a result, over these last few years our percentage of tax collections has gone down from 1988 when we collected about 95 percent of revenues -- down to 90 percent for last year. So as our cost, like anything else, supply and demand, the more something costs, the fewer people will be able to pay it, and we cannot, absolutely cannot afford to have our taxes going higher. This is our concern here. Is the rate of increase of spending desired by this new management, including talk about a live-in prep school -- and nobody is talking real numbers on any of this--

These are all grand schemes that are being presented that sound good, and we would like to believe them, but the fact is that we in the city will not be able to afford them, so why do them? Stick with what we can afford. Let's have fewer grandiose schemes. Stick down to what's going on in the classroom between the teacher and the student.

Senators and Assemblypeople, this is something that we don't hear anything about. That's fine to talk about all of the great plans for the future, all the salary increases, the new staff, but what is this group of management doing different

Now, we have children attending in very poor conditions. The schools need repair, we need books, and these do cost money. So, don't tell me money is not the answer, because it is. (applause)

Recently we have suffered some damage because of those northeasters on the Jersey shore. All of us taxpayers of New Jersey pitched in to help rebuild the Jersey shore, because it's vital to our economy. Similarly, the schools and the children of the State of New Jersey, all of them, are very important to us, and their education is important to us. If you don't pay now, if you don't help them--

When they come in and pledge the allegiance to the flag, and say for liberty and justice for all, if you don't-- If you fail them in realizing that dream, if you fail to enhance that democratic instinct in them, what will happen is, they will turn around tomorrow and we will be renovating jails instead, just as we have done here in Paterson. We don't want that. That's an additional taxpayer burden. It's cheaper to educate a child today than it is to maintain a child in jail later on. Probably they will feel at home anyway, because most of the schools look like jails.

Another thing is, the State has cited Paterson for using test scores as placement tools. It seems to me that we're still doing that. When my son came home, he had to do Mark Twain on his own because the teachers did not have time to go over the literature with them because they were too busy trying to prepare them for their EWT tests. You see, the pressures are on the teachers, because the performance on the test equates their skills as teachers. Okay?

I'll tell you something: It's important to learn literature because it gives you skills that you can use afterwards in life when there are no more tests to take. It helps you to analyze, it helps you to think quickly and become problem solvers, and it's important. Other subjects such as

SENATOR EWING: Fine. Thank you very much.

-Mark Roland? (no response) Not here.

D-E-B-A-N-I-E-R, or something of that nature?

S E R D E B A N I E R: That's Ser Debanier.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, Ser. Okay. Thank you.

MR. DEBANIER: Thank you, and I greet you.

Okay, my thing is the maintenance of the schools. For example, Exhibit A, because it is a crime. I guess that's an extra air vent, I don't know. With modern technology today, I don't know.

Exhibit B: Those drapes look like the same drapes that have been here since I left here in '79. I don't know.

Now, you may say that you're undermanned. All that money circulating around, you should be overmanned.

Now, the saying is: "The school is like a home away from home." If I was a student and this was my home and you being the landlord, I would have to report you to the proper authorities (applause) because to me you show no regard, or little regard, to my living conditions. You show be evicted.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: That's the best speech so far. It was so short. He goes to the top of the class.

Dr. Viji Sargis, followed by Bishop Joseph Robinson.

V I G I S A R G I S, Ph.D.: Good evening. I am a parent of two children in the Paterson School District. One daughter attends Kennedy High School, and a son that attends School 27. I'm also on the advisory board and Treasurer of the NAACP Education Chapter.

The State takeover reminds me of something that a mother-in-law does. She always knows something better than you. She can do things better than you at all times, but she is never there to come around and help. When you need some helping hands, she can never show you; she can never demonstrate how to do the thing right.

B I S H O P J O S E P H T. R O B I N S O N, S R.: Good afternoon. My name is Bishop Joseph Robinson. I'm the Pastor and Founder of the Assembly Holy House of Prayer, 97 North Main Street, here in Paterson.

I want to thank you all for allowing me to speak in behalf of our children. I'm here certainly because I care for our children. Pastoring and Sunday morning services are not all the church is about. We also care about the children.

We do know that since the State takeover, it was supposed to be in our children's best interest. But we also realize, and have taken inventory, that since the State has taken over, it's been more of a dictatorship in our schools.

There are a number of reasons -- a number of things we know that the hiring of staff is transferred from other parts of our city. We feel that we should have people on our staff and teachers in our schools who are from our communities who are more able to relate with our children. It is hard to take someone from Trenton and bring them here and say, "You can deal with the problem," when we have people right here in the City of Paterson who are qualified to deal with the job.

Now, we respect your wishes to help us, but if you're going to help us, don't sit up as dictators. Allow us to say what we need, tell you what we need, and then come in and join our needs.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Bishop.

Jeff Jones followed by Don Hayden.

J E F F R E Y J O N E S: Good Evening. My name is Jeffrey Jones, a resident of Paterson, and the father of two students who attend School 5. I am currently Associate Director of the S.C.O.P.E. program -- Schools and Communities Organized to Promote Education, and I was educated through the Paterson school system.

science, history, world culture, music, art, and shop -- all of these wonderful subjects -- most of these children will never get a chance again in their lives, if they don't get it now. Can you imagine the depravity that you will be subjecting those kids to if you don't give them these subjects? How can you have a well-rounded and globally competent citizen without these? That is my question.

Another thing is, we have to nurture our children. We have to help them to understand, and we have to care. We have to develop tolerance. Multiculturalism is most important in school systems, because once you do not understand how to tolerate somebody else you turn to violence.

Let me give you a little example here: My son wanted to keep a rabbit in the house, but they wouldn't let him because he needed 50 square yards of space. Then we found out that to keep a horse you need two and a half acres, or something like that, of land. Now, look at all these projects that we have where people are stacked right above each other. We have no specifications as to how much space a human being needs to live as a decent person without getting wild.

We are the most territorial of all beings, so given those factors, we have to give a lot more tender care and a lot more space for children in inner-city schools where we are overcrowded in our inner-city schools. The buildings that are built for 1000 students now house 3000 students. That's not right.

So, I urge you, instead of just finding faults, instead of just saying you failed certification because of the following, help us. Provide us the money, because we do need the money. Without the money we will not be able to succeed.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Bishop Robinson, followed by Jeff Jones.

I had one of my constituents call me a few months back, and this gentleman filed for that position. He has had 25 years as a police officer, a veteran. He has his own security department -- his own business -- and he was qualified for the position. He was told to send his resume into the Board of Education, which he did.

A month or two went by, he never heard anything, and he did call the Personnel Department. He was told that the position was not going to be filled. Then a month or so after being told that, the word got out that the position was filled. This gentleman then called me and voiced his displeasure, which I agree with.

I would certainly hope that the Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer. This gentleman certainly should have had the courtesy of at least being called in for an interview. Why this happened, I don't know.

Now, I was the sponsor of the referendum that's going to go on in November supporting -- the nonbinding referendum supporting the public opinion of the problem with the State takeover. I have been getting some phone calls at my home. Some people give me their names and some don't. If they did give me their names I wouldn't reveal them, because they are afraid of retaliation. But evidently they work in the system -- in the security part of the system, and have never met their new security director -- have never had the opportunity of meeting him. In fact, I was told if they wanted to get a hold of him that he had a beeper. It was a South Orange or an East Orange number.

Now, whether or not this is factual, I really don't know. I'm only relaying what I've been told. But I really think that an opportunity was missed by the Board of Education to show that they did have concerns with the people of Paterson by not calling this individual in, who is a Paterson resident, and at least giving him an opportunity for an interview for this job.

I have had the pleasure -- displeasure of seeing the previous-administration and the problems in terms of the lack of education on a number of students; seeing the State takeover, and taking a look at the projected expectations; and seeing that a lot of them have fallen short.

However, I am not here to condemn, or to say that without a little more time that they could not probably get the plan in place. What I'm here to say is that there is a problem. The problem requires not so much increases in salaries, but it requires that education in the schools for the children occurs. It has to happen. No matter what we tell you, that is the message that I hope you take back with you when you sit with your committees and ask the question, "Is education going on?"

Paradigm removes creativity. It is taking away the sciences. It's taking away the possibilities of the future of our leaders, because they're only thinking reading, writing, and arithmetic, and there is a great deal more. You have to get the opportunity to explore, to express, to touch, to taste, to feel, to develop it and watch it grow. Without it, there's nothing.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Don Hayden followed by Louis Purcaro.

D O N A L D H A Y D E N: Good evening, Senator, and esteemed panel. My name is Don Hayden. I am an elected official for the City of Paterson. I represent the Second Ward. We are in my backyard tonight. Kennedy High School is part of my ward. I live five blocks away.

Just as you elected officials have an obligation, I have one also to relate from my constituents things that don't sound right. One of them is the position of security supervisor in the school system of Paterson.

went so far as to ask for these books to be sent home. It all depends on what school you are in and what location you are in, on what books come home. If you don't think that's the truth, than poll the parents.

When you ask for people to stand up in here, how many of those people live in Paterson and have children in Paterson? (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Please go ahead.

MS. RANSOM: Basic skills: Basic skills is just about the best thing that we have, or had. Now we're listed as "at risk." A great name for children to bring around with them; a great name for teachers to have -- at risk. Basic skills was designed to help the child in the classroom, not to take them off to a corner, not to take them off someplace else. It was designed to help the child in the classroom.

State in point: I have a child that's in the seventh grade that got "B"s and "C"s and two "F"s. I stated my concern to the person in charge. She had him get on the phone. The child was taken out of class four times a week during health and during music. I wonder why the child got two F's -- one in health and one in music.

Special education: The teachers that are here, the people who are sitting up there, and the parents -- we're tired of special education. You have special education if you have a disability or a disability. (sic) We aren't special education because we can't read, we can't write and we don't know the English language because you have not done your job. (applause) You take our children, and you have the child study team whip something up on them, then they become special education. Now you have two pots of money. You've got one coming in from special education and you've got another one coming in from basic skills. Our children are not special education children. They're children who have been deprived year after year, after year, after year, after year. (applause)

Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR EWING: Just briefly, the Board up here is an advisory group and they, as far as I know, do not do any of the hiring.

MR. HAYDEN: I do not follow you, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: You said the Board should make sure that he was interviewed or--

MR. HAYDEN: The Personnel Department of the Board of Education that he filed his resume to. They told him to send his resume because he was supposed to be considered for the job. He was never even given the courtesy of being called down for an interview, after being told the job wasn't going to be filled.

SENATOR EWING: Right, but it's not the whole Board itself.

MR. HAYDEN: The Personnel Department of the Central Office.

SENATOR EWING: The Personnel Department. Okay, fine.

MR. HAYDEN: Right.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Mr. Purcaro followed by Vivian Ransom. (no response)
Vivian Ransom, please, to be followed by Lee Brockington. Is this the lady? This is Vivian, right?

V I V I A N R A N S O M: Yes, Vivian Ransom.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. RANSOM: My name is Vivian Ransom. I live at 105 Presidential Boulevard. I put three children into the system. You have to bear with me tonight, because I'm just an ordinary parent coming to share some of the ideas of ordinary parents in Paterson, and I tend to babble.

First of all, what we had asked for when the State first started coming here, when the great compliance report was done -- and we have around four or five volumes of that -- was books. We asked for uniform books in every grade. We even

Recreation in the schools: When I was a young girl we had recreation in the school. I learned how to sew there. I learned to have other people to come into my school. It's a big thing when we take a bus full of people from one state to another state and they call it integration. Is this integration? How far have we come?

We have integration in Paterson. We have every language in the world in Paterson. We should be going to one school and to the other school, so we can get to know each other, so that my child and everyone else's child in here will not be afraid to travel across town. It's a bad thing when you have children on one side saying, "I can't go over there. We're not welcome over there." My child goes to one school and it will be like you say. He's afraid to go over there. He's afraid. "I don't know what they'll think about me." These are all of the children, because they are in one location. Recreation in the school, open up the schools. Find out what the children want to do for recreation, not what you want to design for the children. Children need recreation.

Another thing you can do -- they are coming out with parent centers. Find out what parents want in parent centers. Try to educate these parents along with the children. We have a whole new society of young people that are coming up now that cannot read and write. They could not read and write when they were in Eastside and Kennedy. The children cannot read and write, but at least we can educate the child along with the parent.

I'm only trying to draw things to your attention. There are very, very, very good things. People are starting to do things more than anything before. I hope it's not because the President and the law says that you have to have community participation, and that you have to have parental participation. Listen to us. This is not a brand-new thing to you. If you want to find out what we need, read the compliance

The Paradigm Program, great: It's for the children who can read, and for the children who can write, and for the child who can master language. How can you put a child in the Paradigm Program when he is three and four grades behind, and you're pounding him, and you're pounding him, and you're pounding him.

The scores are going to go up. If the scores go up 1 percent then the State has done it's job. But is it any good for a child who is already behind? Find out what the child's problem is. How do you find that out? When the child takes the CAT. If he takes the early warning; if he takes the HSPT test; if he takes the Paradigm test, it starts from CAT. The child does good in kindergarten; the child does good in first grade; second grade, something's wrong. That's what you should do; find out exactly what's happening. If you do what you're supposed to be doing--

I took my child for a private test. He was tested neurologically, psychologically. They ran batteries of tests. They sat down with the parent; they sat down with the child. They said, "Vivian, the child is right here. This is what needs to be done to get him right here. . He could probably get up to this far, but with a lot of help he could go further."

Special education is not the way. The Paradigm Program, any of these children that you allow to stay in this Paradigm Program will not, and you know it, be able to get into any college. (applause)

I would like to draw something to your attention that was drawn to my attention today. You are getting ready to give the 11th grades a test. On that test there are job specific skills. Is there anywhere in this school system that we have taught job specific skills? There are eight pages, I believe, either six pages or eight pages, but you're getting ready to give the 11th grade this test. Why do we fail? Why do we fail?

some of the teachers part-time to come down and assist us with homework- programs, tutoring programs, and things of that nature.

There are a lot of things wrong with the system, but you have to give people time. I believe they're doing a real good job right now. I believe if you give them an opportunity to stay around and continue to ask us, as individuals, as parents, and as citizens of the city, they will take our inputs, and utilize them in the best way that they see possible.

Thus far, like I said, I think it's a matter of time, and we can't really rush them. Once again, like I said, to me they are doing the things that we need done -- that I feel as though we need done for our children. As I say, they've given us access to the schools. They've given us access to the people that might be in charge, people that have been in charge.

When problems have arisen, you call a few people and they have come around with good answers for us. Once again, everything can't be solved in a matter of a year or two. I believe, like I said, it was once said, "If you give them at least five years, things will change around." We can probably see some improvements, but if you cancel them out at the two-year point, I really don't think things could be done honestly and in good fashion. Like I said, give them a little more time, and I really believe that things that they will do for us will turn out to be positive.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Bonnie Pondelick, followed by Elease Evans.

MR. BROCKINGTON: Excuse me, Senator; excuse me. Someone asked me where I live. I live in the Alabama Project, if you're really concerned about it.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Yes, Bonnie.

report. Very few of you who are sitting up here went to every meeting and followed the State around. You have a lot of parents who went to every meeting. We know exactly what is in the compliance report, because we have them at home.

Listen to what we are saying. It has to be better in Paterson, but what's taking place now is a farce. It's a farce. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Ransom, thank you. Ms Ransom, just a minute. I would appreciate-- You said something and I'm working on special education. I would like to get a list of names of children who really don't need the special education classes so we can ascertain whether they are in them, because that is very wrong. I couldn't agree with you more, you know, put a child in special ed.

Thank you very much.

Lee Brockington, followed by Bonnie Pondelick.

You're Lee Brockington, right?

L E E B R O C K I N G T O N: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: To be followed by Bonnie Pondelick. Go ahead.

MR. BROCKINGTON: Yes. First of all, I would like to say good evening on behalf of myself, a resident of the City of Paterson, and also a product of the environment of the public school system.

Personally, I would like to say on behalf of myself and the position that I hold at the Boys and Girls Club of Paterson, what is going on with the State, I fully would like to commend them for the things that they have done based on what I have seen in the past.

Me, myself as Director of Education at the Boys and Girls Club, I have found openness through the new administration of the State. They have allowed us to go into the schools, contact teachers, talk to teachers, and even hire

great enrichment program. Over 200 League and parent volunteers are involved in this endeavor.

3) Wayne Paterson College has received a grant whose purpose is to develop schools and communities that organize to promote education -- S.C.O.P.E. Because we are a COMER school, we, with our partner School No. 4, are involved in this effort to utilize and involve parental and community involvement in our students' education.

4) To be a successful COMER school, parents must be involved. Our parental involvement is improving. This year our parents support and volunteer during Lunch/Bunch sessions; have developed a monthly family get together night at School No. 28; and sponsor a biweekly parent and kindergarten student story hour. Our parent room -- and I believe it is the only one in the district -- is a focal point where parents congregate, share ideas, and suggest means of helping in their child's education;

5) The New Jersey State Department of Education offers a special interagency program, and the Department of Higher Education requested that interested COMER schools apply for the Urban School Service Corps. Competition was great, but School No. 28's grant was accepted. We are waiting for a funding determination on April 16. The Corps will provide 10 full-time Corps member and 10 part-time Corps members, along with nonparticipating members who will provide programs that will:

a) Identify families at risk, their needs, and alert them to services to meet these needs;

b) Develop recreation and multicultural activities for our children;

c) Plan and coordinate programs in a full spectrum of fine arts;

d) Provide information to parents and children that focuses on types of careers in situations that will give job exposure;

B O N N I E P O N D E L I C K: Good evening. I am Bonnie Pondelick. I reside at 39 East 39th Street, in Paterson. I have been employed by the Paterson Board of Education for 26 years. I am currently on the staff at School No. 28.

Tonight I'm here to discuss our participation in the COMER process. School No. 28 was asked if they wished to be a COMER school. The staff voted, after much discussion, and accepted the offer. The COMER process, originated by Dr. James Comer of Yale University, offers a vision of how schools, local neighborhoods, and social service providers must collaborate to save children from failure. Because we are a COMER school following Dr. Comer's contention that schools cannot be effective unless they are truly supportive communities for parents and children, several exciting things have happened at Paterson School No. 28:

1) Our school planning and management team, which includes administration, teachers, support staff, parents, and community representatives is actively researching and discussing processes that will better enable our school to serve our students' needs; for example, exploring alternative means of assessment and alternative ways of using basic skills employees, and networking of social service agencies.

2) The League of Women Voters, three different branches, are sponsoring and supporting in all ways, including monetary, our Lunch/Bunch Program. This is a program that provides enrichment activities for our students during lunchtime. These activities range from physical educational activities, art activities, logical thinking activities, reading, theatre, cooking, and development of vocabulary to singing. There are 18 activities each session. Because of the Lunch/Bunch, partnerships have been established with Felician College, Indian Hills High School, Ramapo High School, Holy Angel Academy, Ramsey High School, and Wayne Hills High School. Special assembly programs are also a part of this

has developed into a strong partnership of volunteers asking to be included in our other activities and volunteering to provide new programs in our next school plan.

We thank the State, Dr. Wilson and his administration for their support in our COMER implementation and for giving us the opportunity to develop a better environment for our students and families through the COMER process.

Another aspect of growth in School No. 28 which fits the COMER criteria perfectly, is the excellent Staff Development Program. Many of our teachers have taken workshops in the ITIP, which is Instructional Theory into Practice, and all will be trained in the fundamental format within the end of this year. Before the end of this academic year, selected teachers will go on to become building trainers in format.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Elise Evans, followed by Bill Zimmlinghaus.

E L I S E E V A N S: Good evening. My name is Elise Evans, and I run a Life School Program for parents in the City of Paterson. I get an opportunity to work with the parents who have children in the Paterson school system. I'm also a former Board member.

I'm here tonight to say that takeover has not worked in the City of Paterson. I don't know how great it was in Jersey City, but prior to takeover in Paterson, it was not greater than what was going on in Jersey City. Takeover, when I first heard the term, I was amazed by State takeover. We are already a State institution, and it's the same as if I'm going to court to ask the judge to let me adopt my own children.

We are a controlled State institution. If the State is serious about making a change in providing quality education in the urban cities, and not just the City of Paterson, then we need to seriously take a look at what is going on. Taking over

e) Develop and set up programs that will deal with computer literacy;

f) Develop a special education/regular education parent group to act and train as child advocates;

g) Research, develop, and coordinate programs that have as a purpose and goal knowledge of self, environment, desires, needs, and acceptable ways to achieve success;

h) Organize programs to teach parents the rights and responsibilities in the field of child advocacy.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. Chairman, may I just interrupt here? I think the point is that a successful program, apparently, is going on in the school. I just have one short question which I would just like a yes or no to, and I think we've got the picture of the school a little bit: Was it necessary to have State takeover in order for this program that you're describing to take place? Yes or no?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: That's a good question.

MS. PONDELICK: It's a very good question. I don't know. It was the State which asked us if we wanted to be a COMER school. Without that seed planted in our minds, none of these things would have taken place, because we would not have known about Comer's process.

If I may continue there are a few more points I would like to make.

SENATOR EWING: Would you please proceed, Ms. Pondelick?

MS. PONDELICK: Thank you.

These Corps members will be at School No. 28 on Saturdays, certain school holidays, during the months of July and August, and before and after school hours during the school year.

Many Felician College students are doing their practicum at School No. 28 because we are a COMER school. This

The same problems that were there that we tried to get the State to come in and help us fix it-- They couldn't help us fix it; they want to take over and fix it. Under this administration they have taken over. They have not made it better, but have made it worse. Sure, they may pass some tests, but will they get into colleges? No. Sure, they may do some things, but it's not improving the quality education, and I know it's been only two years.

This administration has hands off. They don't have anybody to tell them when to do it, why to do it, and how long to do it. If you have State takeover and you put people here, that was supposed to be the reason. You remove your Board so your Superintendent don't have anybody to tell them what to do. The Board does not take control. Now you don't have that control; that control has been removed. When are we going to start?

I know it's been two years, but you need to start knowing and caring about the children in these urban cities, and caring that we provide quality education in the City of Paterson and in all these urban districts. If we don't, we will be pouring more and more money into building jails, and nothing is happening to educate our children.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Bill Zimmlinghaus, followed by Louis Malone.

W I L L I A M Z I M M L I N G H A U S: Good evening. I'm Bill Zimmlinghaus. I have been employed in the District for 37 years.

SENATOR EWING: Could you talk a little louder, please?

MR. ZIMMLINGHAUS: I've been employed in the District for 37 years, 31 years as a Maintenance Heating Mechanic, three years as an Assistant Supervisor of Maintenance, and, since February of '92, Supervisor of the Office of Building Repairs and Maintenance. I'm not the fellow that puts on the new roofs or builds the new schools. I'm the fellow who tries to keep

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and putting on more administrators, and not concerning yourselves with what's going on in the classroom, is not going to provide quality education.

According to the State, before the State took over there was a shortage of books. Today, there is still a shortage of books. The buildings were old, built in the early 1900 or late 1800s, overcrowded. The buildings are still old. I don't see anything in progress of building new buildings. They are still overcrowded. The same ills that were going on are still going on.

We need to address the total family. The ills, the social problems in the city, must be addressed. If we're serious about educating children -- and we need to become serious in America about educating our children -- we need to know what's going on in the classrooms. We need to know why the students are not reading. We need to know why, and you do not need to pound them with this reading, and writing, and having the children missing out on the opportunity to go to college.

Prior to State takeover, we had a lot of children who were graduating, students going to universities and colleges from the Paterson School District. School takeover does not work, because there is no plan. School takeover is a political game that was not about quality education, and that's what it should have been about. (applause)

I'm a taxpayer in this city and in the State of New Jersey. Folks, I'm here to tell you that if we do not become serious about educating our children in our urban cities, we're going to lose, and we're going to lose as Americans. We're not serious about educating our children. We're here, and we talk about tax dollars, and how much money it costs, and what is cost-effective. Of course, if your money is going into salaries, it's not going into the classroom.

clear that we would become part of the process. In my view, this has made a significant and positive impact with regard to the cleanliness of our schools.

We also were involved in the budget process. It's paramount to me, being in the position that I'm in overseeing the cleanliness of the buildings, that I would have input into that process. It has allowed me to purchase supplies, equipment, and the tools necessary to make the schools clean for the students and teachers.

SENATOR EWING: Speak closer to the microphone.

MR. MALONE: Okay. (witness complies)

Prior to the State taking over, we had no say in the budget process, so I welcome my participation in that. It's very important.

The District was also very instrumental in developing a discipline code for the custodians. Here again, I and my coworkers were included in this process. An extensive list of rules and regulations were designed to improve the work patterns of our custodians. This is working now. Problems that we had in the past, we no longer have. We give them verbal warnings, written warnings, suspensions, increment withholdings, and dismissals, when needed.

Prior to the development of this code, discipline was virtually nonexistent, not because we didn't report it, but because when we did report it, it wasn't dealt with. Letters just sat there, and no one made a move. This made the job of supervising virtually impossible, because the custodians knew no matter what I said, or my staff said, it meant nothing. They knew nothing would be done.

Also, the department now does have substitute custodians, something we didn't have before. This ensures that when the students and staff come into the building, that it will be clean. In-service custodians will be starting next

the 80-year-old boilers going, the sewer pipes under the building intact, and the windows that are 30 to 40 years old operating. Presently, I have a good staff. We've added people. I have materials to work with.

SENATOR BROWN: So, how many people do you have on board?

MR. ZIMMLINGHAUS: I have 45.

SENATOR BROWN: Forty-five?

MR. ZIMMLINGHAUS: Yes. We have carpenters. Do you want me to go through what we have?

SENATOR EWING: No, no, just please--

MR. ZIMMLINGHAUS: Okay. I have materials to work with. I have a good crew. We're making progress. What I'm asking you is, no matter what the outcome of these hearings, please don't let us have to start from scratch again.

We're processing 500 work orders per month. Out of the 500, we complete about 98 percent. My office, on a daily basis, on a cold winter day, receives 80 to 85 phone calls. We're a busy place. We're under pressure. We deal with antiquated buildings and antiquated equipment.

So, please, whatever happens, let's not start from scratch again. I'm starting to get to the point where I'm a little happy.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Louis Malone, followed by Frances Emma Gonzales.

L O U I S M A L O N E: My name is Louis Malone, and I'm Supervisor of Custodial Services in the District. I'm a city resident. I have been employed with the District for 17 years.

Briefly, what I want to say is, since we became a State-run District, one of the most important and welcome changes has been inclusion. The Central Office has made it

trying to bring the children up to where they should be. If it's basic skills forever, if this is all Paterson ever is going to be -- a basic skills educational system -- then I'm happy with where they are. (disruption in audience)

No, no, I'm not meaning it in that sense. I'm saying, if this is where we are until I can move out of here, this is it.

Anyway, I'm very, very concerned about changing from one procedure to another. We just got rid of one system of education, and now people are talking about repealing this one. What will happen to the children? Doesn't anybody care about what kind of chaos this will throw the children into? This is my main concern. I just wanted to put in my gratitude for what I'm getting.

Also, does anybody realize that-- I've heard very few people here tonight speak about the best interest of children. I've heard money. I've heard structure. I've heard somebody even stand up and say that they wanted security -- a friend of his to come in and be security.

Now, you know, everybody has a concern, but I did think that we were all meeting here tonight in the best interest of children. If it's not about children, then it's not about anything. I'm telling you, these are our children, and I will fight tooth and nail to protect mine and anybody else's who needs it. I don't want to see the system torn apart and put into another chaotic status. So, please, if you are going to help our District, then help our District by letting the State do what they are supposed to do. If they don't do it within the limits that have been set for them, then they are accountable.

I've heard people say here tonight, "Return it back to the District." Return it back to what? What are we going to return back to? Surely, not where we came from. Beg your pardon? (responding to unidentified member of audience)

month. A handbook for them has been developed, a users' guide for people to access custodial services has been developed, and these are all positive things.

In closing, I would like to say that much has been done, and I know more will be done. The Central Office personnel are very supportive. We do realize there are problems out there that need to be addressed, but things just can't change overnight. It will take time. However, my staff and I are confident that we are on the right road to that success. We look forward to the future, and will continue to work towards a healthy, safe, and clean environment for the students and staff.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Mr. Malone.

Frances Emma Gonzales followed by Victoria Oquendo.

F R A N C E S E M M A G O N Z A L E Z: Good evening, Mayor Pascrell, and other distinguished guests.

This is going to be short and sweet because everybody has said almost everything.

First of all, I want to thank the State for what it has done. I didn't give my name and address, did I? Did I give my name?

My name is Frances Emma Gonzales. I live at 396 East 19th Street. I have lived in Paterson for 40 years. I've been involved in a lot of things in Paterson, and I've seen a lot of things, especially within the schools.

I am very happy with what is happening with my three grandchildren in school right now. My little granddaughter is in the first grade. She brings her books home, and she is very excited about finding an audience to run up to and read. My grandson is also doing very well in the reading program, math, and his penmanship has greatly improved.

Now, I can't speak for everyone else, but I'm very happy with the State coming in and at least making a stab at

SENATOR EWING: I know, but they can hear you.

-MS. BUFFALO: And you know that.

SENATOR EWING: What do you find-- Do you find the system getting better, or what are the corrections you feel should be made?

MS. BUFFALO: What do I want the corrections to be? Teachers start caring about our kids. The system starts caring about our kids. Make an effort. If you see something wrong with our kids, if our kids are this and that and the other-- A lot of parents are scared of the kids. Teachers can say, "Johnny, fix yourself up" If they start, and then the parents-- Work together.

SENATOR EWING: The parents, right.

MS. BUFFALO: Yeah, so everybody would be connected. You all better start praying, because there's going to be a lot of trouble.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Singletary, followed by LuLu Angele. Lucy or LuLu?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: LuLu.

A N I T A S I N G L E T A R Y: Hello. I'm Anita Singletary. I'm from School No. 21. I'm Home School Council Vice President, and I have two children in School No. 21.

I would just like to say a few things on their behalf. My daughter wanted to address a few things because she's in the school. She knows what's going on, so I listen to my child. Okay. She says to me, "I think the teachers should find an interest in what they do." This program has failed not only for the children, but because the children get restless.

My child is considered gifted and talented. She's getting very bored with what's going on in the schools. I mean, she's advanced, and this stuff is holding her back from being challenged. She's a challenged student, and this math, reading, and stuff, really-- You know, it is just no fun for her to go to school. She needs more advancement.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: People like you.

MS. GONZALES: People like me.

In other words, I didn't like what we had before and I certainly don't want to return to it especially--

Mr. Fuscaldo, is that you? Is that you, Mr. Bello? (addressing members of audience) I did not get up and talk over you when you were speaking. I expect the same consideration.

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Gonzalez, Ms. Gonzalez, will you please-- Ms. Gonzalez, please, your time is up. Do you want to--

MS. GONZALES: In ending, do not throw our school system into chaos again.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Victoria Oquendo, followed by Bessie Buffalo. Victoria Oquendo? (no response) Not here. Bessie Buffalo, to be followed by Ms. Singletary.

BESSIE BUFFALO: Good evening. My name is Bessie Buffalo. I'm the Home School Council President of School No. 13. I have two daughters in the system.

I want to say, first of all, to all the parents that are here, and the panel here, you know, we're here-- We need to do a lot of serious praying. Don't forget about the praying, because everybody here is fighting against one another. Nobody cares about nobody, and nobody's neighborhood. When I was growing up and going to school, somebody cared. Nobody cares about anybody here. Everybody's out for what they can get out of everything, and it's not happening. Somebody better start waking up and filling some changes.

SENATOR EWING: Would you please address the panel and not the audience? Please address us.

MS. BUFFALO: No, but it's everybody. It's all of us. It's not about you; it's about everybody here, and our mayor.

Teachers are taking it out on the students because they are not happy with the program. So our children get beat up, and that's not fair. So the children are losing in the end again. Everyone is being irritated by this program.

She said, "The school lunches are also terrible." That's a big complaint. She said, she doesn't know where the food is coming from, but it's disgusting. She doesn't even want to eat. She says she would rather starve and wait till she gets home to eat, because sometimes the lunches are just gross.

I would just like to say on my behalf, I do agree that some of our children need help in reading, math, and writing. We should deal with those children that need the help in some other way.

I don't think targeting certain schools, because I know that certain schools in Paterson are not on the Paradigm Program. They're on different programs, and that shouldn't be. Certain schools are considered better than certain areas or something? I don't know what's going on. I don't think that's fair, either. Certain schools are not doing this program and certain schools are. My child came from another school that was not doing this program. Now she's pushed into this school because they were targeted that they needed help in these areas and that is not fair.

That is really all I have to say. I just think we need to reevaluate this whole program and find another solution.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

LuLu Angele followed by Ms. Muckle. Come on LuLu. The clock is ticking.

L U L U A N G E L E: The clock is ticking? If I'm not mistaken, wasn't I on the first page.

SENATOR EWING: Did you cook that food?

MS. ANGELE: You know, this is ironic in a way, because my topic is on the Food Service Department as a cafeteria worker.

First of all, my name is LuLu Angele. I live at 23 Courts Lane, Paterson -- lifelong Patersonian.

First of all, I would like to thank you all for giving us the opportunity here tonight, because it has been a long time, which many of the previous speakers, I'm sure, would also agree to. To us, this is almost like the good old days, where we are able to stand up at a microphone without being limited to three or five minutes, and to speak on anything, and to express our opinions, and boy, is this a good feeling. Thank you again very, very much. I'm looking forward to the next meeting already.

Since everyone else that stood up here, rightfully so as parents and educators, spoke on the issues of the educational side of the school system, I would like to discuss the Food Service Department.

Approximately five years ago, the Paterson Board of Education decided to try to go to outside management in the hopes that the professional outside management companies would be able to bring in a lesser deficit to our Department. Unfortunately, the Paterson Board of Education found out it did not work that way. The company, ARA, put us in a bigger deficit that year than we had ever been.

When the State-operated school District came into place, we were informed that we were going to be going with outside management, which is enough to make your stomach curdle, especially when you know what you had lived through under outside management previous to this.

Before I go a little further on that, I would like to correct a statement that Mary Fields made earlier, and no disrespect to Dr. Wilson; it's just fact. The Breakfast Program is here because the breakfast grant had been applied

for long before the State came into Paterson. It had been applied for by our former Food Service Director, Jeff Thomas, who, unfortunately, after his evaluation, which in my opinion, unless I don't read too good and do not comprehend too well-- When I read his evaluation, which I thought was an extremely favorable evaluation, he was let go. Jeff Thomas also happened to be the Assistant Food Service Director in Jersey City.

We are being told right now, since a month ago, that we were monitored by the Federal and the State government; that they visited eight of our schools, and evidently they were not happy with what they saw in the cafeteria department. I understand also that when their report is completed, and I'm sure, and I hope you will pay very good attention to that report when it comes in, because I'm also predicting the deficit will be higher than it was when we had our own Food Service Director on staff.

We have been threatened with, and when I say -- maybe threatened really isn't the word I should use -- intimidated by the employees of Marriott. Marriott came into Paterson last April. When they came in, they came in with a team of four. About three months later, two left and two more came in. About six months later, another one left and another one came in. Meanwhile, every time one came in they would come into the schools and would make changes. When they left, the new ones would come in; they would come back into the schools and they would make more changes, more demands, more work, less supplies, less food deliveries, paperwork on top of paperwork, and no input whatsoever coming from the cafeteria staff.

Incidentally, I also happen to be the union rep for the four-hour cafeteria workers. So needless to say, there isn't anything that goes on in any cafeteria in this city that I am not made aware of. I receive calls starting from 6:00 in the morning at my home, to 12:00, and on weekends. I also get them at work. I happen to be employed at School No. 18, where

I am in my 21st year. After 21 years, I think I've got a pretty good idea of what makes cafeteria work.

We were very well aware of where our problems lie, and we were very well aware of how to correct many of our problems. But the more we put out our hand to help, to offer advice, they kept on biting off more and more and more. They did not want our input. When I say they, I'm basically speaking of Marriott.

When I referred to being intimidated earlier, I meant as of yesterday getting a phone call from one of the workers who told me that she was informed by our director of Marriott that if the ladies did not want to do the job, they know where the door is, and they will find somebody else to replace them. We had been intimidated earlier on, when we were negotiating. At that point, we were told we did not know whether we were going to still be employees of the now Paterson Public School System, or employees of the outside management firm.

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Angele.

MS. ANGELE: Yes?

SENATOR EWING: That part is in your working conditions and everything. What is being done to help the school or hurt the school -- specific points about the takeover?

MS. ANGELE: To help, nothing. Well, as far as this goes, since the State has taken over they are the ones who have decided to go to outside management. It is not helping the Department. It is not helping the staff. It is not helping the children.

SENATOR EWING: You feel there should not be outside vendors?

MS. ANGELE: Definitely.

SENATOR EWING: All right, fine.

MS. ANGELE: To go back to our own private Food Service Director where they will even have a better lid, or control, however you want to put it, to make sure that they are

doing what is right. And again, for the children, because the children are missing out, and some of these people standing here talking about what is going on with the food-- They are right. They're right, and it's not all the cafeteria workers; you've got to go right to management.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Ms. Muckle, followed by Mark Roland, again. He keeps appearing. The phantom. Is Ms. Muckle here? (no response) Next, Mark Roland again. (no response) Paula DePaola?

P A U L A D e P A O L A: My name is Paula DePaola. I'm the head of the Business Department at Eastside High School.

Before the State came into the District our computer labs did not represent what our students would find in the real world of business. Due to the major renovation, updating, and building of new labs, I'm happy to say that today we now have a Business Department that is more than capable of preparing our students for the 21st century. The built-in training support and technological maintenance has significantly helped us to ensure this. We are in the process of working with other departments to find ways to further utilize this wonderful resource.

I wish to personally thank the State, Dr. Wilson, and Dr. Williams for providing a more level playing field for our students.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

SENATOR BROWN: May I just ask -- yes or no -- is all your equipment fully utilized each day? Yes or no?

MS. DePAOLA: Yes.

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you.

P E T E R D i G I A C O M O: Peter DiGiacomo. I am a member of the Guidance Department in Eastside--

SENATOR EWING: Excuse me, what's your name?

MR. DiGIACOMO: Peter DiGiacomo

SENATOR EWING: We haven't called you yet.

MR. DiGIACOMO I'm sorry, I believe my name was--

SENATOR EWING: Nope. Next is Lloyd Guller, followed by Florence Lopas.

F L O R E N C E L O P A S: Good evening. I am Florence Lopas. I'm Department Chairperson of the E.S.L. and Foreign Languages Department at Eastside High School.

I would like to say first that I'm speaking on behalf of a special segment of our school population, our limited English proficient students. For a long time, these students have not been afforded the opportunities that they so well deserve. Besides being academically delayed in their own countries -- a great number of them -- when they do come to a new environment, they find themselves at an additional disadvantage.

It was this past year through the efforts of Dr. Williams, and I believe the rest of the staff with the Paterson School District, that our limited English proficient children have felt that they are ready to enter the 21st century equipped with the ability to have hands on experience to learn the English language.

Oftentimes, children become very passive in the educational process. The teacher is there, but the child does not have the opportunity to become that active ingredient. Our lab -- our computer lab, the bilingual computer lab -- is state of the art. It is an office type setting. When the children go in there they begin immediately. They don't need the prodding. They begin to go in there with the enthusiasm, and they leave with the same enthusiasm, and they wait for the following day to return to that particular lab.

Once again, on behalf of the limited English proficient students, our Hispanic and other foreign speaking parents of the City of Paterson, I once again applaud your efforts, and I wish you continued success.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Calvin Snead, followed by Pete DiGiacomo. Calvin Snead?

C A L V I N S N E A D: My name is Calvin Snead, and I'm a resident of Paterson, a teacher, a former student, and a coach.

A few years ago when I was asked to instruct a computer program at Eastside High School, I readily agree to do so. In my eagerness, I just assumed that everything was in place and set to go. I was very much disappointed to find out that my assumptions were incorrect. There were computers to repair, but no materials to work with and no tools. In fact, no budget had been allotted for this program.

The Apple Care Program was just a proposal on paper. When the State took over and placed Superintendent Wilson at the helm, things began to change. A special fund was set aside for the training of teachers and students in the field of computer repair. Money was made available to compensate students and teachers who now travel throughout the school system repairing and installing new computer systems. Because of this program -- the monetary investment in our students and in the future of Paterson -- the District schools now have access to computer repair technicians who charge a mere fraction of the manufacturer's cost of those private contractors.

Apple Care has opened a whole new world for my students. They feel needed and useful. They are proud of the job skills they have acquired. The program provided them an avenue whereby they can prove to themselves and to others that they can be responsible and self-sufficient. Some of them experienced one of the greater thrills in their young lives, when last summer they were asked to set up a computer lab and install computers in student dormitory rooms at Upsala College for the prep program.

Surely the merits of this and many other programs cannot be ignored when one begins to think about the positive aspects of the State takeover.

By the way, the computer lab that Ms. Lopas spoke about was installed by my students in the Apple Care Program.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Pete DiGiacomo, followed by Lenore Schreck.

MR. DiGIACOMO: Peter DiGiacomo, a member of the Guidance Department and a scheduler of Eastside High School.

I would simply like to say, quite briefly, that last summer a program for scheduling report cards, transcripts, and so forth was accelerated so that this year we have connectivity with the Central Office's mainframe at Church Street. We are now able to enter and to access information of all sorts on our students, their backgrounds, their grades, their teachers, etc.

We look forward to continuing to move ahead in this area, and we welcome parents, as well as staff, to avail themselves of our services whenever needed.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Lenore Schreck, followed by Sheila Ruth. Is Lenore here? (no response) Sheila Ruth? Sheila Ruth will be followed by Dean Nancy Seminoff.

S H E I L A R U T H: Good evening. My name is Sheila Ruth. I'm a resident of the City of Paterson, and also an employee of the Paterson Board of Education. I work in the office of the Assistance Superintendent.

I'm here to speak tonight on behalf of the support staff with Paterson public schools. I would like to say some positive things that we feel have been done since the State has come in with regard to efficiency and technology. A few people have spoken about access of information. As you all know, in

big business, efficiency and productivity are paramount. I applaud Dr. Wilson and Dr. Williams, and on behalf of the support staff for bringing technology to the offices to make our jobs easier.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Dean Nancy Seminoff, followed by Eileen Roundtree.

D E A N N A N C Y S E M I N O F F: Good evening. I'm Nancy Seminoff, the Dean of Education at William Paterson College.

I would like to share some observations with you as an educator bringing 15 years of experience in the K-12 setting and, more recently, coming to higher education. Certainly as a higher education institution in this area, and especially as a school of education we have the opportunity and the responsibility to work with Paterson public schools as a major urban District, also as our neighbor, and as one of many school districts in the region that we serve.

The faculty and I, over this last year and a half that I've been a Dean of the School of Education, have had the opportunity to work with Paterson public schools, with the teachers and with this administration, to expand a number of existing relationships, and also to look at initiating new relationships.

I would just like to share with you briefly some of the partnership efforts that have taken place over this past year-and-a-half that I think might be interest to you.

SENATOR EWING: Well, if it's pointing out where it's helped the takeover or hurt the takeover-- This is what we're looking for. What programs have been put in, you know, that's really immaterial, unless you can say they are hurting something and should be removed, or should be added to because they are going to help.

SENATOR BROWN: I would hope that you had been working with the school system before the takeover. Was William Paterson working with the school system before the takeover?

DEAN SEMINOFF: Yes, it was. And what I would like to share with you, if you would give me the opportunity--

SENATOR BROWN: Three things that are different because of the State takeover.

DEAN SEMINOFF: Yes, I can share those, and that's what I intended to do if I have a few minutes to do so. Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Go ahead, please.

SENATOR BROWN: We're just asking for a little focus.

DEAN SEMINOFF: Yes, and that's what I would like to give to you.

We now have the opportunity to establish-- We have established a professional development school, a relationship with one of the schools in this District. We, in a partnership effort, have done that, which is going to be very beneficial not only to the College, but, I believe, to the teachers of Paterson as we look at collectively professionally developing, in a very focused way, and that has come about now during this past year with a receptivity toward that end.

We have cosponsored a teleconference at the College with the administration and the teachers on effective school restructuring. That attendance has been very positive. We have cosponsored, just today, a multicultural conference on the campus of William Paterson College attended by a number of teachers and administrators from this District. We look forward, as a consequence of that, to the ongoing discussions to look at curriculum for Paterson public schools that would be developed by teachers and administrators, as well as to, in a partnership effort, developing at the College a resource center for better understanding of multicultural education, and for providing resources to that end.

We have also, together, developed a grant that is now in place -- the S.C.O.P.E. Project that you heard about earlier -- looking at schools community-organized to promote education -- a half million dollar grant developed by the United Way of Passaic Valley, William Paterson College, and Paterson public schools to that end. We're very happy about that effort.

I wanted to point out these items to you, because we have found a very receptive administration and teaching staff to work with us, I believe, in a more concerted way than has taken place perhaps in the past, and I can only speak for this last year and a half that I have been at William Paterson College. We have also found receptivity in having our students placed in schools to a greater extent than may have been the case before. We look forward to a continuing positive relationship with the school district.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Eileen Roundtree, followed by Ann Vaughn. Eileen Roundtree here? (no response) Ann Vaughn? (no response) Fred Lang? Here comes Fred Lang, to be followed by Paul Kirby, and then Patricia Harris.

F R E D L. L A N G: Good evening. I'm Fred Lang. I'm President and Chief Executive Officer of the Barnert Hospital here in Paterson. I have also had the privilege of serving as the Chair of the Corporate Circle of the Paterson Education Foundation.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the Joint Committee. I perhaps can bring a slightly new dimension, or perspective, to some of the things that you've heard this evening.

I stand before you as an employer in the City of Paterson. We have almost 1000 employees at the Barnert Hospital. The overwhelming majority of those employees are residents of the City of Paterson. And as the City of Paterson goes, as our employees go, so will the hospital.

This past Sunday, if you have seen The Record, there was a headline article talking about a comeback in the city, a revival in Paterson. I think it was a very positive kind of tone. It is something that we who live or work in Paterson comment about, the fact that we don't see that often enough. There are a lot of pluses in this city.

I don't think that kind of trend can continue, or be maintained, or possible at all, unless we see the caliber and quality of educational system that can support it. I think the foundation of that system is the people that you see sitting here in this room. They, like you, are concerned enough to come out tonight and speak their piece.

The City of Paterson is a true mosaic. You see just a small part of that 140,000-people mosaic here tonight. You hear differences of opinion, you hear controversy. That's what makes the city strong. We don't always agree, but we care. It's that kind of caring that I believe you see very strongly in the educational system today.

I think the opportunity to let that kind of caring flourish, to incorporate into it the controversy that you here in this room-- I will give you one specific example of how that kind of caring is being incorporated into the Paterson educational system today.

I mentioned the Corporate Circle. The Corporate Circle is a group of businesses and corporations both located in Paterson and in the surrounding areas. These are companies and corporations that are prepared to offer their support, their **expertise**, and their resources, including financial, in support of this educational system. This program has been initiated. It has been embraced. It has been developed and invited to come in by the current educational system here.

I can tell you the opportunity for that resource to further develop and further support and help to address some of the concerns you've heard raised tonight-- Let me assure you I believe they are all genuine. I believe they are all real.

I know, I personally, have not heard a single person working in the Paterson educational system today who has not recognized that there's a long road still ahead of us, that there are deficiencies, that there are problems. But they are finding ways to address them. I just urge that this Committee, as they consider what they have heard-- Don't be scared by controversy; don't be swayed by perhaps what you perceive is anger. I believe it's concern and caring. I believe that out of that controversy you will see forged the solution, the improvement, and the progress that this city needs.

I will also tell you that there are many groups out there that are prepared to offer their assistance, and I stand as just one of those in support of that kind of improvement and progress.

SENATOR EWING: Well, have you noticed any change, though, in the short time that the takeover has been in effect?

MR. LANG: Very much so. I found an openness, a desire for partnership, and an invitation for ideas, not always what they want to hear, but the opportunity for this to be sounded out for us all to participate. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

MR. LANG: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Paul Kirby. Is Paul Kirby here? (affirmative response from audience) Thank you. To be followed by Patricia Harris.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Are these people residents that are speaking?

SENATOR EWING: Mr. Lang was from Barnert Hospital so I gather he is a major employer here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Sir, is he a resident? You said residents of the city.

SENATOR EWING: I asked them to say where they live. I forgot to ask him.

P A U L K I R B Y: Good evening.

SENATOR EWING: Are you a resident?

MR. KIRBY: No, sir, I'm not. I'm a Paterson teacher for 20 years.

SENATOR EWING: You're what?

MR. KIRBY: A Paterson teacher for 20 years.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, fine, okay. Go ahead.

MR. KIRBY: For those 20 years I've been a instrumental music teacher, and during that time we've seen a deterioration in the level of arts instruction in the school. That deterioration has been accelerated by the implementation of the Paradigm Program. We're absolutely denying our students the opportunity to experience many other factors -- the use of the academics -- and we're denying them a lot of experiences in what makes us human -- the humanities, the arts. We're also not seeing improvement in the details, and that filters down to the students. I still see finances that were budgeted and allocated to the Music Department being diverted to other uses. I don't know where they're going, but they've been diverted. They've been lost. That hurts the students.

I see systems and procedures that were previously in place and working, however flawed, at least getting the job done. Some of those systems and procedures have been discarded with nothing to replace them.

At this point it becomes very difficult despite the efforts of our new supervisor, Mr. Harris. He's there trying to assess the music and art programs and implement improvements, but at this point, despite his best efforts, we have difficulties getting instruments repaired. They fall apart from old age. A student who is working very hard to bring himself into line with the humanities suffers because of it. We cannot get repairs.

These are the little things. These aren't millions of dollars. I'm not talking about doubling the staff somewhere.

This is where it affects the student, on the \$50 level -- a new drumhead or a repaired trumpet, an adequate textbook. That's where it affects the students, and that's where we have our problems. I know they can be discussed in millions of dollars, but we really need to think on that individual level.

Sure, I travel to five schools; I see deteriorating walls and ceilings, faculties who have respiratory problems, we believe, due to old buildings, inadequate ventilation, heating plants that don't work. Mr. Zimmlinghaus has mentioned that. It all comes down to the individual student and what are they getting.

My opinion? They are not getting much. We try, we work with what we have, but there haven't been improvements on that level.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Mr. Chairman, may I ask him a question?

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

Mr. Kirby? Mr Kirby, just a second. I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Mr Chairman, I apologize for asking a question -- if I may?

SENATOR EWING: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: I'll be as quick as possible.

Are you saying that -- I'm using this as an example, because what I think you're saying, and I want to know if that's really what you're saying-- Are you saying that the money that ordinarily goes to the music program is being directed into another program?

MR. KIRBY: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Excuse me. My question is this: Many of us on both sides of this table have questions -- serious questions -- which I have not come to a conclusion about yet, but I'm still going to continue to ask them, about

the Paradigm Program. Were you implying, or were you indeed saying, that's where the money is being directed to what we would refer to as basic skills programs, and that programs such as music, which is the example that you gave, and other programs that other people said, are being robbed of their life? Is that what your telling us?

MR. KIRBY: I can't--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Or have I misinterpreted it?

MR. KIRBY: I believe the thrust is there. I cannot give you specific details, because I am not privy to the knowledge of the individual budget lines in schools. All I know is from my personal experience that there was one school where the complete music allotment was diverted to other activities. I went to the principal and said, "What happened to it?" And he did restore part of the allotment. I give him credit for that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Mr. Chairman, I think that this is an important issue. It mirrors, to me, a simple layman-- It mirrors a lot of what we have heard tonight. Now, I don't know if that diversion is conscious. I do not know whether that diversion is primarily because of the Paradigm Program. I am not going to be goaded into any conclusion, but hear me out, please.

It's a serious thing that we need to look into. Here's the dilemma, and then I'll shut up. The dilemma is this: The State sent somebody into the District because there are basic skill serious deficiencies -- a lot of deficiencies. I want to concentrate on that, because it goes to the heart of what you're saying. In this audience tonight are those who feel education gets too much money; there are those who say it gets too little money; there are those who say it gets enough, but they don't know how to spend it. So there's a whole sweeping situation here.

The young lady who said before, "We better all be on the same track, and if we're not, our kids are going to suffer," said a mouthful.

The question is, if I'm sent in and told that these very basic skills are so poor, here's the barometer, here's the measurement that we use to prove that basic skills A, B, C, and D are very low, your job-- You're sending someone in to improve the quality of education. It is to improve those very basic skills that reflect somewhat the entire system -- not every student I might add, but the system itself. It's a common situation. It comes up on the monitoring report. It comes up on the daily reports.

My question to you is, and I don't ask this for an answer, just to leave the thought: What do you do? Do you spend your time and the primary source of your money directed at those primary skills at the sacrifice of other creative arts? Or, do you try to reach a balance between trying to improve those very basic skills? Because if we're graduating kids that can't put a paragraph together, we're dead in the water, and we're not successful. I don't care what educators tell us.

My question is: What are we talking about in terms of those basic skills and those creative skills? My opinion is, every kid has creative talent, not just a few. So, I leave that with you, not for an answer, but that's a dilemma that this Committee, I think, needs to address. I think it goes to the very heart of what a lot of people have been talking about from their hearts this evening.

MR. KIRBY: Could I have thirty seconds?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: It's up to the Chairman.

SENATOR EWING: Certainly.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Before the implementation of the Paradigm Program, there were meetings throughout several schools where they showed a film and did a discussion. After a

meeting at School No. 21 there was a question group around one of our new State administrators, and the discussion group was generally the specialist personnel, the home ec., music, wood shop. In this group the comment was made that, "Yes, we would probably have to de-emphasize those subjects for awhile." I don't think the word subject came up. I think it was more like activities. I don't think it was given true academic status.

I started to wonder about this, and they said, "Wait a minute. You are coming new to Paterson. You say we need to do language arts and math." Very true. But do you know what I do in my instrumental music class to address math, and particularly language arts? It is endemic to music. Do you know what Joe Mazur does in his wood shop or metal shop? You cannot be successful in those activities without reading and math. We went through that just a little bit, and the administrator being addressed said, "No, of course they had not been in our classes." I invited them on behalf of the whole group. I said, "Please, before you destroy programs, come in and see what we actually do; see how we address the needs you are speaking of," and you just spoke of.

Well, they didn't come in. They didn't look, as far as I know. I may be in error, but as far as I know, they did not come in. They didn't look. They tore it apart. Right now, there is almost nothing happening in those areas, especially in the Paradigm schools, and the students are losing out. You cannot learn math in a vacuum. You have to have applications. You cannot simply learn language arts in a classroom exercise. You have to go out and use it. So, I encourage use to be returned.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may--
Ma'am, thank you for being patient.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for coming out this evening. I am one of the few Assemblymen who have an hour and a half drive, so I will be leaving very shortly. I just want to make a brief statement before I leave to say thank you to the community for inviting me here today. I had an opportunity to spend the day with Dr. Wilson and some of the staff, to visit your schools and to see them.

I am by profession a public school administrator in the fifth largest school district in the State of New Jersey, and I know a lot of what you -- each and every one of you are facing, not just as residents and taxpayers, but as parents and grandparents and employees. I think what I have seen today is not that much different than what I saw three weeks ago when we spent the day in Jersey City having a similar type of a meeting. It is interesting that many of the things that are being said this evening, in fact, were said three weeks ago when we were in Jersey City.

Let me just make a few interesting points, starting first by saying that each and every one of us-- I have to personally commend Assemblymen Pascrell and Catania, because as a delegation they work very well together, and are constantly hammering people like myself, who are from conservative Republican districts, to make sure that we don't forget what it is like in the cities. Bill and Frank, I commend you. They do an outstanding job.

In light of that, I must also remind you-- Many of the comments made tonight were made about children. I am a child advocate. I think each and every one of us here this evening is here because of children. Whether you are an employee, whether you are a mother, father, grandfather, whatever, you are here because you are concerned about kids. We are all concerned also about what our tax rates are. Some people stood up and they were very, very argumentative about

what their taxes are. They are extremely concerned. Let me point out something very interesting for each and every one of you to think about tonight on your way home.

In my legislative district, I have communities that pay in excess of 85 percent of the total costs to educate a youngster in their communities. You, in fact, are being held accountable to pay less than 20 percent of the costs. I don't think that is asking too much for you to take part in your communities to see that the youngsters receive a quality education.

The last thing that I might add, which I think goes back many years in this community, is the condition I saw of some of your older schools. In my legislative district, it is interesting, I was explaining to the Mayor before, that 1960 was when our first school was probably built, to give you an idea of the growth in my legislative district. In your community, it seems that they haven't built anything since 1960. I think if we are going to be extremely concerned about education and the youngsters, as well as our costs of education, we have to look at the facilities you have in this community. I think we have to recognize that those facilities can no longer be used to educate youngsters if we expect them to learn. I think that as a community, and as legislators, we must join together and recognize that Paterson can no longer be used as a scapegoat for learning, and that we have to take the steps forward to make sure that we-- (remainder of comment cut off by applause)

With that, again, I want to personally thank the State Acting Commissioner, Dr. Wilson, for the opportunity for the tour. Mayor, it is always a pleasure to see you and be in your community. You should be proud of it. Frank Catania, thank you. And most of all, thank you to the community for taking the time out to come out.

With that, I am going to be leaving. Thank you again for the opportunity.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Next will be Patricia Harris -- at last. I am sorry, Patricia.

P A T R I C I A H A R R I S: My name is Patricia Harris. I am a native Patersonian; I was raised here, born here, and will probably die here. At this point in my life, I have three children here. I happen to be a substitute in the system. The title I am holding at the present time, which I don't like to speak of-- My main title is "parent." I happen to be the Home School Council President for the Dale Avenue School, for the John F. Kennedy High School, and for the William Paterson Parents' Association.

The reason I am involved in the different organizations is because parents do not give up the right of being a parent when their child goes to school. Parents need to know, and be educated as well as their child. We want to be in partnership with the schools, with the education system, and work in unity, because together is the only way to treat the whole child. It takes the whole village to treat the whole child.

We in Paterson, when the State came in, or in the beginning-- We were at a place where it was like, "Give us something," because things were so bleak, dead. They came in and they said, "We are going to work together in partnership. We will work together." I took that seriously, and I became involved and I worked. I think they know me very well. So I am visible. I take being a parent very seriously.

I have seen, as a substitute-- I am in the system, but I am not really a part of the system, so I get to see a lot of things. As a parent activist, I hear and I feel what the parents are going through. But the fact is, getting this information back to the right people--

I saw the President last month and I felt closer to him than I do to the administration here in Paterson, because

it takes a long time to get communication through. You get on the phone and you have to repeat, repeat whatever the problem is. You have to be an expert in explaining. If a person is emotional and you have a new crisis at that time, you want somebody to talk to you at that time. You don't want to be told, "Well, tell me specifically what the problem is. Oh, that isn't my part in it. Wait a minute, I'll give you to this one," or, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, I'll give you to that one." By that time, you feel that no one cares. You know, you feel that no one cares.

Now, tonight we have talked about a lot of things, but one of the main important issues that we have not touched on is our children and how they feel. Nobody asked any of the young people who came up here and spoke about how they feel. I happen to be blessed because I have a daughter who is in this school who is able to speak very well for herself. I have sons who are smaller, but my daughter-- I think it is important that you know how the high schools are, not what you see, but the reality that is facing them, what they face every day of their lives in school; and as parents how we feel when something happens at school and you are not informed of it until you come to bring your child to school. Or, if you turn to a station like KISS-- How many parents here know KISS, listen to KISS? Is that the station we are supposed to listen to for emergencies? I don't think so.

I would just like Sekisha Morrison to express how she feels about high school days so you can get a touch of how it is, if that is okay.

SENATOR EWING: Is she signed up? (no response)

S E K I S H A M O R R I S O N: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am Sekisha Morrison, and I am a junior at John F. Kennedy High School. I am 16 years of age.

I am here to speak about the Paradigm Program. To sum it up, it is not working. Why is it not working? Because the cluster classes are tedious to both teacher and student. There

are those who feel that the cluster is not sufficient to their needs due to the fact that although a lot of time is spent on that subject, the students, as individuals, are on different levels. For example, regular curriculum students are categorized, meaning that you have regular and you have ALPHA and below-average students. How can you place all three together and not expect one or more to suffer?

You want input? Well, the parents know, but who is it that knows better than those who suffer firsthand? I am but one student. If you want the real deal, come to our school and ask us, the students. Come and see how it really is. This is all we ask as future taxpayers.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, and also to Patricia. If there are other students who have signed up, we will certainly hear them. The meeting was not advertised as being closed to anybody, so I don't know.

Roland Straten? (no response) Ellen Finley? (no response) Siegmur Silber?

S I E G M A R S I L B E R, ESQ.: Good evening. My name is Siegmur Silber. I am a member of the Advisory Board. I am an attorney in the State of New Jersey. My address is 452 East 38th Street, Paterson, New Jersey. I have lived in Paterson since 1948. My family came to Paterson in 1892, so we have been around for a couple of years. I am part of the mosaic of the City. I am proud to be here. I am proud to be on the Advisory Board and to be a part of what is happening to Paterson's education system today.

We have replaced a system with a highly proficient and efficient administrative system. One of the reflections of this was shown in a previous speaker's discussion of sending a security guard -- or a security person -- down to the Board of Education building for a job interview. I believe he won awards in Paterson. The system has changed. It has become

more professional. It does not depend on who sends you downtown to the office anymore. That kind of change is something that has happened as a result of the takeover.

You have heard discussions tonight of partnerships, not only at the William Paterson College and the Felician College, but also we have a partnership with the Teachers College of Columbia University. Paterson and the Paterson Board of Education have always had a relationship with the Teachers College. The Teachers College connection has been strengthened with the Wilson administration. (witness stops speaking at this point as Chairman is speaking to someone)

SENATOR EWING: Go ahead, Mr. Silber.

MR. SILBER: Yes, I was just--

SENATOR EWING: Well, there is a recording being made. The Mayor has a police call. People are going to be coming and going. The hearing is being recorded, and it is going to be typed up.

MR. SILBER: That's fine.

SENATOR EWING: So they will read it.

MR. SILBER: Good. Thank you.

When the new administration came in, the information on hand was that 90 percent of the students were lacking in the basic skills, and that upon the occurrence of the HSPT, hardly anyone would be graduating from the high schools. The Paradigm Program that has been much attacked tonight is an attempt to get students on track so as to produce a greater yield once the HSPT gets into place.

I personally do not feel that only one program should be available. I personally feel there should be many innovative programs available, and that there should be almost a smorgasbord of programs so we can have a remediation that fits a particular student. The fact that there is so much of an outcry about Paradigm does not reflect whether or not it is working at this point, because the testing results are not in yet as to whether there is a measurable improvement.

I have been asked, as an Advisory Board member, to have some patience until such time as the results of the initial testing are in. I would ask the members of the hearing panel, Senator Ewing, to also show the same patience with the system.

What I am going to ask the Board, in the best interest of the children, is to implement a program to take our schools, which have an average age of 63 years, and to renovate where necessary, and replace where necessary, these schools. It is \$119 million I ask you for. It needs to be bonded. A program needs to be put into place. It is a reflection of 20 years of inadequate response to our infrastructure as a school system. I believe the study that has been done, regardless of prior studies, is an adequate one on which implementation can be completed if we follow through. The State has taken the wheel of our car -- as I have said at prior Advisory Board meetings -- and the State now has to put gas in the car; has to take care of the car while it is under their care, and make sure that it goes from Point A to Point B.

If you buy these fancy evaluations and then put them on the shelf and do not implement them, that is the worst crime of all. To not take that study and to not put the money into the schools now and not build the -- not take out of service the four schools that need to be taken out of service, and to not build replacement schools, will be doing a great disservice to our community.

There is another thing that I would like to ask you to do in the best interest of the students; that is, there was a compromise made where the State's contribution to the City was capped out at \$163 million, which represented about a 7.14 percent increase over the prior year. I believe the contribution to the City was held practically at the same level as last year in the current budget, with only about a 0.2 percent increase.

One of the things that has happened is that there has been a requirement that our Budget Director put into the budget only 85 percent of the Federal program money from last year, which reduces our share of Federal programs by \$2.9 million. Now, if I were in the position of an Assemblyman at the State level, and I had some influence at the State Department of Education, what I would ask my State Department of Education to do would be to get more Federal funds for the urban districts so that the innovative programs could be put into place. If instead of an 85 percent cap, we would talk now of 150 percent of the Federal moneys, we would now make up the gap we are looking at where we are below cap by \$14 million. We would then come within a few million dollars of our cap, and we would be able to put into effect some of the programs that the administration has on the drawing board. Implementation is what is needed. To implement the programs, money is what is needed.

I thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you. I would just like to tell the audience that statewide-- Granted, Paterson has some major problems in its buildings. There is no question about that whatsoever, and there are other areas which do, also. But it has been figured out on a conservative basis that it will take between \$5 billion and \$6 billion to bring the schools up to a decent standard throughout the State. There are other areas, other districts, that have just as bad conditions. It has to be worked on. There is no question about that.

Ellen Borg, to be followed by Joyce Duncan.

E L L E N E. B O R G: I am going to shorten my remarks because a lot of things have been said by former speakers.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. BORG: I am Ellen E. Borg. I was educated in the Paterson school system, and therefore I have a deep feeling

about it. It was a good system at the time I was in it. It enabled me to get the kind of education that made it possible to pursue a successful career.

Today I want that same opportunity for the children who are now in the system. The State came and took over the system because of a number of deficiencies. They asked that a plan be set up to correct those. I think that has been done by this administration. A year and a half is not enough time to have a complete turnaround in the system. Every one of the noncompliance issues that were there, in order to correct them, dollars were needed. Now, if we are not going to have the funds which are required to correct these, then I think it would be unfair to judge this administration on nonperformance when the funds have not been given.

I just want to remind you that the State takeover was put into effect to correct problems. Now I think we do need the time and we need the funds to do that.

As far as the Paradigm Program is concerned, I have heard many arguments against it. I don't know whether it is the best plan or not, but if, indeed, our children were at a point where they were not going to graduate from high school, and the State had put in a system that said, "You must pass at a certain level, or you will not graduate from high school," and if we could have that situation maintained here, I think the parents, the taxpayers, and anyone else who had any concern would be much up in arms if at the time we have this large number of kids who could not graduate, who then could not go into education, into industry, into wherever they wanted to go--

I just want to remind everyone here that unless we have an alternative to what is being done, or what is being attempted in terms of the Paradigm plan, I think we ought to give it a chance for implementation and evaluation. (applause) I don't see how any child is going to take advantage of Mark Twain, or economics, or even reading a recipe

and cooking if he can't master the basic skills of reading, writing, and math. I think in order to enjoy all the other things that we have all enjoyed when we had a higher education, those basic skills have to be the foundation.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Joyce Duncan. You should have let me know, Joyce. I would have put you on first so you could take the poor baby home. I'm sorry.

J O Y C E D U N C A N: He's doing fine. That's all right.

SENATOR EWING: I don't know who everybody is here.

MS. DUNCAN: He is the one who dragged me here, so--

SENATOR EWING: Oh, good. Okay. You have the interest.

MS. DUNCAN: I am Joyce Duncan. I am a member of the School Advisory Board. This is my son, William, my stake in the school system, so we better have some improvements in the next five years.

It disturbs me to hear friends, neighbors, and acquaintances talk about moving out of Paterson because they don't want to send their kids to the schools here. I have heard that quite a bit in the last year since I have been on the Advisory Board.

We did need a change in this town and in the district, whether some want to admit it or not. Sometimes when there are mistakes, when there are shortcomings in our own community, we might not want to admit that. When somebody else comes in-- When we first had some of the Board meetings in the beginning when the State took over, a lot of people came to the meetings shouting, "You're outsiders. Get out. We don't want you here." Maybe some of you remember. Perhaps we are more apt to criticize an outsider than those we have in our own family who are running things. But we did need a change, and I think it is a positive one.

Dr. Wilson-- (baby cries) Do you want to talk, or should I talk?

Dr. Wilson and his staff have been working very hard, day and night, to improve this school system. Something that I personally had questioned about the former administration-- My degree is in Education. I did work, for a short time, in the Paterson school system when there was an alternative high school. I believe that improvement does not happen, and cannot be measured overnight. We need to give some of these programs, perhaps including the Paradigm Program -- which I have mixed feelings about because I haven't seen the results-- I don't think there has been enough time to see the results, but I do know that if students--

Believe me, I am an advocate of the arts and social sciences. I was in the theater for many years, and I have been in music and dance. I believe in all that stuff. But I do believe that kids should also be able to read, write, and compute, or they will not be able to get jobs. They will not be able to go out into the workforce.

We do desperately need money for facilities. I know a lot of neighborhoods are run-down. The children's homes are run-down. When they go to school, they need a place to get out of that atmosphere to give them some sort of hope and a good outlook for their future, so that they can see that things can be different.

Also, I would just like to make a point here about money. I don't see a lot of you at the Advisory Board meetings, the people who have questions, including you, Mr. Mayor. (laughter and applause)

SENATOR EWING: Well, he has other things. Come on, he is trying to run the City.

MS. DUNCAN: I would like to see more of you at the Advisory Board meetings. You have a lot of questions. Some of you I only see if there is a budget meeting. Sure it is about

money, but I would rather spend an additional 31-some-odd dollars a year on education. If not, I may be spending it later on, on incarceration for some of these people. (applause) So I think the money is well spent when we are investing it in all of our futures, not only our children's futures.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

If you don't mind, we are going to take about a five-minute break because-- (negative response from audience members) Let me explain. Just a second. You are able to get up and walk around and go to the rest rooms. The staff here, which is not under my jurisdiction, but the section they work for will not let them leave those machines while there is incoming testimony. They can't have one go off and one come back. So we are going to take a five-minute break. Then we will be right back to keep going.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

SENATOR EWING: Ladies and gentlemen, will you please take your seats? We are ready to start again. Will you all take your seats, please? We are starting again. Particularly those who are teachers, will you sit down and keep quiet?

Lydia Albino, please. Lydia is not here? Oh, here she comes. Lydia will be followed by Luis Perez.

Will you please give me your attention? Will you please keep quiet?

Go ahead, Lydia.

LYDIA ALBINO: Hi. My name is Lydia Albino. I live at 50 Spring Street, Paterson. As a concerned Hispanic parent, I have often stated that all children, especially the Hispanic

and black children, have the right to experience a bliss-filled life of love and knowledge, and to pass that love and knowledge on to the next generation. But this can only become a reality if we fight to make it happen. So I am here to tell you, our elected officials, to please make this happen for our children. All of our children need and deserve the very best they can get in education.

How do we make this happen? We must pull together to solve our children's needs. I mean the entire community, not just parents, teachers, and administrators. I say candidates also.

I am here voicing my concerns tonight for the first time, but it is definitely not the last. We must stand up for our Hispanic and black children. This is why I am here. Now we must make sure that no child is left behind. I must tell our elected officials, "You have to work, and work hard, just like we have worked and worked hard for our children; just like you worked hard to get our votes. I am asking you to work just as hard for our children."

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Albino, let me just interrupt you for a minute, please. What parts of the system now are not working as they used to be working, or what parts are working better? This is what we are trying to find out. We know the philosophy. We want every child to be educated; we want every child to go either to a vocational-technical school or college, whatever God gave them the ability to do. It is not just basic education.

So, what we are trying to find out from all of you people is what you think the shortcomings are in what is happening to the system now, or where the improvements are. That is what we want to know, not the philosophy you have. We all want the child to learn. Nobody is moving ahead in this life without an education -- period. So, whether they are white, black, Chinese, or what, we want them educated.

MS. ALBINO: That is why I am here. I do want the same thing.

SENATOR EWING: We're asking you what the difference--

MS. ALBINO: The system is working beautifully. We have--

SENATOR EWING: So you're saying, "Leave it alone the way it is"?

MS. ALBINO: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: With the takeover?

MS. ALBINO: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

MS. ALBINO: We have the books we need, especially for the bilingual classes. Okay? We have betterment in our school system. Okay? That is why I am here, to make sure that it stays and that we do make it work.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Luis Perez, to be followed by Caroline Gibbons.

Mr. Perez, please go ahead.

L U I S P E R E Z: My name is Luis Perez. I am from the Urban/Suburban Equal Education Committee. I am also Education Chair of the Puerto Rican Action Council.

I am getting a little sick and tired of people -- politicians -- coming here and saying that money is not the problem. For years, since 1973, court case after court case has said that money is the problem -- Robinson v. Cahill, 1973. In 1975, you instituted a personal income tax to try to correct the problem in places like Paterson and Newark and Camden. You finagled the money out somehow, because we didn't get it.

Then, in the 1980s Abbott v. Burke court case, it said that money was the problem. You tried to come up with some Education Reform Act a little while ago, Senator Ewing, and Assemblyman Rocco, to try to remove State-mandated money from these areas. We are not having it anymore.

Our Committee is going to march -- is going to march in your district, if we have to, when people are coming home. We are going to-- We are not going to have it anymore. We want the amount of money that the courts have mandated; the \$119.6 million that you know about that is needed in Paterson to take care of the years of neglect that these children have been faced with of buildings falling apart. You know, does a building have to fall on you for you to get the idea that the cities need money? One hundred and nineteen million? School No. 14 was built in 1887; School No. 17 built in 1891; School No. 3 built in 1899; School No. 11 built in 1905.

SENATOR EWING: We have that data.

MR. PEREZ: You have that data? That is exactly my point. You have the data, and there is no money. Now you want us to come up with the money. We are already paying a higher percentage in taxes for property taxes than Alpine, which-- What is it, \$400,000 per person they make over there, whether they are working or not? We over here are paying a 14.9 percent tax rate, while in Alpine they are paying a 0.6 percent tax rate. This is sick. Year after year this game goes on.

So you can take superintendent after superintendent, and put in anyone you want, but like the gentleman said earlier, you own this building called the Paterson school system. You own all the other ones, too. Camden, Newark -- you own them all, whether you believe it or not. You have been taken to court already on this. You own them. You are supposed to be fixing them up and providing the right amount of money. We had it, but we are not going to have it anymore. If you were a landlord here in Paterson, Pascrell would be on your butt telling you to fix up the building because the building was falling apart.

SENATOR EWING: He's on our butt now trying to get money for Paterson.

MR. PEREZ: Well, I suggest you listen to him, because we are going to explode. These houses around here are made out of wood. They go up real easy.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: (speaking from audience) Stop that kind of talk.

MR. PEREZ: Well, that's the truth; that's the truth.

SENATOR EWING: All right, quiet, please. Quiet. I don't want any interjection from the audience.

MR. PEREZ: Well, what are you going to wait for, for them to go up?

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: (comment at this point indiscernible to transcriber; no microphone)

MR. PEREZ: Look, do you want to be in charge? Why don't you sit up there? (again an indiscernible comment from Councilman Rooney)

SENATOR EWING: Mr. Councilman, Mr. Councilman, this is my meeting. I'll run the meeting.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: Please stop him from talking.

MR. PEREZ: No, no, this is the First Amendment.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: I don't want any threats. (remainder of comment indiscernible)

MR. PEREZ: The First Amendment.

SENATOR EWING: Well, we'll call off the meeting then. Do you want us to call off the meeting?

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: No.

SENATOR EWING: Well then, you keep quiet. You keep quiet.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: Then you cut him off.

SENATOR EWING: You got up and talked. I'll run the meeting.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: I don't want any threats. (portion of comment indiscernible)

SENATOR EWING: You keep quiet.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: Then you cut him off.

MR. PEREZ: I am going to say whatever I want. This is a hearing.

COUNCILMAN ROONEY: Cut him off.

MR. PEREZ: No.

SENATOR EWING: Mr. Perez, you go ahead and talk.

MR. PEREZ: The fact is, we need money, and we need it desperately. Year after year we say the same thing. Instead of giving us money, you take the Super out. You put another Super in. The Super tells you, "We need money." You take that Super out, and you put another Super in.

SENATOR EWING: Mr. Perez, there are many districts which state that they need money. As I said earlier, tragically, in the State of New Jersey, there are between \$5 billion and \$6 billion needed to bring the schools up to any decent standard. It is not just Paterson.

MR. PEREZ: Well, why did you vote to take out the penny sales tax then? That was a penny. One penny could have solved the problem. Listen, the Democrats are no better. They have been there the longest, and they haven't done anything either. (applause) So we are not going to be siding anymore. We know who our friends are and who aren't. The game is over.

SENATOR EWING: Now, to get back to the takeover, how do you feel? Do you feel the system is getting better with the takeover, or should you go back to the old way if it is not getting better?

MR. PEREZ: I feel you are giving us more money because you have the takeover here. What are we supposed to do?

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but is it improving the system?

MR. PEREZ: Of course money is improving the system. Teachers need tools to do their job. When a teacher can't find a globe; when there are children learning in cafeterias instead of in a classroom; when the blackboards don't even hold chalk anymore, of course the money is going to help. Of course the State takeover is going to help. But if you are going to take

it over, do what you have to do to fix it. Otherwise, you are no better than the landlord who they put away in jail.

SENATOR EWING: It is not going to be fixed that quickly. It is going to be fixed bit by bit, because the State doesn't have the money to do all it has to do.

MR. PEREZ: Because of the penny sales tax.

SENATOR EWING: There has been no improvement in the system since the takeover took place?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: You'd need a dollar sales tax for that.

SENATOR EWING: Please, from the audience.

MR. PEREZ: Well, we're going to be on the case.

SENATOR EWING: Good.

MR. PEREZ: Hopefully, other people will get involved and do something about the funding system.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Right. Thank you.

N A D I A A N D I N O: My name is Nadia, and I'm a resident of Paterson. I heard the audience; they said that the kids should say what they feel. So I feel that we should get the arts back. Yesterday -- I'm not going to say the persons' names, because I don't want to embarrass them -- they said that before I speak that I should be specific about what I say. So I say, in other words, I'm going to tell the truth. I'm going to say the truth to you in the audience.

We have no art. We have no science. We have no history. We have no industrial arts. We have-- I could name a lot, if you want, but I don't have time for it. We need--

The takeover isn't doing nothing for us. We have new guards in our school. We have less books. They bring more guards into our school, and that's taking more books away for their pay.

SENATOR EWING: What school are you in, Nadia?

MS. ANDINO: Twenty-one.

SENATOR EWING: What?

MS. ANDINO: Twenty-one.

SENATOR EWING: Twenty-one? What class are you in?

MS. ANDINO: Ms. Ludwig's.

SENATOR EWING: What grade?

MS. ANDINO: Sixth.

SENATOR EWING: Okay. Keep on. Very good.

MS. ANDINO: I was just saying, because-- This is my first time talking in front of a lot of people like this, so--

SENATOR EWING: You're doing very well.

MS. ANDINO: For instance, we have guards in there. They think they own the building. They grab kids by the ears. They're not supposed to put their hands on them. They tell them what to do and what not to do. I understand that, but you're not supposed to put your hands on a child. You're not supposed to, like--

They take the child to the office, and when they bring the child to the office, they carry him by his ears, or they throw them. I don't think that's right.

About the art and stuff, the overtake, they've taken all our books away. We need our books back. For instance, we have-- Teachers don't care about the students. They say, "Oh, you're doing fine." And the kid will think they don't, and they will be on that corner, and they will be selling drugs just like the rest of them.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, Nadia.

Carolyn Gibbons, followed by Mark Rowan, or Roman

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Romei. Mark Romei?

SENATOR EWING: I'm sorry.

Go ahead, Carolyn.

C A R O L Y N G I B B O N S: Good evening. My name is Carolyn Gibbons. I'm a resident of Paterson, and I have three children in the school system -- two currently, one in

kindergarten, one in day care, and one is in the eighth grade, who is here with me tonight. He would also like to address the Committee.

But my question is, in talking about the State takeover, it's come to our attention that we won't have an all-day kindergarten program next year. That's a real big problem. We need to look at that -- include that among the rest of tonight's discussions, also.

I think that the State should not be solely in control. Yes, we had problems with the previous School Board, and we don't want to see that repeat itself. If nothing else, we've learned from some of our past history. Since we can have limited State monitoring along with a new School Board, then I think that would be the route to take, in my opinion.

Here's my son, who is a student in the school system.

SENATOR EWING: Fine.

T E R R E N C E G I B B O N S: Excuse me. I'm currently attending School No. 6. I'm in the eighth grade, and I would like to tell the Council that I don't think that the State should give us back our school system because, you know, it's cutting us out of all our things that we, you know -- our academic, and all our other things that we're taking up. Like, I would like to learn about my black history and all about the other history, and they're cutting it out and taking it out from us.

I would like to have home ec, shop, art, and science, and all that other stuff back. You know, we can't have that because of the Paradigm Program. I can read, write, and do math, and I would like to know why do I have to take the Paradigm Program when I can do all them type of things.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Mark Romei? (no response)

Martha Afètse, followed by Lopaz, from Eastside High School.

M A R T H A A F É T S E: Good evening, Senator Ewing, and also Mayor Pascrell, and Ms. Schulz.

I'm an Advisory Board member for the City of Paterson. I was appointed by the City Council, and I'm a parent. I have worked with the Paterson school system for the past 22 years, and I have seen two decades of children failing. I'm sure that there were many more decades prior to that.

Now, the State takeover, as far as I'm concerned, was a refreshing posture for this particular City. What I mean by that is, year after year, our children were failing, fighting with the Board of Education, parents not being allowed to get involved in the system to the extent that they should have been involved. This new system that has come in has opened up the forum for parents. It has really opened up the forum for parents. It has mandated that every school must have a Home School Council. This has never been mandated before. (applause)

The Superintendent meets with the parents on a monthly basis to give them the opportunity to give their input in terms of how they feel about what is going on in the District, and to keep them abreast of all of the situations pertaining to education, pertaining to the budget, and the Facility Report. He has worked very hard to keep the parents in this city abreast of what is going on in this city.

Not only that, at the Board of Education meetings, they allow this community to come out and voice their opinions. Maybe, Senator Ewing, you should come to the Board of Education meetings, and maybe we can get more citizen participation at those meetings, because you will be able to hear what they have to say. But they do not come.

Now, I've sat on that Board for 19 months, looking out at an empty audience, and the parents have not been there; the community has not been there. Rarely have they been there.

There are a lot of programs that have come into this District since this State takeover. They are programs that are geared to raising the level of education for our children, and eradicating illiteracy in this District. Parents today should not be so, so upset about the Paradigm Program. The union should not be so, so upset about the Paradigm Program, and teachers should not be so, so upset about the Paradigm Program, and on and on, because for over 30 years, these children have been failing in this system. Children have been graduating, but they have been graduating from this city unable to read, write, and compute. They have been graduating functional illiterates, and that is not good.

What this District has done is said, "We are demanding quality education for the children in this District. We want what we are paying for. We want to hold teachers accountable." This Superintendent stood up to the union and said, "You must be accountable for the end result of this product. And if the children come out of here and cannot read and write and compute, you are responsible. You are responsible."

And we don't need to get here tonight because-- I'm a very controversial person in this community, and I know working with this group of people that I've had to work with, I have not always agreed with them. And I have expressed myself to them. There has never been an opportunity-- I can tell you, many times I have called the past administration and I have not been able to get to the Superintendent of Schools. I can call him now, and I can get to him. I think that any parent that has a problem can pick up that phone, and I advise parents, "Pick up the phone. Call Dr. Wilson. Express to him your concerns. He's not a person that you can't work with."

He is a man that did not ask to come to Paterson. The State took the District. The State has, by State statute, the responsibility to support it economically. You know the

conditions of the schools. He is trying to move this District to a level of professionalism, and bring proficiency into this system.

As a community, we have got to work with-- Is everything right? No. But a year and a half is not a good indicator to tell whether they're good or bad, or whether they're failing or succeeding.

SENATOR EWING: Nobody has said that. But you feel the system is better?

MS. AFETSE: I feel that it is working toward progress.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you. Good.

MS. AFETSE: And I think it's progress that the children need in this city, and we must continue to trudge ahead for that progress.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. AFETSE: Education doesn't come cheap. And the other thing is, you want to talk about ratables? Let's talk about ratables for a minute.

SENATOR EWING: Excuse me, excuse me. Just a minute now. We're not talking about ratables. We're going to have the next speaker. You are for the system.

MS. AFETSE: Okay. Yes, I am.

SENATOR EWING: You feel it is much better. Thank you very much.

MS. AFETSE: Yes, I do. I have one other thing to say about the education system.

SENATOR EWING: That is all. Excuse me. What?

MS. AFETSE: That is, without a good educational system and a school system that produces children that can read and write, you don't bring good ratables to the system.

SENATOR EWING: We all know that. That's nothing new.

MS. AFETSE: Well, obviously, we don't know that.

SENATOR EWING: Excuse me. Paula Santana, Paula Santana? (no response)

Mirva Rivera?

When I call your names, the second name should be moving up toward the front so we don't have to wait.

Excuse me, your name?

M I R V A R I V E R A: Mirva Rivera.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Mirva.

MS. RIVERA: Thank you. Good evening, Senator Ewing, Mayor Pascrell, Joint Legislative Committee members. It's a pleasure to be here speaking to you tonight as a native Patersonian, a product of the school system, and an educator for the past 16 years in the Paterson public school system. I am presently the Principal of School No. 12.

My purpose tonight is to enlighten you as to the many positive changes that have taken place since the arrival of our present leadership. Some of them are: The development of a clear student focus vision for excellence in the Paterson public schools, as can be reviewed in the Corrective and Compliance Action Plan -- and there are two such books that are here tonight, if you would like to review them -- in the area of governance, leadership, management, business operations, etc., and the sharing of that vision to all; intensive staff development, team building, and collaborative efforts with and for principals, teachers, support staff, and parents to effectuate and improve student output and outcome; the establishment of 10 initiatives by Dr. Wilson.

One of the initiatives was "students at risk." I had the pleasure to serve on that committee with my coworkers and community members such as Chuck Lighty, the high school Principal; Janet McDaniel, Chief Administrator from Social Services; Al Moody, Youth Services Director; Mike O'Shea, Prosecutor's Office; Richard Munsey, Chief of Police; Judy Sanson, Principal; and many others. Never in the history of Paterson, not as a student, not as an employee in the 16 years, have I ever seen such a committee formed to deal with student issues involving community members.

I'd like to discuss, now, proactive changes that have taken place at School No. 12, with marked improvement in facilities, thanks to the gentlemen, Bill Zimmlinghaus and Lou Malone, and the support from the Central Office; reduced class sizes because of the school-wide project initiatives; increased parental involvement; intensive staff development in assertiveness discipline, reading, math, conflict resolution, and format training by our distinguished Curriculum and Instruction Division; outside resources promoted by Dr. Wilson's initiatives; support for our Homework Helper and After School Program, and precollege Saturday Academy in conjunction with Passaic County Community College; collaborative efforts with Dr. Wilson's central staff, parents, Columbia University, and the Advocacy Design Center for the purpose of improving the delivery of instruction; and such formations of teamwork of teachers, custodians, parents, community members in the design of a core group in order to provide leadership and to do research studies to be able to select an educational model which would be effective and provide change in terms of the delivery of instruction and ensure success. The model, which School No. 12 will be focusing on as a result of this intensive collaborative process with Columbia University, is success for all.

I've already been told that we will be having a Pre-K School Program come September. It is something that staff members and community members at School No. 12 have been seeking for a long, long time, and as a result of Dr. Wilson's initiative, we will be having a Pre-K Program at School No. 12.

There has been intensive Principal training. For School No. 12, I've had training from direct central staff on Saturdays, because I requested it for my team to do team building. I've had training for problem solving, as have other principals, at Hoffman-LaRoche. We've had training in assessment, and data review, and understanding. In the future

we have scheduled conflict resolutions and team building, again, for all principals and Central Office, in an effort to build collaboration between all of us who are concerned for children. This will be taking place as a result of a collaborative effort with Chubbs Institute and a group that is called "MAPS." They are all businesses that come together to help improve education.

When I was a Vice Principal and Dr. Wilson first came to the District, he formulated, for the first time, discussion groups. They were called, "Study Groups." Books were provided to all who were interested. There were at least 10 different Study Groups, and people read and discussed current articles and issues. He began to make us think about possibilities, and he forced us to become more proactively involved in providing direction and learning.

In all of the rapid efforts that are leading toward excellence in the Paterson school system brought forth through his leadership, anyone who would make a neutral assessment with no hidden agendas would surely have to evaluate the schools as moving toward excellence, and give us a high assessment.

Thank you very much for your time. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Yes, Mayor?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Mirva, do you want to come back, please?

MS. RIVERA: Sure.

SENATOR EWING: Not too long.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Very quickly. Thank you, everybody, for your patience.

You're talking about change in the very structure in how we deliver education to our children. We know that many of the problems that existed before were endemic. They have nothing to do -- very little to do -- with personalities, but were endemic to the structure. While there was a reluctance to

change the structure, there was no less a desire before, than there is now, to get kids to learn.

Now, let me say this: I've known you for many, many years, if I may, Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR EWING: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: And I know that you don't just spout the party line. I know you're here-- I'll be very frank with you. I have some questions about why so many staff members are presenting their points tonight, but that, be it as it is -- that, be it as it is.

You know, I have a great respect for you as an educator, and I mean that sincerely. Are you telling us tonight that you are convinced that the new structure that you see in your own school, because of certain things that have happened -- because it doesn't affect every school -- are you convinced that you're better able, and your staff is better able to deliver educational services so that kids will learn more and be better citizens in the community? Are you convinced of that?

MS. RIVERA: Absolutely, Mayor Graves. As you said--
(laughter)

I did it. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Listen, I'm sorry. Mayor Pascshell, I'm really nervous, okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Relax. It's late in the night.

SENATOR EWING: You'll have a pink slip tomorrow.

MS. RIVERA: It's late. I'm sorry. Listen, it's late and I'm tired. I've had a long day today.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: We're all tired.

MS. RIVERA: For example, today at School No. 12, we had a member from Johns Hopkins University there planning with the core group, again, for excellence in the delivery of services. I absolutely and affirmatively believe that the present leadership has provided new direction, has provided things we never had before, such as intensive staff development

-- not just for a selected few, but for all. The level of involvement of parents has increased. The level of involvement of members such as custodians feeling responsible, having ownership, and taking pride in keeping school buildings clean-- The level of involvement from C&I staff to provide workshops-- I can pick up the phone and say, "Will you come in? I need help with my staff in terms of the delivery of instruction in math," and they're there. They come and they provide.

I do believe -- and you know that I'm independent enough, and always have been, to speak what I believe.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: That's why I'm asking you the question. The question is one of structure and order. Children need structure and order. One of my questions, one of my concerns has been -- and we've talked about this for many years -- is, if you impose the structure from the outside, even though it is something that presents an order which we did not have, perhaps, before -- not questioning anybody's motivations now, because we're not going to get anywhere if we do that -- but if we have that structure, I'm not so sure that you wouldn't come up with a structure yourself.

You see, I'm concerned when we impose things on educators, or whether educators impose a system that really debilitates teachers at the station to do what they were taught to do. I don't believe we can social engineer our kids to be good citizens and good students. (applause) Don't interpret what I'm saying. This is not an either/or thing. This is important.

What you say goes to the very heart, again, of what we're talking about here. And in all fairness, if we're going to arrive at a better system, we better be honest with each other with what we like and what we don't like. Because let me tell you, no one has all the answers -- no educator, no taxpayer, no legislator. The fact is, we've got to listen to

each other, and I'm listening to you very carefully. I hope you didn't mind me asking you the question.

MS. RIVERA: No. For School No. 12, I'd like to say that the staff had a choice in becoming involved with the Advocacy Design Group at Columbia University, and they were the ones who made the decision as to what program they wanted to implement. They're taking key leadership roles, and they're sometimes even telling the Principal, Mirva Rivera, "This is what we want; this is what we expect. And when you go to Dr. Wilson, make sure that you come back with a full package," because they work long hours after school, and the people from the Advocacy Design Center -- Dr. Frank Smith and his group -- worked for free, and have been very faithful and consistent in the endeavor of working with us.

I believe that no matter what training I have had in the past through Douglas College or William Paterson, the training that I've had under the leadership of Dr. Wilson and his cabinet is worth more to me, and is invaluable in terms of learning, growth, and where I can take a school, whether it's No. 12, 11, or 14, okay?

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. RIVERA: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Mr. T.K. Wells, followed by Mirta Sanz.

T O N Y K. W E L L S: Good evening, or should I-- It's almost morning. But good evening, Mayor Pascrell and Senator Ewing. I'm T.K. Wells, the Principal of the Rosa Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts.

There are many things that could be said on the positive side. There are many things that could be said on the negative side. However, knowing me as you have over the years, Mr. Mayor, I know that you know that I always accentuate the positive.

I speak as a Principal -- a proud Principal, I might add -- of Rosa Parks, and these are some of the things that

have been embraced by the District and the State District Superintendent and his staff. One of the things that I was very pleased to be involved with was one of the seven initiatives, one of which was the Reconfiguration Committee.

On February 7, 1992, an educational improvement plan was submitted to the Commissioner of Education. I'm proud to say that the cover embraced some photos by my art students.

The Reconfiguration Committee is what I would like to speak about, as I chaired that Task Force. It was one of 10 task forces.

On May 18, 1992, a Task Force Selection Committee met at Rosa Parks. Over 300 persons were nominated, and close to 20 people were nominated -- perhaps over 20 -- were nominated for the Reconfiguration Task Force Committee. Then on April 30, right upstairs, the initial Task Force members met here. About 150 people, I think, were present at that meeting. We broke up into large and small groups. Then on January 6 of this year, a public hearing was held, right here, on the Reconfiguration Task Force's recommendations to establish middle schools in the District.

I, along with members of the Grade Configuration Task Force, recommended to Dr. Wilson that Paterson modify its present elementary structure to include middle schools. Out of that committee, recommendations were gleaned -- three options. They were: a) to continue with the present configuration; option b) was to move to an elementary, middle, and high school configuration; or option c) within various existing elementary schools, organize middle school clusters -- grades 6, 7, and 8 -- and have a middle school within a school configuration.

We had a public hearing here, and we stated some of the benefits, as well as some of the negatives of the middle school within a school structure. The students of the middle school within a school structure would have the following benefits: Students would become familiar with the high school

experience. Students would be exposed to a slightly greater number of teachers and a variety of teaching styles as they traveled from class to class. There would also be a greater opportunity for coordination of the instruction program by clustering the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Principals could focus on the content strengths of their teachers when making teacher assignments, and teachers could concentrate their skills on the presentations of subject matter which allows them to best utilize their context strengths.

The school within a school model, which we recommended to the Superintendent, within each K through 8 school building, grades 5 through 8 would be clustered to form an elementary program; grades 6, 7, and 8 would be clustered to form a middle school program. This idea was presented to the Superintendent, and I believe a recommendation was made to go with the school within a school concept because the committee and I, personally, do not feel that the present status was in the best interests of our students.

There are other points that I would like to bring up, being as brief as possible, and being as thorough as possible.

I stand here as a representative of the District, and of Rosa Parks, which I call an oasis for learning. Under the present administration there are many exciting things that have taken place at Rosa Parks. I'd like to list a few of them:

A summer music camp, which afforded students in the elementary school the opportunity to share in some musical experiences at Rosa Parks in the summer program. There were 12 students from Rosa Parks who went to a PREP program over the summer. The program that we're the most proud of is the Positive Impact Ensemble, which, together with the Prosecutor's Office and the New Jersey State Attorney General's Office, was formed to educate young people about society's vices. I think it's a very, very effective Program. The Mayor and other luminaries were at Rosa Parks when we kicked off that program.

Programs such as dance competitions, held in and out of State -- many awards and trophies garnered by our students. Staff development has been afforded us, and teachers have grasped onto this opportunity with fervor. To name just one of the mundane necessities, duplicating machines were afforded to all the schools.

Many partnerships: As we talk about the need for partnerships between schools and the community, let me just share a few of these partnerships that are presently ongoing at Rosa Parks, and have also been embraced by the State District Superintendent:

Saint Joseph's Hospital Day-Care Center: This program is to foster role model relationships between preschool-aged children and high school students. This has been an ongoing program since-- We're going into the second year of this program.

Golden Years Project: A partnership between New Jersey Youth Corps, Montclair State College, Preakness Hospital, and Rosa Parks for a Paterson 200 Project. This program also aids our writers because they write about these experiences.

We have a Youth Self-Development Program. This is a program of retired professional volunteers who come in to provide tutorial services for Rosa Parks' students on Tuesday and Thursday of each week.

The North Jersey Developmental Center Project: It's an ongoing annual performance for patients at the North Jersey Developmental Center.

Multiculturalism: We have a solid program with the Mountain Lakes High School. It's an ongoing partnership with various student activities at both schools. We've been invited there to share in debates and other various and sundry educational activities, as well as recreational activities. They have also visited Rosa Parks on a number of occasions.

The Federation Senior Citizens Apartment, which is a neighbor across the street from us. We have an ongoing partnership with these residents. We have an Adopted Grandparent Club that has been formed, and these partners visit with us on a regular basis for performances, and to deliver ethnic presentations, as well, in the library.

Partnerships with William Paterson College: As we participate in an ongoing program in an annual Youth Day Conference, also with the Music Department.

Partnership with Montclair State College--

SENATOR EWING: Mr. Wells, we cannot keep going on with one thing after another like that. What I gather is, you feel that the system has improved. It is working well under Dr. Wilson?

MR. WELLS: I feel that I am happy that I have been afforded an appointment to list some of the positives that I see since--

SENATOR EWING: I know, but the hour is getting late. There are a lot of people behind you who also want to say a few words.

MR. WELLS: Your point is well-taken. Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: No, thank you very much for coming.

Mirta Sanz? Is she here? Bill Kline? Oh, Mirta is here.

M I R T A S A N Z: Yes, I'm here. Good evening. I'm Mirta Sanz. I'm acting Bilingual ESL Supervisor, and I'm grateful that I'm able to speak to you tonight on behalf of the bilinguals, who many of them I have seen at every school. The bilingual parents have had workshops where we have gone to the schools and presented them with ideas on how to help their children at home so they are better prepared when they come to school.

Times have changed, and we no longer can be passive. The child has to be actively learning, and when children come

to school, they are just very passive because they have not been exposed to a lot. I remember my last workshop. My supervisor arrived and she saw me with a shopping bag with bread, beans, and everything. She said, "You never told me you went shopping." I said, "Well, this is part of their life. This is everyday stuff that they can use to help the kids at home."

The parents are very receptive. The parents showed me many areas that we can cover besides what I covered that day. That's all documented. It gives us a headway of where to go.

Talking about something else-- I'm trying to cover a few areas in a short time because I realize that we're all tired.

SENATOR EWING: Well, are these new programs that were not in before?

MS. SANZ: Yes. They are new.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

MS. SANZ: Technology: We have, at the high school, computer labs that our kids love to go to. They just know how to use them; they're learning how to use them. Today we have workshops where the teachers are being trained how to use them for their own benefit, how to implement programs using the computers. Therefore, in this case, we can see, definitely, how all of this is helping the students. They're putting together many things in the computer.

I also want to cover the area of-- When Mr. Lang, from Barnert Hospital, spoke-- I was at Barnert Hospital with our kids in December. Our kids showed them what they could do for the community. I think that we're reaching out, and they're responding.

Our students are learning to realize that they have a lot to give. It's not only taking, it's giving, and it's part of growing up.

For teachers: I have found this has been a tremendous year for me for growth, and I hope that it has been for a lot of other teachers. I participate in the audio conferences that, through Dr. Williams, we have been able to accomplish this year. In other words, I speak over the phone with coordinators of other programs in other states. We discuss different areas where we think we can share ideas. Sometimes they have different ideas that I think may help me, and sometimes I have ideas that might help them. By sharing, we're learning a lot from each other. To me, it's a first experience on that.

And secondly, as we mentioned before, with William Paterson, we have been having development workshops, which many teachers are getting a lot out of. We're growing, but just give us time to grow.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Mr. Kline?

W I L L I A M K L I N E: Senator Ewing, Mayor and Assemblyman Pascrell, thank you for the opportunity to make a few remarks.

First of all, I'll try not to say anything, or very little of what has been said before me. I have to comment-- First of all, I'm a little disappointed that I only saw one teacher give expression of what's going on in this District, and I think that's a reflection of the morale of this District.

I spent 35 years in this District, and I left of my own free will as an Assistant Superintendent, having been a teacher, vice principal, director, and assistant superintendent. I served under four superintendents, and never have I seen the morale so low in this District as it is now.

I don't know if you have felt the way I have felt, but Mr. Kirby, who expressed himself tonight, should be commended for speaking the truth and saying what he said. It's

interesting that the only persons we've heard from tonight from staff are administrators. Now, what about the front-line troops, the teachers? I think we should have heard from them, and there must be a reason why we haven't.

When State takeover first happened, the meetings downtown of the Advisory Board -- committee meetings -- were filled with many, many parents. But the time that the meetings were held, 6:30, precluded a lot of parents from attending, because many of them were, first, getting off from work and they had to go home and feed their children. Many of them made sacrifices to come down to be in attendance at the meetings. But the way they were treated, a lot of them didn't get the kind of reception that they thought they should get. Public information was hard to come by, so gradually many of them stayed away. Now when you go to those monthly meetings, there is more paid staff there than there are parents.

It was very refreshing to come in here tonight and see parents here tonight, because they knew they would find a receptive ear. And, Senator Ewing and Mayor Pascrell, I'm very, very happy that you are here. It is a shame that you had to come here in order to get the parents to feel that they would have somebody to listen to them.

It's a shame that somebody would consider hiring an ombudsperson when this system needs guidance counselors. We have principals, vice principals. In this case, the concern was for an Hispanic ombudsperson. We have Hispanic principals. We have Hispanic guidance counselors. We have an Hispanic parent coordinator. We have Hispanic PTA presidents. We have interested, involved Hispanic parents. Why should we spend a high salary on one person -- an ombudsperson -- when that money could be best used to serve the students, maybe to reduce and stem the tide of the Hispanic students who drop out of school?

It's a question of important priorities. We don't need an ombudsperson in this town. We're all ombudspersons. All of us are concerned about children, that's why we're here. We don't need to hire an ombudsperson. We need more guidance counselors.

Now, with respect to the Advisory Board: I commend you for your participation, but if you're thinking about revising or revamping takeover -- if it's going to be takeover at all -- first of all, takeover doesn't work.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: That's right.

MR. KLINE: A dictator cannot fulfill what needs to be done, especially here in Paterson. What has the dictatorship resulted in in Paterson? It's resulted in curriculum programs that are not effective. It's resulted in excessive raises. It's resulted in students' needs not being met, because there is no one to point the finger and to say no.

I'm going to close there, because I'm sure many other things have been said. But I'm saying this: Takeover is not working in Paterson. Our students are suffering. Our community has been disenfranchised. We have no say. The Advisory Committee is not even a rubber stamp, because they couldn't even do anything about the raises. Raises are to be deserved.

I think you've gotten the facts from the people tonight, Senator Ewing, Mayor Pascrell -- Assemblyman Pascrell -- and I'm sure that you're going to take the right kind of action.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Pete Tirri, followed by Carlisle Parker.

P E T E R T I R R I: Good evening, Senator Ewing. My name is Pete Tirri. I'm President of the Paterson Education Association. And, Mayor Graves, I want to tell you that you haven't looked better in years. (laughter)

Senator Ewing, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak before you and the rest of the administrative staff of the District, and provide for you an opportunity -- or our perspective of what takeover has been about.

The takeover of the school system is the result of the failure of the monitoring system of the State of New Jersey, more than anything else. Paterson schools were the victims of politics, inefficiency, petty individual interests, and of that there can be no doubt. One visit to a Board meeting showed the bickering that created the chaos in the District. In point of fact, the good old days weren't.

However, while the State monitored and observed and documented, the problems grew. The animosity between the County Superintendent and the District increased the problems. They could agree on nothing. The atmosphere in the District became one of, "them versus us." Instead of trying to resolve the differences, they fought about them. Nothing got better; nothing was corrected.

The State should have, Senator, at that point, had interim intervention steps to avoid the total paralysis that struck this District. Such intervention could have avoided the total takeover that became almost inevitable.

From the day of the takeover, the attitude of the new administration has been to virtually ignore the potential and cooperative nature of the staff. It was as if they had all the answers, and we had virtually none. We have been told time and time again that history in this District doesn't matter, that this is a new era. The staff I represent, despite being placed in the throes of adversity, have continued to perform admirably. The District has imposed program after program upon the staff so that the collective equilibrium remains off balance.

The Paradigm Program has left staff demoralized and our students disgruntled. Questions raised by staff about curricular credibility, high school graduation, and college placement were ignored. The Program was imposed upon 10 schools, with little or no leeway for creativity. Art, music, industrial arts, home economics, social studies, and science are eliminated from the programs. In point of fact, the students in those schools are more educationally deprived today than they were before the takeover. (applause)

The designation of four schools as not successful further demoralized the staff, who, to this day, do not know the basis upon which the determination was made, much less the rationale for the determination. They were never even told that they were being evaluated. Based upon a secret evaluation process, an entire school staff was transferred. No explanation was given, just a determination that they had failed.

Job vacancies for the new administration have resulted in few Paterson staff being promoted. While the appearance is that significant numbers of new administrative jobs have been created, they have gone mostly to outsiders who face significant obstacles in trying to learn about the District. Many qualified Paterson staff have been overlooked. Others were dismissed for reasons unknown. A supervisor with a highly commendable rating was, for example, let go during the review process for no apparent reason.

In addition, posting for new administrative positions carries salary cap figures which will discourage experienced members of my unit from applying. Why should anyone take a cut in pay to get more responsibility?

When the State took over, we all expected that at least supplies and materials would reach the teachers on time. We were wrong. Every day, staff members tell me of orders placed but never received, of orders held which resulted in

fewer materials being provided as the prices rose. One staff member characterized it to me by saying, "Same bus, different drivers." For classroom teachers, the improvements we expected have not appeared.

Even when the new management, unfortunately, took positive new actions, the results have been mixed. Copying machines were purchased for each school to replace unhealthy, antiquated ditto machines. We probably have the only ditto machine still working in the State of New Jersey. Unfortunately, toner and paper supplies were not increased. Teachers are still forced to purchase copy paper because school supplies are absent or inadequate. As a result, the machines, not able to accommodate the variety of paper surfaces, weights, etc, are breaking down with a greater frequency.

The jury is still out, so to speak, on several initiatives, among them a facility report. The study, which I believe you received a month or so ago, is one of the most important exercises ever undertaken in Paterson. The report shows how severely neglected the facilities in the District have been, and how very expensive that neglect will be to rectify. PEA has stated for years much of that which can be found in the report. We support its findings. The question is: Who will provide the funds? If State takeover can only identify problems without paying for their resolution, who needs it?

Initiatives such as summer music camp, computer camp, and the PREP Program may have positive impact upon small numbers of students. Nonetheless, these initiatives are to be applauded, because even though they're limited in scope, they are significant improvements over what we had.

Senator, the best parts of the Paterson school system are the students in the classrooms and the staff that works with them every day. State takeover was supposed to improve conditions for them, make things better, improve morale and

bring stability and respectability to the schools. After two years these goals, in the eyes of my members, remain unattained.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

C A R L I S L E S. P A R K E R, S R.: My name is Carlisle S. Parker, Sr.

SENATOR EWING: How do you spell it?

MR. PARKER: C-A-R-L-I-S-L-E, and it's pronounced Carlisle.

SENATOR EWING: Somebody printed "Y." Sorry.

MR. PARKER: Okay. I will try to be as brief as possible. I am a Principal in the Paterson public school system. You have asked for a response, either in the positive or the negative. My response will be in the positive, and the positive in this regard: We are all concerned about children, and children are what I am concerned about. And I use that personal pronoun because it's very critical.

Change is hard to accept, not only for those of us who are older, but some of us want the same old things. Our society is changing. I may not agree with every tactic or approach that might have been utilized, and I might have even made some suggestions, but I'm not here to criticize. I am only here to give those things that are positive, and what I see from a small rim of this large system. It is critical that changes have to be made, and what I have seen, I will express very briefly.

We have the yen to think in a different light; goals, objectives, these are primary. Teachers that I have had the opportunity to work with have come back with positive statements from my particular building, because we have to think in terms of our boys and girls, regardless of their race, regardless of their language, regardless of any other thing, that they can dream the impossible dream. And what has been going on is simply this: some changes that had to be made. I,

too, was in the system when I used to go to Board meetings, and I'll say it very openly: I often wondered who was important. Were we talking about our boys and girls, or were we talking about people who were only concerned about themselves?

Therefore, in conclusion, I will say that the changes made are for the boys and girls. Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: Anna DeMolli, followed by Richard Robert. Oh, she had her finger over the name, Richard Roberto? Is Richard here? (no response) Okay, then she will be followed by Fred Lang.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: He already spoke.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, okay. Esther Boone?

All right, go ahead, proceed. I'm going to excuse myself for a minute, otherwise-- The Mayor will carry on. You know where I'm going.

A N N A D e M O L L I: I'm very tired myself. I'm ready to follow you right out the door here.

SENATOR EWING: I'm not tired, I just have to--

MS. DeMOLLI: Good evening, Mayor. Good evening everyone. We're all here because we love Paterson, and that's the reason I'm here.

I just want to say, having been a child here in Paterson, having been a student in the schools, and now, an administrator in the school system, that for 20 years I went to Board of Education meetings, sometimes once a month, and sometimes twice a month when the work session was different from the public meeting. I've gone to a lot of public meetings, in general, about education. One of the things that I've felt for a long time is that we really were in a hole that we were not getting out of for a long time, wondering if there was going to be some light at the end of the tunnel. Paterson, everyone knows and no one can deny, was not doing well, and we keep slipping and slipping. We went to Board meetings and we

would shout and talk and jump. We'd visit schools. People would come in and out. Monitors would come in and out. It was just getting worse. Intensive care was needed.

State takeover came in, and what it's done for me is, it's begun to revive my hope here in the city in terms of the schools. I am an administrator in the school. Research says that you've got to look to the administrators, as well. You've got to do something for them. What the administration has done is, it has begun to clarify a little bit of vision for some of us. I say for some of us because I can only speak for Anna DiMolli, and maybe one or two of my colleagues, because we talk about what the State takeover has done. I'll tell you what it has done. It really has directed us in a way and in a vision that we thought wouldn't happen, and I'm very grateful for that.

The 10 task forces that were developed, the facilities report that has been done, the work on the shared decision-making, the schoolwide projects that are coming in, everything that's been going on, it isn't all perfect, but we're beginning to move ahead. It's given me a new sense of hope.

I'm sticking around for awhile because I think for the first time, some of us are very, very excited that someone downtown does not have to like me in order for my roof to get fixed. It's going to get fixed because they care about getting it fixed. And believe me, that's the one thing I think the State takeover did. I don't feel I have to go around making friends in order to get the things that need to get done, done.

I'm very pleased about the State takeover. They don't look at what connections we have. They're not looking at those types of things. They're looking at what needs to get done for the very first time in a long time, and I'm very pleased about that. (applause) I don't feel I have to go and make certain phone calls to get something done now. I put in an order, and

because somebody doesn't like me, it doesn't go under the other 499 work orders that have to get done. To me, that may be a minor change, but believe me, it's a tremendous change.

I asked one of my teachers, "What would you say, if you had to, that the takeover did?" And she said, "You know, I don't know how to say big visionary things about what the takeover has done, but it gave me a copier." And people will say, "Well, gee, you know, she's going to ditto more sheets." No, she's not going to ditto more sheets. What she's doing is trying to provide more individualized instruction for children, and now she can come in and make five lessons very quickly and copy them, as opposed to one lesson.

So, there are a lot of things that we can talk about, but what I want to say is, for me what it's done, it's made me excited about education in Paterson again for the first time in 20 years. I thank the new administration for that. Whether they stay, whether they go, I'm excited again, and I know a lot of my teachers are.

Of course, the research shows, believe it or not, that the morale will be lower when changes begin, because people are uncomfortable, because the expectations are changing. One of the things the takeover also did for me is, it made me zoom up my expectations, because now we're being listened to, and I really appreciate that.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Thank you very much.

James Gist, III? James are you here?

J A M E S F. G I S T, III: Right here. (speaking from audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Come forward please. State your name for the record, James, when you get up to the microphone. Thank you.

MR. GIST: My name is James Frederick Gist, III. I've been a resident of Paterson all my life. I live at 86 17th Avenue. I am President of the Paterson Association for Gifted

Education, which is a parent group of children in the Gifted and Talented Program. I am also President of the Home School Council at the Rosa Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts.

I am here as an advocate of State takeover, but not completely. They have done two things that I think have been touched on today, that bother me: the Paradigm Program. I think what happened is, it was like a hand grenade. When it went off it took everybody, and it really didn't pinpoint which children needed it. The other thing is: The raise, I believe, was just a little untimely. I'm not saying undeserving, but I think it might have been untimely. Okay?

Other than that, I think they have been very receptive to us as parents and students. I believe our education system really needed an enema, if I can say that. (laughter) And I am really thankful for the change.

I'm going to yield the rest of my time. My son has been waiting here for hours. He has been wishing to speak to the Council. So, if you can just give him a minute or two so I can take him home and put him and his brothers and sisters to bed, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you.

J A H I G I S T: I'd just like to start by saying, really, when it comes to education, I don't care who's in charge, as long as they're getting the job done. (applause) Because State takeover has-- I think State takeover-- Well, let's just say it hasn't done anything bad, except, of course, the Paradigm Program. I'm not for that, because the Paradigm Program, it breaks down students. And if a student likes science and he doesn't get science, then they're not going to be willing to learn.

If they want to teach a kid reading, and he's not good at reading but he is good at something like science, then let him read about science. That way you will kill two birds with one stone.

I think one of the main problems with teachers is their attitude. I think sometimes teachers don't have the right attitude, or don't have a good attitude toward teaching students. (applause)

SENATOR EWING: What about some of the students' attitude towards the teachers?

MR. JAHI GIST: Well--

SENATOR EWING: No, that's all right. What grade are you in?

MR. JAHI GIST: I'd like to answer that question, actually.

SENATOR EWING: What grade are you in?

MR. JAHI GIST: Seventh grade. I'd like to answer that question, actually.

SENATOR EWING: No, no. You go on with--

MR. JAHI GIST: Okay.

SENATOR EWING: I mean, life is a two-way street. You can't blame everything on the teachers.

MR. JAHI GIST: I know. I'm just saying, it's not actually the teachers' fault, because it's a joint effort on everybody.

SENATOR EWING: That's right.

MR. JAHI GIST: After all, whenever some people make mistakes, usually it's about teaching the students, so the students have to bear it whenever anybody else makes a mistake. And whenever somebody does something good, the students also bear that.

SENATOR EWING: How many students are in your class?

MR. JAHI GIST: There are about 22 to 26. I'm not sure right now.

About the Paradigm Program, I'd like to say again, that I'm not for that. The Paradigm Program, it just beats down the students.

SENATOR EWING: Okay. Thank you very much. You were very good.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Was Anna DiMolli here?

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: She just spoke.

SENATOR EWING: All right. Richard Roberto? (no response) Not here. Okay.

Esther Boone? (no response) Alice Smith (no response) Robert Howell? (no response) Candice Farrell? (no response) Philomena Pezzano?

Is this Philomena?

PHILOMENA PEZZANO: I'm Philomena.

Good evening. I will keep my comments brief. I do have a prepared statement which I will hand in, and I will just address a few of the issues that I heard this evening.

My name is Philomena Pezzano. I'm currently the Director of Student Support Services with the Paterson Public School District. I have been a District employee and an educator for 22 years, the last 6 as an administrator. I was an administrator under the prior administration, and at that time received full support from the Superintendent and his staff. However, as many people have said, there were endemic problems with the entire structure at the time. And although I received that support, I can say now, following the State takeover, that I am better able to provide quality services and quality programs for our students.

I have always been, for those who know me, a strong student advocate. There isn't a decision I make that isn't based on what is good for students. I truly want the best for them.

With the State takeover, one of the issues that was raised before by Mayor Pascrell was the issue of structure, and whether or not you can impose structure, or should it be imposed. One of the things that I have found out that has assisted me tremendously is the fact that a very clear organizational chart has been implemented with very clear

reporting lines. Those clear reporting lines have allowed for change, have allowed for departments to function very efficiently. I know in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, we are divided into departments. Those departments work as a cohesive unit. All of the departments work together to provide quality programming for students.

Our administrator -- our leader -- in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction will always tell us that curriculum is the heart and soul of the school district, and if we can provide quality programming for students, they will benefit. I truly believe that although I have always felt that I have provided quality services and programming, I'm better able to do it now. Things may move more quickly. We're not hedged in by some of the problems that were there prior to the takeover.

Also, we in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, because of the organization that we have, are constantly promoted to be -- not promoted in the sense of the word -- but constantly encouraged to be creative and innovative. If you're willing to work hard, if you want to do right things for students, there aren't any stumbling blocks in our Division, and a lot of wonderful programs have come about.

I would encourage any of the Senators to come visit with us. I would love to speak to anyone concerning the programs that we have. There are many good things.

Just one other issue I would like to address is the issue of the credibility we now have. Prior to the takeover, because of the impending takeover, we lost a tremendous amount of credibility. I continue to oversee the career and vocational programs. My prior position was Coordinator of Career Programs, and I have dealt with businesses and industry and various community groups.

Prior to the takeover, people were willing to work with you. After the takeover, I can't begin to tell you the number of calls I have received, the kinds of partnerships that

we have been able to partner with. Just an example of that is the Mita Copy Star. Mita moved their corporate headquarters to New Jersey. They contacted the Paterson public school system; they wanted a partnership with us. We developed, on the spot, a partnership where we are providing a copier repair course for our students.

Someone before mentioned a computer repair course. That was-- That is for special ed students. We are now providing a program similar for regular students. They have provided training; they have provided money. Those are the kinds of things that have happened because of takeover.

So I can honestly say that it is better now, and I thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Philomena.

Joseph Fulmore, followed by Dennis Vroegindewey.

J O S E P H F U L M O R E: Good evening--

SENATOR EWING: Good evening.

MR. FULMORE: --to Senator Ewing, our Mayor, and certainly to our friends who are still here. We are here because -- as someone has said -- we are here because of our children.

My name is Joseph Fulmore, and I'm a resident of Paterson. I have three children, one of whom is a teacher in the City of Paterson, a 17-year-old daughter, and a 10-year-old son. I am very fortunate to be the lucky Principal of School No. 6.

I had a 20-page documentation that I would like to share with you. However, as my colleagues said not to do so, I'm going to take my time and say some things I would like to say.

I'm going to begin with the word, "unity," and I'm going to say that unity, in my definition, comes as the result of teamwork on the part of effective leadership -- a union of professional educators and family members -- and this, a system

which has brought about changes at all times; a system that is working for the improvement of all children.

As a citizen of the Paterson community for many years, I can see the educational community embarking upon a change that will make an ultimate positive impact on the lives of our children.

Our goals are very clear at School No. 6. We define our needs as the result of extremely long hours of collaboration with all aspects of the community. Of course, in order to be the best, you must have that instinct of the desire to pursue the solutions to fulfill those needs. I feel that we have been directed in the most educationally sound and productive manner in order to reach our goals.

As we continue to meet the challenge of our District's vision, which is led by Dr. Wilson and his staff, we at School No. 6 discovered that the greatest measurable deficiency was the inability of many of our students to meet the basic standards in reading and math. In addition to the supportive program, increased availability of materials, and in-service workshops; that is, as we attempt to reshape the minds of our students, we have placed these in the highest priority and devoted the maximum amount of time possible on these essential skills. Time on task was increased substantially by our students as the result of -- and I'm going to become the target -- as a result of the Paradigm Pilot Program at School No. 6, one that I find to be successful; one that has brought about, and certainly made our students exposed to more academics. I truly can attest that the assessment of the students' performance to date has shown improvement. The upcoming California Achievement Tests will give us a more definite assessment. There has been improvement in attendance -- staff attendance as well.

As the District continues to embark upon a campaign to promote a bond between home and school, this was done through

the many parent forums conducted for parents and other community groups. This is an ongoing process which gives the parents and other groups the opportunity to interface with our Superintendent.

Our goal is to educate our students in the most expeditious manner, to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning, and to make available the materials to accomplish this end.

A statement was made earlier, in terms of the Paradigm Program -- and I applaud those young people who stated that they would not prefer the Paradigm Program. But I say to you tonight, that if I were to bring about a pilot program at School No. 6 next year, or the next year, knowing what I know now in terms of the achievement, I would bring a restructuring format to School No. 6 in the form of a Paradigm Program.

I think when you look at the Paradigm Program, you must take into consideration that it is that leader of the building who must also take charge of where or how the philosophy and how the curriculum is being articulated. Yes, the science, the social studies textbooks are being used in the classroom. Those books are being used not from the content point of view, but are used from a language arts point of view. This happens to be a part of the ongoing process, as a part of the takeover. That's a part of Dr. Wilson's initiative, and also a buy-in that we volunteered for at School No. 6 as staff members and parents. I might be the target, but I'm willing to take on the task.

I just would like to share with you some of the programs. There are many of them that are taking place at School No. 6, and I'm very proud to be there. But just to share a few with you, such as: Our work orders, of course, are being responded to in a timely fashion. Our supplies and materials have been made available. The ordering process has improved tremendously. Positive involvement for the parents

and the community of various programs. The Aristotle Program, which has made a tremendous impact upon the morale and the self-esteem of our young people. It's a five-year program whereby eighth graders will be followed through high school as a partnership with IBM. We also have a Mentoring Program through Project 2000, where we have more than 100 men who have been through School No. 6, and are still coming, working as teachers' assistants in the classroom; that is, basically being mentors to boys in grades one, two, three, and four. And certainly, we have the young ladies involved in that, too.

I could go on and name a list of things that are happening at School No. 6 which are very positive. I'm going to end simply by saying that if I had the opportunity again to be a part of what happens to be a great change in education, in the philosophy, in the curriculum here in the City of Paterson, of which we're going to make a great impact, I would do the same again.

I thank you for your time.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Dennis Vroegindewey, followed by Gabrielle Duffy, followed by Darlene Rankin.

D E N N I S V R O E G I N D E W E Y: Mayor Pascrell and Senator Ewing, I have the longest--

SENATOR EWING: What's your name?

MR. VROEGINDEWEY: I was just going to say, I have one of the longest names on your list, but I promise to give the briefest presentation. My name is Dennis Vroegindewey. I am Supervisor of Libraries in the town, and I'd just like to say that this year, we've made a splash across the nation in the library community for opening in September -- 15 reopenings of libraries, and the hiring of 8 new library media specialists. That was in collaboration with the Paterson Education Fund. We're even serving as a model for the American Library Association for the way we did this.

My second comment is going to be this: Joe Fulmore, the man who preceded me at School No. 6, wants to put a library in his school next year. He wants to replace an industrial arts shop with outmoded equipment, ready for the scrap heap, that was probably put in there after World War II for a predated manufacturing-based economy. He wants to put a library media center in there with computerization, so his students can access all the data bases that are out there, and really become information literate.

One restriction we have is that to do that, he needs a change of use. The present codes would mean that he would have to have a facility about half the size of this auditorium to do so. So I am just asking--

SENATOR EWING: For the library?

MR. VROEGINDEWEY: Yes, to make a library 50-square feet per student. He's got a school with almost 1000 people, so that is something that we are going to be approaching you and the educational community to address.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: We'll work on a method to-- We might be able to get a waiver, so you don't-- In fact, this is one of the areas that we're going to be looking into, some of the outdated rules and regulations regarding facilities and things like that.

MR. VROEGINDEWEY: (speaking from audience) We will have his specs coming for three sites, down to Trenton, so possibly, if you could look into that? Thank you.

G A B R I E L L E D U F F Y: Good evening. My name is Gabrielle Duffy, and I'm employed as Supervisor of Practical Arts by the District. The position is the consolidation of two previous ones, so one salary was saved in its creation. It encompasses both the home economics and industrial arts areas.

This is my first year as Supervisor, and my twentieth year in the District. Ten years of that time were spent as a

home economics teacher, primarily in the family life area, nine others as a work study coordinator.

I'm here to share some of the good things that are happening, particularly in the practical arts area. Many of the things that have been addressed have dealt with general concerns.

In answer to the initial question that was repeatedly asked by your panel as to what difference has the State takeover made in our District, I would have to answer that if it wouldn't have been for the takeover, change would not have been as great, as quick, as supportive, and as collaborative with town agencies and industry.

Home economics in Paterson had been traditional, focusing primarily on clothing construction and food preparation. This focus neither met the personal nor vocational needs of our students fully. Within the last year, the discipline has been redirected. The teachers and I evaluated the personal, academic, and vocational needs of our students, and curricular and training needs have been identified. This process was started independently by staff last summer, a time when there was no supervisor for this office, and implementation of these needs began this last September.

Lesson plan books emphasizing academic vocational integration, multiculturalism, and gender equity, as well as broader career opportunities have been constructed for grades six through eight.

Two home economics high school projects are particularly noteworthy to this panel. The Teen Parenting Program, based on a successful national diffusion project, represents an interdisciplinary support system to meet the needs of the many pregnant students and single parents in our high schools. A collaborative project with Silk City School-Based Services and community agencies, the project allows a level of support and service heretofore not possible.

The District has a facility for pregnant students, but citing last year's statistics -- as well as several years in a row, the same trend is present -- approximately half of these students elected not to attend that particular facility, but rather stayed in their home school. There was no support system for the student returning to school after delivery, nor for the single parent -- the single parent, male student.

I have been impressed and touched by the concern and support extended by our community agencies. Just recently, Passaic 4-C, the primary child care provider for many of our students, contacted us for a collaborative mentorship program with them and the Paterson Alumni Association. A new high school course entitled, "Life Skills," is planned for the next school year to help students improve their decision-making skills in the many critical areas of conflict faced by adolescents. These are only some of the things that are happening in that particular discipline.

Equally dramatic changes will also come about in the industrial arts areas. These changes will reflect teacher input, national and State trends, and the incorporation of well-developed, proven programs. Practical arts will emphasize career and vocational skills preparation that is in keeping with these trends. Never an easy task, it is more complicated in the 1990s when industry requires greater academic and vocational knowledge than was needed in previous decades.

I would also like it noted that these changes did not require additional moneys. Their design and implementation was made possible through competitive Perkins, and Child Trust Fund moneys.

I would also like to say that there are a lot of good things happening in the District, many of them targeting preventive services. The Comer Project, the child development projects that are going on, the format training that teachers are receiving, there is a lot of good instructional stuff going on.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Darlene Rankin, followed by Barbara Graham.

D A R L E N E R A N K I N: Good evening. My name is Darlene Rankin, and I have been a teacher at School No. 18 for the Paterson School District for the past 20 years.

An enrichment program titled "The Summer Music Camp," initiated by the Paterson public schools, was implemented for the first time this past summer. This program, housed at Rosa Parks High School of the Fine and Performing Arts, began on July 6, and continued through July 31 of 1992. I had the privilege of acting as the Principal of this program.

Applications were accepted from students from grades 5 through 11, attending any of the District's elementary and high schools. Twenty-seven of the schools were represented with students attending this program.

Each candidate selected one area of concentration, including: beginning or intermediate woodwind, piano, and voice. Interviews were held with the candidates and their parents or guardians. The staff included representatives from the elementary and secondary schools, and the diversity in the staff selection provided the necessary and best opportunities available for our students.

Eighty-nine students were enrolled in the program. The group was culturally diverse. The daily curricular program provided each candidate the opportunity to experience all dimensions of the musical spectrum. Their day was divided into four 40-minute classes, including: theory, chorus, and piano, in addition to their specific areas of concentration.

Sixty-five students received individual piano lessons at the end of the 20-day period. A musical finale entitled, "Together You and I Can Make a Difference," was held on July 31. Twenty-five beginning woodwind students were included in the 50-member instrumental ensemble's debut performance. All 89 students participated in the choral selections.

I believe this program was a special gift to the children of Paterson. It was an enrichment program, not a remedial program. The children attending Summer Music Camp were there because of their common interest in music. They didn't receive any grades, and their reward was their own achievement.

I think this program can best be summarized by a parent of one of our students. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude in providing his son the opportunity to receive individual piano lessons. He went on to explain that he had recently lost his job, and was struggling to meet his family's financial obligations. He wanted to provide his son with music lessons, but it was fiscally impossible. Through his tax dollars, and the Paterson public schools, the summer music camp afforded his son this dream to become a reality.

Thank you.

B A R B A R A G R A H A M: My name is Barbara Graham. I am also a teacher at School No. 18. I teach vocal music. I, too, was working with the Summer Music Camp. This program gave me the opportunity to meet and work with students that had a special interest in music. The fact that the children attended on a voluntary basis told me that they wanted to learn and experience more about music, whether they were an instrumental or choral student participating in their own music school program.

I thought it was a rewarding experience for the students who bonded together as a group, coming from many areas of Paterson. Not all the students knew each other, but their interest in music gave them all something in common. Also, the program kept their interest focused on music and not on outside influences during the summer break.

The fulfillment of the program could have been seen in their proud faces at the final program that was presented on

the last day. They built their self-esteem tremendously, and it was a lasting memory to what they did on their summer vacation.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

You know, the hour is getting on. I'd like to know if there is anybody in the audience who has some other points to bring up other than what we've heard?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: I was on the list, and I would really like to be heard.

SENATOR EWING: All right, we'll keep going.

T H O M A S F U S C A L D O: Tom Fuscaldo, from Paterson.

SENATOR EWING: Wait just a minute.

MR. FUSCALDO: When I speak--

SENATOR EWING: I think what I'll do is, I'll just go along with the list, and you can all sit and wait your turn, because I'll wait here, too. The only thing that upsets me--

MR. FUSCALDO: When I speak--

SENATOR EWING: I said, "I will call the next person," and you're not the next person. Will Jeannette Lyde come up please?

MR. FUSCALDO: I came up when you said you would--

J E A N E T T E L Y D E: My name is Jeanette Lyde. I reside at 268 East 31st Street in Paterson, New Jersey. I am a native born resident of Paterson, an employee of the Paterson Public School District, a homeowner, a taxpayer, a parent of two students who graduated from the school system who are now in college, and a product of the Paterson School District myself.

A question was asked earlier: Why were so many administrators present at tonight's hearing? We are here because we have a vested interest in what happens with our students. The leadership must be a unit in order to make positive changes within this school district.

I have seen the best of times and the worst of times in the Paterson schools. I am now a part of a golden

opportunity to assist in bringing positive changes to our District, an opportunity that was virtually nonexistent prior to Dr. Wilson's appointment.

I stand before you this evening with a positive outlook for the future of the Paterson public schools. No, I, like many others, did not look with immediate favor upon the inevitable takeover of the school district by the State of New Jersey. Distrust, suspicion, and fear of the unknown can cause many of us to look upon change with disfavor. However, openness, a willingness to take risks, and acceptance of the inevitable enabled and allowed us to have many positive experiences. I have had those experiences and opportunities since the appointment of Dr. Laval S. Wilson and his cabinet.

I daresay that the current District-sponsored professional development opportunities are impacting upon me as an educator and employee of this school District, and they have been more beneficial to me than all of the so-called "in-service days" to which I have been exposed since 1976.

I refer, of course, specifically to District-sponsored activities, for I have personally taken advantage of other professional development opportunities outside of the Paterson School District.

Under the leadership of Dr. Wilson and the expertise with which he has surrounded himself, many residents of the City of Paterson, employees of the school district, and community organization representatives participated in the development of the Paterson Education Improvement Plan, a long-range corrective and compliance action plan.

I was asked to chair the task force on programs to address adolescent issues. That gave me the opportunity to work with the school community and the community at large in the development of activities and programs to meet the challenges of adolescents in our community. Under the leadership of Dr. Wilson, administrative and instructional

staff members have received training in format learning and leadership style from the teacher's perspective, and format in the principalship, an exploration of the task of the principal and the school as a system.

I am currently participating in a teleconference. In fact, on Monday evening I attended what was, I believe, our fifth or fourth conference focusing on the restructuring of schools. I'm an active participant in a District-sponsored audio conference, which is partnered with the teleconference. I have had the opportunity to speak with other educators in Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The training in these experiences has enabled me as an educator to revisit with renewed and refreshed vigor, energy, and vision, my reason for choosing this profession as my career.

I want to help young people quench their thirst for learning and the acquisition of knowledge. I want to be a part of those who ensure capable leadership for this place we call the world. Someone must take our place. I want my tax dollars to be used now to house students in educational institutions, and not in penal institutions.

One of my major challenges took place this last summer. I'm going to ask Kelvin Shivers if he would join me at the podium now. I was chosen to lead a pilot educational initiative for the school district, the Paterson Residential Education Program -- PREP -- which was housed at Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey. Fifty-one 10th graders -- students who had just completed 10th grade -- from the three Paterson high schools took part in this pilot project. They resided on the college campus for four weeks.

I was afforded the opportunity to help shape the focus of this program, to develop its agenda, to develop its curriculum, to schedule its classes. I spent several late nights with Dr. Wilson and his cabinet members in making sure that this program got off the ground and came to a successful closure.

During that period the students came to appreciate the importance of study, the significance of research, and the benefits of computer technology. Students were chosen as PREP participants on the basis of their willingness to reside away from home for a four-week period, their interest in the program, and a positive outlook. The voluntary, tuition-free, residential program provided these 51 students increased opportunity for academic growth, social awareness, improved self-concept and self-reliance.

PREP was staffed by a Director, an Assistant Director whose primary responsibility was oversight of the residential component, four resident assistants, a counselor/social worker, a language arts reading instructor, a language arts writing instructor, a mathematics instructor, a social studies student activities instructor, a computer specialist, a nurse, and an office manager.

Prior to the opening of the program, parents and students received personal interviews, a parent/student orientation night was held, and parents participated in a tour of the campus facility.

SENATOR EWING: Jeanette?

MS. LYDE: Yes?

SENATOR EWING: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but really-- These are great things. If you want to make a synopsis of that and send it to us, and if the other teachers who are here -- somebody signed in all the names in the same writing, so it's the same group -- if they would make a synopsis of what they want to say, then fine. But we're not here to find out what programs you have been working on. We want to know if you feel the system is going well, if you feel that Wilson is doing a good job, and if you feel, evidently, that the takeover was necessary. That's about the guts of it.

But really, I'm sure the other people want to talk, and I damned well am going to stay here until I hear each one, but I'm not going to let you talk this long.

MS. LYDE: Okay, I would like to finish. I'll close out in about two minutes.

SENATOR EWING: You'll have two minutes, period.

MS. LYDE: The four-week pilot program afforded us the opportunity to see if a residential program would work for inner-city youth. The answer is, "Yes."

There are many new initiatives taking place across the country, positive changes which are bringing about positive results to the school. I ask that you would give us a chance to change the Paterson school system for the better. It took more than one and a half years for it to reach this point -- before the takeover -- and we consistently failed monitors.

In closing, I thank you for this opportunity to share my positive experiences with you. I would like to say that I hope that you will take a look at the movement that has taken place to date in the school district. I only hope and pray that we will not lose the gains that have been achieved. This is a time for all of us to unite, to join hands and recognize we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. LYDE: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Cheryl Kurdek, followed by Dawn Ciarlegh?

Oh, does the student want to say something?

MS. LYDE: Yes. Yes, he does.

SENATOR EWING: What's his name?

MS. LYDE: Kelvin Shybers.

K E L V I N S H I B E R S: Hello, Senator. My name is Kelvin Shybers. I'm a student at Rosa Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts. I recently attended the pilot PREP program this year, and I would like to say it was a great success, and it made a great deal of significance in my life. It's changed me and made me a more mature student. It gave me a great

outlook toward life, and it taught me to like school, to like my education. I give three cheers to Dr. Wilson and his staff, because they have changed my life.

SENATOR EWING: What grade are you in?

MR. SHIBERS: I'm now a junior.

SENATOR EWING: What?

MR. SHIBERS: I'm now a junior.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, good. Okay, thank you very much.

Cheryl Kurdek? (no response) Dawn Ciarlegh, Kindergarten EWK, or something? (no response) Vera Ames, Councilwoman? (no response) Mary Robertson? (no response) Geraldine Raineri?

G E R A L D I N E F. R A I N E R I: Good evening, Senator Ewing. Thank you for your time and your patience.

I come before you as a parent of a child in the Paterson public schools, a member of the Paterson School District Advisory Board, and a lifelong Patersonian. I speak to you on behalf of the children. I hope that my message is simple, loud, and clear.

We all must work together for the children. Our schools must be about the children; our schools must exist for and because of our children. We are in a crisis in Paterson. Let us focus together on the opportunity for a genuine commitment to children and to change.

The State monitored the Paterson public schools, the State provided the takeover law, and the State mandated the takeover in Paterson. Thus, the State, and you, as legislators, have a responsibility to Paterson to support reasonable plans and efforts to bring our schools into compliance.

We are aware of the magnitude of the problems in our schools. The State outlined the deficiencies for us. These did not occur overnight, nor will they disappear overnight. Some of them will not disappear at all if the State does not

provide the funding needed. We need your support financially to correct some of the ills that plague our schools, and which need to be corrected to achieve State certification.

We need you to become a part of the solution to our problems. Our children deserve facilities which are conducive to learning. They need modern textbooks and technology which other students in other communities have had for years and years. We need all-day kindergarten classes throughout the District. We need more guidance counselors. Our gifted children need a more enhanced curriculum. We desperately need new school buildings, and major repairs and renovations to those buildings in existence. We are not in compliance with our outdated facilities. This is not the fault of the administration, principals, teachers, advisory board, or the community.

While money alone is never, never a guarantee for a quality education, it is money which is needed to address several of the areas of noncompliance in our District. The Long-Range Corrective and Compliance Action Plan, as well as an extensive facilities study have been provided; the money to realize the plans has not been. We need for you now to have the wisdom to provide legislation for funding to complement the State takeover law.

This is not just an urban problem. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a human problem. Only with options available to each and every one of us through education, are we the beneficiaries of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We all must have the grace to recognize the problems in the Paterson public schools as the problems of our country. We need parental, educational, and legislative leadership and accountability at every single level.

The price tag for compliance in Paterson is staggering, but the price tag for our children and our country for noncompliance is tragic. It will, and it has cost lives, make no mistake about it.

I challenge you, meet the opportunity that is being given to you to go down in history as legislators who became part of the solution to a crisis, not politicians who walked in the opposite direction. Listen, support our efforts. The outcome in Paterson is going to affect all of us in one way or another. I beseech you to have the vision to see that we must all be in this together. Let us not miss the opportunity to serve each other and to change our schools.

I leave you with a challenge from Maya Angelou, "On the Pulse of Morning": "The day is breaking before you. Give birth again to the dream. The horizon leaves--"

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Raineri?

MS. RAINERI: Yes, sir?

SENATOR EWING: Do you feel takeover is working or not working?

MS. RAINERI: Sir, we've had 19 months of the takeover.

SENATOR EWING: I just want your opinion. Do you feel--

MS. RAINERI: I am giving you my opinion, sir.

SENATOR EWING: We don't have long enough to look at it.

MS. RAINERI: Sir, I waited six hours. It will only take me one minute to say what I have to say.

SENATOR EWING: I'm just saying to you, though, as far as takeover-- It's only a year and a half, so it's not long enough. Is that what you're--

MS. RAINERI: That's right, sir.

SENATOR EWING: Okay. That's all I want to know. Thank you.

MS. RAINERI: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Irene Sterling.

I R E N E S T E R L I N G: Hi, my name is Irene Sterling. I live in Paterson, New Jersey. I am the parent of a 16-year-old at Rosa Parks High School, and I am the Executive Director of

the Paterson Education Fund, a business/community partnership which is involved in bringing cooperative change to the Paterson public schools.

We were established in 1983, which was the year of the "Nation at Risk" report, and we came into being with that report. We also came into being in the first year of monitoring, which led us to State takeover.

We have spent 10 years suffering along with the people of this District to help bring educational change and excellence to this District.

When we first began our work, we went to foundations and corporations and were told that the City of Paterson does not exist. We were told that the City of Paterson could not be trusted in either its political leadership or its community leadership with other people's money, that they would take it and run. For that reason, it was very difficult for us to raise dollars from other than locally committed people.

I am pleased to tell you that in the takeover, doors have opened to us because of the credibility of the leader that you, the State of New Jersey, put in place for us. Dr. Laval S. Wilson has come to this District with a record that is admirable in places across the country. It is on the strength of his presence here, and the District's commitment to the work, that we were able to secure a million dollar grant from the Dewitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund. That money will allow us to bring the District into compliance with regard to library services, and indeed, move us beyond the compliance. This money is now putting us on the map nationally. We will be visited next month by cities from all over this country who are competing for that money in a second round of replication.

We cannot continue to attract corporate or foundation funds unless the State of New Jersey continues to stay the course which it has laid out. There is a mound of evidence in my office that I have compiled from all of those monitoring

reports that says this District needed to be taken over -- lists and lists of deficiencies. It is our obligation to work together, as painful as the change process is and as long as it's going to take -- and business says it takes three to four years to see any change in a takeover situation-- We must work together to maintain the quality of effort so that we are able to restructure the Paterson public schools to better serve Paterson's kids.

The business community, the corporate, and the foundation world stand ready to be our partners, but the State of New Jersey, in its takeover District leadership, must stay the course.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Dennis Wyka, W-Y-K-A? (no response) Carlos Guzman, and then Mr. Manzo. I think he was here earlier, wasn't he?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Tina Leone will follow Carlos.

C A R L O S G U Z M A N: Good evening, Senator Ewing, Mayor Pascrell, and ladies and gentlemen. This has been quite a learning experience for me, and patience has endured.

A lot of my colleagues have made a lot of comments on not being redundant, and just saying a few comments regarding this process. You are interested in knowing: Is takeover working or not working in the views of many of us?

I would like to say, to begin with, takeover is very strong medicine. It comes with Paradigm, and it comes with a lot of side effects that have left a lot of people a little bit dizzy, or with many emotions. But I'd like to say that I graduated from this school here. I'm actively involved in the community, and I see what it has done.

I'm also involved in the Paterson Education Fund as President, of course, and I have talked to a lot of business and industry leaders regarding this process. I can tell you

that they are much more supportive with the leadership that your team from the State has brought here.

The only thing I would like to suggest, sir, is that, of course, this medicine has to be somewhat regulated. I ask you to please take a look at all the things that have been said here, that perhaps you can amend the takeover law to have a better effect in the goals you want to accomplish.

One of the things that I want to say to you and the people here is that never before did I see so many people speak openly, being able to express their ideas and be a part of this process, than now. Not only here, but in all the forums that Dr. Wilson has opened throughout the city, no one can say that their mouth had been shut, not to say what they wanted to say for the betterment of our children.

So with that, I'd like to close. Thank you for coming and sharing your time with us.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Tina Leone? (no response) Vivian Ransome?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: She spoke.

SENATOR EWING: James Gist?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: He spoke.

SENATOR EWING: Dorothy Rowe? (no response) Lilly Fleming? (no response) Patricia Green? (no response) Sheila Owens? (no response) Frances Gonzales? (no response) Jeffrey from S.C.O.P.E., a S.C.O.P.E. parent? (no response) Lew Smith? (no response) His cousin, Frank Smith? Yolanda Jackson?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: They're here.

SENATOR EWING: Who, both Smiths?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: The Smith brothers.

SENATOR EWING: And he's got the beard, too. Look at that.

Which is which Smith?

L E W S M I T H: This is Lew Smith, L-E-W.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you for having us tonight.

When I walked in tonight, about a half a dozen people asked me where my video camera was. They asked me that because I've spent the last six months in Paterson, in Paterson schools, with a video camera, taking the opportunity to document a rather unique school design process. In the process of doing that, I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about Paterson in a short period of time.

I'm from Teachers College. I'm a newcomer to Paterson, and perhaps a bit more objective than most of the speakers that you heard tonight. You know, it's difficult to be in the middle of the forest and see the trees sometimes.

But in the six months that I have been in Paterson, living here, filming it, filming the streets of Paterson, the schools of Paterson, the kids of Paterson, the teachers of Paterson, I've come to the following observations.

The first question that I want to ask is: why did it take the State so long to take over? When you hear about the fact that Paterson was warned for 15 years that they had failed the monitoring process for 15 years, and then, when you speak to the teachers and administrators in Paterson, they say to you, "Well, I'm not quite sure why we never were taken over before," the question becomes not whether it should have been taken over, but why it took so long.

SENATOR EWING: The legislation was not in place.

MR. SMITH: Okay. A good answer.

SENATOR EWING: Now we have passed a law so we can take over school districts that don't meet certain criteria. Now it's available to us anyplace in the State.

MR. SMITH: The second message that became clear to me as I began to document over these last six months was that with that takeover, you would need decisive and strong leadership,

and that's what you now have in Paterson. It also became apparent -- and it's not just apparent in Paterson, it's apparent from my 25 years in education, being the principal of a high school in the suburbs and in New York City, and being involved in a lot of school change -- that change is real tough for people. Whether it's in our personal lives or in our professional lives, people have a real hard time with it.

And the second lesson about change is, it doesn't happen quickly. The State has had some wisdom in saying to Dr. Wilson, "Well, you have five years to do this." Is it appropriate after a year and a half or two years to pause and ask, "How's it going so far?" Sure it's appropriate, but it's even more appropriate to say, "Well, you have five years to get something done. Now let's get it done."

SENATOR EWING: Or longer.

MR. SMITH: Or longer. But let's get it done, because it's not going to happen overnight.

The main lesson that I've learned in these six months is that stuff is happening and can happen, and I'll tell you about the little piece that I've been filming.

We're attempting to pilot a way of redesigning schools in Paterson that is completely new. It takes the best of what's been done before. Very briefly, what that means is the following:

Traditionally, over the years, schools were redesigned top down. Some bureaucrat sat in an office and said, "Well look, this is the way we ought to do schools." The plan was done by somebody who supposedly had some expertise, and then they would go out and hire a principal and a staff and say, "Do this plan."

There was a revolt against that in New York City and in some other places in the last 15 or 20 years, where they said, "No, no, that doesn't make any sense. The people who live in the schools, they're the ones who should figure out

what to do in the schools." That attempt was made in a number of places, but it had one failing piece: They didn't know what they were doing, necessarily. They didn't have any particular expertise, so the downtown expertise was eliminated, but the stakeholders were empowered.

So then we made a decision that we would try to do something in Paterson that would borrow the best of those worlds. We would say to the local stakeholders, "Redo your schools," but at the same time, we would provide them with the expertise. We would give them information upon which they could do that redoing. We would give them a framework. So we developed a process using four schools that Dr. Wilson and his staff had the courage to go into and say that they weren't working.

That's a piece of the story. If you want to redo what's happening in Paterson schools, you have to evaluate the schools. They went in and they did that. They said, "We have 35 schools." Four were obvious in not meeting the tests of whether schools were working. Those four had to be redone.

Teachers College was asked to come in and assist in a process of redoing those four. That process says, "The local stakeholders will do it, and we'll give them the tools to do it with."

We've gone through an initial phase of that process. Those four schools -- and there was a reference to it by some earlier speakers -- have had a period of months of learning about models of what they could be. Those core groups in those schools, involving teachers, administrators, parents, nonteaching staff, and community representatives, decided the direction they wanted to go in, and they are now going to move in that direction over the next six months. By next September, there will be new models in those schools.

That's borrowing the best, but it was because of a certain sense of vision by this leadership that said, "We're not going to go it alone. We're going to involve a university

partner, and we're going to make an attempt to redo our schools." Because when you erase all the other rhetoric tonight, it all comes down to what's happening with kids in classrooms. There is a process that's in place here to change what's happening with kids in classrooms, so that you can be proud of the fact that the State did what they did, and that Paterson is on its way to becoming a different kind of place.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: What is it costing to have Teachers College-- Is it being done by Teachers College, or are we paying for it?

MR. SMITH: It's not costing Paterson a dime. Teachers College has gone into this collaboration with Paterson--

SENATOR EWING: Taken on as a project?

MR. SMITH: Exactly, exactly.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

Now, has Paradigm been used in Sandusky, Ohio; or Dallas, Texas; or anyplace?

MR. SMITH: The Paradigm piece is a piece that has been done independent of the Teachers College piece, and that's being done at some of the other schools.

SENATOR EWING: It's being done at other schools?

MR. SMITH: The Advocacy Design Center that Dr. Smith and I will both be speaking about is a process that involves four schools. It has nothing to do with Paradigm.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, I see. I thought your-- Okay.

This is Lew?

MR. SMITH: Lew, L-E-W.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: A question?

SENATOR EWING: Yes, certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I have a question, Mr. Smith, about the four schools. Have the principals in the District been able to review the work of what went wrong in the analysis in those four schools?

MR. SMITH: To a limited degree. They were certainly told about and given the instrument that was used in evaluating all 35 schools. So they know the instrument that was used. I'm not sure of the specifics about the data in their school that was shared. But they certainly know the instrument, and the instrument was based upon some of the best research about effective schools. It wasn't an arbitrary thing, and it certainly was done, from my understanding, by a combination of both outsiders and insiders so that there would be more than one perspective about the 35 schools.

What I think you are partly referring to is another fairly natural phenomenon in that-- I had a case of this in putting together the film, because in putting together the film, I followed one of the four schools very intently, and got to know the people there very well. There was a sort of a natural -- and I thought, really kind of nice, in a way -- a natural reaction to being hurt that their school was being labeled this way. There was some fierce reaction to that, and some of them have had a hard time letting go of that.

But I think at this point in time what we have is, we have staffs in those four schools who have now bought into the idea that it's not the labeling of being a failure that's the critical piece, but they've been given an opportunity to redo their schools, and they're very much in charge of what that redoing is all about.

But there was, as you're alluding to, a kind of a natural hurt among those four schools. Some of them had said, "Well, why not this school, or that school, or another school?"

SENATOR EWING: Who did the analysis?

MR. SMITH: The analysis was done using an instrument that District staff put together, and it was done by both outside consultants and by the administrative staff, centrally, in Paterson.

SENATOR EWING: And all schools were done, all 35?

MR. SMITH: All 35 schools were evaluated. Four of them were found to be definitely below par.

SENATOR EWING: Where are copies of those analyses?

MR. SMITH: In the District Office, I presume. They're available.

SENATOR EWING: We'd like to get copies of that -- those four, anyway.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Mr. Chairman, I'm not finished.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, excuse me. I'm sorry, Mayor.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I'm sorry the nuts and bolts come at the end of the evening, but this is very interesting.

Are you telling me that you did an analysis, or participated in the review of specific schools, and from that analysis you made some recommendations or alternative recommendations to the staff at those schools, but on a limited basis -- to quote you, "That was made available to the very principals who have to run the school"?

MR. SMITH: Let me just--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Am I correct in what I just said?

MR. SMITH: Okay. Let me answer your question.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: No, am I correct in what I said, or correct me.

MR. SMITH: I'm going to correct you. My role was not in the analysis of the schools.

F R A N K L. S M I T H, J R., Ed.D.: I'm Frank Smith, Chairman of the Department of Educational Administration at Teachers College.

SENATOR EWING: In New York?

DR. SMITH: In New York. I happen to be a Jersey resident and a Partner in Paterson, so I feel at home here.

Mayor, the answer to your question is, "No;" that is, we did not go in with a remedial approach that says, "Let us find the problems and tell you how to rectify them." A basic

consequence of the research by James Comer is "no fault." You can spend three years in pointing fingers at who did what wrong, and why it didn't work. The fact is, it doesn't work.

What we said is, "Let's just start with that, and forget trying to find out who's to blame, and look to the future and say, 'What is the new design for the new school?'" We didn't simply make these up. We went to research and said there are four basic models in the research that show that student performance will increase, that school communities will be improved if you systematically work on these designs.

What the Design Center did was to take the core group, where people elected their own representatives -- selected their own people, parents, teachers, support staff -- and came to the Design Center discussion where these models were presented. They were each systematically presented, using a set of 29 questions which describe the total school: its instruction, its governance, its accountability, its organization.

The teams had complete descriptions of these four models from research. The system, under Laval Wilson, generously made staff development time available for them to study the models, to discuss the models, to go visit schools, to have access to bibliographies. Based on that, core teams made decisions at their schools as to which model they wanted to proceed with.

Based on that, led by the principal and the core team, they designed, specifically, a request list of what it would take to make that plan work in their school. The agreement is that everything will be in place -- so far as we possibly can do it in terms of staff training, instructional materials, facilities plans, and schedules -- by June, so that when the teachers leave these buildings in June, they have the summer to work. We're also trying to make it possible that they work in summer school so that they can get a period of training prior to September.

When September opens, everybody is committed to the notion that rosters of kids will be on the teachers' desks, with the materials in place, with the class ready to begin; not trying to find out who the kids are, or if the textbooks are going to get there by October. When September opens, teachers will have been trained in the model they selected to make their school work.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Dr. Smith, I have a -- through the Chair -- great respect for research. I want you to know that. I also, being somewhat familiar with education, never considering myself an expert -- having taught, having chaired, I think, committees in the State Legislature that deal with education, higher and lower education-- I am also aware of self-fulfilling prophecies in education. I am very aware of charlatans in the trade -- very aware.

DR. SMITH: I'm not supposed to take an inference from that, I trust?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: No, please don't. Please don't. I wasn't suggesting finger-pointing, and this is one of the problems that educators have when anybody asks a question. I wasn't suggesting that.

I'll tell you what I was suggesting: This is very elemental, but very important to us, having talked to many members of the Committee for a long time now. What's very elemental is, how can you have strategic research and not share the results of that research, particularly where schools have ultimately failed -- dramatically, in fact, to be singled out? Four schools have been singled out, and there is no way we can hide that. You can't call them school "A," "B," "C," and "D." It's either School No. 8, or School No. 9. We all know that.

How can you have strategic work research that comes to conclusions about four schools where we are dying to try to make things better, trying to help each other? No one knows all the answers. You didn't even share what went wrong in

those schools with the other principals in the District to indicate, or to provide a foundation where the other schools could improve themselves. What am I missing?

DR. WILSON: Bill, that's not--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Wait a minute. I listened--

DR. WILSON: That's not accurate.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Excuse me. Let me finish.

DR. WILSON: That's not accurate.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Please, let me finish.

DR. WILSON: At least be accurate about it.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I asked a question. I didn't answer the question.

SENATOR EWING: Dr. Wilson, I'm running this meeting, and you can get up and talk later. If you don't want to do that, we'll close it down right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: And if I can't ask a question, since I was the one who stuck my neck out in support of the process, nobody is going to ask any questions. And don't think I'm kidding.

May I get back to the question? In the process of sharing what we learned, why did not-- And the answer was a semi "No." Those are not your words; those are my interpretation of your words. Why didn't we share that information and that data with the people who are closest to our kids, the teacher at the station, the principals, the administrators in the schools? Certainly, far closer than me or a superintendent, or assistant superintendents. Wouldn't you admit at least that?

DR. SMITH: I can't give you an empirical, historical answer as to how or why it was or was not done, because, again, Teachers College simply accepted the process; that there had been a reasonable process; that the decision had been made, and we picked up on the agenda at that point.

The research would say, again, that the reason not to do that is because if you're trying to get a school to shift its way of thinking, you're trying to focus on design and not on past history. Those are fundamentally different logics.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: But we've already started from the basis that most of the problems that have concerned us in education in Paterson were endemic, in some schools greater than others, but basically endemic. Otherwise, why change the structure? Why not just go in and change a few principals around, and that's it, and think that we've solved the problem? We know they're endemic. It's across the line. In some schools where it's most pronounced -- let's say these four that you talked about-- In those four schools, it's obvious that there is at least a mirror of what might be happening to a lesser degree in the other schools in the District.

I mean, is that faulty logic on my part?

DR. SMITH: I don't know the answer to that, again, because we didn't study all the schools. We're not involved in that process. What we tried to do was engage those staffs in action research saying, "Look at this research, assess your own school in terms of these key questions, and decide if this is a better design to respond to it." Instead of spending six months trying to figure out who did what to whom in the past, we said, "Let's get engaged in research now."

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Well, let's talk about the four schools. Let's talk about them.

Did you find, in looking at these four schools, that it was primarily the result of four-- I don't know who the principals are, so let's keep personalities out of this, as you suggested. Are you saying to us that the basic problems in those-- By the way, in all four schools, I think the four principals, whomever they were, were replaced -- were removed.

DR. SMITH: That's correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: May I assume that the problems in those schools, and the inability of those schools to deal with the monitoring reports as they affected those individual schools, that the principals were not able to overcome the problems? Or, were the problems so great that you could have put Houdini in any of those four schools, and with the structure that existed there, it wouldn't have changed?

I know a little bit about what I'm talking about. At least give me credit for that. I realize that I'm not the expert.

DR. SMITH: I would say you're about half right, based on the research; that is, the structure is part of it, the individual is part of it. But what's controlling them is what is in the research called, "The School Culture;" that is, over time, they have come in their head to this design and model of what a school is. Unfortunately, while there are models of success, there are also models of failure, and schools convince themselves that they can't succeed with these students. They firmly believe that, and you cannot persuade them otherwise.

In effect, you have to make a strategic decision: Are you going to try to keep convincing them, or are you just going to say the game's up? It's like going in the South and trying to convince people to stop segregating people at the water fountains, or eventually just say, "I'm tired of talking. We're not going to do it anymore. Start over."

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Would it matter if we kept the structure and simply changed the principal to a principal who-- Perhaps yourself or myself would say, "Here's a good principal. Let's put him into this 'terrible' situation, in this school -- School 'A'. That is where we're going to change everything around over a couple of years because we have this good academician as principal of this school." Is that how it works?

DR. SMITH: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: Okay. That's my point.

DR. SMITH: If you want to take a traditional school model and say-- And this is what the State does, frankly, in its compliance procedures with T&E. What it says, in effect, is, "Try to be better at the old school." And what actually happens is, the harder they work, the worse the problem gets. That's the whole point of the Design Center. You have got to look at the four pieces, or interrelated parts of the school -- instruction, governance, organization, and accountability -- and redesign that school. The harder you work at that old design, the worse it's going to get.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: But you know, Dr. Smith-- And I'll conclude this, Jack, in just a second.

SENATOR EWING: Okay. Because I think it's only fair we get Dr. Wilson up. He wanted to say something before.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: But, to the Smiths--

DR. SMITH: We're not related.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: I figured that.

You know, I listened to what you were saying. I think you're being honest in your response to me, and I hope you understand the direction that I'm going in, which is no mystery here. But you know, the fact that I'm asking the question -- hear me out, please -- in terms of our situation in Paterson-- I think, unfortunately, it's just us that's left here. But the fact is that, what caused a tremendous-- And I know there is going to be pain with change.

DR. SMITH: To some degree.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCHELL: I appreciate that. I've been part of that on both sides of the desk. But the fact is that you can reduce that pain a tremendous amount if the people who are going to be affected have a basic understanding about why you're doing what you're doing.

And do you want to know something? That doesn't cost a dime. That does not cost one dime.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but I don't feel that's their province, really.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I agree.

SENATOR EWING: Dr. Wilson, would you like to say -- because it's only fair.

DR. SMITH: But before he does, let me go back to the original question that the panel asked -- the Joint Committee -- and that is: Has State takeover made any difference? I want to suggest to you that Columbia University would not be back in Paterson if it had not been for State takeover. State takeover said, in effect, somebody is willing to acknowledge that 95 percent of these kids cannot perform at the minimum basic level. Those were the test scores. And what Laval Wilson represented in his compliance plan was not simply a traditional way of going about things, but in the end, where there was a statement about the initiatives and task force, we read that as an opportunity to watch the process of community building; that is, of getting people engaged. That's what these four design schools are.

The core groups are the critical part of all of this. There are teachers, there are custodians, there are parents, there are members from Barnert Hospital, from "U.S. News," all on these different core groups making a decision about an individual school.

What State takeover did, and what Laval Wilson did directly, was to invite the University to be a partner in that action research. Without the State takeover, and without Dr. Wilson, we would not be partners in Paterson.

SENATOR EWING: Dr. Wilson?

DR. SMITH: Let me also just give you-- All of the talk about the Design Center -- if you would like to read it, I would like for you to have it when you have time.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

DR. WILSON: Senator Ewing and Assemblyman Pascrell, I was not trying to disrupt your meeting, but was trying to bring some clarity, because you were asking the wrong person the question. I didn't want you to ask him a question that he couldn't answer.

Every principal has a copy of the evaluation instrument. The instrument that we designed was a schoolwide effectiveness instrument, not an instrument on the evaluation on the principal, per se, but a questionnaire developed by outside consultants who put it together to look at the instructional program, the governance issue in the school, parent relationships, and the management of the school. They looked at the whole delivery of instruction. An outside consultant, along with one of the assistant superintendents responsible for schools in each of the various cluster groups, assessed, independently, how effective a school was delivering its instructional program -- all of our schools.

The schools were either rated as above average, average, or below average. Four schools ended up being below average. I went to one school, School No. 12, along with our Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and spent 45 minutes to an hour reviewing the results. Every faculty member in all four schools received a letter from me explaining the assessment process. It did not give them all of the questions' results. It didn't say you got above average or below average in each question area. But they had the questionnaire, and they had the results of the assessment. The goal was to try to find out which schools were doing all right, which schools were doing above average, and which ones were really failing in delivering effective instruction.

The point was, we had four of them that came out way below average. Would those same four have been designated if another instrument had been used? I think, probably. There was a fairly good consensus. We spent a considerable amount of

time with a lot of different people reviewing the results of those assessments that those four schools, anyway, were below average. One was so below average that we vacated the entire school and brought in a completely new team of teachers and administrative staff.

With the partnership of Dr. Smith, Mr. Smith, and other members of Columbia University, we put together what's probably the best reform design in the country. The teachers, the parents-- You had custodians, you had security guards, you had lunchroom people on these core teams. They studied the four design possibilities, and a fifth one, which was one we called an "eclectic design," they could put their own together.

They went out to visit. They made a judgment either on a consensus basis, or, if they couldn't reach a consensus, they voted on which design they felt would improve their schools.

That started last summer as a process. It ended in February with the schools making a decision on their reform effort. As Dr. Smith and Mr. Smith indicated, what's happening between now and the end of the school year is getting ready for next year. But those schools will be better.

SENATOR EWING: But, Dr. Wilson, the people in the schools, did they see the final results of the evaluation, each teacher in that failed school?

DR. WILSON: Each teacher didn't see numerically-- What each teacher received was--

SENATOR EWING: Why didn't they see it? Why wouldn't they see what they were doing wrong? How can they improve themselves for later on in life if they go to another school, or something?

DR. WILSON: The instrument itself--

SENATOR EWING: I don't give a damn about the instrument.

DR. WILSON: Well, I'm trying to explain it to you, whether you do or not. I'm trying to explain that the instrument itself--

SENATOR EWING: I didn't ask you that.

DR. WILSON: What I'm trying to explain--

SENATOR EWING: It's the same way when you take an exam. You usually get the exam back, and you can see what questions you failed on.

DR. WILSON: We didn't try to give every school their exam back.

SENATOR EWING: I think that's too bad.

DR. WILSON: It was a cumulative average of each one of the schools. They had the entire instrument, so they could look at the instrument and the assessment was below average. But we didn't see a point in saying, "You received out of, let's say, 60 or 70 questions, you received below average in this, above average in that." The entire questionnaire was summarized and we thought, at that particular point--

SENATOR EWING: I think it would have helped them as individuals in life, and whether we're working with children or older people, we want to help people.

DR. WILSON: Well, we're trying to help those four schools.

SENATOR EWING: Where are the results of those?

DR. WILSON: Those results are available in the Office of Assessments, in our school district.

SENATOR EWING: And they're available to the teachers if they want to go look at them?

DR. WILSON: If principals or teachers would like to see them, they can be made available. They weren't made available at the time, as individual questions. The total results were available. It was written up and summarized for each staff. But they are available if anyone would like to see them.

SENATOR EWING: The individuals?

DR. WILSON: The individuals could see them if they would like to.

SENATOR EWING: No. Can they see the individual papers?

DR. WILSON: I'm saying, "Yes."

SENATOR EWING: Okay, good. Thank you.

Anything more?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Have they seen them?

SENATOR EWING: No, they haven't seen them, but they are available to them. If somebody calls us up, we'll tell them they're available.

Yolanda Jackson? (no response) Camise Jackson? (no response) Anita Singletary? (she spoke before) Tom Fuscaldo, One Eye on Paterson?

MR. FUSCALDO: That's me.

SENATOR EWING: You in the Hathaway shirt, eh?

MR. FUSCALDO: Yes, you bet.

Now, you've got a lot of staying power, and I've got a lot of staying power, but the one with the most staying power is Mayor Graves. (laughter)

SENATOR EWING: Don't be mean.

MR. FUSCALDO: I think Bill hit the nail on the head. One of these school employees today came over to me and said, "Why are they keeping secret the test results? We want to know how we did on our school evaluation."

SENATOR EWING: You just heard from Dr. Wilson that--

MR. FUSCALDO: He's now going to make them available.

SENATOR EWING: Well, regardless. Don't let's go back up the water. From now on they're available, so they can go to them and get them. And if they have problems, you let me know.

MR. FUSCALDO: So Bill discovered one of the major problems.

SENATOR EWING: Good, that's what we have Bill here for.

MR. FUSCALDO: Now, I wanted to bring out something on a slightly different vein. Private schools cost half of what the public schools cost, and private schools do a better job.

SENATOR EWING: Have you heard of the NJEA?

MR. FUSCALDO: Yes, we heard of them.

SENATOR EWING: All right. I serve on the board of a private, nonprofit school, and the salaries are one hell of a lot different. The fringe benefits are one hell of a lot different, period.

MR. FUSCALDO: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. But the cost per student in Paterson is something like the costs in college, and a lot of this money goes to a gigantic administration with fabulous salaries. Now, Mr. Wilson or no other person deserves an obscene salary. It is not earned money; it is money destined by the taxpayers for the benefit of the children, and it's diverted for the benefit of the administrators. It's blood money; it's tax money. It's the children's money.

SENATOR EWING: One other interruption, I'm sorry. In all fairness to Dr. Wilson, his salary is paid for by the State. It's not coming out of the money in Paterson itself.

MR. FUSCALDO: That's true, but it's the State that's wasting taxpayers' money.

SENATOR EWING: They waste it on a lot of us legislators, too.

MR. FUSCALDO: As a result of this expenditure, we will have reports that test scores in Paterson improved.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: As a what?

MR. FUSCALDO: That test scores of the students will improve as an official result. But I'd like you to be aware, to look beneath the surface. The tests will be different, and the marking system will be different, because that's the way they do things around here.

Now, you are legislators, and we need legislation. No other city should face a fascist, dictator takeover like

Paterson and Jersey City. We need a law against any further takeovers. It's very destructive to a community.

We need a law that no school administrator should have tenure or a contract. Their employment should be no more secure than their elected superiors. We need a law that they are not above their elected-- That's why we had trouble in Paterson; we had tenure for our administration.

SENATOR EWING: I think eventually you're going to see that tenure change for the administrators.

MR. FUSCALDO: I know you're working on it.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: It's changed for the superintendents.

MR. FUSCALDO: Now there's a possibility the Legislature should consider vouchers, because with a voucher somebody could go to a well-run school, a private school, or anything else, and they're all run more economically than here. But we'd have to research a new law for a voucher system of education.

Now, in Paterson, we have the State operation, but the City still must contribute to the funds. I would think that the City government should refuse to pay anything while the State has taken over the school. That's taxation without representation, that's fascism, and that's incompetent administration.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Is there anybody else?

L Y D I A P E P P E R: Here.

SENATOR EWING: All right, "Here." The next up is "Here," and one gentleman in the back. Do you want to step forward so we get you right away?

You can report late to school tomorrow.

MS. PEPPER: Promise?

SENATOR EWING: For staying up so late.

MS. PEPPER: Senator, Mayor, educators, parents, my name is Lydia Pepper. As a teacher, I am pleased to see an extensive, in-depth teacher training program being implemented as a result of the new administration. I have seen older teachers revitalized, and new teachers nurtured and supported through the workshops. Staff development is an important ingredient to ensure quality education.

The format training I received renewed my faith that the system is changing, and that our District is moving to meet the needs of teachers and students.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MS. PEPPER: I waited a long time to say that little bit.

SENATOR EWING: That's all right. Thank you very much. Yes, sir. Your name, please?

J A M E S D A V I S: Good morning. It is after midnight. My name is James Davis, a resident here in the City of Paterson, and a parent. I have two students who are in private schools here in Paterson because of the system. Hopefully, they will go to public school as it gets better.

I will say that the takeover has done several good things. Dr. Wilson has involved the community in a lot of the different committees that have been set up to improve the education system. They have also identified some of the issues.

But I say to you, Senator, and our Mayor and Assemblyman, are you really listening to what is being said? Several years ago we were here -- not this late -- but we were here and identified several key issues. The one that has come forward tonight has been: money, money, money. You indicated we need some \$5 billion to \$6 billion for the infrastructure to take care of the buildings.

SENATOR EWING: Statewide.

MR. DAVIS: However, we identified that several years ago. Nothing has been done.

We also identified the issue of books, the lack thereof. Nothing has been done. That should be corrected, and I'm asking, "Are you really listening?"

SENATOR EWING: What was that last, about books?

MR. DAVIS: It's also been pointed out this evening that there are still old books in the system, and that students still need books.

SENATOR EWING: Well, that's one thing we're going to be talking to Dr. Wilson about. There's no question of that in my mind.

MR. DAVIS: But again, we indicated that several years ago when the takeover was first discussed, and apparently no one listened, because they still need books. Salaries are going up, but students still need books and other supplies.

SENATOR EWING: But also, there is different control in both Houses down there now.

MR. DAVIS: But again, you asked a question just like you're asking us now: What's been done good, and what's been done bad? We need to make sure that you're listening to what we said, and the students need books, pencils, papers, and other materials to learn.

SENATOR EWING: Right, definitely.

MR. DAVIS: Again, there should also be some channeling of these resources, the millions of dollars being spent by the District making those who are already wealthy, wealthier. We held a seminar-- We commend Dr. Wilson for holding a seminar for minority entrepreneurs. We had some 70 of them there last March, but how many of them have gotten contracts with the District? It's the same old thing, to that we say that the District has failed.

You ask, "Where is this money coming from?" I say that it can come from the Legislature, come out of dollars that are currently being spent to build new, better, improved

prisons. We don't need them. If we improve the schools, those young men, those young women will be encouraged to stay in school, not to commit crimes, but do and be law-abiding citizens.

Again, just wanting to emphasize on the economic standpoint, to spend some of those dollars to help others, because if those minority business folks are, in turn, helped, they can turn around and hire some of these students that are in school, and other people who are looking for jobs.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Did anybody come in late who wants to talk?

Yes, sir?

J O S E A C E V E D O: I didn't come in late, but when I saw the list, I thought I might not have an opportunity. Thank you for your patience. I am Jose Acevedo, and, no, I am not paid through Dr. Wilson's payroll. I am with the City of Paterson, as Mayor Pascrell knows. I am one of his staff members, with the Human Resources Department, under Nellie Pou.

I am happy to share with you that I came on board last year, toward the end of September, as the Director of the School-Based Youth Services Program, which we call Silk City -- Students Involved in Life and Knowledge. I am also here representing PAC, Puerto Rican Action Council, and from those two perspectives I will share some of the impressions that I have gotten.

Initially, for us to say what's bad and what's good about the State takeover, surely we should have expected both. Any impact causes both things. What I am saying, however, as an outsider, not as a parent, but as someone who has been working with students for the past 16 years, ever since I was coming out of high school as a junior counselor, graduated from Rutgers with a social work background, worked with Aspira-- I was an Aspira Counselor 10 years ago in this very high school.

Ten years ago, the impression that I left with after a year here was that there were people here that you could blow the dust right off of their heads. (laughter) They seemed like they had never moved. I was fortunate enough, with the cycle of things, having worked with Aspira, then Inroads, then AT&T Bell Laboratories with their EOAA diversity management, and life brought me back, full circle, working with students. I'm blessed for that.

Ten years later I'm finding a totally different format with the State takeover. A lot of things-- Just like the people thought with Ma Bell, the breakup, a lot of similarities as far as what happened in the corporate sector.

But the bottom line, though, is that as you get some of the negative fallout, you also get the people who are charged, as you heard this evening.

You also get the people who, all of a sudden, get the feeling of being empowered under new leadership, and I have had the opportunity of seeing that at the Advisory Board meetings. I have seen that as a School-Based Director trying to pool collaborative efforts. We provide one-to-one family counseling right here on this site. Downstairs, across from in-school suspension, there is a center that was renovated, partially by moneys from the State Human Resources, that provides the grant for school-base, and partially through the Board of Ed through public schools.

This year that renovation was able to be made -- or late last year -- and an increase had to take place. That was done, not necessarily gladly, but it was done. Much more of a share was asked from the school system, because we had never envisioned certain changes with ADA requirements and what have you. It still came through, to the point that that teen center is downstairs, and it's serving hundreds of students on a daily basis.

We are able to work with Gabrielle Duffy, who spoke earlier. I house her counselors with the Teen Parenting Program in my group center. I house the Aspira Counselor. I have Private Industry Council people coming in, Planned Parenthood activities -- things that affect--

Some of the things that the school has embraced with the new administration have not been of an academic nature when I'm involved, because we're talking about impacting on the students to avoid them getting pregnant. If they get pregnant, or if they suffer family violence, they're not going to be around in class to be able to take basic skills, never mind go further.

I, also, as an outsider, have seen pretty much the feeling that anything is possible. With the group that I have that I am now working with in the school system, the principals, the nurses, the social workers, the teachers, the coaches, they can envision some of the things that I'm seeing as far as a clinic as part of the school-based concept. If worse comes to worse, they can envision child care right on-site, something that's done at other school bases.

To wrap up, one of the things I have learned -- having had management positions, although I'm only 32 -- is that you expect people to make mistakes, and that rather than beat them up with a two-by-four, you say, "Okay, how do we fix it?" I like to see myself as part of the solution, and not part of the problem, and I hope the Committee does the same.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

What you're saying-- In our original legislation, before the final thing was decided on the funding and everything, we had a part in there for care, because we envision the schools, they've gotten to, over a period of time, where they are the focal point for families, because you have the children longer, so there would be nutrition, counseling--

MR. ACEVEDO: Health care, parenting, physical exams, whatever.

SENATOR EWING: The whole thing. It's got to be based in school, but it's not going to be done tomorrow or anything, because here, again, the dollars involved in getting a prefab structure put up to house it -- because the classrooms are already crowded-- But we certainly have got to go in that direction. Our feeling is, as we move into it, that we've got to see why we can't get some funds out of Human Services and out of Health, so it doesn't come out of the school budget. That money should be going to teach the children. These other peripheral things have got to be done to keep the children in school, but it shouldn't be part of the educational dollar.

I want to thank Dr. Wilson for letting us use the auditorium here tonight, and I certainly appreciate the tremendous turnout. As I said earlier, it is heartwarming to see such a good, big response, which we did not get in Jersey City because the powers that be up there sort of kept it under the rug that we were going to have a meeting, or the meetings that we did have.

We planned to have two meetings. We had one in Jersey City just about three weeks ago, or so. We'll be having another one up there in five to six months, and we'll have another one here in five to six months. If Dr. Wilson or the people feel that we should have another meeting sooner than that, I'll come up, and if other members can come up, fine. But I'm perfectly willing to sit down and listen, because it's from these ideas that we're able to try to better the whole system for everybody.

The interest that's been shown here-- One of the things that's been mentioned several times tonight, which is so frightfully important, is the parental interest in the child; that the parents know what the child is learning in school, and try to help them and ask them questions about it, because the teachers cannot do it by themselves, whatsoever.

The condition of the buildings is so tremendously important. For a teacher to come into a dilapidated old building where the heat doesn't work and everything, is not very conducive to putting their all out to, unfortunately, many students who maybe are coming from the same atmosphere at home where there isn't sufficient heat and everything. So it's not conducive to learning, and we've got to get them to learn.

Another part of our program is to make sure, eventually, that we have prekindergarten, as well as full-day kindergarten in our schools. I know we're working on legislation now -- just to make sure, it will be in the statutes -- that you can use these prefabricated buildings that are made of concrete and steel -- not those damn wooden trailers and things -- but they last for 30 or 50 years, and not have to have a bond issue ready after two years to go. You can use it as a permanent structure.

Also, that you can use part of the property that may be the playground, because I know, in talking to quite a few educators, they say it's more important to get the child in a prekindergarten or kindergarten, than having them out skipping rope on a blacktop. So, to cut down the requirements of the State that you have to have "X" square feet to play on, or something like that-- So it's in the law.

So we are striving toward that, but these things are going to take time. Just because you're a takeover District, it doesn't mean all the money is going to be dumped in here, whatsoever. That's the tragic part about it, because the social needs out there that are bearing down on the State-- In talking with the gentleman who headed up the Bioethics Commission who did a study for the Governor on AIDS -- I can't remember the year, whether it's the year 2000, or 2005 -- he said there would be something like 50,000 cases of AIDS, at \$100,000 per year. That's \$5 billion there alone, in that one area.

If you take the number of families-- I'm sure people here know people who have children, the children are now 35 or 40 years old, but that's their child. They've taken care of them because they had a disability when they were born. They have been incontinent, maybe, since they were born, and they've taken this person and brought them up because of their love for them. Maybe one respite care sprint a week -- you know, three hours a week to get out of the house. There are between 3500 and 40,000 individuals of that nature looking to be put into group homes, and we don't have those group homes out there.

It's horrendous what the social needs are out there. So people say, "Well, you took over the District. Come on, get the things. Get the curtains pulled down," and, "Put up new buildings." Do you need them? Yes -- not new curtains, but you need the rest. There is no question. But it is going to have to be done slowly. I want to be very honest and frank with you.

But, again, I appreciate the turnout, and I'm sorry all the other fainthearted left. They wouldn't wait until the end, because I was going to say, if they all stayed, I was going to take you all out to breakfast. (laughter)

But thank you again, very much. And thank you, Dr. Wilson.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

110 Chatham Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey
March 21, 1993

State Education Committee
Trenton, New Jersey

Gentlemen:

Prior to August 7, 1990, some of us believed that the only way to bring quality education to the Paterson school district was to have a state takeover. During the past two years, there have been changes:

The district now has a central office staff three times the size prior to takeover. I have with me the directories of the central office personnel for the years 1989-90. Bigger is not always more efficient. While people must be compensated for the jobs they perform, tripling the staff creates a budget high on salaries and a dearth of programs for children. Raises have been extremely high. When raises are exorbitant and when there are a plethora of positions, programs, textbooks and supplies do not filter down to where they are needed the schools and the children. If you examine the purchases during the first year of the takeover, you will find that they did not totally expend the textbook allowance and that supplies were not in the buildings. Similar problems exist this year as was indicated in the Paterson Education Association survey conducted earlier this year. The survey stated that facilities were not ready for use-stairwells closed, leaking roofs and overcrowding. Once again, there was a shortage of books and supplies, and in some buildings, staff was not in place.

A number of perks have been granted to those central office staff placed in high positions. Persons have received moving allowances, extensive sick time benefits, additional life insurance policies other than contributory insurance given to the teaching profession in this state. May I remind you, this is paid for by Paterson tax dollars and money from Trenton. I have in my possession a copy of a letter offering a position in the district with these perks. The person did not take the position.

Since takeover, consultants have been hired regularly. Some of the consultants have been persons who were either state employees or part of the CCI team. This, to me, represents a conflict of interest. Some of these consultants who evaluated our central office personnel and our principals were part of the state team who evaluated the district. How can they perform an unbiased evaluation of these people?

Another consulting team was hired to perform a facilities study. The former Board of Education commissioned a study of facilities in 1989 and was completed in 1990. Why did they not use this study? Last summer, a consultant was hired in personnel to assist the personnel director and his assistant. During the last five years, one personnel director or assistant superintendent

staffed the whole district.

We have been fortunate in that the Paterson Education Foundation applied and received a large award for libraries. Those schools that applied for the grant and were accepted had to supply matching funds by September of 1992. One elementary school (PS 27) received a grant. The PTA sent their matching grant check (hand delivered to the Board office) last September. After ninety days had elapsed, the President of the PTA asked central office about this check indicating that the check had not cleared the account. Finally, the check was returned to the PTA President, uncashed, with the explanation that it was found in a drawer. The president just recently reissued a check (dated March 2, 1993) to match the funds.

In reading the education literature of today-bigger does not make us more efficient. There is a move to decentralize responsibility and fix that responsibility at the local site. What we have here is a larger bureaucracy that is sacrificing efficiency to create a dynasty.

Paradigm, a program started two years ago, has the potential of causing many problems. In its first year, freshmen encountered two periods (80 minutes) of reading and writing, two periods (80 minutes) language arts and two periods (80 minutes) math. While time on task should increase productivity and outcomes, you will find that this program has created in the youngsters a lack of self esteem, absenteeism and no sense of closure. Have they accrued the necessary units to qualify for graduation in our state? If they continue in the paradigm in the second year or until they have obtained a passing grade, these youngsters will not have the necessary credits to move on to another high school year or to college. Moreover, if they transfer from East Side or Kennedy to a school in another town, will paradigm course work satisfy that districts requirements? More than likely, the answer will be no. We will either have five year high schools or more dropouts. In addition, Abbott v Burke cited that districts such as ours are entitled to offer our youngsters the same courses afforded the suburban districts. Yet, paradigm denies them access to arts, music and shop. This is particularly in evidence in the elementary schools. Visit our high schools and check the master schedules of the paradigm elementary schools. Perhaps, you might speak to our teachers off the record and outside of the buildings. You might have a better picture of what is not happening in our schools.

While the faces in central office have changed, the business of education in Paterson has not!

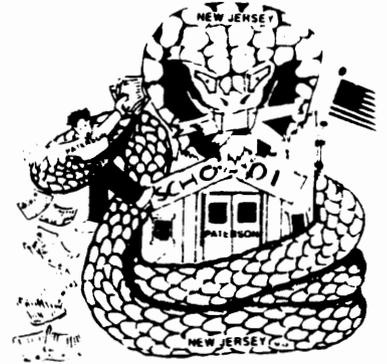
Sincerely,

Judith Moran

Operation Take Back

PULSE

PATERSONIANS
UNITED FOR
LOCAL
SCHOOL
EFFECTIVENESS



To: The Joint Committee on Public Schools
From: Tony Vancheri, PULSE President
Date: March 24, 1993
Re: Public Forum on the State Takeover of the Paterson Public Schools
Inclusion of PULSE Newsletters, Releases and Letters into the Hearing Files

PULSE is a Grassroots Citizen Organization in Paterson, New Jersey, formed as a result of the State "takeover" of our public school system. PULSE acts as a citizen's "watchdog" and parent advocate for our children's education.

Many of our members will be speaking this evening. We are asking that the attached documents - PULSE Newsletters, Releases and Letters be included in the hearing transcripts.

Thank you.

YOUR EAR IN BOSTON

Laval S. Wilson assumed the role of Boston school superintendent in 1985 in the manner of a chief executive officer of a multimillion-dollar industry. That corporate style, however, alienated the very people needed to improve the troubled school system: parents, teachers, principals, the business community and elected officials. Wilson frustrated supporters with his management style by shunning their advice on how to improve student performance--even when he solicited it. This was most notable with Wilson's Boston Education Plan, a long-range proposal to improve the system that was developed after almost two years of volunteer work by about 300 parents, teachers, community and business leaders. Wilson rejected a great many of the recommendations for the plan in favor of his own. He insisted they had no reason to be upset, because he was the final decision-maker. (Boston Globe-2/14/90). Well, if his own ideas for improving education worked, he would have been a hero. After 3 years of Mr. Wilson's absolute rule, the Boston school system provides an excellent case of spending more taxpayers' money without improving the schools!

"Boston students perform badly on all national exams in reading and math. Their 1988 median combined SAT score is 764 -- 140 points below the national average. This is not a question of money. The Boston school system spends more than \$6000 per student...." (Straight Shooting by John Silber, p34). Now this is the same individual appointed to run Paterson by the "boys" in Trenton. Recall, NJ Ed Comm. Ellis stated, "Dr. Wilson's tenure in Boston was distinguished." (Herald-8/8/91). Now, you figure it out! SAT's of 764 won't even get you into a county college. Another example of second-class citizenship in education in Urban America & Boston! In Paterson, Wilson is singing the same song: "... community involvement....with parents serving on screening committees...." (Herald-8/9/91). We ask...after the charade, will Wilson again reject Paterson's citizen's ideas for his own opiate beliefs??

PULSE

429 Preakness Avenue
Paterson, N.J. 07502

**Patersonians
United for
Local
School
Effectiveness**

PULSE NEWSLETTER

Vol. I; No.2

PULSE is a grassroots citizen organization in Paterson, formed as a result of the State Takeover of our school system. **PULSE** acts as a citizens' "watchdog" and parent advocate for our children's education. Many of our members belong to parent organizations, throughout our school system.

This Newsletter is made available for those citizens seeking additional information regarding State Takeover. **PULSE** members have been attending school district Forums and City Council meetings, bringing forth parent and citizen concerns about school spending, excessive staff hirings, vo-tech problems, firings, denial of paid health benefits and lack of direct parental involvement. In essence, we have legalized dictatorship in Paterson.

If interested in getting involved, contact **PULSE** by writing to: **PULSE**, 429 Preakness Avenue, Paterson, New Jersey 07502.

Tony Vancheri
President

March, 1992

2.

RETIREEES --- It was PULSE who notified the press and a City Councilman of the devastating elimination of health care by those "outsiders" running our school system. Keep in mind, when complacent Patersonians refused to stand-up to the dictates of the takeover law, which eliminated ALL citizen rights to redress, it was known that when problems began, nothing could be done! So now we have a major dilemma.....while every major politician is talking about a national health-care program, the power-brokers in Paterson/State Schools are **ELIMINATING** health care for our retirees-those helpless elderly, who need health care more than anything else. Many who live daily on their meager pension, must now pay up to \$451. monthly for health care! NOW the Council and others, who continually told PULSE members that they had no power over the State or "give the State a chance", NOW THESE SKEPTICS are joining the PULSE bandwagon demanding the benefits of fully paid health care remain for those least able to pay! PULSE feels the state laws should be changed to allow retirees to receive health care if that was agreed at the time of retirement. It is unconscionable to change the rules in mid-stream! Our seniors have been the pillars of strength in our community and to have these "outsiders" strip them of their basic right to health care must be challenged!

VO-TECH ---As our founding fathers so aptly stated: "Government is best that governs least." But not so the "fat cats" from Trenton...armed with a dictatorial law, they smell the educational dollars earmarked for Paterson & Jersey City children. This translates into high paying JOBS for their "buddies" and "takeover" fever is running rampant! Before the ink dries on the takeover remedies for Paterson, we are told by politicians and state appointed officials, the Passaic County vocational school must also be "takenover." Freeholder Director Robertson is correct when he stated, "...that Paterson clean up its own educational system before it starts looking for new responsibility." (Record-1/24/92). What has Mr. Wilson done for voc-ed in Boston? On February 18, 1990, only 2 years ago, a Boston Globe article stated, "The state department of Ed has threatened to strip the system(Boston Schools-run by Wilson) of its right to run vocational education if substantial progress is not made soon. The state

VO-Tech cont.

(of Mass) found that vocational education(in Boston) was being accorded 'second-class status' by the school system." We ask Mr. Ellis, given the record in Boston, are you really serious in reforming education in Paterson?

NEGOTIATIONS: "Who's Telling The Truth?"

The No.Jersey Herald on 2/17/92 stated that,"For the first time, Paterson teachers have been working through the school year without a contract." In recent memory many parents do not recall such public bickering between the staff and state administrators. Almost daily, our children are becoming personal messengers for the state "Coligan Man" - that high priced propaganda employee hired to make Patersonians feel good in the midst of trouble. Don't believe all you read in these flyers---the problems between the parties are not only financial! A case in point deals with educational programs, especially those conceived by our well traveled superintendent. Example: "The Paradigm Project" (say what!). As explained by the PEA, it is the "brain child of our new superintendent." Subjects like science, social studies, shop, home economics, art and music have been completely **ELIMINATED!** Remember, the reason Paterson was taken over by the "fat cats" of Trenton was our kids were not learning --- according to State compliance. Is this new Paradigm philosophy saying - if you don't learn it, you can't forget it? PULSE believes such a program limits academic and job opportunities for our students. **Deja vu from the Boston days?**

NJ STATE BD OF ED

--- We were there! Representatives from PULSE spoke in January at the public portion of the New Jersey Board of Education regarding takeover in general and specifically about the problems many parents are having with the Paterson situation. Questions were asked of your PULSE representatives and many more will be attending their meeting in Apr. **Let us know if you want to attend.**

PULSE DINNER-DANCE & FUND RAISER

Mark the date on you calendar:
Wed. May 27, 1992 at the Brownstone. \$25/per person.
 This is our only fund raiser so far so please help!
 See Jeanne Sandford, chairperson for tickets.

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BUDGET APPEAL ---The Paterson City Council has appealed the State Operated Education Budget, thanks to the vigilance of PULSE members. After months of asking the City Council to "get involved" in our school system, it was only after the proposed Education budget showing an increase of almost 10%, then the City Council got involved! Our schools of milk and honey turned SOUR when increases were proposed! Remember, this is the first year Paterson citizens DID NOT VOTE on their school budget --- any wonder why it will increase \$18 million? Under YOUR elected School Board, 2 of the last 3 school budgets DID NOT INCREASE THE TAXES IN THE CITY OF PATERSON, AND THEY NEVER, NEVER, RAN A DEFICIT!

Even the Council's paid educational consultant thinks the proposed state school budget is excessive. The Council is asking the Paterson/State School District to reduce its budget by \$ 8 million, and we agree! All major studies show more money alone DOES NOT improve education. See Robert Braun's article in the Star-Ledger dated May 1, 1982, about New Jersey's propensity to spend on education without accountability or positive results.

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NJ STATE BD OF ED --- PULSE continues to speak-out at State Board of Education meetings. PULSE reps. attended their Trenton board meeting on April 15th, along with Fr. Santora of the Jersey City Take-over district.

Our main concern was to get the elected school board back in Paterson and Jersey City; and to allow our citizens to vote on school budgets and building improvements! Over 500 school districts in New Jersey have this right, but not two very large URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS! THIS IS NOT RIGHT!

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PULSE UNDER COVER ---The PULSE organization continues to review the State take-over laws in an attempt to bring voting power back to our citizens & give parents a "say" in their child's education. Our investigating team has uncovered a confidential State Report, by the Sub-Committee on School Intervention, dated July 8, 1981. At that time, only Jersey City was under State control. This Senate-Assembly Sub-Comm. made a list of recommendations which are highly critical of the State take-over law. Many of their recommendations are what PULSE has been asking for since the Paterson State take-over: pg. 11 of the report "...the Board of Education shall become a voting Board." "...provide for parent inclusion in the operation of the district."

"Qualified individuals...who were employed...prior to State intervention should be considered."

prior to candidates from outside the district."

YOU READ THIS REPORT AND YOU DECIDE. PULSE WILL REMAIN NEUTRAL!

Patersonians United for Local School Effectiveness

PULSE - 429 Preakness Ave., Paterson, New Jersey 07502

PULSE NEWSLETTER

VOL 1; No. 3

PULSE is a Grassroots Citizen Organization in Paterson, formed as a result of the State Takeover of our school system. PULSE acts as a citizens' "watch-dog" and parent advocate for our children's education.

This newsletter is made available for those citizens seeking additional information regarding State Takeover. The PULSE Newsletter is a compilation of our meeting activities, membership activities and opinions; YOUR EAR IN BOSTON is referenced and footnoted, for accuracy - not our opinion!

May, 1992

Tony Vancheri, President

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PULSE DINNER-DANCE & FUND RAISER

Mark the date on your calendar:

Wed. MAY 27, 1992, at the Brownstone. \$25.00/person.

This is our only fund raiser so far, so please help!

See or call JEANNE SANDFORD, chairperson; or TOM FUSCALDO

or TONY VANCHERI, for tickets!!

+++++

WORKING WITH JERSEY CITY --- At our last monthly meeting in April, Rev. Alex Santora, a member of the Jersey City school district advisory board, spoke about the ills of the take-over law. PULSE is working jointly with a citizen's group in Jersey City which is also seeking local control of their school district. In our next Newsletter, we will give an update on this strategy of working with other urban districts.

CHALLENGE IN BOSTON --- PULSE has been doing an expose on Mr. Wilson's tenure in Boston (1985-1990), using footnotes to document all our statements. It was felt the Paterson community should get to know, intimately, the STATE APPOINTED LEADER of our 23,000 students.

PULSE was shocked and chagrined when Mr. Wilson responded to our documented statements by issuing a 22 page memorandum to thousands of community representatives, governmental leaders, staff members, etc. Mr. Wilson states, "...the PULSE Newsletter inaccurately describes progress of students in the Boston Public Schools during my tenure there as Superintendent."

(Wilson Memo dated March 10, 1992). ALL OUR STATEMENTS ARE DOCUMENTED AND REFERENCED. It is not PULSE who should be challenged, but our references: 1) Massachusetts State Education Commissioner - Harold Reynolds, Jr.; 2) Newark Star-Ledger; 3) Boston Globe Newspaper; 4) Dr. Lois H. Jones, current Boston Superintendent; 5) a novel titled, STRAIGHT SHOOTING by John Silber; 6) The Boston Herald Newspaper, etc.

Any high school or college student has the sense to review footnotes to ascertain the accuracy of a particular report. Apparently, this was not done by Mr. Wilson. PULSE stands by its reporting accuracy and refers all questioners to our parenthetical references. The "My Record as your Superintendent" by Dr. L.S. Wilson, dated March, 1990, must in retrospect, be disputed in light of documented facts. Read for yourself an article from the Boston Herald, dated January 18, 1992 (not PULSE, but the Boston Herald):

Now, on pages 3 & 4 of Mr. Wilson's "Record" list "... appointments of high quality central office, site administrators,..." etc., etc. We ask, if these appointments were of such high quality, why have many of them been released? Will this happen in Paterson? You read what's going on in Boston; and you decide. PULSE WILL REMAIN NEUTRAL!

School budget ax targets teachers, administrators

By PATRICIA MANGAN

Despite repeated complaints from City Hall about administrative fat in the School Department, the mayor's school board this week barely cut any staff from central offices and aimed most layoffs at classroom teachers and administrators.

The newly appointed school panel made the cuts Wednesday at a bolsterous meeting that some

observers said was the most unruly in 20 years.

The committee refused to give in to impassioned pleas of parents who turned out in record numbers to urge the committee not to make any further reductions in the classroom. By unanimous vote, the board cut \$8 million from the current year's spending plan, eliminating 269 jobs.

Of total layoffs, only 85 were drawn from the central offices at

the School Department. Twenty-two people were laid off from the superintendent's office, seven from the department of curriculum and instruction, and 36 in management services.

No personnel cuts were made in the central offices of special education. Only one administrative position was cut from curriculum and instruction, a post that has been vacant since the resignation of the deputy superintendent.

Most of the layoffs will occur among teachers, aides and school administrators.

About half the central office administrators are paid by external funds and are not included in the School Department budget. But school sources said more cuts could have been made at headquarters to save school positions.

"If you have to eliminate administrators, you should do it at the central level before the school level," said Paula Georges of the

Citywide Educational Coalition.

The School Department has begun sending out layoff notices and most laid-off school administrators will immediately begin bumping teachers out of jobs.

Georges said she was concerned the chaotic atmosphere at the meeting prevented observers from following the procedure and understanding the budget reductions.

Others complained the failure of Chairman Paul Paris to control the meeting prevented the audience from hearing any discussion of the budget by the board.

At one point toward the end of the meeting, people who had

not signed up for public comment screamed at the board while members were discussing a motion.

Unlike the elected School Committee, which had been known to capitulate under public pressure at large meetings, the new school board dug in its heels and sent a strong message it will not be awayed by the opposition.

Sources said some committee members were initially leaning toward postponing the budget vote until a later meeting, but decided that waiting would draw still more crowds and protests to a subsequent session — making the cuts even more difficult.

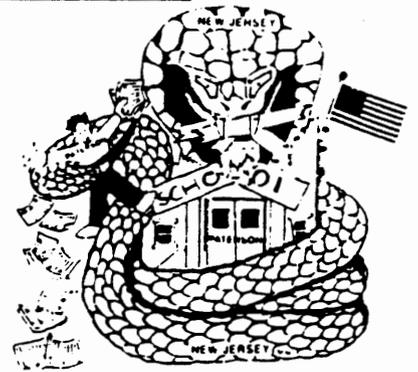
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Operation Take Back

PULSE

PERSONIANS
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August 6, 1992



ator John Ewing
airperson - Joint Committee on Public Schools

ar Senator Ewing:

Sunday, July 19, 1992, a guest editorial appeared in the Education Section of the Star-Ledger under your by-line as Chairperson of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Schools.

The editorial was enumerating the educational benefits of the state operated school district in the City of Paterson, New Jersey (New Jersey's third largest city and school district in terms of population and considered a densely populated urban area). Several statements in this editorial need to be addressed for they do not represent the true facts.

As a matter of fact, PULSE is a direct result of the Paterson citizenry's disenfranchisement with the state operated school district. A few years prior to the state take-over, Patersonians voted to replace their appointed school board with an elected board in response to citizen desires to "get involved" with their failing educational system. This fledgling elected board was starting to turn urban education into a positive when the impetuous political state machinery decided it could correct the educational ills of yet another urban city. Do not think that complex social and economic ills can simply be solved by a state operated bureaucracy; but back to the editorial: First, the state-appointed Superintendent has remained hidden and inaccessible in his Central Office. If he has held over 200 meetings with various business, community, religious and family groups, as the editorial claims, we would like documentation as to dates, times and places; for very few people in Paterson, the common folk, that we know of have met with him.

The editorial states that the Paterson Board of Education was understaffed, with no one willing to take responsibility. On the contrary, the Board of Education which had only recently become a fully elected school board, instituted several major reforms. Fiscal responsibility dictated a lean yet responsive staff. However, since the state take-over, over 350 ADDITIONAL employees have been added without any citizen approval or accountability, with a budget increase of \$18. million.

The elected board had recently suspended the business administrator and replaced that person with an acting business administrator who instituted district-wide savings into the millions of dollars in insurance premiums savings; in-house food service program reforms; central purchasing; etc. A dormant capital improvement program was resurrected under a lease-purchase program that renovated eighteen school buildings in one year. These actions were responsible and

sponsive in the business area of the school system. Subsequent to state take-over, the capital needs of the district have again remained dormant, while bureaucrats "study" the problem and another year clicks by.

While the state-appointed Superintendent reported there was no Management Organizational Chart, that was not true. The Board of Education and Central Office administration spent many months with public and employee input developing such a chart and by public resolution formally adopted the first comprehensive organizational chart since granting the Superintendent of Schools "unit control." For decades Paterson's district had a "dual-control" system of management which was reorganized by a receptive elected school board in an attempt to move urban education forward under the singular control of the district's educational leader, their Superintendent.

The state-appointed Superintendent claims he found 1,000 purchase orders (P.O.) stuffed away in file cabinets. This again is not true. A check with the business office staff will show all purchase order "hard copies" were neatly kept in P.O. numerical order, but were rifled and mixed out of order by the various state appointed monitoring and transition teams, buzzing around the Paterson district for years with "super" state authority to ask for much and prove little.

It was also reported that two separate date systems, containing separate information were running simultaneously. This statement is correct. The Board of Education had elected to replace its antiquated and inefficient computer with an updated system. The school district was in the middle of this computer conversion and it was necessary and prudent business to run parallel systems and proof them out.

Additionally, the editorial stated educational dollars were placed in non-interest bearing bank accounts. This is another falsehood. At the time of the three monitoring and eventual state take-over, all school funds were properly invested in appropriate accounts. As a matter of fact, aggressive fiscal concerns by the business office staff doubled our anticipated investment revenues during the 1990-1991 fiscal year by keeping school district funds in the highest yielding interest accounts that were legally permissible. Periodically, local banks were solicited in writing by the business office and the board finance committee to submit proposals that were financially beneficial to the school district. This can be verified by current and previous employees, previous board members and the board auditors who served prior to state take-over.

In addition to the elected board's attempt to remove its business administrator, its legal counsel of many years was not rehired, and immediately state and federal law suits were filed against the board and the members by their former attorney. Additionally, the elected board attempted to have their Superintendent of over ten years retire or resign, but he refused. Through the valuation process, supervised by the New Jersey School Board's Association, another attempt was made to make the Superintendent more responsive to central state and local educational concerns. Again, the local elected Board of Education is frustrated by antiquated state tenure laws making it impossible to rid the school district of its administrators, for cause. Tenure for superintendents have subsequently been removed by the State Legislature, thank God! The attorney and business administrator mentioned above have walked away with hefty buy-outs, to the chagrin of many former board members and citizens in general.

X

Under the elected Board of Education in Paterson, two of the last three school budgets represented a **zero increase** in local school tax. These stabilized budgets were in line with the wishes of the public who continually rejected Board of Education budget increases at the local level. During this time, state funding to education increased substantially, thereby freeing much needed municipal tax monies for local expenditures, especially for fire and police protection.

Asbestos abatement was started under the elected board, again in response to public concern after an asbestos scare many years earlier.

The elected board also officially instituted an "open enrollment" program to encourage proper desegregation of its urban school students, without much fan-fare or state mandates, which tend to polarize school districts especially New Jersey's suburban districts.

The HSPT and CAT test results, especially the results in March, 1991, showed dramatic student improvements in math and reading. That's right, **dramatic improvements**, the first in years, under the elected board, prior to state take-over! Here was proof that newly instituted and positively generated educational programs were working! Paterson programs such as intensive summer learning programs and special gifted and talented student programs, in conjunction with the basic skills improvement programs, with dedicated staff, provided the impetus for students to excel; all with state, county and local educators working together with local community groups, parents, PTAs and the local elected school board members, accountable to the citizens of their district. Isn't this the way a democracy should operate?

If State take-over works, why has the state operated district in Jersey City asked for an additional two years to continue the process up to seven years? Yet Paterson's elected board was taken over after only five years to prove itself as an elected board! Do you think this is fair?

ULSE feels it is important that accurate information be reported. That is why ULSE representatives have appeared at State Board of Education meetings, local education meetings, local city council meetings in addition to meeting with our locally elected state, county and municipal officials.

Senator Ewing, please feel free to call if you have any questions in this matter

Anthony Vancheri
Anthony Vancheri
Chairman
415 Edmund Avenue
Paterson, NJ 07502
(201) 790-6831

Jerry Bello
Jerry Bello, Sr.
Education Liaison

PATERSONIANS UNITED FOR LOCAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

PULSE - 429 Breakness Ave., Paterson, New Jersey 07502

PULSE NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2; No. 1

PULSE is a Grassroots Citizen Organization in Paterson, formed as a result of the State Takeover of our school system. PULSE acts as a citizens' "watch-dog" and parent advocate for our children's education.

This newsletter is made available for those citizens seeking additional information regarding State Takeover. The PULSE Newsletter is a compilation of our meeting activities, membership activities and opinions - many referenced and/or footnoted.

Jan., 1993

Tony Vancheri, President

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL

Re-Cap: since our last newsletter, membership has kept busy and actively involved: 1) Highly successful Dinner-Dance & Fund Raiser on May 27, 1992. Many "thanks" to our committee & supporters. 2) PULSE members have attended local meetings of your state-run school system and also State Board of Education meetings in Trenton. At every city council meeting, PULSE is there. 3) PULSE has met with legislators and their staff (locally and in Trenton) regarding QEA funding and changes in QEA law. Funding to Urban Districts are being reduced!

LONG-RANGE FACILITY PLAN: pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:3-1.23, the facilities improvement report has been received. Any parent with children in the system knows the problems with our buildings, the question has always been: **who will pay the 120 MILLION DOLLARS to rehab, replace, and expand our schools??**

BOE CALENDAR: '92-'93: when State appointed administrators eliminated Veterans' Day holiday in Paterson for our school children & employees, PULSE jumped into action. PULSE contacted federal/state/local "politicians" along with various community & veteran groups. Laval S. Wilson, Paterson State appointed superintendent was highly critical of PULSE's request to reinstate Veterans' Day as a BOE holiday. PULSE and the community at large felt recognition was necessary for those men & women who have served the country in our armed forces, many of them never to return. PULSE believes our school children should acknowledge the sacrifices made by our veterans to preserve our precious freedoms. Apparently, the BOE hierarchy felt expeditious **not to grant this holiday. BIG MISTAKE!!!** By working together with our friends & neighbors, the state operated school district in Paterson **reinstated Veterans' Day as a day of recognition!** Thank you supporters

APPEAL: as you know, the state operated school district's budget for 1991-1993 was increased almost \$19 million, to almost 1/2 BILLION DOLLARS, during Paterson's time of economic poverty. Much of this increase was to be paid by Patersonians, although we have no voice, no vote, no meaningful say in the education of our children. **PULSE** immediately called the budget increase "unconscionable" at a public budget hearing, due to Paterson's inability to afford such increases. **PULSE** advocates "State mandate - State pay," and New Jersey should pay any and all school costs! **PULSE** is still awaiting the budget break-down of expenditures for last year's budget. **PULSE** has continually advocated funding increases in those items directly impacting on the students' education: a) bilingual programs; b) gifted & talented programs; c) expansion of science & math labs at our high schools; d) revamp and expand the Prep School Concept to include those students truly in need of added learning skills to enter college. Regarding this year's budget: where are the additional millions going?? **PULSE** encouraged the Paterson City Council to appeal this budget increase and also asked that any increase be paid by the State DCA! **PULSE** thanks the City Council for their support in these budget matters. **PULSE** firmly believes "State mandate - State pay" will enable Paterson to maintain its police & fire departments and help other necessary services (DPW, Recreation, etc.), to survive; only if the school budget is kept under control!

WORKING WITH JERSEY CITY: as you know, Jersey City was the first school district to lose local control (Paterson is only the second). **PULSE** has continually worked close with our friends in Jersey City to bring local school control back to the parents & taxpayers of both these urban districts. In November, over 60% of Jersey City voters supported a non-binding referendum to return Jersey City back to local citizen control: local control to set budgets and have a "say" at local public meetings. This is significant because as Jersey City was entering their 5th & final year under the "take-over" law, the state administrators have requested additional YEARS of take-over. Even the State, in 5 years, could not significantly improve education in Jersey City. Just maybe, all of education's problems are not just the fault of a locally elected Board of Education, just the State. But many of our concerned parents & educators have known this for years. However, the arrogantly domineering State of New Jersey found it politically correct to "take-over" rather than correct. We told you so! Well, the citizens of Jersey City have said, "NO!", and we in Paterson are attempting to get a similar non-binding referendum on our ballot, through our City Council. This **PULSE** initiated referendum has been pending before our City Council since September, 1992 and should be voted upon in the near future.

CAFETERIA AIDES: a controversial addition to the new school budget was almost **\$1 million** for 200 "Lunchroom Aides." Many educators felt such money would be better spent in the classroom. **PULSE** has learned that most of these newly hired "aides" are now being used as security guards in our hallways & playgrounds. This change of hiring is significant! Do we not need aides? Do we now need guards? What's going on here? The student/teacher incident reports, we were told, showed **statistically measurable large reductions**, so why the guards? Spend the money on educating our children, not to restrict them.

BLACK ISSUES CONFERENCE: interestingly, **PULSE** is not the only parent/community group critical of State control in Paterson. However, the local media refuses to honestly report concerns of such magnitude. At a recent Passaic County Black Issues Conference, with **PULSE** members in attendance, local & state educators **blasted** the Paradigm Project (a controversial educational program instituted by state appointed superintendent Laval S. Wilson). **Note** - see PEA Advocate dated Jan., 1992 & June, 1992, for great Paradigm Project details. The Paradigm Project, instituted **without** meaningful teacher and parent input, was criticized as detrimental to the overall learning process. The Paradigm Project limits science, social studies, geography, etc., for extended periods of reading, writing and math. Many critics feel motivated students are severely hurt by such a restrictive teaching curriculum. Superintendent Wilson's conspicuous absence at this important community meeting was aptly noted by moderator Dr. Harris of Montclair State College.

JOHN ELLIS: New Jersey Commissioner of Education, John Ellis, has resigned after less than 30 months on the job (the briefest in memory - see Star Ledger dated November 20, 1992 and reporter Robert Braun's articles since, especially January 3, 1993). 1) it was Mr. Ellis who decided to remove local elected control in Paterson's schools; 2) it was Mr. Ellis who declared Paterson schools "pickings" for state bureaucrats; 3) it was Mr. Ellis who found and appointed an unemployed Laval S. Wilson to "run" Paterson's schools. Who is this individual who had such an affect upon Paterson and when only **PULSE** was critical there was a frightening ominous & eerie silence from those in power! Mr. Ellis leaves a department in disaray, while battling with top education advisors, the State Board of Education, State legislators and is under investigation by the State Commission of Investigation for his handling of \$25 million in school aid in 1991. Mr. Ellis also eliminated state monitoring of educational objectives and goals, opting to leave such important indicators to local districts - another highly critical decision. When asked if Mr. Ellis resignation would change the state-operated district in Paterson, Mayor William J. Pascrell said, "it might," and reiterated his belief that "the quicker the state-operated school district is given back to the municipality, the better." (The Record, November 21, 1992). It is comforting to note our mayor agrees with **PULSE's** philosophy in this matter!

John Ellis con't.

Star Ledger Education Editor Robert Braun called the State DOE under Commissioner Ellis "out of control;" given false accounts of the benefits of the QEA law. Mr. Braun continues: "... districts could safely ignore him;" Mr. Ellis made himself "irrelevant;" giving \$1.5 million to a school district "the school system did not deserve but ... because it was politically well-connected." Braun continues to discuss the dichotomy of our State DOE pushing their idea of "school-based management" and local "empowerment," training parents and teachers to decide what they want out of schooling(of course not in Paterson or Jersey City - no local control here, not politically correct, you know!). But savvy parents and leaders in general recognize that only radical change will affect school; but radical change is politically destructive. Yet, Mr. Ellis demonstrated what happens when a leader **cannot** or **will not** lead. And he was Mr. Wilson's "boss" you know! **PULSE** believes the voices of disenfranchisement in Paterson about the state control of our schools is growing and rightfully so! Support our efforts.

Operation Take Back

PULSE

PERSONIANS
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To: Paterson City Council
From: PULSE Executive Board
Date: February 27, 1993
Re: City Council Resolution #91 Regarding
a Referendum on the Control of the
State Operated School District in
the City of Paterson.



PULSE wants to acknowledge, with a show of appreciation, the City Council of the City of Paterson for their continued commitment to the children, parents and taxpayers of our town, by their recent approval of City Council Resolution #91, to place a referendum on the November, 1993 ballot, giving the voters of Paterson the opportunity to voice their opinion on a state takeover of our local school district.

A special "thanks" to the Resolution sponsor, Councilman Don Hayden and the co-sponsors, Councilwomen, Vera Ames and Maria Magda. This "Rainbow Coalition" of council-people truly represent the feelings of all Patersonians regarding this crucial educational issue.

It is our hope the citizens' approval of this non-binding resolution will prompt the State of New Jersey to return education to local voting control in both Jersey City and Paterson.

The reasons for local control are obvious, but a financial example will suffice. The current school budget under state control has increased Paterson's School Tax more than the last 3 budgets under our elected school board, and approved by our elected city council, COMBINED! And, our educational system has not improved.

PULSE members, along with other community organizations, such as the NAACP's Education Committee and the Black Issues Coalition continue to stand ready to assist in anyway necessary to help improve our children's education.

Please feel free to call.

Anthony Vancheri
PULSE President
415 Edmund Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey 07502
(201)790-6831

Jerry Bello, Sr.
Education Liaison

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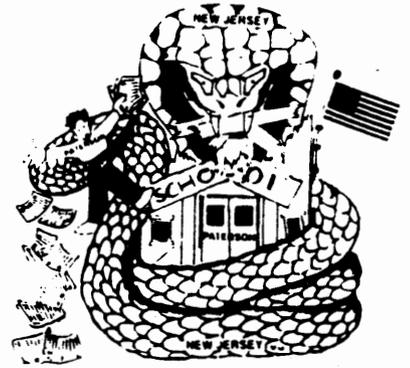
Operation Take Back

PULSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PATERSONIANS
UNITED FOR
LOCAL
SCHOOL
EFFECTIVENESS

To: Public Officials, News Media,
Citizens at Large
From: PULSE Executive Board
Date: March 17, 1993
Re: Independent Auditors' Report:
Paterson Public School District for the
Year Ended June 30, 1992



For additional information call:
Tony Vancheri, president, at
(201)790-6831.

PULSE is a Grassroots Citizen Organization in Paterson, New Jersey, formed as a result of the State "takeover" of our public school system. **PULSE** acts a citizen's "watchdog" and parent advocate for our children's education.

The CPA firm of Lerch, Vinci & Higgins of FairLawn, New Jersey, submitted their independent auditors' report, dated December 15, 1992, covering the year ended June 30, 1992 for the State of New Jersey's operated school district in Paterson, New Jersey. The Scope of the Audit covered the financial transactions of the School Business Administrator, Treasurer of School Monies, the activities of the School District, the Student Activity Fund, Enterprise Fund and Special Revenue Fund under the auspices of the School District.

Based upon our review of this audit report, we believe state district superintendent Laval S. Wilson and his administrative management team are being cited for conspicuous and obtrusive mismanagement of school expenditures while violating their fiduciary responsibility for fiscal reliability and trustworthiness. Such carelessness, in a school district where citizens have no recourse of accountability, cannot and will not be tolerated. The educational future of our children and the fiscal integrity of our city are in the balance.

There are many examples in the audit report where the State Operated School District in Paterson has failed to properly exercise management controls. Certain items of mismanagement are in violation of State Code wherein some may be construed as illegal acts; a far superior indicant of error than had confronted the prior locally elected board of education under Level Three scrutiny. A few obvious examples follow, however, a cursory perusal of the audit document will readily uncover a plethora of non-compliance.

A) Student Activity Fund (pg. 115 of audit report):

unauthorized accounts opened
\$75. check issued to "cash"

16X

B) Enterprise Fund (miscellaneous revenues) (pg. 116):

breakfast program reimbursements deposited to Operating Account
underclaim on meal count for reimbursements
cash receipts journal incomplete and inaccurate
certain deposit slips missing
over \$1.2 million adjustments made to "balance" the records
no purchase order system for expenditures in Food Service Fund

C) Condition of Records (pp. 117-120):

In general, financial records and books of accounts are maintained in an unsatisfactory condition:

purchase orders issued after receipt of invoice; financial reports not reconciled monthly; cash receipts recorded after a deposit is made; overpayments due from the State DOE to the district; books and records not readily available for the audit team; monthly certification of line item appropriations & fund balances not filed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.12 and Policy 200-11; Lease Purchase records not always available to the audit team; tuition revenue records not updated on a timely basis; expenditures exceeding budget appropriations could not be reconciled by auditor; outstanding orders exceeded the budget and purchase order reports by almost \$5. million and could not be reconciled by the auditor; debt service interest rates range from 7% to 11% and should be refinanced; grants of \$2.9 million were not expended and unencumbered, therefore, over \$350,000. must be returned to the State DOE; cash disbursements exceeded payments recorded by over \$173,000. and could not be reconciled by the auditor; various grant salary costs were not charged to the grants, but to current expenses; several budget line items were overexpended and transfers were made after deficit operations.

D) Schedule of Findings of Noncompliance - State/Federal Programs (pp. 120-121):

unexpended grant balances due to the State DOE
certain financial reports not timely filed as required
small amount of Teacher salary charges could not be substantiated
program expenditures exceeded approved budget amounts
fixed asset inventory not maintained
meals claimed for reimbursement not in agreement with actual count

E) Schedule of Findings of Noncompliance - Administrative (pg. 121):

appropriation report not in agreement with approved budget
line items expended into deficit prior to money transfers
year end transfers not approved during July, 1992
certain expenditures exceeded the amount requiring public advertising for bids
certain purchase orders & vouchers did not contain authorized/required
signatures & certifications
many vouchers did not contain supporting documentation for the audit team
district has not approved a corrective action plan for the 1990/91 school audit

This Audit is a public document and is available to all who request a copy.

PULSE believes the best solution to such fiscal incompetence is a reversion of the local school district to a locally elected school board to oversee the administration of education in our public schools. Such an elected procedure, the keystone to a democratic society, will inculcate confidence in a fledgling state operated school district.

We realize that an elected school board is not a panacea for all the difficulties facing our urban district, however, school management accountability to a locally elected body will heighten the process to improve education to our children and bring the teachers, parents, administrators, local citizens and our elected mayor and city council back into a community-wide family, something that has been lacking in Paterson since state takeover.

LEGISLATIVE ALERT: The Joint Committee on the Public Schools will hold a public forum regarding the state takeover of Paterson's public schools on Wednesday, March 24, 1993 @ 6PM at Kennedy High School.

PULSE looks forward to seeing you at that meeting!

Accounts Payable/W-Reserve

A review was made of the Accounts Payable/w Reserve and our test noted that no blanket orders have been included. Also, a selected sample of w orders was taken and that sample represented valid contracts executed and delivered to vendors by June 30.

The June 30, 1992 year end budget appropriations report included an amount for outstanding purchase orders which remained open from the 1990/91 school year. These payables were reviewed subsequent to year end and cancelled by the auditor. Procedures should be implemented to review the validity of the open purchase orders on a monthly basis.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance Trust Fund

The Board has adopted the direct reimbursement method and has established an Unemployment Compensation Insurance Trust Fund (Exhibit G-3).

Workers' Compensation Insurance Trust Fund

The Board has adopted a self-insurance plan for workmen's compensation and has established a workers Compensation Insurance Trust Fund (Exhibit G-4).

The District has not created a Loss Reserve for claims incurred which were unpaid to June 30, 1992. At June 30 1992, the District's Fund Administrator Rasmussen Agency has esimated the value of the loss reserves to be \$2,218,062. In addition, the District has not created a reserve for any potential unreported losses which have taken place but in which the District has not received notices or report of losses. The effect on the financial statement from these omissions could not be determined, but is material.

Student Activity Fund

Cash receipts/disbursement ledgers were maintained at each school. These ledgers which are manually maintained were not always posted on a timely basis. Bank reconciliations were not prepared on a monthly basis.

Certain student activity vouchers were not approved for payment, in addition certain schools did not utilize vouchers. Supporting documentation was not always made available for audit.

Our audit revealed that pre-numbered duplicate receipt transmittals were not utilized by all schools of the District. In the schools, where receipt forms were utilized, the composition of the cash receipt (i.e., cash, check, etc.) was not noted.

- ✓ Savings accounts passbooks were not timely updated through June 30, 1992. In addition, during the school year savings accounts were opened during the year, which were not authorized by the District.

The School District does not maintain a listing of all bank accounts of the Student Activity Fund. Signature cards for the numerous student activity accounts are not filed with the School Business Administrator.

- ✓ Year end financial reports were not prepared by all schools within the District.

Our audit revealed that numerous bank accounts were utilized in the Kennedy and Eastside High Schools activity accounts. Consideration should be given to consolidate the various bank accounts of these schools.

The Kennedy and Eastside High School accounts maintained individual class accounts for classes which have graduated from the District.

The audit noted that a check in the amount of \$75 drawn from the Eastside Athletic account, was issued payable to cash.

Enterprise Fund

- ✓ The financial transactions and statistical records of the Enterprise Fund were maintained in unsatisfactory condition.

The financial accounts, meal count records and eligibility applications were reviewed on a test check basis.

- ✓ The number of meals claimed for reimbursement was verified against sales and meal count records. Reimbursements of \$28,491 from the State for the District's Breakfast program were erroneously deposited in the schools Operating Account. Reimbursement vouchers were timely filed, but meals claimed did not always agree with meal count records, resulting in an underclaim as detailed on Exhibit F-4.

Our audit also noted that the breakfast tally sheets for the period September 1991 through December 1991, were not available for audit. This resulted in an overclaim as detailed on Exhibit F-4. There appears to be no review of the mathematical accuracy of the monthly compilation sheets, nor a monthly review for reasonableness or completeness on a school by school basis.

- ✓ A formal cash receipts and disbursements journal was not maintained. The cash receipts journal which was maintained was incomplete and inaccurate and was not reconciled to the cash receipts deposited in the bank on a monthly basis. Certain deposit slips were not always available for audit.

In addition, the Cafeteria receipt transmittals are not duplicate or prenumbered forms. The receipts per the cash receipts journal exceeded the actual deposits by \$9,345. The cash disbursements journal did not include a payments from the account. Adjustments of approximately \$1,243,000 were made to bring the district records in balance with the audit.

Applications for free and reduced price meals were reviewed for completeness and accuracy. It was noted that several applications were missing information; however, the missing information was not necessary to determine eligibility. In addition, our audit revealed 25 exceptions for students classified as free or reduced who did not meet the income eligibility guidelines for these meals.

Adjustments have been made for meals claimed for these students on Exhibit F-4. The number of free and reduced price meals claimed as served did not exceed the number of valid applications on file, times the number of operating days, on a school-by-school basis. The free and reduced price meal and free milk policy is uniformly administered throughout the School System. The required verification procedures for free and reduced price applications were completed.

The School District has not implemented a purchase order system for expenditures incurred in the Food Service Fund. As a result the required signatures for purchase order approval, receipt of goods and the claimant's certification were not obtained or documented. Vendor invoices were reviewed to verify costs. In certain instances supporting documentation was not always available for audit. Inventory records on food and supply items were currently maintained and properly applied in determining the cost of food and supplies used. U.S.D.A commodities were received and a separate inventory was maintained on a first-in, first-out basis.

Time sheets were reviewed on a test basis and labor costs verified. Payroll records were maintained on all School Cafeteria employees authorized by the School District.

The cash disbursement records reflected expenditures for program related goods and services. The appropriate revenue and expenditure records were maintained in order to substantiate the nonprofit status of the School Operations. Net cash resources did not exceed three months average expenditures (see Exhibit F-1).

The Enterprise Fund collects miscellaneous revenues for services provided for various school activities and events. The present billing system does not provide adequate internal controls over this process. In addition, an accounts receivable ledger is not prepared for this revenue.

Enterprise Fund (Continued)

As noted on Exhibit A-1, the District is carrying an accounts receivable of \$175,341 for reimbursement of a prior year deficit, previously paid to ARA Services Inc., the prior outside cafeteria management company. This amount was collected during August, 1992.

The Enterprise Fund has not reimbursed the District's operating account for cafeteria expenditures paid from this account. As a result an interfund payable of \$2,399,023 exists as of June 30, 1992.

Application for State School Aid

The district maintained workpapers on the prescribed state forms or their equivalent.

The district has written procedures for the recording of student enrollment data.

The enrollments reported on the ASSA Summary were verified with the workpapers. A test of the district workpapers with the school registers disclosed reporting errors as detailed on Exhibit K-8. Most of the errors are the result of School No. 8 reporting the enrollment data in the incorrect grade.

A listing by school of students classified as At-Risk Students was not available for audit.

Transportation

All purchases tested were for transportation related services.

The district complied with proper bidding procedures and award of contracts.

Treasurer's Records

The Treasurer's June 30, 1992 monthly financial report was submitted in December, 1992. The report does not present the detail transactions of the various State and Federal grants. In addition, the financial report is not reconciled with the District's internal records on a monthly basis.

The Treasurer records cash receipts after a deposit is made and not when funds are actually received by the district.

The operating bank account was not reconciled on a timely basis.

Condition of Records

- ✓ The financial records and books of accounts maintained by the District were in unsatisfactory condition. The prescribed contractual order system was followed, with exceptions noted. Certain purchase orders were issued subsequent to the receipt of the invoice.
- ✓ The District maintains manually, the required fixed asset property records. These ledgers were not updated for fixed assets purchased during the school year. In addition, the fixed asset records are updated independent of the budget system.
- ✓ The District Secretary's June 30, 1992 monthly financial report was submitted in December, 1992. The monthly financial reports do not detail the transactions of the various special schools and state and federal grants. In addition, the financial reports are not reconciled with the school's internal records on a monthly basis.

Condition of Records (Continued)

- ✓ The District records cash receipts after a deposit is made and not when funds are actually received.
- ✓ Our audit revealed the following overpayment due from the State Department of Education at June 30, 1992:

Nonpublic Textbooks	\$ 95
Nonpublic Chapter 193	598
Emergency Immigrant Assistance	<u>7,289</u>
	<u>\$7,982</u>

Our audit noted that not all State debit/credit memorandums were posted to the District's accounting records.

- The District's books and records were not available for audit on a timely basis due to considerable difficulty encountered in closing the books and adjusting the records, because of software limitations in the District's processing system. Additionally, the checklist for audit was not completed by the District pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:23-1-11. Situations have arisen whereby payroll transactions could not be processed because of lack of sufficient computer memory. Additionally, there is an inability to properly update purchase order journals for payments made in excess of the initial encumbrance. The latter is creating the appearance of negative purchase orders throughout the respective budget reports. The above deficiencies severely hinder the business office's ability to generate internal financial reports in a timely manner.

- ✓ The monthly certification of the availability of line item appropriations and fund balances were not filed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.12 and Division of Finance Policy Bulletin 200-11.

Our review of the Lease Purchase records revealed that the monthly investment statements were not always available for audit and that certain statements received during the school year were not opened until November 1992. Reports which were not on file with the school were subsequently received from the respective trustee.

Our review of the District's Revenue Accounting Procedures and Records revealed the following:

- a) A duplicate, pre-numbered receipt transmittal for General Fund monies collected has not been implemented.
- b) The District does not utilize a pre-numbered invoicing system for billings relating to tuition and rental of school facilities.
- c) The General Fund manual cash receipt ledger maintained during the school year was posted in the total column only, and was not properly extended to their respective receipt categories. No recommendation was required since the District has computerized these records.
- d) During the 1991/92 school year the District computerized the General Fund cash receipts. Our audit noted that revenues of a similar nature were misposted to different receipt accounts. Interest earned on deposits from July 1991 through February 1992 were not recorded in either the manual or computerized ledger.
- e) A revenue and accounts receivable ledger were not utilized during the year of audit.
- f) The computerized cash receipt ledger does not adequately reflect miscellaneous revenues collected during the year. Numerous sources of revenues are combined into a "miscellaneous" account. Improved accountability would be achieved by developing a separate account for each major type of miscellaneous revenue.
- g) Tuition revenue records were incomplete and maintained on manual worksheets. In addition, the records were not updated on a timely basis.

Condition of Records (Continued)

Our review of the District's June 30, 1992 vendor analysis report revealed the following:

- a) The year to date cash expenditures exceeded the amount reported in the June 30, 1992 budget appropriation report by \$109,295,241. Because of computer limitations the budget report did not print \$100,000,000 of miscellaneous clearing disbursements and \$9,284,051 of refunds applied. The difference of \$11,190 was not reconciled by the auditor.
- b) Outstanding orders of \$10,674,082.10 were reported, whereas the open orders per the June 30 1992 budget report and outstanding purchase order report noted \$5,726,359. The difference of \$4,947,723 was not reconciled by the auditor.
- c) The District's current computer software does not have the capability of generating a vendor listing which reports only year to date amounts and does not include all detail transactions. The utilization of this type of report would provide expenditure data in a summary format that will improve the district's internal monitoring of disbursements as it relates to compliance with bidding regulations.

✓ A review of the school District's outstanding serial bonds (Exhibit I-1) revealed that the interest rate on several bond issues ranged from 7% to 11.0%. Consideration should be given to determine if these bond issues are callable, and if a debt service savings would be generated by refinancing these issues.

Our audit noted that the financial information supporting the District's state and federal programs are maintained within various offices throughout the District. As noted, in Section C of the audit, numerous 1991/92 grants allotted to the District were not expended by June 30, 1992. Approximately \$2,900,000 was unencumbered and over \$350,000 is required to be returned to the State Department of Education. Consideration should be given to designate one individual with the responsibility of monitoring and supervising the District's State and Federal programs.

Our review of the June 30, 1992 budget appropriations report disclosed the following:

- a) Adjustments reclassifying expenditures are documented on data input journal entries. These input sheets are not pre-numbered nor initialed by a supervisory individual. A general journal summarizing these adjustments cannot be provided by the current computer software.
- b) Adjustments that reallocated charges within the District's operating budget were reported in a computer generated contra and abatement report. The contra report should be used solely to record reimbursements or refunds made to the District and not to record internal reclassifications. The use of the abatement report should be defined.
- c) In processing the District's monthly payroll, checks issued payable to the payroll accounts are charged to a miscellaneous clearing or nonbudgetary account. Subsequent to this posting an inter-office "dummy" check is recorded, which posts all payroll charges to the various salaries and wage line items. This procedure presently records payroll charges twice in the vendor run and cash disbursement journal as well as inflates the miscellaneous clearing disbursements. This practice should be discontinued immediately. All payroll expenditures should be charged to their respective accounts upon the initial issuance of a check.

Condition of Records (Continued)

- d) The total cash disbursements issued during the school year exceeded the payments recorded in June 30, 1992 budget report by \$173,624. Due to the numerous adjustments recorded during the year, we were unable to reconcile the difference. This amount has been reflected as a disbursement against the prior years payables.
- e) ✓ Costs such as salaries and wages, fringe benefits, etc., pertaining to the various State and Federal Grants were not charged to the grants on a monthly basis. These costs were originally posted to the respective current expense line item and subsequently reclassified to the grants. Internal controls over financial reporting would be enhanced by charging these costs directly to the State and Federal Grants.
- f) Expenditures for garbage tipping fees and cartage were included as Plant, Other Expenses (Account 660) and Purchased Professional Technical (Account 670). These costs should be charged to Plant, Contracted Services (Account 620).
- g) ✓ The original budget per the budget appropriations report did not always agree to the appropriations reflected in the adopted budget. Exhibit A-3b as presented reflects the adopted budget amounts.
- h) ✓ Several budget line items were overexpended during the school year as well as at June 30, 1992. Transfers were made subsequent to the date of line item operated in a deficit position. The year end transfers were not made by July 30, 1992.

Schedule of Findings of Noncompliance - State/Federal Programs

- ✓ Our audit of the special revenue fund revealed there exists certain prior year unexpended grant balances due to the State Department of Education at June 30, 1992. These balances are detailed on Schedules C.
- ✓ Our audit of the Application for State School Aid disclosed reporting errors as detailed on Exhibit K-8. In addition a listing by school of students classified as at-risk students was not available for audit.
- ✓ Our audit revealed that teachers charged to the various State and Federal grant were not approved as program teachers in the District minutes.
- ✓ Our review of the original budget appropriations revealed the Adult Literacy grant budget was not in agreement with the District's approved allotment.

✓ The District has not filed the year end financial reports for the various State/Federal programs by the required due dates.

The audit of the Nonpublic Chapter 192/193 program revealed that the District's internal accounting records do not reflect program expenditures by the required sub-grant account classifications.

Our audit of the Discretionary Aid Grant revealed the following:

- ✓ a) We tested \$980,507 of Teacher salary charges of which \$12,669 could not be substantiated to the schedule which detailed all employees and their respective salaries charged to the program.
- ✓ b) Program expenditures exceeded the approved budget amount for Instructional salaries by \$380,50

✓ Our audit revealed that a fixed asset inventory was not maintained for all equipment purchased with State or Federal grant funds.

Schedule of Findings of Noncompliance - State/Federal Programs (Continued)

The audit of the Enterprise Fund revealed the following:

- a) ✓ Meals claimed for reimbursement did not agree with the meal count records.
- b) ✓ Breakfast tally sheets for the period September 1991 through December 1991 were not available for audit.
- c) ✓ Certain students approved for free and reduced price meals did not meet the income eligibility guidelines for these meals.

Schedule of Findings of Noncompliance - Administrative

- ✓ The budget detail presented in the appropriation report was not in agreement with the approved budget.
- ✓ Budget transfers were not made prior to the line item operating in a deficit position. The year end transfers were not approved during the month of July 1992.

The audit of expenditures revealed:

- a) There were expenditures for certain cost categories which were in excess of \$10,700 for which no public advertising for bids were sought.
- b) Certain purchase orders/vouchers did not contain the required signatures and certifications. Additionally, supporting documentation was not always available for audit.
- ✓ Certain Student Activity bank accounts were not approved as legal depositories by the District.

The School District has not implemented a purchase order system for expenditures incurred in the Enterprise Fund

- ✓ The District Secretary's and Treasurer of School Monies June 30, 1992 monthly financial report was not filed on a timely basis. The detail transactions of the Special Schools and the various State and Federal grants were not disclosed.
 - ✓ The monthly certification of the availability of line item appropriations and fund balances were not filed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.12 and the Division of Finance Policy Bulletin 200-11.
 - ✓ Certain State debit/credit memorandums was not always posted to the District's accounting records.
- Expenditures for garbage tipping fees and cartage were charged to incorrect cost categories.
- As of the date of the audit the District has not approved the corrective action plan pertaining to the 1990/91 school audit.
 - ✓ As of June 30, 1992 the City owed the School District \$599,298 of district taxes for the 1991/92 school year. The balance was requested by the District and received as of the date of audit. Since this was a first time occurrence and the amount owed to the District has been cleared of record, a recommendation is not warranted.

To: The Joint Committee on the Public Schools
From: Jerry Bello, Sr. ; Paterson, New Jersey; (201)956-8004
Date: March 24, 1993
Re: State Takeover of the Public Schools in Paterson, New Jersey

Good evening. My name is Jerry Bello and I've lived in Paterson all my life. I and my children are graduates of Paterson's public schools and we all have college degrees. I am a professional consultant to the medical and environmental professions. My community activities include almost 10 years as a Library Board Trustee and tenure as an appointed and recently, as an elected member of Paterson's Board of Education. My area of expertise has always been finance.

I have always been against the state's intrusion into the urban districts of Jersey City and Paterson, mostly for philosophical reasons. However, such esoteric reasons are normally challenged due to the public's misunderstanding of such an indecisive discipline.

However, time, in the Jersey City and Paterson districts has become proof-positive that state control has not markedly improved education to the students in state-operated districts while state and national test results and independent financial audits show two districts replete with problems and non-compliance, many times, greater than the level three scrutiny which brought in the state saviors. Ironically, state control extensions are presently being considered, while the question before this body should be the return of educational control to local parents and taxpayers, through their locally elected boards of education.

In the state's haste to remedy the ills of urban education, a behemoth of a bureaucracy has been created! Rhetorically, I ask: do you honestly believe a 9 member, locally elected or appointed board of education in Paterson or Jersey City is the primary reason why children in Elizabeth, Newark, Trenton or Plainfield are not learning? Is it really that simple? Throughout history, the rights and privileges of the masses have been suspended or eliminated for a "higher cause," however, such a simplistic approach to urban education is non-productive.

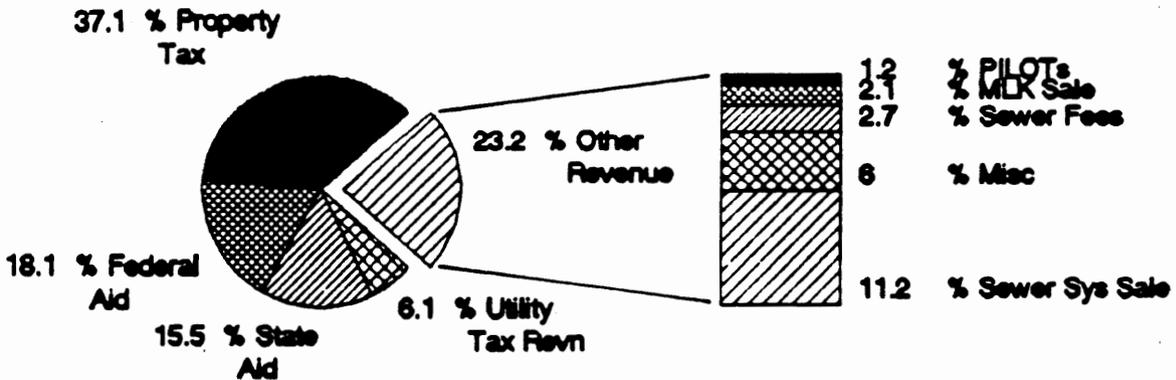
In Paterson, state takeover has disenfranchised our citizens from the educational process as bureaucrats spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on ineffective task forces to win the mood of the people, and administrators travel around the world to find that magic answer for Paterson's children, while expending millions for untried or unsuccessful and fancy-named pilot programs, while citizens have no recourse of accountability. And woe to those individuals who respectfully disagree with our state administration! Both employees and citizens at large, parents and community leaders, and yes, even elected officials, have been rebuffed and held to ridicule by these modern day carpetbaggers; preying upon the fears and bias of our people to suppress constructive ideas! Is this democracy? Would such pompous rebuke be allowed at any other district's meeting in our state? Of course not! Would the state dare intrude upon Bedminster or Haddonfield? I doubt it.

And don't believe the answer lies in additional funding, at the chagrin of our suburban neighbors. When you compare the cost of educating the children in Paterson, it would be more economical to send them to a private school or to one of our neighboring districts. Under the guise of elaborate and esoteric social programs, which have become very politically "correct," the State of New Jersey has spent billions of dollars this past decade alone in urban districts, without positive educational results. Than the gall to remove the voting privileges of the many poor, uneducated and predominately minority citizens while sending in outsiders to tell Paterson how to educate its children, is sheer hypocrisy! These so-called experts send their children to private or suburban schools, do you think they are selling us something?

Takeover is educational genocide and Paterson will not tolerate such bigotry. State law requires districts to send special education students to a private school if no public program can serve their needs. Well, the schools in Paterson do not appear to serve our children's needs for a thorough & efficient education, therefore, I suggest we allow our students to attend schools in our neighboring districts. If Paterson remains a state district, our children should be placed, voluntarily, in adjoining districts, as a cost effective, positive move to properly educate our children. Are we to be considered second class? Meanwhile, Paterson deserves school management accountability to a locally elected body to heighten the process in improving education to our children and bringing the teachers, parents, administrators, local citizens and our elected mayor & city council back into a community-wide family something that has been lacking in Paterson since state takeover.

CITY OF PATERSON BUDGET REVENUES 1980

Major Sources as Percent of Total
Total Revenues = \$84.0 Million



Bar Graph is a breakdown of "Other Revenue" section of Pie Graph

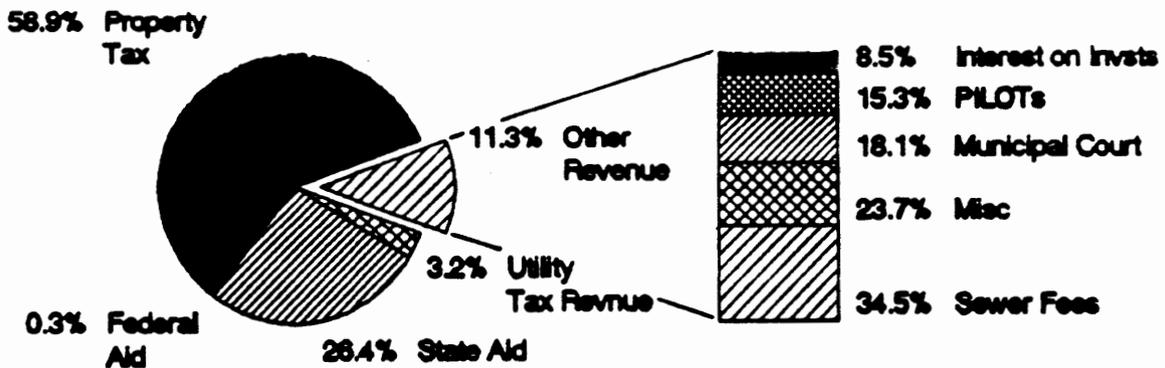
Prepared by Thomas C. Rooney

Graph 3

RVFCLP80

CITY OF PATERSON BUDGET REVENUES 1992

Major Sources as Percent of Total
Grand Total = \$156.3 Million



Bar Graph is a breakdown of "Other Revenue" section of Pie Graph

Prepared by Thomas C. Rooney

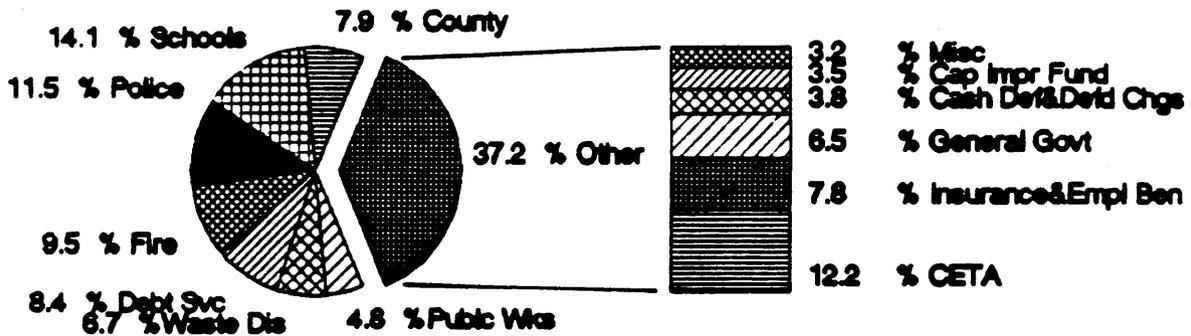
Graph 4

RVFCLP82

27X

CITY OF PATERSON BUDGET EXPENDITURES 1980

Major Purposes as Percent of Total
Grand Total = \$84 Million



Bar Graph is a breakdown of "Other"
section of Pie Graph

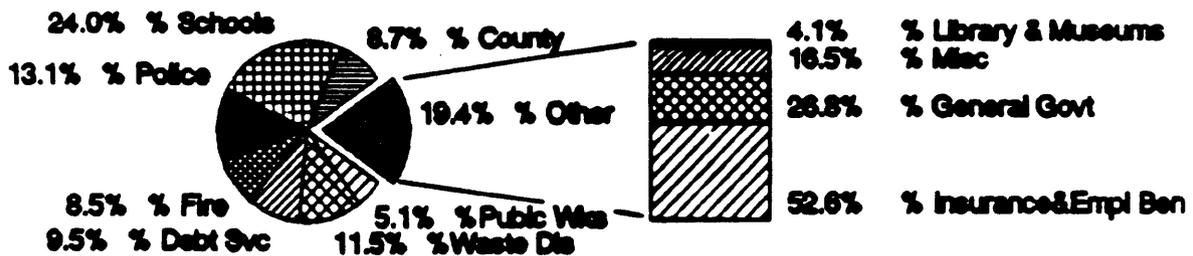
Prepared by Thomas C. Rooney

Graph 7

EDFCLP80

CITY OF PATERSON BUDGET EXPENDITURES 1992

Major Purposes as Percent of Total
Grand Total = \$156.3 Million



Bar Graph is a breakdown of "Other"
section of Pie Graph

Prepared by Thomas C. Rooney

Graph 8

EDFCLP82

28X

GROWTH OF PATERSON RATABLES vs NON-RATABLES (1972-1993)

Paterson's tax rate has more than tripled during the last 13 years from \$5.00 per \$100 in 1980 to \$15.32 per \$100 in FY 1993. One of the major reasons for this destructive increase is that our tax base has remained almost static for the last 21 years. In 1972 our last revaluation went into effect. The total value of our ratables (tax-paying property) was \$630.1 million. 21 years later the total value is only \$632.9 million, an increase of less than 1/2 of 1%.

The "tax-exempt" category of property has had a rate of growth totally different than the ratable category. It has more than doubled in value since 1972 from \$145.2 million to \$305.8 million. So, while our property which pays taxes has increased by less than 1% our property which does not pay taxes has increased by more than 100%!

Annual values for both Taxable and Tax-Exempt properties in Paterson since 1972 are given in Columns 2 and 3 of the following table. The last two columns show how relentlessly the percentage of tax-paying property in our city has been declining (from 81.3% to 67.4%) while the percentage of tax-exempt property has been increasing (from 18.7% to 32.1%). No wonder our taxes are so high!

YEAR	VALUE OF TAXABLE PROPERTY (Millions of \$)	VALUE OF TAX-EXEMPT PROPERTY (Mill of \$)	TAXABLE % OF TOTAL PATERSON PROPERTY	TAX-EXEMPT % OF TOTAL PATERSON PROPERTY
1972	630.1	145.2	81.3	18.7
1973	618.5	178.2	77.6	22.4
1974	621.7	195.4	76.1	23.9
1975	618.7	204.6	75.1	24.9
1976	621.0	207.6	74.9	25.1
1977	617.2	216.8	74.0	26.0
1978	625.1	224.7	73.6	26.4
1979	629.5	226.7	73.5	26.5
1980	625.9	234.2	72.8	27.2
1981	624.2	245.2	71.8	28.2
1982	619.9	245.9	71.6	28.4
1983	619.6	268.5	69.8	30.2
1984	618.4	271.3	69.5	30.5
1985	610.8	271.4	69.2	30.8
1986	627.3	278.9	69.2	30.8
1987	624.6	289.0	68.4	31.6
1988	627.2	298.0	67.8	32.2
1989	636.4	300.9	67.9	32.1
1990	644.7	298.2	68.4	31.6
1991	640.1	300.5	68.1	31.9
1992	639.5	303.0	67.9	32.1
1993	632.9	305.8	67.4	32.6

March 23, 1993

Councilman Thomas C. Rooney, Jr.

29X

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Second Assessment Report

of the

Paterson Advisory Board

Dated: December 17, 1992

Presented to:

Hon. Comm. John S. Ellis
Department of Education
State of New Jersey

Laval S. Wilson, Ph. D.
State District Superintendent
of Schools
Paterson Public School District

Presented by PAB Members:

Charles Walker, Chairman
Jose Morales, Vice Chairman
Martha Afetse
Joseph Barbieri
Ellen Bullock
Joyce Duncan
Alonzo Moody
Sheila Owens
Geraldine Raineri
Dr. Vigi Sargis
Siegmar Silber, Esq.
Nilda Torres
Anna Maria Vancheri

All eyes look hopefully upon us, ...
to deliver the education due.

[CCI REPORT; Summer, 1991]

All eyes look to you, ...

hopefully to deliver the education now overdue.

[Education Task Force; June, 1992]

Hopefully all eyes look to us, ...

we shall deliver the education now due.

[Dist. Supt. Mission Statement; September, 1992]

INTRODUCTION

The above are paraphrases, not quotations, from events of the past year. The statements are not merely demonstrative of shifting emphasis, but reflect the shift from the Commissioner's charge to the garnering of the community consensus and the shift from the consensus to the statement of commitment and responsibility. To the ears of the Advisory Board, the words are refreshing as now someone has said that they are obliged to deliver. What probably has engendered the enthusiasm reflected by the assessment which follows is that the commitment is made in a Trumanesque the-buck-stops-here manner. This is quite rare in these times. Now that we have progressed well in the first year - the hill we climb rises more steeply and in the ascent we must maintain the energy for the

task, monitor our gains, and achieve the educational goal.

BACKGROUND

According to the New Jersey Education law, the Paterson Advisory Board, which was installed December 18, 1991, is required to provide a progress report to the State Commissioner of Education no less than twice each year. This is the Second Progress Report and conveys the opinions of the Board members after the first full year of operation of the Paterson Public Schools under the State takeover provisions.

The First Progress Report, dated June 17, 1992, provided an assessment primarily addressed to the statutorily required reorganization of the School District and the newly formulated budget. At that time, the reorganization and the budget, while not being "the only shows in town", were the most prominent. Appropriately the First Progress Report used the executive summary of the CCI Report to provide a framework against which the comments of the Advisory Board members were viewed.

While the assessment method remains substantially unchanged, there is now more to address. Besides observing the staffing for the reorganization and the work on a second budget, the Advisory Board has been exposed to initial results of intensive remediation in reading, writing and mathematics; new contract settlements; the introduction and implementation of subcontracted food services;

initial school maintenance and repair to improve utility of the existing physical plant; an array of innovative educational programs, including partnerships with industry, the PREP program, and various special events; the development of an urban educational philosophy as propounded by the District Superintendent and the head of Curriculum and Instruction; the development and study of the capital improvements needed in the physical plant; reports from various task forces; and more.

Because of the greater familiarity of the Advisory Board members with the overall operations, new dimensions have been added to the viewing framework. These new dimensions will become apparent as the report unfolds.

ASSESSMENT METHOD

The Advisory Board has used a similar methodology for generating the the Second Progress Report as was employed six months ago, a copy of the assessment form is again attached. By using a similar format, the data collected in this assessment of progress can be compared to data collected for the previous report.

Assessment progress forms were provided to the Advisory Board members during the November meeting and members were asked to complete and return the forms to the Chairman. A committee of four, including the Chairman, was assigned to review the assessment forms and to prepare the Second Progress Report in accordance with the

statutory requirement. Eleven of the thirteen Advisory Board members completed the report as requested.

In the form, there are twenty two places for the members to check applicable ratings, namely, "little progress", "progress", "good progress", and "unable to assess". The most frequently checked rating was "good progress" with 146 checks. "Progress" received 62 checks; "little progress," 8 checks; and, "unable to assess," only 4 checks (one assessment form transmitted only comments). See tabulation below.

In comparing the overall response to that of the first report, the following is seen:

	<u>First Report</u>		<u>Second Report</u>	
Little Progress	36	14.5%	8	3.6%
Progress	80	32.3%	62	28.2%
Good Progress	101	40.7%	146	66.4%
Unable to Assess	31	12.5%	4	1.8%

The assessment form is presented in Appendix A and the tabulation of the line-by-line results in Appendix B. As now there is a basis of comparison, a comparison was made in each case in which there was exactly or nearly exactly the same area of assessment requested before.

In preparing this report, the writer retained the outline from the CCI Report which was used in the First Progress Report and has

added portions of the District's mission statements. The individual Advisory Board member's responses are correlated with and analyzed against this dual backdrop. This process is more than a mere exercise, and seems to accomplish several goals, namely: (1) to validate the underlying technique employed in the reporting process; (2) to organize and structure the report results in a format that is familiar to the State Commissioner of Education; and, (3) if "compliance" is basic and the "mission", an ideal, to observe where the District is both basically and ideally.

As the CCI Report addressed requirements by which the system governed by the Paterson Board of Education was below minimal standards, this report is of a State-imposed system that has management without local governance. Thus, the following outline reflects both CCI-derived and non-CCI categories.

CCI-Derived Categories

- A. Management
- B. Fiscal Operations
- C. Management of Educational Programs
- D. Facilities
- E. Organization Structure and Management Processes
(including Compliance)
- F. Long-Range Planning

Non-CCI Categories

- G. Community Outreach
- H. Information Dissemination
- I. Training of Advisory Board Members

In reporting on each of these areas, where applicable, two parts are provided. First, an overall report in each area of the Advisory Board's Second Assessment Report is provided. This is on a nonstatistical basis to give the reader some insight to the survey results. Next and, because the comments from the Board members were so incisive, excerpts or quotes from the comments are provided. These excerpts add a subjective perspective which would otherwise be lost.

MANAGEMENT

The general tenor of the survey is that good progress is being made toward a management structure that will serve the Paterson School District. As this area is probably the earliest one emplaced, the dynamics of change brought thereby are already sensed by the the Board members. The repeated almost uniform assessment of "good progress" is highly encouraging. The Management Excerpts below reflect that it is again noted that the new management structure provides an improved climate for decision making, and, in doing so, overcomes several major deficiencies in the CCI Report. The State Superintendent has instituted a management-by-objective plan and in his Mission Statement requires each person reporting to him to prepare written objectives by which the Mission will be accomplished.

Management Excerpts...

...[The management needs to have the...] Ability to be more responsive to school administration, community and individual.

...Goal-oriented, established needed policies, corrective action taken in major areas.

...The use of self-generated standards at the Cabinet level is a mark of good management.

FISCAL OPERATIONS

In the fiscal arena, the major aspects viewed by the Advisory Board have been the continuing budget process; the improved control of business operations by the Business Office and completing most of the required structural/organizational deficiencies; proper contracting procedures being emplaced; the settlement of some of the differences between the City of Paterson and the State; and, the conducting of conferences for minority contractors with the District. Here, again good progress is almost unanimously seen. Certainly, most if not all of the CCI fiscal operations deficiencies have been addressed by the above. Among the items in the Mission Statement, the tone is set by, "It is critical to the financial stability of the school system that accurate financial statements be made available to the Superintendent and the Cabinet on a monthly basis. Actual and projected expenditures of the various accounts are needed for all twelve months."

Fiscal Operations Excerpts...

...Thorough job well-done. The opportunity for community involvement is commendable.

...New budget has not been presented as of yet.

...I would like to see a minority set aside program.

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The CCI-cited deficiencies of non-uniformity of instruction and failure to deliver education for basic skills acquisition have been addressed by the State District administration. Here, the major emphasis is on basic skills development through the Paradigm program. The Paradigm program was separately treated in the assessment form; however, it has elicited a less enthusiastic response than other items and some comments. There may be no known remediation program which is savored by the population-at-large or by an Advisory Board required to listen to complaints about remediation. (Teach me to do the job right, but do not ask me to correct my ways!) Here, as the objective measure is inconclusive, the subjective comments take on greater importance. It is the consensus of the subcommittee which prepared this report that some additional test results from the Paradigm remediation program are needed to see whether there is substantial improvement in basic skills.

Here, the Mission Statements again provide us with guidance, and the school system's ideal is simply and elegantly stated as:

...we must continuously ask ourselves the following: Do the instructional programs under our purview provide all students the very best learning experiences possible? Will our students become lifelong learners as a result of our influences? Have we provided engaging content and a variety of strategies which enhance the teaching-learning act? [Dr. C. Hoover]

Management of Educational Programs Excerpts...

On the Paradigm Program...

...This program is proving somewhat effective, however, I am concerned over the lack of "buy-in" by parents and students. Rigorous education plans need to be put in place for parents, students and community so they can better understand the objective of this program. To succeed it needs their support.

...This aspect of the reform is troublesome. A number of parents are troubled by the Paradigm program. The sense I get is that in order to meet the education needs of non-achievers, those with better achievement capabilities are being denied what they need to pursue higher education, and the educational offerings for everybody are being reduced to the "lowest common denominator". Are the concerns of parents justified? How can we reassure them that their children are not losing out...Can time on Task [remediation] be achieved without diluting the offerings for the more capable students. Certainly the possibility of failure in the H.S.P.T. must be drastically reduced. This whole area needs more interpretation to parents.

...We must make sure that each school offers regular classes to all students who do not require remedial courses.

On Principal Assessments...

...Exceptionally "good business sense" has been demonstrated in this area, i.e. moving highly qualified personnel into schools that were assessed "poorly" for improvement.

...Improvements already evident.

...Latest information seems to be that principals as a group are enthusiastic. The principals look toward greater site-based management with more autonomy.

FACILITIES

In this area, deficiencies are being addressed, and at the Board meeting just prior to the assessment a comprehensive facilities plan (the "Plan") was received from collaborating consulting firms. Most of the Board members had, at that time, only received summaries of the plan. The Plan points out that the school infrastructure has been particularly neglected in the years prior to the takeover and illustrates the need to embark on a building program that includes replacement of some structures and rehabilitation of others. Even with an aggressive and costly six-year facilities program, compliance is still doubtful in some areas as the starting point is so abysmally low. Additionally, unless a massive influx of funding is provided, system-wide compliance during the five-year period is extremely doubtful. Here the Superintendent's Mission Statement is more guarded. It is, "The Cabinet will need to prioritize the various phases of the facilities plan and make decisions about funding this anticipated, massive school renovation effort."

Facilities Excerpts...

...On a tour of some of the schools, I saw where a tremendous effort was made in this area.

...As to school facilities on a long-range basis, we know that

unless funding can be secured through a bond issue or other sources not much can be achieved. However, it is still important to arrive at as accurate a needs assessment of facilities improvements and replacements as possible.

...Finally, we have an excellent plan to guide us in what needs to be done to our schools in terms of rehabilitation or replacement. Now our new Commissioner of Education and our legislators must realistically address the price tag for compliance. More importantly, each of us needs to take a sobering look at the higher price tag for our children, if compliance is not achieved. The work that desperately needs to be done in our schools is only to make them "adequate" and provide an environment conducive to learning.

...The ten-month study which Dr. Wilson initiated, was very costly; it was also very necessary and long, long overdue. Where do we go from here? Dr. Wilson has provided the district with a detailed account of the physical problems in our schools: I hope that we can now focus our energies on creative, but realistic, ways and means to implement the necessary building projects one by one, and ensure that the money spent on this study was well-worth it.

...Basic repair and preventive maintenance can improve in many of the District's facilities.

...The Plan is convincing evidence that an infusion of special funding for urban education is required from the State or Federal governments. Every child deserves an education in a facility that has an auditorium, a gymnasium, a music room, an art room, and a library. In a school system for the City of Paterson, the school population is sufficiently large to warrant the schools having a variety of special instructional spaces - small-group instruction spaces, language labs, industrial arts shops, etc.

...The Paterson school buildings should be revamped and expanded. Some schools still hold classes in area cited for violations prior to the takeover. Some elementary schools which serve as night schools for adults provide uncomfortable seating and the desks are inadequate. ...the District's effort in making some the buildings more presentable is impressive. The new toilet paper holders, computers in the offices, refurbishing of the business departments to simulate the real world conditions are indeed a step in the right direction and congratulations are in order.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES (including Compliance)

Organizational changes continue to be the most remarkable in the business operations area in which the span of control problem is being addressed. At the time of this assessment, the Advisory Board had not received the Mission Statement from business operations. Already the new business operations structures being formed are showing signs of bringing this aspect of the District into com-

pliance. In large part, the impact of changes cannot be assessed at the one-year point. In every area, the majority sees reasonable progress in the area of compliance planning and the time lines established therefor.

Organizational Structure Excerpts...

...The establishment of goals, methods to monitor goals and ability to provide direct problem solving approaches have been of tremendous benefit to the school district.

...Well-organized approach for identification of initiative and monitoring of improvement.

...Much needed results already evident.

...A high level of organization and well-directed coordination of efforts and resources has brought easily recognizable results. Progress has never moved so speedily and effectively in the Paterson School District as it has under the direction of Dr. Wilson.

...Regarding the supplies and materials in our schools, progress has been made from last year. I would like to see that all books and supplies, whether or not they are for the students and/or the teachers, be in the schools and ready for distribution on the first day of school. ...I hope that with more business administration staff and computerization, as well as the recommendations of the Task Force on Supplies and Materials, problems with delays in purchases and/or deliveries can be avoided in the future.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

After the first year, long-range planning seems to be well underway. This area and the CCI-cited deficiencies thereunder are additionally addressed by comments included above.

Long-Range Planning Excerpts...

...We have a long and challenging journey but it appears that we are at least on the right road and going in a good, orderly direction. Certainly, the Superintendent and his Cabinet have made progress in bringing the school into compliance and in their attempts to meet our students' educational needs with a variety of innovative programs and partnerships. However, if we are to turn the plans for the Paterson Public Schools into a reality for the children, some attention must be given to state-takeover legislation in relationship to special funding for state operated "special needs" districts. Dr. Wilson seems to be doing the best he can with the budget available to him, and it is by no means a small budget, but the price tag for compliance in a district which has been non-compliant for so many years, is extraordinary. Money will never be a guarantee for a quality education, but money is one of the key elements lacking in Paterson and it may be a factor that inhibits good progress.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the hallmarks of the State Superintendent's mission is the need for community outreach. In quiet eloquence, he says:

By ourselves as educators, we will be able only to provide a certain amount of assistance and help to our students. We must continue to value and to encourage parents, community agencies, and citizens of the general community to collaborate with us in the partnership of providing quality programs for the young people in our schools.

Community Outreach Excerpts...

...We need extra effort to involve the parents in our schools. There has to be a greater effort in establishing better relations and open communications lines with the people involved in shaping our future, our children!

...Library Powers-excellent program, would like to see many more.

...The district has made a valiant effort in this area, however, its been an area that has been so neglected in the past, that constant unrelenting effort must always be made. Its not at an acceptable level yet.

...The Summer PREP School initiative was a major step in the right direction.

...More effort needs to be made in this area. I don't feel this is as focused on as it should be.

..The Task Forces are a wonderful idea if they remain active. There should be interaction between the various task forces for exchange of ideas. All of us have a common goal, the welfare of our children!

...This is one of the most important and dangerous relationships to be developed.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

This area engendered a large number of comments, a sampling of which is presented below.

Information Dissemination

...This started out well; however, I have not seen newsletters this school year. We cannot stop these efforts.

...This is underutilized as a forum for community outreach.

...All information presented is clear, direct manner and presented in an appealing format.

...I am disappointed that Channel 8 is not utilized more effectively to advertise and disseminate information regarding the monthly Advisory Board meetings. While the meetings may be advertised in the legal notice section of some newspapers, a few people read such notices. Many parents and community members have commented that they have never seen an article regarding publicity for a meeting. I have recommended to the administration that Channel 8 be used to inform the public of Advisory Board meetings and even perhaps an outline of the agenda. A small newspaper article each month from Chuck Coligan's office regarding the meeting and the agenda would also be helpful.

...Since so many programs are repeated on Channel 8 and at other times the screen is blank for days at a time, perhaps the Advisory Board meetings could at least be shown taped since I have been advised that we do not have the facilities to broadcast live in the manner of the City Council meetings.

...Information is usually given in a timely manner - occasionally more sensitivity would help.

...We should have a fully operating studio run entirely by our students with assistance from staff.

... When new programs are being introduced in the district and when parents are asked for signed permission slip to indicate that they do or do not want their children to participate, Channel 8 could be an alternate way to explain to parents what the new program is about and even perhaps ways in which parents can become involved.

TRAINING FOR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER BOARD OPERATIONS

The statutorily mandated training for Advisory Board members was conducted during the past reporting period. The assessment comments reflected strong support for the training process employed.

Training for Advisory Board Members and Other Aspects of Board Operations Excerpts...

...We were provided much needed training as for our roles and how we can be more effective.

...Would like continued training for Advisory Board member.

...I hope that we continue to be provided with training

sessions whether they are overnight or one day seminars. The retreat was excellent and I would like to see us receive as much training as possible.

...The Advisory Board retreat was informative and it gave us an opportunity to gain some insight into the workings of the Board. It also gave us an opportunity to learn about each other. In my opinion it was productive.

...Two board members have stepped down and have yet to be replaced. This should be a priority, as well so the continuity will not be disrupted.

CONCLUSION

The Advisory Board of Paterson is quite enthusiastic in their assessment of the philosophy, actions and plans of Laval S. Wilson, Ph.D., State Superintendent, and his Cabinet. In all of its proposals, the team has met with unanimous or near unanimous support of the Advisory Board. Considering the size and scope of the school district, there has been very little negative response to the programs put forth and a substantial increase of comments of the "well done" variety. At the present time, there are two areas that remain in the "show me" column, namely, the assessment of the program for basic skills remediation - the Paradigm program, and the ability to come into compliance in the facilities area without external financial support. The Advisory Board seems sufficiently patient and accepts that a demonstration of improvement in basic skills takes more time than the initial one-year period. As to the funding of the Facilities Plan, here the answer is part political, part economic and part good management. Here, the Advisory Board sees that, since it does not hold all the required keys to solving this problem, additional leadership from both inside and outside the District is needed.

If the present level of professional activity continues, the Paterson Public School District will enjoy the status of a District that meets all State required compliances, and, if the goals of the Mission Statements of the State Superintendent and his Cabinet are partially achieved the District will be a model for urban education throughout the country.

**Joint Legislative Committee Meeting on
Public Schools**

John F. Kennedy High School

Paterson, New Jersey

March 24, 1993

My name is Philomena Pezzano and I am the Director of Student Support Services in the Paterson Public School District's Division of Curriculum and Instruction. I have been an educator in the Paterson School System for twenty-two (22) years, the last six (6) years as an administrator. My focus has consistently been to provide services to children. During my administrative tenure as Coordinator of Career Development with the prior administration, I received full support from our former Superintendent and his staff. Their support allowed me to develop and implement quality programs for our students in my area of responsibility.

Since state takeover, however, I have been afforded the opportunity for more enhanced program planning, development and more expansive program implementation due to a number of mechanisms which have been put in place as a direct result of

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Paterson becoming a state-operated school district. These mechanisms have assisted me in providing increased services to our students.

One such mechanism is the new district administrative organizational chart developed as a direct result of Paterson becoming a state-operated school district and implemented on February 7, 1992. This organizational chart provides clear reporting lines for all district administrative staff and is a systematized matrix from which all goal setting, planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs emanate.

In the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, this has allowed areas of similar content to be grouped departmentally to work as a cohesive unit. These departments, in turn, work together to strive for effective programs for students. Under the leadership of Dr. Clarence C. Hoover, III, our Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, members of our division are provided with clear direction, constantly encouraged to be creative and innovative, and are provided with a multitude of educational resources from which to draw. We are constantly reminded that curriculum means service and it is our responsibility to provide service to

school-based staff in order for these creative and innovative ideas to become reality for our students. It is my experience that individuals wishing to serve children and willing to work hard do not find stumbling blocks in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction.

Another mechanism implemented as a direct result of Paterson becoming a state-operated school district was the appointment of a State District Superintendent with responsibilities of a Superintendent, as well as those of a Board of Education. This aspect of the takeover law has proven to be beneficial to the change process occurring in our district.

Takeover has provided a forum for systemic changes to be made both in the area of compliance, as well as in the area of educational reform. Administrators, educators, parents, students, community representatives, association representatives and government agencies have all had the opportunity to participate in the change process.

These changes have been expedited by the State District Superintendent being able to act on recommendations for change without delays inherent

in normal Board of Education operations. Since the takeover law provides for five (5) years of state-operation, time is of the essence if change, which will benefit our students, is to occur.

In addition to the above two points, it has been my experience that Paterson being a state-operated school district has focused a renewed credibility on the district. In the years prior to takeover, the district lost some of its credibility because of our impending takeover status. Currently, however, more and more businesses, colleges, community groups, are more willing to assist us in our endeavors to help our children. These groups are more readily providing funding, training, and other resources to help us and work with us to achieve our goals. This support has been invaluable and this renewed credibility has come about as a direct result of state takeover.

In closing, I'd like to once again state that my focus and goal has always been to provide the best possible service and programs to our children and educational decisions made during my twenty-two years with the district have been based on that goal.

Thank you for your valuable time.

