
Committee Meeting

of

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*“Development of a model for a thorough
and efficient education program”*

LOCATION: Committee Room 12
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: March 21, 1996
9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator John H. Ewing, Chairman
Senator Joseph A. Palaia, Vice-Chairman
Senator Robert J. Martin
Senator John A. Lynch
Senator Gordon A. MacInnes

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblyman Louis A. Romano
District 33

Darby Cannon III
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Senate Education Committee



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SENATOR JOHN H. EWING (Chairman): Good morning, everybody. Unfortunately, there was a mixup with the scheduling with the Department of Education. They have a retreat. Commissioner Klagholz called me and spoke to me about it, and he said that he would come if we demanded it or like that. But I think it's more important that he does his retreat, which has been scheduled before. Why I was confused with this date, I don't know, but I will read a memo from Commissioner Klagholz:

"I regret that I am unable to meet with you this morning to present the elements of a thorough and efficient education as outlined in the Department of Education's school funding proposal. Unfortunately, the State Board of Education's annual retreat has, for some time, been scheduled for this day. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the subject of today's hearing at any time in the future.

"As you know, I have testified previously on the elements contained in the Department's model of a thorough and efficient education. Therefore, at this time, I would like to share some general observations.

"First, given the constitutional mandate that all children receive an equitable education that is thorough and efficient, it is unavoidable that we have some specific definition of what a thorough and efficient education would require in common for all schools.

"Second, to some extent, the definitions in our plan are illustrative. Without question, they result from our research of the literature, from a review of analyses conducted by other states, and, perhaps most importantly, from numerous public hearings we conducted throughout the State. We believe that the plan's model elements of a thorough and efficient

education are sound. Nevertheless, it is important to note that what we have proposed is a public process that every two years would define the essentials of a thorough and efficient education and set the appropriate per-pupil spending target. Until such a process is completed, our analyses must be considered tentative.

“Third, we believe it is essential to address the issue of compensation in some way. The Court has ordered equalization of spending, and most of school spending represents employee salaries and benefits -- more than 70 percent. Therefore, equalization of spending is not possible without equalization of compensation. Given New Jersey’s system in which 600 school districts bargain independently, this goal has been elusive.

“Obviously, there are alternative ways of addressing this centrally important issue. The approach we have proposed would set a range of compensation that is needed to provide essential for a thorough and efficient education -- those staffing levels and compensation amounts that are judged necessary to provide an education that is both thorough and efficient. The State would be obligated to equalize compensation within that ‘T&E range.’ School boards that exceed the range, either because they negotiate higher compensation amounts or because they employ greater numbers of staff, would have to fund locally the excess portions of salaries and benefits.

“Finally, we believe that it is necessary to reform the relationship between the local budget election process and the way the State defines a thorough and efficient education. Currently, citizens are asked to vote on the entire school budget. If the budget is defeated and reduced, the local board can appeal the reductions to the Commissioner. Only then does the

Commissioner define what is essential for a thorough and efficient education, overruling local voters when expenditures are deemed essential and upholding them when reduced expenditures are not constitutionally required.

“We believe that, if the Commissioner is responsible for, and capable of, separating essential and nonessential after the fact, on appeal, it clearly is possible and more desirable to do so systematically in advance of elections. Such an approach would assure funding of a thorough and efficient education in a way that is fairer to local boards and voters alike.

* Districts with budgets that are within the fiscal definition of T&E and within the cap, should not be required to seek approval of local voters. Indeed, if the voters were to reject such budgets, the Constitution would require the Commissioner to overrule them on appeal, as is currently done.

* Districts with budgets that are within the definition of ‘thorough and efficient,’ but want to exceed their cap, ought to be subject to the procedures of the current system, that is, a vote with an opportunity for appeal.

* And, those that want to spend beyond the definition of a thorough and efficient education should be required to subject the excess portion to voter approval without an opportunity for appeal on constitutional grounds.

“I hope that these comments are helpful to your deliberations. I am grateful to Senator Ewing for entering my statement into the record. And I commend members of the Committee for providing leadership on this issue of great importance to the children and citizens of New Jersey.

“Again, I apologize for not being able to be present this morning. I would very much welcome a future opportunity to meet with you.”

I certainly would be remiss--

Join, come closer.

Assemblyman Romano has come to listen to the discussion here today, and I appreciate his attendance. He certainly is vitally interested in education.

It's nice to see you, Lou.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Did you get a cup of coffee?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROMANO: Thank you for the courtesy. No, I didn't get it yet.

SENATOR EWING: Do you want to say anything first, Lou, or do you want--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROMANO: No, I'm actually here just to listen, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: Senator MacInnes, would you like to say anything?

SENATOR MacINNES: Having just received the Commissioner's statement, I don't have a lot to say, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity.

I think it's important that we start pinning this down a little bit. The Commissioner's statement continues to evade the real question that is on the minds of so many people concerned with the schools, which is, where are we going to set the constitutionally defensible line of spending, because in his

“illustration,” it appears that about 75 percent of the school districts are above the line that he has suggested. At some point we have to stop suggesting, in quotes, and illustrating, in quotes, and have from the administration a proposal that we can deal with that says, “This is our response to the Court’s decision, and this is where we are going to set the line, and this is why we think we can defend this before the Supreme Court.”

Right now, it looks to me, based on the testimony we have received, that this is going to be quickly tossed out by the Court as unconstitutional, because it seems to me it fails to meet the Court’s requirements in the Abbott v. Burke decision. I’m not a lawyer, but I think the testimony has been pretty compelling on that point. For it to work and to have any chance of the Court receiving it, we need to have an agreement on the definition, as the Commissioner has tried to provide us, on what is a thorough and efficient education.

On that point, we have, again, what he refers to as a sort of a shifting proposal on the core curriculum, which I find to be woefully lacking in meeting the sort of basic standards of English usage, for example. With the exception of the math and science standards, the rest of it, I think, is very weak, confusing, repetitive, vague, and impossible as a source of direction to school districts in designing curriculum, or to anybody to design a statewide test. I consider that to be a major gap in the Department’s offerings.

Finally, I would say, Mr. Chairman, that the Commissioner has now come out for uniform compensation throughout the State, and that districts that are not within the boundaries established by the Department as being defensible for thorough and efficient education will have to put their

compensation at risk of voter disapproval. Now, I'm in favor of having greater oversight in the collective bargaining process, and I'm in favor of accountability in it. However, his statement, once again, leaves out the fact that New Jersey is a very diverse place and that the cost of living in parts of New Jersey is very much higher than it is in other parts. I continue to use the example that the average house in Cumberland County costs \$80,000; the average house in Bergen County costs \$232,000, and to assume that the compensation can be uniform in Cumberland and Bergen, or should be, makes no sense. Either people are going to be underpaid in Bergen or overpaid in Cumberland. The Department continues to ignore this mathematically demonstrable fact of life in New Jersey, and I would love to see us address that.

SENATOR EWING: We'll be working on it.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'll look forward to whatever testimony we are going to get today.

SENATOR EWING: Joe Hancock.

JOSEPH HANCOCK: Good morning. I was pleased to hear in the Commissioner's statement, as he has said before, indicating that the proposals that he put forward are not in concrete and that they are subject to examination and suggestion. I would like to address just one particular aspect of the models as they have been developed. These models, as they stand now, are based upon certain hypothetical assumptions. We have some difficulty in dealing with them from the standpoint that it's hard to compare what their impact is without having some idea about numbers. With the numbers, you can begin to see just where these cutoffs are and where they should be and give

some attention to that. So until we have that, it's difficult for us to deal with that.

There is one area, though, that the organization asked me to bring to the attention of the Committee, and that focuses on the statement that indicates that they have designated as central to the aspect of the models a standardization of the numbers of classroom teachers that are ideally required in the State's schools -- for the elementary school, for the middle school, and for the high school, for the numbers that they have.

Now, we all agree that this is an important area because teaching, as a profession, is labor intensive. Since it's labor intensive, the attendant costs are tied to labor. No question about that; we all know that. It becomes a major factor, but we all agree that economies should be sought.

We feel, however, that the model's use of standardized pupil/teacher ratios as a basis for controlling costs has some serious downsides to it, number one, on its impact on innovation and creative planning within the school district.

Our concerns in other initiatives, as we proceeded through this particular session, is that we look for innovation -- innovative ways of dealing with education. This is not a new idea. We have districts out there who deal with innovation.

The problem with innovation is this, if I can use as an example: Demonstration schools have not been a new item throughout the State. For years, colleges had demonstration schools. I had the privilege of working with a demonstration school at Kean College.

Now, the average pupil/teacher ratio there was not 21 -- was not 21. We focused and tried to focus on individualized attention. We tried to focus on innovative ways of dealing with children's problems, and if you had to average it out, and I went back and checked on it, the average pupil/teacher ratio was about 12 or 15. There are situations in this State today where, in dealing with creative kinds of programming, the teacher/pupil ratio may vary within this State.

We also have situations in this State where we have accelerated programs and advance placement programs. These have different kinds of pupil/teacher ratios. They focus on the gifted. They focus on the talented. And I believe that the State benefits from these children being educated to their fullest potential, just as well as they benefit from everyone else across the spectrum, but I think we have a problem there.

We find ourselves in the situation, also, where we are using more educationally efficient methodology for acceleration of the transitional purpose of bilingualism. We took a long time in trying to find ourselves a way where we would not have to be hamstrung by one particular approach to getting these children through the standards, through the problems of transitioning from their particular language into the English language; therefore, districts out there have come up with innovative programs to try to accelerate this process, with some degree of success, I might add. If we try to hamstring them into a particular pupil/teacher ratio, they might find themselves at a disadvantage.

There is another point that came to mind. It came to mind the other day. I had an occasion to be talking with a group of people about the charter school. As I went through all the items in the charter school, it dawned

on me. I don't see anything in the charter school which is charged with being an innovative program in the State of New Jersey to try to come up with the best programs for children -- different programs for children. I see nothing in there that standardizes pupil/teacher enrollment. Now, if it's an important item, if it's that important of an item, why isn't it in the charter school also?

Also, there is another facet to this. If we move to the charter schools, and they become successful in any way, and I in my school district have "X" number of children in my classrooms, and I have the proper pupil/teacher ratio, all I need to have is a certain number of kids move out of my district and I'm now on the other side of the balance. What do I do? I think this is a serious problem that has to be looked at.

The third item I feel has an impact on this is the move toward inclusion -- inclusion in trying to adjust to the problems that these children have and trying to find better ways of treating their problems and getting them into the mainstream of education. We're going to have to experiment with the kind of pupil/teacher ratios we need in order to do it flexibly. They may not be teachers, as such; they may be aides. But, anyhow, they are personnel, and as personnel, they have an impact.

I believe that this, then, is using pupil/teacher ratios to control labor costs. It does, in the long run-- It does the kids a disservice. It still leaves us with the problem that needs to be thoughtfully reexamined. How do we deal with this? I wish I had the answer, but I don't think this is the way to go, and I think this is one thing that the Committee should take under consideration as it addresses and studies this issue.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

MR. HANCOCK: You're welcome.

SENATOR EWING: Dr. Robert Boose.

ROBERT E. BOOSE, Ed. D.: Good morning, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: Good morning.

DR. BOOSE: We appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to share with you our paper, which we developed in looking at a comprehensive response to the Comprehensive Plan. We think there are some areas in that plan that need to be expanded.

With me today is Edwina Lee, who is my Associate Executive Director.

I'd like to pick up on the challenge that you gave us, Senator, not too long ago, to say "Come back, not with criticisms, but come back with some ideas." So with that in mind, I would like to pick up on page 3 of my testimony and talk about the major pieces: curriculum standards, special education, at-risk, and technology, as well.

We just heard some discussion about the standards. One of the things that concerned us initially was that the standards were not brought forth initially; the Comprehensive Plan was, and the standards followed. We thought the standards should have been developed first, and then from that we could define ways of organizing to deliver those standards. But they are very important to us. The standards have to be of high quality and for all children in the State. We need to have the standards so we can base a financing system on those standards. We also need to give school districts the tools for them to carry out and achieve those standards.

Professional development is important. State aid that addresses the needs of at-risk children and students who have problems meeting those standards or remedial programs are going to be very important.

The Commissioner has laid out, in his standards, what he thought were essential pieces. World language is one of those. If we're going to have world language in the elementary schools, then we also should see the resources that follow that in the professional development in the teachers prepared to teach that.

My point is, if we mean to deliver that, then we need to be staffed and prepared and have the resources necessary to do that.

Professional development is going to be so important as we go into the next century. We're going into the information century. We have an opportunity now, in the next five years, to train our teachers in the delivery of this standard. When we looked at standards across the country, the State of Delaware -- though it may be one of the smallest -- is far ahead of the rest of the nation. They spent three years -- three years -- developing their standards, and they are now spending two years training their entire staff, statewide, to deliver those standards. No matter what we decide on, we need to look at professional development as a way to enhance not only the teaching effectiveness, but the quality of our program.

According to the Commissioner's own testimony, he has said that less than 1 percent of the total cost of education in New Jersey is devoted to professional development. That is something that you, as you deliberate over any future legislation, have to decide, is that going to be enough, and if not, what should it be.

We also need to do some staff development with our supervisors so that they are trained better as evaluators of instruction, not to play “got ya,” but to play “the improvement of instruction.” I think that’s very key. If we have strong standards, we ought to look at how well the students are achieving and not achieving, and whether or not how we can change our instructional strategies to improve that.

Financing the system: I’ve looked at educational financing since 1975. In two different states, I’ve had to deal with educational funding. There is nothing wrong with the funding formula. Every formula is perfect. The problem is, they are never fully funded, and that’s where it falls apart. So it doesn’t matter how we talk about it. You can have all the circles and squares and all the computations. If you don’t fully fund it, it’s a bad formula.

But if we’re going to go about the next century in funding adequate levels, certainly the Comprehensive Plan is not a high-foundation level. I think that is something that we have to look at: is it enough? I heard Senator MacInnes say that in his calculations, 75 percent of the districts already achieve that. Well, if we’re talking about high standards and asking districts to reach and do more, then the foundation level must rise in order to achieve those standards.

Right now, 38.5 percent of the total educational cost is supported by the State. We’re arguing and continue to argue for a 50/50 ratio to take the burden off the local property taxpayers and go into a 50/50 share, not tomorrow, but a five-year plan that says, maybe by the year 2001, we’ll try to achieve that goal. But there would be balance in the overall educational funding and less of an overreliance on property taxes.

We want to see a foundation level that guarantees the necessary resources for all of New Jersey public school students, not just the 30 special needs, but all of them. It must allow school districts the opportunity to look at their programming and figure out ways to account for their State aid, as well. We need to have stronger accountability, and that's not a problem, but we also should provide those districts who wish to spend beyond some local leeway. In most states, and if you look at the history of this State-- Over 100 years ago there was a grand argument in the funding formula that Chief Justice Hornblower had to call the education community together in a special summit to try to get education resolved. And one of the biggest issues they want is, the rich districts, or those districts that had the most money wanted to spend more money. That debate still continues today, where they know the quality of their program, and we don't want to see leveling down. So local leeway has got to be a piece of that puzzle that we are trying to put together.

We believe the State should continue to fully fund the cost of the teachers' pension and Social Security. It's a very difficult problem to try to divest that down into the districts. I don't think it could even be achievable, but it is a State responsibility, and we believe it should remain as such.

Special education is a very key area. We've seen the debate special education begets now between the regular parents and the special parents, and that debate is a fight over diminishing resources. We want to stop that debate. The recent task force that you were part of, Senator, has delivered a very good paper. We support many of the actions in that paper. As a matter of fact, the shifting from that medical model -- New Jersey classifies its students in 21 different categories, which goes far beyond what the Federal requirements are.

Instead of us using a medical model to label, we're proposing to look at those 190,000 students who get that special education in a different way.

We want to eliminate the 21 categories. We want to correlate this in four levels of service to those, starting from low involvement to high involvement, which would be direct classroom and specific programs.

Massachusetts, who led the nation two years before New Jersey did, back in the early 1970s in special education, has most recently gone away from that classification and pigeonholing by medical model, and several other states are doing it as well. I submit that we need to think long and hard about our special students and go in that direction.

I want to talk about technology. Technology, to me, is not making sure that every student has a computer. If the staff and teachers don't know how to use the computer so they can teach in a meaningful way how a computer is used to access information, to process information, and to communicate, it's a wasted investment. And we're talking today about a technology standard that we don't even know, in the year 2000, what the technology is going to be before those children.

We're going to be buying equipment today to use five years from now which may be obsolete. One of the biggest mistakes that we make-- I go back as an undergraduate student, when they said the overhead projector, which was the latest technology, was going to just revolutionize classroom instruction. Well, it didn't, and they are still sitting in the back of the classroom.

I don't want to see computers still sitting in boxes and being underutilized when they should be part of a resource component in a strong

facility that allows students to learn how to use it to solve problems and collect information. That's a whole new thinking in technology. It's not, "How many computers I have versus how many computers somebody else has."

If you want to look at resources in this State and you want to see where the resources are, if you were to do an inventory of who has the computers and who doesn't, you will see who has the resources and who doesn't. You don't need to do a great deal of investigation.

Facilities is another point. Not too long ago you may have seen a political cartoon that showed the current President of the United States walking into a classroom, armed with computers and plugs, and the teacher sitting behind the desk said, "There is no outlet." A lot of our schools are so old that you can't put a system in. You would have to -- it's almost cheaper for you to tear the building down and build it back up. So we have to look at how we're going to deliver the technology in light of dire physical needs in our plant.

We also need to look at a financing system that takes that into consideration and equalizes not only the capital expenditures, but the debt service. Districts that were trying and committed to improving their facilities are getting short changed every year as we reduce our level of debt service support. That adds more of an impact to the property taxpayer.

The leveling down of programs -- specifically I'm referring to the impact of poverty on our children. The at-risk component is a very key component, as you know, in the Abbott v. Burke situation. The Commissioner, in his Comprehensive Plan, did lay out a process where you would identify 20-- If your district had 20 percent or more at poverty, then

you would be eligible for certain amounts, and at 40 and 60 and 80. I don't know what the break points are, but it seems to be a reasonable approach. The Court did say we have to look at the impact of poverty on these school systems, and so I think that's a way for us, a positive approach, I believe, in the Comprehensive Plan.

But what is not in the Comprehensive Plan are the management issues. It doesn't tell you -- and again, I refer to some of the comments that Senator MacInnes said -- it doesn't tell you how to get there. It tells you what it should look like, and it's a model, but how do I get there? From 1995 and 1996, how do I get to 2000 and 2001? I think whatever law we put together has to take into consideration that we've been operating and managing schools with laws and regulation that go back to 1909. Do we want to go into the next century, the information century, managing our schools under the same rules and regulations? If we want to talk about wholesome and true education reform, I think that's a missing component, and I hope, as you deliberate over the reform package, that you will look at it. Boards have been pressured and a lot of public demands for cost efficiency. We need to have those cost efficiencies.

When we look at health benefits, our process and our recommendation is not to take things away from people, but we think that there is a better way and a cheaper way to maintain quality health care. Many of our boards are tied into is the State Health Benefits Program, which is becoming a very restrictive-- It's uncontrolled. We have no ability to understand why they raise their rates. We don't see flexibility in there. The 12 percent increase for '96/'97-- We can't negotiate the contributions of

employees to individual coverage. We have employees who work in different districts, we have to pay twice what we could have one family coverage, but we can't get those benefits, because the system won't open it up.

So these are issues the boards are trying to bring back to you to say, "We want to, but give us some flexibility. Make the State Health Benefits Program as competitive, as flexible as many of the programs that are out there on the street." We've gone from 70 percent participation down to 58 percent, and my staff tell me it could go to 52 percent. So people are leaving that system, which could cause problems in the long run in the overall coverage, but it's time for us to look at these things. We've been dancing around it for too long.

Building employment costs: Senator Ewing and Senator Lynch, of this Committee, are supporting and sponsoring legislation that eliminates another major issue in the bargaining process. It's the automatic increment. If the district is in negotiations and there is still no contract, by case law we're required to pay the increment in the year that we're now still negotiating in. So, if the increment is 2.8 percent, we still have to pay it, and we still haven't closed on a new contract. What interest is there on the other side if they know they are going to get at least something for that time, to try to bargain and close.

All we want is to bring that management/labor pendulum back to dead center and operate on an equal footing, that we don't have to pay that increment until we get the contract resolved.

The other is improving the delivery of instruction. One of the things that we have been talking about and has been a long standing policy of

this association is to look at the issue of lifetime certification and lifetime tenure. Does this State want to continue into the next century with those concepts? If you discuss it, which is what we would like you to do, and you conclude that we should, so be it. But we're bringing it before you as something that has to be looked at in the management model.

We know, in the early '90s, this Legislature passed a reform in tenure which restructured contractual tenure for superintendents. That's been in effect. What we are looking at is, why can't that be discussed in the other areas of our labor situation? If tenure for teachers is important and we maintain it, then let's look at three years and a day. Is that enough time for a new teacher to develop the kinds of skills and standards that we believe are necessary for quality, if you are going to continue a lifetime certificate. Or should we look at five years and a day, or six years and a day? Could we have more time for success to give them the professional development that's necessary, not to play "Got ya," but to play "improve you" in the classroom.

In 1909 was the first tenure law in New Jersey. William Howard Taft resided in the White House. I don't know how many of you were alive in 1909--

SENATOR PALAIA: Jack. (laughter)

DR. BOOSE: You ran his campaign, I understand.

Henry Ford hadn't revolutionized American travel with the Model "T," but yet, New Jersey had its first tenure law. I think a lot has changed since 1909, and I think it's time for us, after 87 years, to take a step back. Our boards are asking you to do that, take that step and rethink it.

We have many pieces of legislation that protect employees rights and due process -- the School Ethics Act recently. There are many things there that protect, and a lot of states have contractual tenure. It's not a concept that is new to the United States.

Renewable certification: Again, we're one of two states, Texas being the other, that gives a lifetime certificate. The Commissioner, in my most recent discussions with him, said that within the next two months he is going to respond to the recommendations that he received from the State Board. That is going to be important to guide us. Are we going to talk about lifetime certification, or are we going to talk about a model that will require a five-year or six-year plan for renewal of skills. I think that's important.

Forty-five states have renewable certification. I don't want it to be just collecting credits. It ought to be tied to how you are functioning in a classroom. It ought to be tied to where the district needs to go in terms of achieving its standards. It ought to be meaningful educational professional development, not just a collection of hours and credits. I won't comment any further on that until we see what the Commissioner and his staff have come up with.

We do and have put forth a proposal. We believe that a new teacher should work under a provisional certificate for three years, and after three years and a solid evaluation of their effectiveness as a teacher, then they would acquire a certificate that would be good for five years, but then renewable, again, based on their performance in a classroom -- not an evaluation for employability, but an evaluation for certifiability. Because you have a certificate doesn't necessarily mean that you should have a job for life,

nor should you think that you are doing everything for life that's perfect. We need to run professional development, not only for our teachers, but for our administrators.

And we introduce another concept called the master certificate, because we believe that's an optional certificate to reward teachers who are doing an excellent job of teaching other teachers. They should be given an opportunity to do that. We have teaching hospitals, why can't we have teaching schools? Let the educational community cross-teach and cross-talk. That's the collegiality that has been missing for many years in the body of public education. We could do a lot of things to bring that reform together.

I've thrown a lot of things at you this morning. I hope you take it in the understanding that these are ideas. You've asked us to give you our ideas, Senator, and that's what we've done.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: I've got a question. Does your organization have a list of each district and what the increases were in salaries on the last contract?

DR. BOOSE: We could get that.

SENATOR EWING: But the percentage, does that show-- Does that include the increments plus whatever--

DR. BOOSE: It should include the increments. The average-- The most recent statistic that I have is, the average settlement is 4.43 percent, which would include-- Some increments run 2.6 to 2.8 percent, so if you have a 4.3, then what was settled over that was 1.5 percent more than what the increment was.

But we also have some districts -- I'm sorry to inform you -- that have an increment in excess of 5 percent. So, if we're trying to negotiate and bring it down to what the current marketplace is, if you have a high increment, that pushes up and you have to pay it.

SENATOR EWING: My feeling is, there ought to be just one increase, period, and no increment.

DR. BOOSE: Well, I'd like to see that legislation if you develop that. That's where we would be on an equal playing field. It should be considered, because what happens, the other side of the table says, "Well, we already have 2.8 percent." So when we go to negotiate, that's already--

SENATOR EWING: A given.

DR. BOOSE: Yes. And it shouldn't be, because the public looks at, "What is it that we're totally paying in the next contract?" That would make it very clear, Senator, I agree.

SENATOR MARTIN: Jack, I have a question on teacher certification, something I pursued from time to time, not successfully I might note.

But when you talk about the distinction between tenure and certification, as you see it, renewable certification, I wasn't clear. Are you saying, while they are not the same, if you don't get recertified in a given period of time, you won't be permitted to teach, right?

DR. BOOSE: That's an excellent point.

SENATOR MARTIN: Or does it mean something else?

DR. BOOSE: As I understand the current law, even today, if a certificate is removed for other reasons from a teacher, they are not employable as a teacher; therefore, they can't maintain tenure.

If our plan is put in place, or something like that where we have a renewable, you maintain your tenure as long as you maintain your certifiability. So, if you let that drift, if you don't achieve that, then I can't continue to pay you as a teacher because you don't have a legal certificate, therefore, you have failed yourself and you have lost your own tenure right.

SENATOR MARTIN: Well, effectively what you are saying is, a ground for losing tenure would be not getting recertified.

DR. BOOSE: That's certainly what I'm saying.

SENATOR MARTIN: And another approach, which is maybe not as drastic, is to continue somebody suspended from their ability to be able to teach. If they lapse and don't get their certification within the appropriate time, they would not -- they would still have tenure, but they couldn't teach in that period. It would be as if they had some kind of a pregnancy leave or something else, where--

DR. BOOSE: We understand that.

One of the things that we also are suggesting to the Commissioner is, using that example, that we would give -- they would go back to the provisional certificate. In other words, they would go back and they would have to acquire the training in order to earn back. So it's not that they are automatically dismissed. They would have to go back to the provisional certificate, take the training that is necessary, and then they would get the certificate back.

But if they failed to do that, then I think, in terms of professionalism, they have said to us that they no longer wish to be part of and enjoy the rights and privileges that the profession does.

SENATOR MARTIN: In our previous proposals that dealt with that, we more or less based it upon credits. I appreciate the fact, and I agree with you that a program like that shouldn't be based just on credits. Do you have some-- We talked about this before, privately, a couple of years ago. Have you now some proposal that would be able to provide that kind of professionalism that is not just credits, but in some way would be meaningful in a way that you would like to see it?

I mean, I don't think anybody wants to see someone just going to a course, a course that may be unrelated or just valueless, but to do it just to get -- you know, plug in the missing gap.

DR. BOOSE: That's an excellent point, and I glossed over that, so thanks for bringing it up. On page 28 of my testimony, we lay out the body of our proposal saying that in a five-year period, we expect 180 clock hours, half of which should be earned, maybe, in a higher education component, but at least half of which should be in district driven or professional association driven training programs, which, I think, allows for a good mix. And if districts want to come together in collaboration for staff development, that the State should recognize that as wholesome and therefore part of the recertification process. So that's the balance that we see.

SENATOR MARTIN: Last question: How do you address costs for that? Does the teacher pick it up, or does the district pick it up, or is it -- do you know?

DR. BOOSE: Well, I think one of the things we're looking at, the total investment, the Commissioner says right now that in his statistics, he believes 1 percent of the total cost of public education is into professional development. There is a lot of professional development going on right now.

We also have in the form of professional development, almost in every contract, where we are reimbursing teachers for courses and programs taken. So I just think that is more of a harnessing of those investments into a better structure.

SENATOR MARTIN: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

DR. BOOSE: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR EWING: Bernice Venable, Superintendent of Trenton schools.

We're putting you on early so you can get back to work.

B E R N I C E P. V E N A B L E, Ed. D.: I never stop working. I'm glad to be here.

First of all, I want to thank you very much for calling me in fast forward. I would also like to say a very close friend and colleague of mine, Dr. Larry Feinsod, along with me, we just found out about the hearing today. My statement that is here before you, you are going to help me proofread it this morning. But Dr. Finesole, who is superintendent in Madison, and he is also the President of the Garden State Coalition, he regrets not being here this morning, but he knows that I will at least try to summarize some of his concerns.

Good morning. My name is Bernice Venable. I am the Superintendent of the Trenton Public Schools. I am here to comment on the “Comprehensive Plan for Educational Improvement and Financing.” Our district presented testimony in October 1995, prior to a discussion of the funding portion.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan is the State’s response to define thorough and efficient education and to design a new funding formula for the public schools. We wish to point out, however, that the Plan, as it is now drafted, would be a viable document if all things were equal in this State and each child had everything he or she required to perform well in school. However, ladies and gentlemen, all things are not equal in New Jersey. The Plan moves us farther from the law. If accepted as proposed, it will move not only the Camdens, the Trentons, and the Newarks back to pre-1975 in terms of the funding level, but it will also impede the progress made by the suburban and the rural districts of this State.

By the way, for whatever reason, the progress that has been made by many districts has now, of course, been categorized as excessive or unnecessary municipal spending that needs to be capped. John McLaughlin of The Star-Ledger recently stated, and, very poignantly, that the State now looks upon the higher spending districts as colossal wastrels and gross mismanagers of public funds. We all know that the urban 30 special needs districts, over more than 15 years ago, were also accused of the same thing. Now, today, we are all perceived in the same negative light. That is unconscionable.

Today I will address, briefly, several salient points. First of all, the Plan, according to the Education Law Center, does not address the quality of educational opportunity for the State's neediest children, as ordered in the Abbott decision. The decision indicates: "It is the State and only the State that is responsible for the educational disparity, and only the State can correct it. The responsibility for substantive education is squarely and completely committed to the State." From the calculations we have received, the proposed funding level will provide less to the districts. Trenton stands to lose \$16 million in aid by Fiscal Year '98. I have a sheet attached for your perusal.

Others will also lose because of the anticipated cuts in foundation aid. That is unconscionable. How will we educate our children in the cities, in the suburbs, in the rural areas? The proposed cuts, coupled with what is intended on the national level, are far more than the public educational system can bear, particularly in the urban centers.

The Plan, as proposed, will cause a shift in the foundation level, which will result in a total loss of \$217 million in State aid for the special needs districts -- see attached. The Department, in effect, is basing a foundation amount on an educational structure that it defines as educationally and fiscally effective and efficient, so long as it is less money. Clearly, as it cuts back on education at this level, it may have to increase the cost of incarceration. There is an indirect relationship between the funding of schools and the funding for prisons. It seems the more that is spent on prisons, the less that is spent on schools. Is that what is intended?

Second, in the Plan, models for school districts and for the three levels within a district have been described. Clearly, these models are not

based on the majority of what currently exists in public school education in the State of New Jersey. That may not be a bad idea; however, why at a level of funding that existed two calendar years ago? And, as important, why is the plan silent on measures to address districts that have less than 500 students? At this time, more than 300 districts, or 50 percent, are in that category. In effect, if the funding level remains as proposed, most districts, by 1997-1998 will suffer severe cuts in order to support less than they currently have. Austerity has its place, but it is apparent that most districts would not be able to exist at all if they are to depend on their municipality's ability to pay. The State has that responsibility. In reviewing the models, we hope you will pay attention to the proposed staffing and the level of support for needed services.

Third, the Department's proposed solution for funding at-risk students is far reaching in content. In effect, while it is noble to expand, substantially, at-risk aid from 30 to 180 districts, please be aware that to satisfy the Court's requirements, students in special needs districts must receive supplemental funding sufficient to constitute a significant intervention in order to help bridge the gap between them and the "I" and "J" district students. Right now, we have more than 60 percent of our students in Trenton who are at-risk and require a multiplicity of support services. With the concomitant diminution of cutbacks anticipated on the Federal level, i.e., Title 1, we have to ask, what is to happen with the students? Clearly, we cannot stop children from coming to us with greater needs. We must continue to serve them.

This year, in our district, we began to analyze more closely the causes of absenteeism among our students who are at risk. We have

discovered that the preponderance of those who are regularly absent, not incidentally absent, are students with asthma. They simply do not come to school. They are the students who need the help afforded them by the types of support services that the Plan appears to recommend but not support. The burden, as proposed, is to place extra costs to the local municipality.

Indeed, districts like ours cannot stabilize the factors that daily chisel away at any gains. That is why the funding for at-risk students is so critical. To lessen the funding level, as proposed, it will move us farther away from the intent of Abbott. Lest you forget, it is the State that “must assure that the level of funding in poorer districts is adequate to address these extreme disadvantages.”

The Court also ruled that funding in the poorer districts, like Trenton, must be certain every year and cannot be dependent upon a local district’s ability to tax, given its limited property tax base and other essential services funded from that source. The Plan does not address this issue at all. And, as a district, we are expected to do more, with so much less. For certain, whether the Legislature remedies this or not, we do hope efforts will be made to eradicate the causes for dissension -- and I’m going to repeat that -- to eradicate the causes for dissension that are occurring between the urban and suburban districts. There is no need to perpetuate a perception that we are taking funding from other districts and wasting what we receive. The \$60 million windfall, as an example, this year, and any windfall last year, did not stop in Trenton, a special needs district. We would like to know where did the money go? We received level funding, and you will see that in the chart that is attached.

In fact, and the records will show this, we received \$6000 less in State aid for Fiscal Year '97 than we did for Fiscal Year '96, with no chance to close a \$25 million gap needed to support existing programs. This is a direct result of receiving a no discernible increase in State and local funding for the past four to five years -- and the chart is attached. When a district has close to 670 new students, increased needs for more programs and services and no money to cover them, there is a problem which spurs cuts in critical areas. That is our current scenario in Trenton, and we are losing ground. According to calculations, Trenton, in 1994-1995, was closest to parity, at 91.6 percent. Yet, by 1996-1997, our district will have experienced a percentage decrease to 84.23 percent, thus moving us farther away from parity with per pupil spending in the "I" and "J" districts. That is also attached.

Fourth, the Plan's proposed solutions for funding special education are not clear. What we do know is that it is inconceivable that a prearranged percentage can be developed for children with disabilities. With only 10 percent of the population of classified students projected to receive full State funding, we expect a negative result in greater cuts than those stated. Clearly, we cannot preordain what a child would require in terms of services. If the child is handicapped, he or she has to receive the services. Beyond the indicated 10 percent limit, the local district would be expected to pay the difference on a sliding scale. In Trenton, this is not likely to occur. We do not have the funds. Why set such unreasonable limits? Why not cap the cost of private contracts for special services and transportation?

Fifth, the Plan remains absolutely silent on proposed solutions for the funding of school facilities, and the retrofitting for technology. This is

unconscionable, albeit, Trenton received \$111,000 restricted aid for technology. That translates into \$8 per student and does not address the problem, by a long shot.

If the Department is serious about what it is proposing for the Core Curriculum Content Standards and a new definition for thorough and efficient education, then it must decide just how it will deal with the facilities and technology issues. We are talking about the whole infrastructure that must fit and facilitate the programs and services that have been and will be monitored. We urge consideration for a major education trust fund which is analogous to what is done to repair and rebuild the major highways and byways of this State.

If the Legislature wants to, it could stop the chaotic trend in which we are headed. All it will take is the will to do the right thing. Apparently, it is more fashionable to be more concerned with transportation and incarceration and less concerned with education. If you can find a trust fund for transportation, place the same trust in education and fund it adequately. Roads and jails are not our future, the children are. Indeed, we cannot endure any retrenchment from the very institution that made this nation great. I know that money is not everything; however, in education, green stamps will not cut it for what we need to do to educate the children.

Let me remind you what the Court did when it reaffirmed its 1990 decision in Abbott. It took the unusual step of retaining jurisdiction of the case and announced that it would entertain applications for relief if -- and you can review the Tractenberg testimony:

* In school years 1995-1996 and 1996-1997, the 16 percent relative disparity in regular education spending is not addressed to an extent suggesting a reasonable likelihood that full, approximately 100 percent, parity will be achieved by 1997-1998; or,

* If by September 1996, a law has not been adopted assuring such substantial equivalence, approximating 100 percent for school year 1997-1998 and providing as well for special education needs; or,

* If by 1997-1998 these funding requirements are not actually met.

The Abbott decision and subsequent decisions addressed the existence of poverty and what conditions had to be in place to offset that poverty and the impact of poverty on the students who reside in the urban areas. You cannot dismiss the fact that it takes time, effort, and commitment in order to eradicate so much that counters improved outcomes. We have to build capacity for reform, and that takes time and support.

Finally, we are not here to urge you to do anything other than to support the children in this State who need the support. Currently, there are more than 270,000 students attending the State's special needs districts. If the children had the choice, they probably would elect to attend schools in suburban communities where they perceive that students are favored in terms of support. However, the support that even the suburban and rural districts may have had in the past has now been eroded, due to a diminution in State funding levels. This does not bode well for the future of public school education in this great and wealthy State of New Jersey, no matter where any of the children reside. The Legislature must garner the will to do something

about this. You can start by eradicating the reliance on local property taxes for the funding of the State's public schools.

And, also, I have attached the cover of a report that was submitted to the Legislature and the Governor in July of 1994. I do have available a few copies.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to come before you today.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Dr. Venable.

DR. VENABLE: You're welcome.

SENATOR EWING: Any questions (no response)

Thank you.

DR. VENABLE: Oh, you're welcome.

SENATOR EWING: Lynne Strickland, Garden State Coalition.

LYNNE STRICKLAND: Good morning. I am Lynne Strickland, and I am the Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools. I just wanted to say that Larry Feinsod must be covering all his bases today.

I don't know, Dr. Venable, whether you got demoted and I got promoted, but at any rate, it's also a good example of the fact that Larry and Dr. Venable are friendly and colleagues and share a similar concern for children throughout the State.

Garden State has been supportive of equity and excellence combined since its conception and supports the special needs districts.

When I got hold of this hearing notice, I said, "Gee, I think we've done this before," and I was a little bit confused, so please excuse the fact that I don't have formal written testimony. I think, probably, a few things.

Here is our first testimony from December 5, when we appeared in front of the joint committees, to testify on the Plan. Basically, everything we were concerned about then still holds true now. We haven't seen any modifications or adjustments to have us be less concerned in the areas that we expressed.

I also believe that nearly 1200 people, in Livingston in February, probably sent Garden State's message loud and clear also about its concerns with the Plan. Garden State is not pleased, in general, with the Commissioner's Plan as presented, and we have been hoping to hear, or, perhaps, get the sense that these concerns have been heard.

And they are not only from us, as you know. Here's an example. Shortly after we testified on December 5, I was called by a north Jersey news cable station, and they wanted to tape a program on peoples' concerns about the Plan. They asked me to appear on that, and they said, "We'll get back to you, because we're trying to find somebody to present the other side of the coin in support of the Plan." Four or five days later they called back to say, "We can't find anybody."

Indeed, I was very fortunate, because Paul Tractenberg was invited, so what they did was, they had an urban/suburban discussion of the Plan. The consensus between us was obvious in terms of common denominator concerns, especially about the potential for being leveled down by the inherent premises in the Plan.

Now, one thing I think maybe I'll do and concentrate on a bit is the concern that we have about the vote over what would be considered the T&E budget. To date the foundation amount hasn't changed. We have heard

from the Department that these were model figures and that it would be premature to analyze them or to get any sense of assessment from them, but we have nothing else to go on. The Department also has said by January 1 we'll update those figures and you'll get more sense of reality out of this, and you can get a better feel for it. January 1 has passed. Then it was going to be February 1, and, in talking to a high Department official in early February, they said March 1.

So it's almost April, and it seems that I'm sure there will be an adjustment at some point as a matter of when. The process is boggling to us, because, obviously, there isn't a whole lot of time to have pragmatic discussion when you're backed into September of '96 for having legislation enacted to deal with the Abbott v. Burke decision and respond satisfactorily to that. So we're very, very frustrated about that.

Now, I'm sorry, I kind of got away from my point about going over the T&E budget. What we have had to deal with are the same figures in it that have been analyzed by Garden State, by Ernie Reock, who has said 74 percent of districts throughout the State are over that T&E amount. The Education Law Center has done its own analysis. It's very similar. And even the Department, itself, has not denied that it would be close to a billion dollars out of current moneys if excessive and unnecessary votes were turned down, it would be going out of the education funding to schools.

In the Commissioner's Plan, what I want to clarify is, when you are talking about the excessive and unnecessary vote, that is not new money or more money that people would be voting on. The way it is presented in the Plan, what they are talking about is money that you have today in your budget

that y
yester before that. In Garden State districts, we're talking about 15
t to 30 percent of their current school budgets would be labeled a
excessive t
pass, tha
operating today.

It forces the local townspeople and the local town councils into
of what I feel is like a victim's decision: Shall we support our public
schools so that quality education that our students are receiving is not leveled
down, or should we seize this opportunity to finally reduce property taxes?
You know, it's a rock and a hard place concern, and that goes well beyond our
communities. As I said, statewide, 74 percent of communities are affected.

No one really wins here, and no one really feels good, whether they
vote up or down. They will resent the policies that put them into this kind of
mean spirited and dank position, and they will know where they came from.
I'm hearing that from all -- really many parties throughout the State, and
interestingly, I'm now getting called by taxpayer associations.

In Passaic County and Morris County, they see common ground
between our concerns and theirs, even though taxpayers associations-- You
know, it's very seductive, "We'll vote these budgets down and we'll save this
much money," but they know the process will be devastating to their
communities and to the school children in their communities, and they don't
want that.

So we need a way out of this, and we need a place where we can
get to a worktable where we have productive discussion. I think that Garden

State would be delighted if there was an update or a modification of this Plan, it also seems like the Commissioner and the administration are pursuing this plan regardless, at this point. We don't see much indication of We certainly know the Legislature is working very hard, we're not saying that, but the timelines are nearly impossible at this point.

I mean, I get the sense that they are -- the Plan, which may not be too many, are in a little submarine in a volcanic lake, and they look around, and they see it's surrounded by volcanoes, they say, "Well, maybe if we go down for a little bit, you know, submerge, we'll see a little crevice there. No, that's not working. Maybe we'll course correct maybe two degrees." They'll go around 360, but they are never going out of that lake. We need to discuss this and sit down. Garden State is more than willing to do that. We do have some ideas, as you know, and we've had testimony all over the place. I almost reissued it, or recycled it, I know how we feel. If you want some more details or information, please give

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Gene Keyek.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My comments will be brief. Really what I want to discuss is the importance of development and the importance to all of the education organizations.

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When we look at the development of a model, there are three pertinent questions that need to be responded to. The first one is, what is it that we want the model to do? The second question is, how do we arrive at the cost? And the third question is, truly, how much do we want to spend?

So, when we look at the first part of that model, the first question, what is it we want the model to do: The core curriculum is supposed to be the basis for this model, for the model for spending. The core curriculum is just now being debated by the State Board of Education. Absent any definition, it is difficult to develop a particular model.

The second question that comes up under this, what do we want to do, is how do we deal with the mandates. Boards of education and school districts are faced with dealing with many of the mandates which are not included in the Commissioner's model.

And then the last question, what is it that we want to do? The Commissioner has identified items which are optional. For whatever reason, there seems to be a fixation, as an example, on lighting for athletic fields. You know, this is a question that comes up: Is this an essential part of an education program? Perhaps not, but when we talk about the sharing of services, the utilization of facilities, we see that a municipality and a school district should be utilizing the same facilities and making it available to all members of the community. The installation of lights, perhaps while not educationally connected, has some merit in terms of good utilization of funds for the community. The same taxpayer, whether they are paying municipal tax or the school tax, is going to benefit from the installation of these lights.

So to say that they are just wasteful really doesn't -- or ignores the

How do we arrive at costs? That's a major issue. We make some and this is where we have our greatest difficulty with the Department of Education. Can we use averages? Can we use or assume class Can we assume the number of minutes in a day? I'm quite surprised that the Department developed a model in which we don't change the school we don't change the school year. We've used the same limits that we currently have.

Is there any literature which suggests that perhaps we should be looking at additional time in school. Perhaps we should be looking at full-year schooling. None of these issues have been addressed in the model. We go back to that model and we say, "We're using 220 minutes of instructional time." Is that outmoded? One hundred and eighty days goes back to the agricultural days of New Jersey, so that when we look at that number of minutes in a day--

Now, I handed to you a model. The page is from the New Jersey School Board's Association, Cost of Education Index. I have some pride in this, because this was developed 20 years ago. This has been around the State of New Jersey for 20 years. When we look at the model the Commissioner has proposed, we're seeing an ideal model. Does this model exist in New Jersey? Is there a district that has one high school, one middle school, two elementary schools, with a population of 3075? No good cost accountant would permit the development of a cost model, making an assumption on something that does not exist.

So that when we look at models, we say that with a configuration the school districts in New Jersey -- we have K-6, K-8, K-9, K-12, 7-12, 9-vocational schools, educational services commission. In the Commissioner's Comprehensive Plan, the Commissioner makes a basic assumption, that is realistic and is based on a realistic model, aware of a hypothetical, idealistic model, K-12. The School Boards Association, in their Cost of Education Index, will provide K-6 grade plans, K-8, plus all the expenditures.

This Cost of Education Index looks at what the district spends in comparison to the State, to the county, to the socioeconomic group, to the enrollment group, and to a grade plan, so that when you look across the top, this is just one page for one district.

This is available for every district. Legislators can take this and they can ask for printouts for all of the districts in their particular legislative district. What you have is an indication of what the spending is in comparison to this.

Now, at what point does the Department decide what is thorough and efficient? At what point does the Department decide what is mandated? And at what point does the Department decide what is optional and should be presented to the public? The answer really boils down to the last question. How much do we want to spend? That's the bottom line in any cost accounting in any type of accounting project. How much money do you have available? Now we can begin to develop a sound model.

If the State of New Jersey says it is going to provide \$4 billion, and is going to cap the spending for all districts, this establishes what we are going to see begin to look at. It still boils down to a final question, how much do we want to spend in terms of

Now, Dr. Boose, in mentioning negotiations and speaking about the impact of negotiations, that school districts may have higher salaries because in many cases, have high salary costs because of a high level of experience. More and more of our teachers, remember, came in during the baby boom of the '60s. These are the people who are currently on salary guides. These are the people who are at the top of the guide, so that a district

Now, during the period of the 80s, yes, salary increases were Salary increases were 8 percent and 9 percent. But the issue still remains

We can't arbitrarily say, "Take an average salary, and any district above that is penalized." The districts went a this will occur. And they were encouraged, in part, by the Legislature. If you which provided for a minimum guide of \$18,500, many people testified against the bill, saying it would have a significant impact on

The Commissioner of Education, at that time, said, “No, it wouldn’t. It wouldn’t trickle up.” Well, it did, so we have this kind of a situation.

The final comment: If you are going to look at a model, if you are going to consider a model, it is a model that has to span all of the grade configurations. We cannot take one model and say that this will fit all of New Jersey, unless we’re certain that we’re going to force regionalization to a K-12 program. I could honestly say that in my discussions with members of both Houses, it is highly unlikely that we are going to see a forced regionalization bill. There may be fiscal incentives for districts to regionalize, but until we change the cost patterns for regionalization, many districts who have a high ratable will not regionalize with districts with a low set of ratables, because they will end up subsidizing. So until we examine all of those--

A final comment, and I know that it has been mentioned by a number of presenters: We’ve very concerned and somewhat irritated about the Department’s reluctance to provide data. I know I have spoken to this Committee before. We have asked for the assumptions, the data, that they used to arrive at their model.

Their model is good. Their model fits all of the standards of good cost accounting. But the only issue really is that any of you can develop a model. It is, what assumptions do you use to arrive at the final figure? I have made this statement publicly, and I have challenged the Department and will continue to do so. These figures that they arrived at are too close to the figures that were presented by the task force chaired by former Commissioner Cooperman, that these figures that are here, at \$7500, are not coincidental.

It is my estimation that many of the assumptions that were utilized by the Department were utilized to back into a figure. "We have 'X' number of dollars. We've got to arrive at this particular stage." I have communicated this to Dr. Contini, to Mike Azarra. If I'm wrong, give me the figures. Let me run--
- Let me see what assumptions you used, and I'll apologize. But to this date, no one has come forth with the figures.

That also holds true -- Senator, you and I have talked about this-- This special ed report is still not out. The special ed report -- what can I assume, that it doesn't fit the Commissioner's presentation, the Commissioner's recommendations for the funding of special education? I have no idea.

We've spent \$180,000 to do a study. We had a special ed task force which finished much earlier than the Commissioner's study and came up with, probably, better recommendations than may be included in the study.

So I think, from our standpoint as an association, until we see the direction that the Department is going, what they would like to see included, the conclusions-- We testified yesterday before the State Board on the Comprehensive Plan, the Core Curricula, and there is no consensus yet, so I don't know how the Department can develop a model without consensus as to what is to be included in the model.

And this holds true in private and public sectors. I've done cost accounting for private sectors; you ask the same questions. Let's apply that model to the public sector.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: David Nash.

D A V I D N A S H: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. We realize what a difficult issue you are grappling with, and the timelines are very tight that we have to work under as we try to develop a new school funding plan, so we do appreciate the chance to share our views on this very, very complex issue.

Our Association has very carefully examined the school funding model proposed in the Comprehensive Plan, and we realize that the Commissioner has said, over and over again, that this is an illustrative model, but it is the only model that we have, so we've looked very carefully at that model that is in the proposal.

And to be fair, we have noted, time and time again, that there are some positive aspects to the Comprehensive Plan. We think it is important that the Plan emphasizes the need for technology, for promoting professional development, and having a formula with guaranteed funding from year to year, something that we have not had in a long, long time in New Jersey. So we acknowledge those positive aspects to the Plan.

We are also concerned, frankly, that the other provisions in the Department's Comprehensive Plan undermine these positive aspects and really turn them into an illusion, things that we will never be able to achieve and, ultimately, would level down the quality of education throughout the State.

We believe the implementation of the Plan in its final form will result in some very divesting things. And it's interesting that the final Comprehensive Plan actually is much worse than the original Comprehensive Plan. It seems like the Department took the testimony from people talking

about deficiencies in the Plan and went in exactly the opposite direction of that testimony.

We see, in the final Plan:

- * the potential for significant increases in class sizes for students in all subjects at all ability levels;
- * a great reduction in the number of advanced placement, honors, vocational educational, and elective classes;
- * an inability to meet the State's proposed academic standards;
- * a denial of educational services that are essential for special ed students;
- * a failure to meet the needs of our State's poorer students and students who are at other socioeconomic levels, as well;
- * and an increase in our overreliance on property taxes.

We've attached, for your review, a survey that looks at a sample of school districts and how the Comprehensive Plan model would play out in those districts. I think it shows, pretty dramatically, the negative impact that this Plan would have on just about every district in the State of New Jersey.

In East Brunswick, where their high school was just noted as one of the best schools in the nation, they would be asked to eliminate more than 100 teaching positions under the Comprehensive Plan model. And this is a district that the Department of Ed has praised as a model school district throughout the State.

We've included, as I said, a list of districts that cover every district factor grouping, every part of the State, and it shows that the Plan, uniformly,

asks those districts to reduce their staffing for teaching and administrative staff.

We are particularly concerned that the Comprehensive Plan seems to have been developed completely independently of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. We've heard, over and over again, that these standards are supposed to be the foundation for developing a new school funding plan, but there hasn't been any analysis of the standards to say what it would take to implement those standards. We think it's just a missing ingredient that is vital to this whole process. We should have had the standards looked at first, developed first, analyzed first, and then built a funding formula off of that. We seem to be working in the opposite direction.

Our own review of the standards shows a need for tremendous investment in personnel, professional development, technology, and facilities if we expect to meet new standards.

Just as an example, most districts, we feel, would need to hire additional supervisors with expertise in particular subject areas that are covered in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Supervisors would be needed to plan and conduct professional development, rewrite local curriculum, identify materials needed to implement the new standards, and generally provide the leadership necessary for this process to work.

We realize, however, we aren't here just to criticize the proposals put forth already. We've been trying to be proactive and constructive and offer our own ideas for where we should be going in school funding. We've attached, for your review, a list of 36 specific recommendations and 7 guiding

principles that we think should guide New Jersey's efforts in developing a new school funding plan.

Just to briefly touch on the core principles we would urge the Legislature to look at, in developing their plan, first:

- * We think that we have to maintain our constitutional commitment to a thorough and efficient education for every child.

And we're very dismayed to hear any talk, albeit it rumors at this point, that the Legislature may consider eliminating the T&E provision from our Constitution. We think that is an important standard that has served our State well, and without that we would not have any ability to make sure that we're leveling up our education.

- * We think that we need to ensure long-term stability and equity in a funding formula, something we've not seen for a long time.

Just as an example, the proposal put forth by the Commissioner talks about shifting pension costs back to local districts and ignores the question of increasing the State's share of funding for education. Those are issues of stability and equity that we think the Commissioner's Plan is just going in the wrong direction on.

- * We think we should be encouraging responsible empowerment of our key stakeholders at the grass roots level.

- * We think we should ensure an environment conducive to learning for all students, and certainly, that has to do with the issue of school facilities as one particular point under that core principle.

The State of New Jersey has not done a very good job, according to the Department of Education's own surveys. We have a multibillion need

for school facility improvements, and that's without even looking at higher standards. We do agree with developing higher standards and effective accountability mechanisms, but you certainly need the tools to turn that into reality.

We recognize and support the need for a high level of professionalism among public school teaching staff members. We've been a leader in the State in promoting required professional development for all of our members. We think that should be part of New Jersey's reform plans, and we've come out with our own proposal on that topic.

We also think that professionalism means that we don't penalize districts that have more experienced staff, that we don't penalize districts that have a more educated staff, and using a single salary figure for all districts in a funding model would penalize just those districts. We think that sends out the wrong message.

And we need a formula that addresses the unique needs of a very diverse population. One of the commonsense things that you need to address the needs of your students is to first acknowledge that your students exist. Unfortunately, our stopgap funding formulas of the last two years have virtually ignored significant increases in student enrollment.

We've attached for your review a fact sheet summarizing New Jersey's declining per pupil support for education. When you factor in the cost of inflation over the last four years, New Jersey has actually reduced its per pupil funding by 11.5 percent in that time period.

In a dollar figure, that comes out to a staggering \$600 million shortfall in just the last four years. That is something that has to stop in any

new funding formula. We need an absolute commitment to current year enrollment funding.

As I said, we've included a list of our specific recommendations. Our members look forward to working closely with you to develop a new funding formula, and we do feel that this can be done, although it will be a difficult process in the timelines that you have. Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Dave.

Ray Kalainikas.

RAYMOND KALAINIKAS: I can only speak as a citizen representing my own experience of going through the educational system.

Number one, I disagree with the State having the responsibility of a thorough and efficient education. It seems to me that every individual, individually, has the responsibility of a thorough and efficient education for themselves. In the same way that I have the responsibility of determining and forming my own religion, I also have the responsibility of seeing to my own education, with the assistance of parents and anyone else who chooses to assist me.

So I guess I disagree with the very basic premise upon which this task force is formed, the idea that somehow the State has the responsibility of determining education for its citizens.

I would like to just add a few things of a practical nature. That being said, and of course, Jack, you understand that I'm also opposed to taxation. I view taxation as legal theft, so we're really on the opposite side.

But something always stuck in my head over the years, and this is a good opportunity to let it out. Back in the '60s, when I was taking a college

course, a teacher told us they had performed an experiment. They tested five high schools in the area -- this was in New Jersey -- for knowledge retained over four years. Maybe you're familiar with this. It turned out that the result of this test was 85 percent of the information passed on in those four years was lost; 15 percent, for all practical purposes, was retained.

He told us the 15 percent consisted of mainly drivers ed, general math, and English. The conclusion was, when you pass on information to students and it is a long time in coming before that information is put into practical application, it's, for all practical purposes, lost. There must be a very close relationship between passing on information and applying that information in a practical work sense. Obviously, in general math, you learn it, you apply it immediately. English, you learn it, you apply it immediately. Drivers ed, you learn it, you apply it immediately.

This is what was said in terms of 15 percent retained. The other 85 percent was a waste of time. That has stuck in my head for all of these years, because anyone who has gone through the system, from kindergarten to grade 12, can connect with that. It's real. Our whole educational system is very inefficient -- 85 percent of it, inefficient -- and something should be done with respect to this.

If we pass on information, it should be utilized immediately, otherwise, don't waste a student's time. Don't become a disincentive to learning, because students will say, "Where can I use this? How can I use this?" And the teacher will always say, "Some day, somewhere, somehow." And after a while, he gets tired and bored of hearing that, and he loses interest

in the whole educational process, because the whole educational process -- 85 percent of it -- is a waste of time the way we have set it up. That's one point.

Two practical points I would like to add with regard to cost effectiveness, since I'm opposed to taxation. I attended, in my schooling-- In my schooling, I attended public school half of the time, and I went to private school the other half of the time. And when I was in private school, the system was such they tried to get students to help pay for their own education. So, in the morning, we essentially did all the janitorial services of the school. It was called morning duties. We each had something to do to see that the school was clean and up kept. And in the latter part of the day, we did some of the heavier work, called manual labor.

Now, I know we have janitorial service in our schools, and graffiti is all over the place because students don't feel responsible for their own school. But I can tell you, going to a private school, we felt very responsible for how it was up kept because we had to upkeep it, and in effect, we cut the cost of education. This happened to be a junior seminary of the Catholic church, but it always struck me as being very efficient, the way in which they had the students literally take care of the school itself. There was no graffiti, because we were the ones responsible for cleaning everything up.

And if the kids going to public school were responsible for taking care of their own school, I question how much graffiti you would see in the hallway. So that's a very practical way of saving tax dollars.

The other practical way, it strikes me, is if a particular job is eliminated in our public school system -- not eliminated, but left vacant, left open, somebody retires, someone goes somewhere else, or for some other

reason, some person leaves this particular position, and it's funded by property tax dollars, I would hold to the contention, anyone in the community wanting to pay off their own property tax and having the capability and the expertise to fill the position -- particularly many people in a retired position -- should be able to go into that position and do the job until their property tax is paid for. They would receive vouchers; they would receive no monetary payment, and in fact, they would only receive half the income. If you were making, let's say, \$20 an hour, you would get \$10, but you would get \$10 in vouchers. And you would work until your property tax gets paid. You would receive no health benefits; you would receive no retirement benefits. In effect, you would save all the other taxpayers half the salary of that full-time position and all the benefits that go with it, while at the same time paying off your property tax.

This could be done, for instance, if students were allowed to take care of the janitorial duties. But let's suppose, for the boiler, we need someone who is professional, for other work in the schools, people who are really professional. So when the janitor who is normally full time leaves that position, allow other people in the community to fill that position at half the compensation, no retirement benefits, no health benefits. I'm talking about savings.

Let's go into the classroom and do the same with a teacher.

SENATOR EWING: Well, Ray-- Ray, let me just interrupt a minute. What part do you want to discuss as far as what the Department has given us? I mean, this really--

MR. KALAINIKAS: Well, I guess-- I'm listening to, "There is a base cost per student. And then, if the community pays more, they would have to give it to the voters." But I guess, it would seem to me--

SENATOR EWING: That's what is being proposed.

MR. KALAINIKAS: I know. I understand, that's what is being proposed. But it would seem to me that this would be one way to keep the costs in line, considering you're only given so much. So you can utilize that cost in other areas.

But I--

SENATOR EWING: Well, I think, like in Trenton here, where you have 2000 children, at least, students in the high school, I don't think there are 2000 jobs there they could give them to do. So I mean--

Keep going.

MR. KALAINIKAS: Well, okay, you have 2000. I can think, if we had 200 in the school, but yet we each had a particular chore to keep the school clean.

I guess what I am saying is, it would require less effort, less time, and in the long run, this is simply one way of cost effectiveness--

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

MR. KALAINIKAS: --with regard to the whole educational system.

SENATOR EWING: Well, what else do you have on the Department's proposal?

MR. KALAINIKAS: I guess I have a question, maybe. If there is a base cost, across the line for all municipalities, are there municipalities -- a

large number -- below that base cost, or we don't know what that base cost is yet?

SENATOR EWING: Don't know.

MR. KALAINIKAS: We don't know. So it's pretty hard to deal with, if you really don't know what that base cost is, and that's what Gordon MacInnes was talking about. In other words, there is too much of a generality, nothing to talk about, because it's too general.

I would hope that in some way-- Well, essentially, I would like to see the idea that when a position is left open, whether it's a teaching position or some administrative position or janitorial position, that we can allow citizens who want to pay off their property tax to fill the position, half the compensation, no benefits -- retirement, health, or otherwise -- until they pay off their property tax. And if it takes seven people to fill that position over a year, that's more people involved in the system.

I'd also like to see students involved in helping to pay for their education, not just in a janitorial sense, but if the property taxpayer, who has to pay for this educational process, if he is told, "We will allow students -- you supply the paint, you tell us what you want painted, you supply the equipment, you tell us how you want your grounds kept up," I think there ought to be other ways in which students, apart from, say, forming clubs and participating in sports, can be called upon to help pay back to the property taxpayer what that property taxpayer is required to give.

Is this a possibility, or has anyone ever thought of this, to you knowledge, openly and publicly like I'm thinking about it: calling the students

to form teams to go to a house, let's say Mrs. O'Leary, who is 85 years old, who hasn't had her house painted in 20 years--

SENATOR EWING: That's not part of the overall program. Really, Ray, we've got other people, and we've got to go to our conferences, because we are going to be voting today. So you've heard what the other individuals have said. They are addressing themselves to that part of what the Department came up with. That's what this particular discussion is going to be about today.

MR. KALAINIKAS: Well, that's it. That's all I have to say then.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Judith Cambria.

J U D I T H C A M B R I A: Good morning. I guess it's fitting I get a chance to speak to you directly, since the first meeting on December 5, there was no way I could be prepared for that quickly. December 19 was canceled because of snow -- right here it says on my testimony, December 19. And the third one was in January, where I was fortunate enough to be away at that time for a little vacation.

I don't want to belabor some of the points that have been made, but the League-- I'm speaking for the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. I'm the Education Director responsible for all of our work in education, and I represent 62 local Leagues here in New Jersey.

But we have provided very extensive testimony to you, something like 9 pages long. I certainly won't bore you with all of it. But it is there. It has been sent to all members of the Committee.

Just to briefly go over some of the things that we are particularly concerned about. We have not seen, at this point in time, any change in the Department's stance concerning this Comprehensive Plan. While we continue to hear that they are open minded, and they talk about the fact that they listen to people for all last year during -- and we testified three different times to them at that point in time and have since -- we don't see that there really has been any change in their basic stance on what they intend to do.

First of all, in terms of the Core Curriculum Standards, it just is clearly apparent that the funding plan has no -- bares no relationship to the Core Curriculum Standards. It just doesn't exist. We believe that because of the constitutional implication of what we are doing, that is unacceptable.

The constitutional question here is that the State has clearly said-- It challenges the Supreme Court's decision in Abbott II, which said that the State will raise the level of spending to provide high quality education of the poor districts to that in the wealthy districts. The Department, and I am assuming also the administration, has said, "We are not going to do that. We're going to set a different standard, and we are going to set that standard as a program equity standard. We are going to have programs that are equal across the State," and they have set their own standard of saying it will be at international and national levels of excellence.

Unfortunately, the Core Curriculum Standards that they have put out so far, from what we can see, first of all, don't have a relation to the funding and, secondly, don't have a relationship to that level. So there is a real concern there that, and I think you as legislators must assure-- The only way this is going to get through the Supreme Court -- again, for the fourth time

folks, we don't need that, really -- is that there truly is educational equity, program equity, and that Core Curriculum Standards truly are tied to the money.

Secondly, the hypothetical school model: The League of Women Voters happens to be opposed to mandated regionalization. However, I will say to you at this time that you either mandate school regionalization or you change the school model. If you are not willing to mandate school regionalization, then you must, in good faith, change the model to reflect what really exists here in New Jersey.

It is sheer nonsense to say, "We are going to fund you on a model that only 7 percent of the school districts match." That's all, 7 percent match that model. Nobody else matches it. That's sheer nonsense.

It is also sheer nonsense to make the assumption that school districts can regionalize. The fact of the matter is that there are lots of poorer school districts, who over the years have desired to regionalize very, very much. They can't. The reason they can't is because there is a public vote, and the public in each of the school districts has to vote for it. And the minute they look at it they say, "Oh, they have more kids and less property value. If we regionalize, guess what, we're going to pay more." They have examples of this, all the time it happens.

Across the country we are virtually the only state who has failed to regionalize. The only way it happens in any of those other states -- we went from over 150,000 districts down to something like 15,000 -- is because they mandated it.

I don't think you are going to do that. I think, politically, it's impossible. The League wouldn't support it anyway, and, therefore, I think you really have to change the model.

Incidentally, I don't see how you can do it at the same time you have just passed a charter funding school law, which sets up 135 tiny little schools that are less than 500, and which are not K-12. I mean, I think that's going the wrong distance.

I see you are saying-- You just said, "We want to regionalize. We're going to fund it on the basis of it being K-12 districts of 3000 students." And then you said, "But we're going to set up another whole system within that." It doesn't make sense, folks.

Staffing levels: As has been testified, the League's work also indicates the staffing levels that are provided in the Plan simply are inadequate. They are so inadequate that they would undermine the quality of education in our higher performing districts. I don't believe that this Legislature or anyone in this State really wants to see that happen. But the numbers that are provided simply wouldn't cover the classrooms. They certainly would not provide the class size that they purport to cover of 21, 22, 24. They would not happen. They would be much, much, much higher than those.

We're also concerned that in setting up these class levels as they have been, they fail to recognize that there are differences in the children who come to a district and must be served by that district. It is perfectly permissible and likely that 21 children in a class in a more affluent, suburban district can be appropriately and properly served by a single teacher. But the

studies and the research show that that's simply not the case with disadvantaged children, who come to school with their development one, two, or three years behind those in other school districts of their more advantaged peers.

The figure that is usually talked about in research, as being an appropriate number, for that kind of child is 15. That is not taken into consideration in this Plan, so I think that's an important thing. And if we are serious in our attempt to equalize educational opportunity, but to assure that as the Supreme Court calls for, that we turn out students who are competent citizens capable of producing in our economy and who are able to compete with their peers, then at that front end, where we have to make up for those things, that's where we have to push more resources, and class size is one of those. There is definitely a resource there that has to be different.

The League of Women Voters has been an amicus curia in the Abbott case since 1985. We have joined that case because one of the principles of the League of Women Voters is equal educational opportunity is the right of every child, hence the responsibility that it be provided to them. We believe that there is the potential for the program equity, Core Curriculum Standards, to do that, to provide equal educational opportunity. We believe that has the potential to happen with that system, so we're certainly not against it in principle in any way, shape, or form. However, we are very clear that what we have been shown so far in the Comprehensive Plan is far from being able to provide that.

I'm just going to read one little section from our written testimony:

“The fatal defect in the Comprehensive Plan is that while it talks about program equity which would meet the Court’s requirements, it fails to provide a realistic way of achieving that program equity. Instead, it reduces the amount of State aid to special needs districts by setting a foundation level below what they already receive and declares this is adequate to achieve the new Core Curriculum Standards for regular education. This flies in the face of reality: the special needs districts still have far larger classes, can offer far fewer educational programs, have obsolete facilities lacking in libraries, laboratories, and other educational resources, and of course, serve children who have far fewer family and community resources devoted to their social and cognitive development.

“The League believes it is wishful thinking that the Court will accept a foundation amount lower than the actual spending in the special needs districts and the State average as adequate to provide both the breadth and quality of education found in high performing suburban districts. For the Court to accept a program equity standard, there will have to be clear evidence, not now found in the Plan, of how the State will encourage, develop, and fund the expansion and improvement of educational programs and services in poorer schools to a level consistent with high quality schools.”

I would just like to speak briefly about the part of the proposed plan which is tied to the at-risk funds. Again, conceptually, the League sees that including a larger number of schools that have a significant proportion of their children in terms of the socioeconomic status of their parents -- mainly we’ve measured it by economics -- we believe that that is probably appropriate to expand that to serve them. Certainly, some of our rural areas have been left

out of this whole equation, because the equation said it has to be poor and it has to be urban. Well, some of our poorest districts certainly are also rural.

On the other hand, so again, conceptually, we believe that's appropriate. What we are concerned about is that if we are going to go from 30 to 180 districts, this will call for an enormous increase in the amount of money provided by the State for at-risk funding. The testimony -- and I happened to sit through all of the testimony for that, which led up to the Abbott III decision -- was very clearly that people came in from the school districts and described the programs that they had determined that they needed to help these children achieve, and that the shortfall between what the at-risk money gave them and what they needed to provide specific well designed programs.

So, again, we would support it, but that means the money has to be there.

Overall, we are concerned that fiscal policy that has been adopted by the State and carried out over the past few years makes it virtually impossible for the State to provide the kind of support for the public schools that will enable it to actually achieve the Court's standards. As you well know, we are a fragmented state with over 600 school districts, which have absolutely unbelievable variations in the wealth they have to support each child in education. In my testimony, I have given you some of those figures. There are five districts that have less than \$100,000 behind a child. There are 337 which have 100,000 to 500,000 behind it. If I have 500,000 and you have 100,000, for every dollar that I get at the low level, they get five per child at the same level of taxing. There are 169 that have 500,000 to 1 million; there are 50 that

have 1 million to 3 million; and there are 13 that have over \$3 million behind each child.

That is why it is essential and necessary that the State play a major role in this State because of this fragmentation and disparity. There has to be a lot of State aid to help make up for those huge fiscal disparities. And then, in addition to that, we believe it is appropriate, as the State has done in the past, to meet the special needs of identifiable needs of particular children such as special education, bilingual education, at-risk, etc., which again, is a lot.

Therefore, the policies that we have been following, including cutting the major State taxes such as the sales tax, the income tax, the corporate taxes, which are broad based, bring in large amounts of money, and are more equitable and less regressive than the property tax is not the way to go. We do not see how you will have the kind of money to provide support for the schools that you will need.

We are also concerned that many provisions in this Plan appear very clearly to shift funding from the State level down to the local level. Again, that would increase reliance on the property tax rather than more neutral or progressive taxation.

I'm sure you know some of the things: there are pensions and Social Security, the remedial education, a low foundation level shifts money back to the State. A high local fair share school property tax also would shift it. Those are important features that we just don't know yet. We are concerned with others that the State and the Department have chosen not to provide us with any additional information.

Now they say that they can't do it because they are looking at core curriculum standards. That's one part, but they have absolutely refused to give us any information about what levels they will support the catagoricals at. There are huge portions of this budget that are just-- We have no idea what they are all about, but until we know those, until then, we are just very concerned about those. And when we see what that required school property tax rate, with them going at a level of about \$1.09, but according to the latest reports out on property taxation last year, the statewide average for school property taxation, 1995, is up to \$1.25.

Now if the State were to choose to raise that up to that level, that would shift an enormous proportion of the cost from State funding to local funding by reducing the foundation, by reducing what they would receive in foundation aid.

I thank you very much for your attention. It was nice finally to have a chance to say it out loud. Thank you so much.

SENATOR EWING: Do you have a copy of that to spare?

MS. CAMBRIA: I will run over to the office to get a copy and bring it back.

SENATOR EWING: You can bring it back tomorrow. Don't run over now.

MS. CAMBRIA: No, today is the only day I'm going to be here. My office is right across the street. It's no problem.

SENATOR EWING: All right.

MS. CAMBRIA: I will be happy to do that. How many copies would you like?

SENATOR EWING: Well, if you give us one, we'll do the rest.

MS. CAMBRIA: Okay. Thank you so much.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Barbara Reiche.

BARBARA DeMARCO REICHE: Good morning. My name is Barbara DeMarco Reiche, and I'm with Nancy Backer Associates. I am here today on behalf of the Council of County Colleges.

Before I begin, let me state that while the discussion about thorough and efficient is primarily a public school, kindergarten through 12th grade discussion, there is one very important factor impacting the State's 19 county colleges. I am speaking about the postsecondary vocational programs at the vocational technical high schools.

As you know, Commissioner Klagholz, in the Department of Education's "Comprehensive Plan for Educational Improvement and Financing" has recommended the following:

"Postsecondary vocational programs are not within the Constitution's guarantee of a free public education, and accordingly, such enrollments would not be considered in the determination of the foundation budget."

New Jersey's community colleges strongly support this recommendation, and we urge the Legislature to sustain the Commissioner's recommendation. Let me briefly explain why.

Prior to the Quality Education Amendments of 1990 and 1991, vocational technical high schools in New Jersey did not receive direct State funding for postsecondary students. Since QEA, the vocational technical high

schools have received about \$20 million annually for postsecondary students. This \$20 million provides about \$2800 for each postsecondary student attending a vocational technical high school for postsecondary instruction. This is nearly triple what community colleges get per full-time equivalent students from the State.

I have included a chart prepared by the Public Affairs Research Institute of New Jersey. It's attached to the testimony. This chart shows the funding imbalance present in the 1992-1993 Fiscal Year.

Due to this imbalance in funding, vocational technical high schools have the ability to duplicate the programs already in place at New Jersey's community colleges.

Community colleges are also concerned that many of the vocational technical high schools have greatly expanded their role into postsecondary education. In addition, many vocational technical high schools have renamed themselves institutes of technology. Both of these changes have occurred with little or no State review.

As the legislative process on K-12 funding moves forward, community colleges urge that a full and open dialogue occur on the mission of the vocational technical high schools. Then, and only then, can appropriate funding decisions be made. Community colleges agree that there is a role for the vocational technical high schools in postsecondary vocational programs; however, this role should be targeted and clearly defined. Further, it should be developed in conjunction with community colleges at both the county and State level.

In summary, mission should determine funding, not the reverse. Currently for the vocational technical high schools, QEA foundation and categorical funding is driving the mission. For this reason, we urge you to accept Commissioner Klagholz's recommendation to correct this growing problem in New Jersey.

On behalf of the Council of County Colleges, I urge you to reevaluate the role postsecondary activities are playing within the obligation of thorough and efficient. Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you. Would you put together, or maybe you have it already, the various courses that the various technical institutes give.

MS. REICHE: They are currently doing that.

SENATOR EWING: No, say, like Somerset County Vocational Technical School, or Monmouth Technical Institute, what are they giving you think they shouldn't give--

MS. REICHE: Okay. I think that--

SENATOR EWING: --that's really in your province? Probably there are some courses that you are giving that you shouldn't be doing that they are going--

MS. REICHE: Possibly.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, yeah. Come on, in a bureaucracy everybody wants to be Mr. Big. So you expand and you go on more and more.

MS. REICHE: Well, Senator, with all due respect, I think that you would find the county colleges would agree with you. They have no problem with the vocational technical schools conducting courses that would

be in refrigeration, masonry, or plumbing. The problem is when you get into things like robotics, computer technicians, computer programming, that's where you are tending to have duplication, and that's where the problem is.

But I think that report that you are requesting is currently being developed, and within two or three weeks, Larry Nespoli, who is the Executive Director of the Council, will be providing that to you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

MS. REICHE: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Last but not least, Joseph Smith. (no response) We believe it was the policeman who was back there.

Well, that ends it for today. Thank you very, very much.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)