
Committee Meeting

of

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

“Testimony on the proposed core curriculum
content standards”

LOCATION: Committee Room 10
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: April 11, 1996
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator John H. Ewing, Chairman
Senator Gordon A. MacInnes

ALSO PRESENT:

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



Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
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Lynne Strickland
Director

Garden State Coalition of Schools

30x

mjz: 1-103 (Internet edition 1997)

SENATOR JOHN H. EWING (Chairman): Good morning.
COMMISSIONER LEO F. KLAGHOLZ: Good morning,
Senator.

SENATOR EWING: Commissioner, do you want to lead off,
please?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, I will.

SENATOR EWING: We appreciate your being here.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: My microphone isn't going on,
Senator. Oh, there it goes.

Good morning, Senator Ewing, and members of the Senate
Education Committee. I appreciate your invitation to discuss efforts of the
State Board of Education to raise academic standards for children in New
Jersey's public schools.

The State Board's ultimate purpose in developing curriculum
standards is to assure that every child in New Jersey receives a high quality
education and is prepared for success as a college student, a citizen, and a
worker. The standards represent an important first step in the achievement of
that ultimate goal -- setting high expectations for student learning.

In a real sense, the standards that the Board is considering are
being developed by the citizens and educators of New Jersey. The process of
developing the standards began in 1993 when committees of educators drafted
standards in each of the major subject fields.

Subsequently, these initial drafts were reviewed and revised by
groups that included educators, parents, school board members, and
representatives of the business and college communities. In addition, the

Department of Education received public input at more than 100 events, distributed the standards through a newspaper insert that reached more than one million homes, and conducted two televised town meetings with Governor Whitman.

The standards have been revised four times in response to the thousands of pieces of input we received. The State Board has also just completed a final round of five public hearings throughout the State.

Through this elaborate process, which has spanned three years, the State of New Jersey is gradually coming to a consensus as to what our children ought to know and be able to do as a result of the education we provide them. I am proud to say that this year, New Jersey was one of four states to receive the annual award of the National Governors' Association for its "1995 Progress Report on Achievement of the National Education Goals," the centerpiece of that report being a description of the State's participatory process for setting standards.

In their current form, the standards address student learning in seven major fields and include workplace readiness skills that cut across those seven fields. The State Board is currently conducting a final analysis of testimony before adopting the standards.

When the Board takes final action, New Jersey will have taken a critically important first step toward improving education for all children throughout the State.

I am joined here this morning by two staff members from the Department. To my right is Assistant Commissioner Ellen Schechter, in charge

of Academic Programs, and to my left, Gary Reece, Assistant Commissioner of Standards and Assessment.

SENATOR EWING: Commissioner, one of the questions I have been trying to get straightened out in my mind is: The State Board reviews this -- the core curriculum -- and then they adopt it?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: That is correct.

SENATOR EWING: Where does the Joint Committee come in? Someone said yesterday that that has been taken out of the legislation or something.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Has it really? I didn't know that myself. But whether it is in the legislation or not, we have tried to involve the Joint Committee and keep you--

SENATOR EWING: The State Board, after consultation with the Commissioner and review by the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, shall establish State goals, etc., establish State standards, etc., make rules concerning procedures.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We have tried to provide exactly that opportunity for review. We sent the various drafts to yourself and Assemblyman Rocco as we have moved along. The first time we sent them was September 15, 1995. We sent the newspaper insert on October 12, 1995, the next draft of the standards on December 29, and then the most recent draft on February 7. In those pieces of correspondence, it invited input and comments as a result of any review.

SENATOR EWING: I am just wondering if there shouldn't be a meeting of the State Board with the Joint Committee to review it. I mean, I

don't know whether you consider review just sending something out in the mail. You don't know if the people read it or not, or have questions on it.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, we asked that any questions be expressed and we would be happy to try to answer them. We tried to be as open as possible -- someone said to a fault -- on this one. It has taken too long. We have been at it for three years now.

SENATOR MacINNES: Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR EWING: Yes?

SENATOR MacINNES: On that point, I am a member of the Joint Committee, as well as the Senate Education Committee. While the Department may have sent informational copies of things to the cochairs of the Committee, they have not sent copies to the members of the Committee.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think we sent some things to all members of the Legislature.

SENATOR EWING: They went to everybody.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I can produce that documentation. I don't have it with me, but--

SENATOR MacINNES: Your response to Senator Ewing was that you sent copies to the Chairs -- to Senator Ewing and Assemblyman Rocco.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, but not only them.

SENATOR EWING: I believe it went to everybody on the Committee, etc.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We have, at times, corresponded with the entire Legislature, I believe. But I can--

SENATOR MacINNES: Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Our information is that the Committees have gotten the last two drafts, Senator. There have been other pieces that have gone to the entire membership of both Houses. We can produce that, clarify that for you, if you would like.

SENATOR EWING: Did you get one of these?

SENATOR MacINNES: No, I did not get one of those.

Let me ask you this question, if I may, Commissioner.

SENATOR EWING: This yellow one?

SENATOR MacINNES: Oh, I have that, yes.

SENATOR EWING: Well, that is the one they sent out.

SENATOR MacINNES: That is the February issue, yes. That is the one I got.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think we did the last two. The one before that was back in September. It was an early draft at that point. We weren't quite sure what it would be.

SENATOR EWING: Right.

SENATOR MacINNES: If I may, Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Klagholz, given the language that Senator Ewing has read about the statutory requirement that this be reviewed by the Joint Committee of Public Schools, are you suggesting that informational copies of drafts are sufficient for meeting that standard?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, I am assuming that they were reviewed when shared. We have invited any further discussion that might result from that review.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, I just say that-- Of course, the whole reason we have the profession of the law is to dispute the meaning of legislation.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I know.

SENATOR MacINNES: We have created quite an industry, and continue to. But I would think that the inclusion of that in the statute would call for a higher level of formality in the involvement of the Joint Committee than simply providing informational copies. As I said, that is only a dispute, but I would think that that would--

I mean, if you look at the in basket of any legislative office in terms of the number of statutorily mandated reports that are received -- and probably ignored -- I mean, it is an awesome volume. Receiving drafts, and that kind of thing, if they went to the members -- I do not recall getting it in September, and I am interested in this issue-- I do have, certainly, the February draft.

But I would think that the question the Chairman has raised about a more formal process is appropriate, because I think this is too big to be introduced in February and approved in May, whatever the public participation has been. This is at the heart of your proposal. The questions that are raised by the February draft, frankly, are of such a magnitude that I would expect that the February draft might receive the same consideration that, you know, the financial plan for the Comprehensive Plan would. I mean, that was something that was promised for Christmas, and I guess it is going to be available by Memorial Day. But this is something that was delivered in

February and is, I gather from the press reports, scheduled for approval at the main meeting of the--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Absolutely. It is scheduled at the main meeting as per a plan that really dates back to 1993 that has been presented openly at the outset to say, "This is how the process will carry forward."

In terms of Christmas and Memorial Day, you make an interesting point about the timing, in that there are two kinds of input we are getting now. One is, where is the funding Plan? And yet, that is dependent upon the curriculum standards, and that we are backing you up against the September deadline by not providing it. Then the other piece is to say, "Well, let's take more time on the curriculum standards." Those two things are incompatible.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, I don't think they are necessarily incompatible. I think the public schools will operate whether the core curriculum is adopted on May 1 or not. I don't think-- In fact, I think the implementation schedule carries it out into the next century, so I don't think that that is of such moment that we need to lightly take our responsibilities as members of the Legislature, having received a document which I do not think meets the test that you yourself have established for the core curriculum.

That is a matter of judgment--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: That's right.

SENATOR MacINNES: --and that is the purpose of the hearing.

SENATOR EWING: Gordon, I think what we will do is, I will get an opinion from Albert Porroni, who runs Legislative Services, and see what he says -- what this language says.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Okay.

SENATOR EWING: Then we can get back in touch with you.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think, you know, one point I would make is that there is a reason that the Legislature delegates this and other decisions to the State Board. It has to do with the independence of educational decision making. There are things that I would say about the standards, too, that could be improved. We are still working on that as per the process as described months ago.

But more than anything I have ever been involved with, where this has run into problems in other states is because one person has tried to impose his view of the world. What we have tried to do is make this a participatory process as much as possible, and it is a gradually building consensus, I believe, of a majority of New Jersey educators, citizens, business representatives, college participants, all those who have participated in it.

One of the things I think the State Board feels very strongly about -- and I think rightfully so -- is maintaining the integrity of that process right through to the end in terms of the timing of it, as well as the substance of the product at the end.

SENATOR EWING: Well, let me see what Mr. Porrone says. He might have your AG look at it also and see what their general opinion is.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I will do that as well, and I will give you a call on that, if you want.

SENATOR EWING: And I will let you know Mr. Porrone's answer, okay?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Good. Right.

SENATOR EWING: You will be phasing this in over how many years?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I believe the plan is over six years. We will give the standards out to districts immediately. I think that is important, because, as Senator MacInnes said, it would make a difference. I really think it does. The longer we wait, there are at least some places in which children are not getting the education they deserve. And it is not moving, it has not moved forward over 25 years, and we have been criticized for that by the Supreme Court -- more than criticized. We really do want to get it underway.

Now, districts can move at their own rate. We are going to phase in the assessment of these over six years, so, in effect, that gives them time to adjust.

SENATOR EWING: What staff do you have that is going to handle the development of the whole thing within the school system?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: In essence, we have devoted an entire office to this project. It is the highest priority in the Department. Gary Reece, the Assistant Commissioner of Standards and Assessments, heads that office and will be in charge of it. He is currently in charge of it.

SENATOR EWING: Does he have anybody working for him--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Absolutely.

SENATOR EWING: --or is he doing it by himself? (laughter)
Well, I don't know, you have been cut back so. Come on.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Gary, how many do you have?
(consults with Assistant Commissioner Reece)

SENATOR EWING: Does he have a staff of a half, or one, or what?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Nine people.

SENATOR EWING: Nine people?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Will he be working on the assessment methodology, how it is going to--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Absolutely.

SENATOR EWING: The whole part will come under him?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, that's right.

SENATOR EWING: Where do we stand on all of that right now?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We have, as you know, an 11th grade test and an 8th grade test. They test certain subjects. Those would be the first areas that we will adjust. We also have the funding for a 4th grade test, and we are proceeding with the development of that.

Gary, do you want to talk about the subjects?

ASST. COMM. GARY T. REECE: Senator, the plan is -- with the development of the 4th grade test -- that some new content area would appear in 1997-1998, and it is most likely to be science. Each year thereafter, as Senator MacInnes pointed out, there would be another part added. As the 4th grade content appears, for example, science, it would also appear at 8 and also appear at 11. The issue of counting it, in terms of graduation requirements, is another matter that the Board would have to decide. But most likely, there would be a delay, so that it would get into the system without counting it in initially.

SENATOR EWING: Commissioner, do you know, how many districts are there that are below the standard now? Do you have any idea on that?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, if you include all of the standards, including world languages, almost all would be below the standard, because only a handful introduced world languages by the 4th grade. Science is another area where the standards are much higher than are currently in place either in rules or in practice. So that would be another area where there would be a significant number of districts not up to standard.

SENATOR EWING: Well, do these schools-- Do the different districts have schedules of when they would be able to put a world language in and take out something else?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes. One of the things we are doing here--

SENATOR EWING: What will they be taking out?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, that's-- What we are doing with the standards is moving from an emphasis on prescribing the process, like how many units, or hours, or periods, or so forth. What we are defining instead are the results, what we want students to learn. How to get to the results, that part we want to give more flexibility to in terms of using an interdisciplinary approach that integrates subjects in reaching the standards. Do you want to reduce one area and increase another one? They will have to do that within statutory restraints.

I do not mean to raise a sore subject, but there are some restraints, one of which is-- For example, phys ed is the only subject in which

there is a law that requires at least 150 minutes a week. Nothing like that is required for math or English.

SENATOR EWING: Aren't you able to fight that union of phys ed teachers? (laughter)

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Evidently not.

SENATOR EWING: I couldn't do it quite a few years ago.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think they are at war with the foreign language teachers right now.

SENATOR EWING: Do we have enough trained teachers for a foreign language available?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: No. That would be the last thing we would phase in, number one. Number two, we have, in the funding Plan, a proposal that 2 percent of salaries would be appropriated for -- would be built into the formula for professional development. That was one of the things that came directly from the fact that we were basing it on evolving standards. So we are proposing that the resources be there for the training.

Another thing, too, is that the State Board, at the last meeting, asked us to, in this final run, make a number of improvements in the standards. One was to do some rewriting to clarify without changing the substantive meaning of certain standards. Another one is to clarify, in terms of the world language part, that-- I believe the issue is that the intent is to introduce students by providing a general exposure, you know, because there seems to be some assumption that it would involve, you know, a 50-minute period every day, with specialists, language labs, and all of that stuff. That is not the intent necessarily.

SENATOR EWING: Maybe you ought to privatize it with Berlitz or somebody. (laughter)

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: That is an option, it truly is.

SENATOR EWING: I mean it.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: In fact, there are districts that use CD-ROM as a way of doing this, yes, exactly. Distance learning is an option. There are many, many options in terms of getting to the standards.

SENATOR EWING: Do you feel you can do the implementation of the standards with the staff you have now in the Department?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We think so, because we have reallocated staff to those things that are the highest priorities. What we have tried to do -- I think with success -- is to move staff out of areas where there seems to be general agreement that what we do is not that productive. So one of the results was the creation of this position of Standards and Assessments and a special office for it.

SENATOR EWING: Well, will this be run out of the County Superintendents' Office?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: What we want to do is run the Assessment Program. The idea is an accountability system based on an up-front definition of what is expected -- that is the standards -- an assessment system that is geared toward those expectations, and give more responsibility to the schools for more freedom, for deciding how to get to it, innovating. I mentioned interdisciplinary approaches. That can't be now, because we have all these sort of antiquated chronicity unit victims that we adhere to. Then the accountability, of course, is the consequence that results from not getting

students to the standards, rewards and sanctions, public reporting of results, that kind of thing. It is all an effort, of course, to raise the quality of education.

SENATOR EWING: Well, the Superintendents' Office -- I forgot to ask you yesterday -- are they increasing in staffing? Are they staying the same?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: They had decreased under the previous administration. That was one area where we brought them back up again. We have done that.

SENATOR EWING: To what, full strength?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes. I think it is 114 staff now. It is not what it was in its heyday, nor should it be. It is also not as low as it was some time ago. What we did was-- The way we did that was to try to figure out, as we reorganized a year and a half ago, what the functions are that need to be closest to the clients, as it were. Some of those that were handled in Trenton, sometimes through the county offices-- We moved out the ultimate responsibility, along with the staff, to the county offices, so training is handled there, for example. Teacher certification is being handled more at the county level than in Trenton, those kinds of things. So it is sort of a decentralization of certain functions.

SENATOR EWING: Well, there is more help being given from the County Superintendents' Office to districts that need help.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: There is more staff, and we think the quality of the help and the nature of the help are more relevant. The

quality is higher. We are always striving to do better, but I think it has improved.

SENATOR EWING: Have you done anything about the facility needs?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Of school districts?

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, I think we have.

SENATOR EWING: When are you moving to your new building?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think in July.

SENATOR EWING: You used to have school districts.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We are moving in July, on State time.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I don't know if it will be July. It probably will be, maybe, next December.

SENATOR EWING: Right.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: But, no, the schools-- We have proposed, in the funding Plan, that we change the approach to funding facilities. Right now, the State does not set priorities. We do not identify priorities. It is whatever is decided locally, whether it be students not having classroom space, at one end of the spectrum -- a really critical need -- to an extra swimming pool at the other end. We treat them the same and, by formula, fund them as though they were equal in priority.

What we have proposed is adjusting the formula so that we would identify priorities, we would identify efficiency in the construction plans, and

we would fund those priorities, so that where the real need exists, it would be the first priority, and the lesser needs, as it were, would not be as high.

Then the other thing is, the whole idea behind the approach we have recommended in the funding is to get a handle on all school funding, so we are funding priorities everywhere. Now -- and this has been the problem the Court has cited, in essence -- with the local control system, the decisions are made everywhere. It is whatever we put in our State budget, whatever they put in their budgets, and it produces disparity.

We're saying, "Let's start prioritizing needs, whether it is facilities, transportation, foundation, the regular ed program, and so forth. Let's put the dollars behind what is going to be most helpful to the children, not just what happens to be the collection of 600-plus budgets."

SENATOR EWING: Well, let me know what legislation we need to try to strengthen the handle you have as far as construction goes.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We plan to do that, and it will require legislation.

SENATOR EWING: If and when the bond issue which I have in now for half a billion dollars ever gets through-- In that, we are planning to really move the construction from local control into the--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: That, I think, is the--

SENATOR EWING: --Educational Facilities Authority, where we will have a better handle on it.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I would be supportive of that.

SENATOR EWING: On the technology that is going to be required, what is going to happen about the funding for that, other than the \$8 per pupil, which you might not get?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, beyond that, in the funding Plan-- You think we might not get it? You got my attention.

SENATOR EWING: Well, I am going to try to make sure that you don't get it, you and Higher Education.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, there are two different issues.

SENATOR EWING: Maybe we will have to go to court on it.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Okay. I hope not. We think that's--

SENATOR EWING: Well, I don't know. People do not understand English. If it says, "nonlapsing," how can they take the money out?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I know you will address that other issue, but I think, in addition, that the technology is critically important, whatever happens on the other one.

In addition to that, which is sort of a head start on this whole thing, in the funding Plan we have recommended 100 computers for each elementary school, that there be \$450 per pupil allocated in 1994 dollars, plus a distance learning pot. That has been in the recent hearings in discussions we have had on the school funding part of this. We have been urged to expand that part of it, that the distance learning is a critically important part, and I agree with that.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, yes.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We will do that.

SENATOR EWING: But will there be money put into a budget for it, do you think?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We proposed that it be in the formula.

SENATOR EWING: In the formula?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes. And there is money in the budget, too, as the first installment.

SENATOR EWING: What, the \$10 million?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: What are your guesstimates of what the overall costs will be?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Oh, I saw a study that said \$30 million. I saw another study that said more than that.

SENATOR EWING: Well, also, to go to the interactive part.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, right. We have a special pilot project designed to get that going, the Classroom Connections to the Future Program, which is specifically intended to link urban districts and other districts through distance learning.

SENATOR EWING: Right.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: On April 23, we will be announcing the next round of grantees on that.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Senator MacInnes?

SENATOR MacINNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner, I commend the Department for the process and the wide involvement of the public in this effort. I commend the Department for coming up with adopting the notion of a core curriculum and using language in the adoption of that that offers the promise of high standards, high expectations for our students, that offers the promise of clear, measurable, concrete high standards. I think that is all to the good.

I think, in the main, in the math and science sections of the core curriculum, that those criteria have been met. They are understandable, well written. I am not a psychometrician, or whoever devises these tests, but it looks to me like they are measurable. These things are measured across the world in those two areas, so it shouldn't be too much of a reach to measure them here in New Jersey.

I think, by contrast, the balance of the standards fail the criteria which you have set. I would hope, in recognition of that fact-- These things are verbose, jargonistic. They are not understandable. I have been through the core curriculum now twice. It is an arduous effort. The Department would like to set the standards for using the English language in the State, yet this core curriculum document does not meet the minimal standards for English usage that one would expect of a high school senior in terms of clarity, in terms of efficiency of word use, in terms of conciseness, all the things you use to measure clear, strong English language usage.

These standards, except for the math and science standards, fail that test miserably. Now, I would hope that any writing sample that would be required as a part of high school graduation-- You could offer most of this as

an example to be corrected, if anyone could fathom the meaning of the author, or the authors.

So I think this is a very important moment in the development of education reform in New Jersey and meeting the Abbott v. Burke test. I have been very pleased and a strong supporter of the Comprehensive Plan -- the first part of it. The framework for it, I think, is very important, and a very strong supporter for developing high, clear, strong standards and high expectations for all students in New Jersey.

Now, I have some questions. I would like to start with--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: May I respond to the point you raised already, because I think it is a very important one.

SENATOR MacINNES: Sure.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: There are some ways in which I find them unclear, too. I make the point -- it is not particularly relevant -- that they were not written by the Department. They have been written by educators of New Jersey, with input from citizens throughout the State. I think by and large where we disagree, is that I think they did a fine job.

SENATOR MacINNES: Excuse me. But the Department has adopted -- has taken this Committee-developed document and has made it its own. It may have been developed by a Committee, but it is now yours.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, that is where I--

SENATOR MacINNES: So that distinction, I don't think, is important in terms of--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: But the part that is, Senator, is that I disagree on the point that it fails miserably. I think they have done a

fine job with it. That is why we have adopted it. Now, there are some places we believe need to be edited, and we are going to do that. However, we are going to do it with the fact in mind that it is intended for psychometrics. Essentially it is intended for professional educators.

One of the things the State Board wants to do as a supplement, in addition to putting cleaner language in some of the standards in this final round, is also a parent guide to the standards, a citizens' guide to it, that might not be for the exact same purpose as the standards themselves.

SENATOR MacINNES: You're saying that the language employed by professional educators is so different than the language employed by the rest of us that it can be coded in a way that it is beyond our understanding as nonprofessional educators? Is that what your point is?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: No, I do not think it is universally not understood.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, I mean, I look at this in terms--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: A lot of people looked at them, thousands of people.

SENATOR MacINNES: I look at the things that have been proposed in language arts -- which I assume includes English usage -- and I say, "Gee, what does this mean? Why couldn't it have been-- If you know what you mean, why couldn't you state it clearly so that people would understand what you mean, instead of traipsing through the dictionary and inventing words and confusing the reader?" That is the language arts section, which encompasses English usage.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: That is very good input, and that is precisely the type of input we have been seeking over the many months that we have been doing this as we have circulated the successive drafts to all corners of the State. We have been seeking exactly that kind of constructive input on how we might make them clearer, substantively better than they are. I think we have gotten a lot of good input on that. We continue do, even as we approach the final decision.

SENATOR MacINNES: You want these standards to be measurable. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, indeed--

SENATOR MacINNES: You expect--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: --but not necessarily by multiple choice tests.

SENATOR MacINNES: The language in the bill that was considered and, I think, unfortunately, approved for the development of the 4th grade test specifically ties the test to core curriculum. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Frankly, I think it does, but I am not sure.

SENATOR MacINNES: It is designed to test achievement against--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: It has not been adopted either.

SENATOR MacINNES: It went through the Senate. I don't know where it lies now.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think it was just released from Committee in the Senate.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, we had a floor debate.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Oh, is it further? Did you? Okay, I'm sorry.

SENATOR MacINNES: Yes. I was not persuasive enough with my colleagues.

Did you vote for it, Senator Bubba?

SENATOR JOSEPH L. BUBBA: Senator MacInnes, I am here to take in all this wisdom you have to impart. I am not here to comment on that yet.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Good morning, Senator Bubba. I didn't see you there.

SENATOR MacINNES: I withdraw the question.

The legislation establishing the 4th grade test does tie the development of the test to student achievement against the core curriculum.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER REECE: Yes, right.

SENATOR MacINNES: Are you confident that all the standards -- and we are talking, as I remember it, about 65 standards and 850 indicators of progress--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: --undifferentiated, by the way-- I can't tell that one standard that is developed for the performing and visual arts is more or less important in terms of the development of the statewide test than the standard for being able to do real numbers. Don't ask me what real numbers are. I am an American.

You talk about setting priorities. There is no priority within this. My question is: Are you actually proposing that this core curriculum would be the basis for developing the 4th and eventually the 8th and 11th grade tests?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Absolutely.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. Would you tell me how you are going to do that in the performing arts? Take any standard on the performing arts and just tell me how in the local school district the test would be administered and how you would set the standard for judgment, and then how you would ensure that that standard was uniform.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: One of the things -- just a general point -- that I think the committees tried to avoid was backing into only those standards that are concrete enough to measure on a multiple choice test, and so it assumes that different types of assessments would ultimately be used.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER REECE: There are six, I believe, arts standards. Five of them deal with areas of knowledge, not easy ones necessarily, because you have one on aesthetics and you have one on the process of critique. One of them is performance based, choosing one of the four arts areas -- either music, or visual arts, or drama, or the dance. The one that is performance based, Senator, just as you suggested, would be developed as a performance exercise administered at the local level and judged in light of a set of standards, written standards developed by educators in New Jersey that are applied uniformly across the State, similarly to the frameworks for special review assessment today.

The other parts of the test would lend themselves to knowledge. That would be administered through a paper and pencil administrator.

SENATOR MacINNES: Now, does that assume that all elementary schools will have arts and music programs as a part of the model school and that that will be supported by State funding?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER REECE: I am going to pass the funding over, but the other part of it was, disregarding the content, when you-- You may have seen in the September version--

SENATOR MacINNES: No, I didn't get the September version.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER REECE: --which was a green cover, and the December version, which was a blue cover, which you may not have seen-- The way those art standards were written, there was always the conjunction "and," so you had the four art forms with an "and." People pointed out, "I don't think that is realistic." So we are looking at the conjunction "or." Therefore, to answer your question about what would be in programmatically, schools would choose one or more of the arts forms to emphasize, and not have all four necessarily present.

SENATOR MacINNES: Actually, as I read the standards, Mr. Reece, I don't think that there are only -- that there is a single performance standard. I see that Standard 1-3 calls for demonstrating appropriate use of technology tools, terminology techniques, and media necessary to create dance, music, theater, or visual arts. Standard 1-2 demonstrates technical skills and dance theater, music theater, or visual arts appropriate to student's developmental level.

So two of the six at least-- Then you have this other thing where you are offering constructive critique of others' performance, of student performance as a part of the fourth standard, which assumes that you are going to be, you know, physically present when one of your--

So, I mean, I look at that and say, "Gee, there are three of the six right there that require something by the local school district which will turn out to be, I think, quite expensive, quite subjective, and very difficult to develop a statewide measurement for, which says that in terms of the core curriculum for performing and visual arts that our schools are doing a good, bad, or lousy job.

Would you disagree with that, Commissioner? I mean, you have at least three of the six that are now performance based.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think one of the books on mathematics and one of the reasons that that is clearer is because it is a hard discipline.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, I don't want to focus on mathematics. I want to focus presently just on this.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, I know. My point is, the assessment of mathematics has evolved, too, over many years--

SENATOR MacINNES: Oh, yes.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: --and I think the same will be true as we get into some of these other things that are going to evolve as well. But on the basic point, you know, what we are doing, in part, is responding to the Supreme Court's view that we can't have a full curriculum in some area,

in some school districts, and then basic skills in others, driven by the fact that the State only requires the basic skills and only measures the basic skills.

The other thing is that we not back into a funding amount. As we have defined the standards and as we have tried to focus on the education so that we don't do that, we had two types of criticism: One is that we are contriving a definition that is cheap. Then the other one is that we are contriving a definition that is horribly expensive.

SENATOR MacINNES: Right, I think you are doing both simultaneously. I agree with that. I do agree with that, because in the real world that I look at in Morris County, which is an area where public education is a very high priority for the people who live there -- I can't speak for everybody in the State, but in Morris County I think that is the case--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I think it is a high priority everywhere. It is not equal everywhere.

SENATOR MacINNES: I do, too. It is not equal everywhere, and certainly, in terms of opportunity, it should be equal. Music and arts programs have, frequently, been the first to go in downsizing.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: You bet. Exactly.

SENATOR MacINNES: So you are now suggesting a standard which assumes that music and arts programs are back in place in every elementary school in the State.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: It assumes that they need to be in place.

SENATOR MacINNES: And then you have, now, a constitutional amendment, which I think Senator Ewing and I both supported, which says if you mandate this from the State, you pay for it from the State.

SENATOR EWING: I didn't.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, you didn't, did you?

SENATOR EWING: I don't agree with it.

SENATOR MacINNES: This is a guy who is not running for reelection, you know. (laughter)

SENATOR EWING: I might change my mind.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. Could someone get Chairman Kavanaugh on the phone?

This is not the only example, but it is one, I think, that everyone can understand.

Walk through for me how you mandate this in terms of performance on State assessment exams -- all right? -- which is now established, at a time when the resources to provide the instruction and perspective required, at the elementary level in particular, but throughout the public school system, where we know that a lot of schools are totally unequipped to address this. They have eliminated art and music programs right and left across the State.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Wrongfully, yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. In terms of the requirement, the mandate from the State, as adopted by the State Board of Education at some point--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Right.

SENATOR MacINNES: --how do you square that with the constitutional requirement that the State pay for whatever it is that it mandates, where this would constitute a new mandate for a lot of the school districts?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: By adopting a funding formula which provides the resources to do this.

SENATOR MacINNES: So we should wait for May and be able to judge, therefore, whether the funding program you put forward in May provides the resources to those districts that do not now have an adequate music and arts program to meet the standards that you want to adopt in May. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, it is. I think the point of the Supreme Court-- They made a number of points, one of which is, even as dollars have gone in, this isn't happening. There isn't a change in the curriculum. The inputs are not there; the results are not there. The Court, in the last decision, in effect, chastised the Department for not seeing to it that the dollars are used effectively for this purpose.

SENATOR MacINNES: I don't disagree with you, I am just asking--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, I think that is exactly what we need to do.

SENATOR MacINNES: I just want to know what your intent is. What you are saying is, you are going to have a funding program which we can't see yet -- so I am going to accept it on faith -- that will meet the requirements of the core curriculum in terms of those districts that now do not

have an adequate instructional program in music and art, just as a beginning point.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: You have two things: One is this Comprehensive Plan which contains in it a basic illustrative analysis educationally, organizationally, and fiscally, based on draft standards that were in existence at the time it was developed.

One of the things I recall when I testified before the Joint Committee on the Comprehensive Plan back in, I believe, January-- What was said was, "Why would you even do that? You need to wait. It is disingenuous. Unless you wait until you know for sure what the curriculum standards are, then how could you have done this fiscal analysis?" Our answer remains the same. Both things are right.

We attempted to do an illustrative analysis so we wouldn't be providing zero information on the one hand, and on the other, it is correct. That admonition is exactly right. We do need to wait until the curriculum standards are in place before we do the final, and programmatic, and fiscal analyses.

In fact, I think that is one of the things the Court is saying, not to offer an educational program to some children based on the resources that are available, but rather design a program that will provide them with the education they need, that will make them competitive in the workplace. Provide the resources, in effect, whether the revenues look like they are there or not, regardless of what the voters think about it. They must be provided. So we are trying scrupulously to take exactly that course.

SENATOR MacINNES: Now, to bring it back to the simpleminded Senator, you're saying then that where the core curriculum mandates achievement -- sets the standards for achievement in areas that are presently underserved in many schools, that the State's financial plan will recognize the combination of the mandate and the inadequacy?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: And will recognize any existing inefficiencies in the system as well.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. I wonder if Treasurer Clymer has seen that yet.

SENATOR EWING: He's listening.

SENATOR MacINNES: What I am wondering, Commissioner, is--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Try to figure out, though, so we can benefit from the exchange we are having, whether you disagree with that, that we should not provide the resources to support it.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, I am not sure that I agree with the first assertion by Mr. Reece that this should and is capable of being measured in the same way that an achievement in mathematics is, and that--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Oh, I agree. I don't think he asserted that, that it is in the same way.

SENATOR MacINNES: He asserted that it is the intention of the Department, nevertheless, to develop a statewide assessment that will permit uniform evaluation of school districts--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Sure, yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: --in an area which is, by definition, terribly subjective.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: There are all kinds of things that are done -- I mean, you could get into this -- in other countries in these kinds of assessments, and it isn't all paper and pencil and it isn't all multiple choice. There are ways to do these things, I believe.

SENATOR MacINNES: As I recall, tests of that kind are terribly expensive to administer.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: It depends on how you do it.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, if you want to judge a 4th grade's dance routine, or a 4th grader's efforts at writing a stage play, it seems to me that that judgment would be a very expensive one, when contrasted with having someone perform a mathematical exercise or do a biology formula of some kind. Right?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, those things are more our experience. That is why, perhaps, these two things -- that there is one thing of the State developing a written question and three alternative answers, and then entrusting the teachers in the schools to administer that, to observe the student's response, and then send the data back. It is possible to use that same type of system modified where you entrust local officials in tightly designed criteria to do those kinds of data collection.

SENATOR MacINNES: One of the reasons you use standardized "objective" tests, is it not, is to remove the bias of someone who has a stake in the result of the test?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Sure it is.

SENATOR MacINNES: So if you have teachers evaluating whether they have done a good job or not, haven't you introduced a level of bias in that that sort of wipes out the credibility of the test?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I don't think there is any assessment that is completely free of that, because you have those who are writing the items. Is there a perfect system? No.

SENATOR MacINNES: I didn't ask for a perfect system. The question--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Is there a workable system? Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, that is what I am trying to assess in terms of the core curriculum here.

I think the number is 65, or maybe it is 56 -- because I am dyslexic and transpose numbers -- standards and something like 850 indicators of progress-- They are, as I said, undifferentiated. There are no priorities set on them.

Is it your assumption that school districts, teachers, and parents are going to give equal weight to each of the 850 progress indicators?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: What we are trying to address, at the essence, is the disparity that exists of some students being expected to achieve a wide range of things, and others only being expected to achieve reading, writing, and computation. Yes, we do want all students to achieve all of the standards.

SENATOR MacINNES: So you will not say, even though in terms of implementation you might start with math and science because of the ease of measurement and other things, and because--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: They are already in place.

SENATOR MacINNES: --they underlie so much other knowledge, that you do not distinguish among the 850 progress indicators as to what is important for a kid to be competent at when they emerge from a New Jersey high school?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: They are all important.

SENATOR MacINNES: Equally important?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: It is important that every child have all of those things, and not just some children having just some of them.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. While I certainly agree with that sentiment, I do not agree that these 850 progress indicators are exactly equal in terms of their importance in developing thoughtful, creatively thinking, and participating workers and citizens in an increasingly complex world.

I think, moreover, that many of these are so repetitive that if you introduced, you know -- in one of the sections if you introduced that a student will have good manners, and know what good manners are, you would eliminate about 20 different standards that are set up. If you would say, "A student shall have the ability not to hurt him or herself," you would reduce another 15 or 20 in terms of the safety things. I mean, there are some things here that just--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: How would you assess that good manners thing?

SENATOR MacINNES: I wouldn't try to assess it. I do not consider that to be in the nature of something that the Department of Education or school district, even when it is trying to set high academic standards, should try to measure. I would not try to measure it.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We agree.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would throw it out.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but the parents all expect the schools to do it, Gordon.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would throw it out.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I thought you said to put it in, in place of other things that are--

SENATOR MacINNES: No, it is already here in all sorts of--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We think it is not. We think we have been narrower and more specific in terms of-- One of the things was to design exactly what the State's responsibility was, and not have these sweeping things in there that are unmeasurable and not the State's responsibility.

SENATOR MacINNES: If that was your intent, I don't think you succeeded, frankly. I think there are many things in here which have very little to do with academic achievement and meeting academic standards, and have a lot to do with preferred behaviors and other things that are important, absolutely, but are not really -- should not be a part of the core curriculum.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Well, that is helpful input.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would be happy if you really-- Don't say yes to this, but I would be happy to try to go back through this and identify specific performance indicators which I think meet that criticism.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I would love the opportunity to meet with you to talk through some of the specifics. That would be great.

SENATOR MacINNES: That's a deal, that's a deal.

SENATOR EWING: Who is going to call whom?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I'll call you, if you like.

SENATOR MacINNES: We'll work it out. We'll work it out.

SENATOR EWING: We have a lot of witnesses here.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I'll call you this afternoon.

SENATOR MacINNES: I can't do it early this afternoon, but I would like to do it before May 1.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Yes, me, too. In fact, as soon as possible.

SENATOR MacINNES: If I may, Mr. Chairman, you have been very gracious, as usual, in allowing me a lot of time. I believe so strongly that, except for math and science, these standards fail the Department's own criteria in terms of clarity, in terms of measurability, in terms of the strength of the standards. I think in the social studies area they are terribly weak. They are very generalized. A student can come out of a New Jersey high school and have no idea about the concept of federalism. It is sort of incorporated in there, but maybe it is and maybe it's not. The standards are so vague and unspecific. In that area, it is alarming to me that there is no concreteness to those standards. There are very broad things.

Understand the rule of causation in history? How are you going to measure that? What does that mean? That is a very general, general standard. It is a progress indicator. It is one of -- how many? -- in the area of social science. Does 105 stick in my mind? No, 124, I'm sorry. It is just one of 124 progress indicators. It gives no guidance, or very little guidance, no practical guidance, I don't think, in developing curriculum to a classroom teacher. You know, make sure your students understand the role of causation in history. That is not a helpful standard. That is not a strong, specific standard. It is possible to develop strong and specific standards.

Understand the Constitution is basically the standard as outlined in social studies. It is in need of much greater specificity, much greater strength, things that can really be tested. So instead of talking about understanding the Constitution, why don't you have a standard that says, for an 11th grade student-- Eleventh grade students should be able to describe and evaluate the challenge to federalism represented by the Voting Rights Act of 1965--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: We're trying to--

SENATOR MacINNES: --represented by the New Deal.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: --achieve a proper balance between the point you are making now and your previous point that if we only had more general things, we could eliminate half of the more specific ones. So we are trying to achieve a proper balance between generalities and specificity.

SENATOR MacINNES: Now you want me to be consistent? That's not fair.

I asked that you toss out a bunch of stuff that is not academic, doesn't meet the tests you have set in terms of high achievement, high expectations, and which, in my belief, is not measurable. And if it is measurable, it is not important. It is important for people to have good manners, but it is not important for the Department of Education to be developing a test which basically determines that. It is important for people to be civil and respectful, of course it is, but that is not what the academic achievement in the core curriculum should be about.

You have lots of things that are connected to that. If you start with that -- whatever you call that first section, which requires school districts to meet--

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Technology.

SENATOR MacINNES: --you know, job-seeking skills across the spectrum of all the other standards that you set, then you open up just a can of worms of even more subjective, soft, and weak standards that are supposed to be met.

Now, here is what I would like to ask you: I would like to see the State Board of Education receive a recommendation that the math and science standards be adopted now. They meet, I think, all the standards that you have set. I think the questions and the controversy about the remaining standards are significant enough that the State Board should not adopt them in May.

I would ask you to consider, very seriously, withdrawing -- if you have made it already, but not making it if you haven't -- the recommendation that the State Board adopt the core curriculum as circulated in February.

Do you have any preliminary thoughts to that suggestion?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: No, but we will consider it, obviously.

SENATOR MacINNES: I think, given the implementation schedule, given the weakness in these other standards, given the problems of measurement, given the financial implications of them, that all of us need time to have the kind of interchange that I hope you and I will have in a session between now and May 1, to take something that is terribly important in this process, not just in meeting the September 1 deadline to the Court, but in really setting the path for public education down the road. This is a terribly important moment.

I fear that there is so much softness at this time on the interrelationship of this with the Comprehensive Plan and the financing. I think just this one example in the visual and performing arts illustrates that. But that is just the beginning.

We would all be well served by saying, where we have something that meets our standards, "We are going to adopt it." School districts will be on notice. Developing the 4th grade test, yes, we can certainly have the core curriculum in math and science reflected in that 4th grade test. The balance: This does not have to be-- This is not to say that we don't think it is important to do. It is not to say that it shouldn't be done in a timely way. It is just to say that until the product is worth adoption, we will not adopt it. Until we meet ordinary standards of clear, strong English usage, not just in the language and arts section of the thing, but throughout, that we are not going to adopt the standards.

That is what I am asking you to do. I am going to keep making that suggestion privately and publicly, because I think that this sets us on a road that will not bring credit to public education in New Jersey.

SENATOR EWING: Gordon, I think we have to let other people testify.

SENATOR MacINNES: I agree, Mr. Chairman. I just wrapped up, and I appreciate your patience.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I just want to say, Senator, on that, if I may--

SENATOR EWING: Certainly. Go ahead, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: --those criteria are our criteria, and they are the ones we will use within the next couple of weeks with the State Board in terms of deciding how to proceed. My response of saying consider it is based on the fact that until that discussion occurs with the Board, I do not want to prejudge and say, "No, we are absolutely going to move on May 1." However, to be completely honest--

SENATOR MacINNES: You are making a recommendation, though. That is what I am asking.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I know. To be completely honest, I am inclined to-- Well, we are also making some final revisions as well. But if those revisions meet the need -- and I think there is a good chance they will -- my recommendation would be to go forward, for a lot of reasons: the length of time we have taken already on this, the fact that for every person-

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SENATOR MacINNES: This has only been out for two months.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: For every person who feels as you do, there are others who feel equally on the other side who participated in the authorship of them, for example. I don't know how much of a delay you would think would meet your need or what it would accomplish, because if we delay and move it in another direction, having set forth way in advance a fair process -- an absolutely fair process -- in which the input we received early on was much more helpful than the input we receive at the 11th hour--

In fairness to everyone who participated and took the time to do that, you know, what would the delay accomplish? Would it set aside their input in favor of some new input? Will they then want yet another delay? You know, all of that.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, no. You are going to say that the process is more important than the product.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: They are both important.

SENATOR MacINNES: Excuse me. The product is what counts here.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: You're putting words in my mouth. I am not saying that.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, you just said that the process was an open one, and--

SENATOR EWING: Oh, Gordon, let's, as I say--

The other suggestion I would like to make is, I think you ought to contact Ann Dillman, the President of the Board, and see-- Did she have subgroups that worked on this, or did the whole Board work on it?

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: It was the Board as a whole.

SENATOR EWING: I think you ought to sit down with them as well and give them your points of view on the thing.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: I would welcome that tremendously, and I will contact you on that.

SENATOR EWING: I think that would be very interesting to them.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would be happy to do that.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Great. That's terrific.

SENATOR MacINNES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KLAGHOLZ: Thank you, Senator Ewing.

SENATOR EWING: Senator Bubba?

SENATOR BUBBA: Thank you, Senator Ewing.

Senator MacInnes, I listened intently, and I agree with your comments about the way that report was written. I wonder if we could join together and maybe sponsor some legislation that would even make our legislation readable. It would be interesting.

I am going to take a page out of Gary Reece's book. When the funding issue comes up, I am going to say, "I want to pass the funding over."

I would like to thank you, Senator Ewing, Senator MacInnes, and the rest of the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify here today.

I am here to support an educational program that goes beyond preparing our children for the future. It could preserve their future. It is about giving our young people the information they need to protect themselves from abduction, and it is about saving lives.

The bill I sponsored would require the Department of Education to develop and establish guidelines and curriculum material for the teaching of child abduction prevention techniques for local school districts and for grades kindergarten through eight. It is a permissive measure which would allow any board of education to establish a program in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Department.

Certainly an educational program so critical to our children's safety should be part of any core curriculum standards that this Committee or any other committee discusses. I urge you to consider this as you begin debate on this difficult issue that you are tackling right now.

We battled this problem of child abduction by cracking down on sex offenders. Now let's try it from the other end, by giving our children the tools they need to have a fighting chance against would-be abductors.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask you to allow Brenda Zofrea to make some short comments.

SENATOR EWING: Fine, Brenda.

BRENDA ZOFREA: Thank you.

My name is Brenda Zofrea, and I am with the Safety Child organization. Safety Child was founded in 1987 to help prevent missing, abused, and abducted children through prevention education.

We are currently helping Connecticut to write their state law to include this prevention information in their educational system. We are also helping Connecticut to develop their educational curriculum. Our program has been approved for use in New York State, which just passed a law similar to Senator Bubba's last summer. We are strongly involved in helping California as well.

I would like to offer to you Safety Child's experience, the knowledge of our Board of Directors, and our dedication as a resource in any way we can help in this matter.

However, the main reason why I am here is to ask you to amend and support Senator Bubba's bill. I would like you to amend it to include the prevention of sexual abuse, in addition to abduction, which is how it is stated now. The reason why is because the U.S. Justice Department reports that there are over four million convicted child molesters residing in the United States, that one in three girls and one in seven boys will be molested at least once before they are 18 years old.

A typical molester will molest between 30 and 60 children at least once before they are caught, and up to 380 children in their lifetime. There is, on average, one child molester per square mile in the United States. These figures are from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The media also reports that 1 in 42 children will become a missing child; that abduction was the number 1 topic among 3rd graders; and that the sexual molestation of our children is a national crisis. You are probably thinking, "Can we afford to provide this prevention education?" I say that we

must find a way. We cannot afford not providing this. Safety education must be a priority in our homes, our schools, and our communities.

As a child safety advocate, a registered voter, and the mother of two young boys who cares about children throughout the State, I would ask you to please enhance Senator Bubba's bill and pass it swiftly. I truly believe that New Jersey needs to be a State that is proactive, instead of reactive in the care and safety of our children.

Thank you.

SENATOR BUBBA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would imagine that will put my bill on another agenda.

SENATOR EWING: It has been introduced?

SENATOR BUBBA: Yes, and it is probably--

SENATOR EWING: And assigned to the Education Committee?

SENATOR BUBBA: I cannot attest to that, but in all probability it has been. If it hasn't, I will make sure that it is. I would ask you to hear it at your earliest convenience.

I know you are really tied up on this core curriculum, and I thank you for allowing me this little time to talk about my bill.

SENATOR EWING: Have you discussed it with the Department?

SENATOR BUBBA: The Department of Education? No, not yet, but I understand the Commissioner is waiting with bated breath.

SENATOR EWING: After he gets finished with Gordon?

Okay. Thank you very much, Senator.

SENATOR BUBBA: Thank you Senator. Thank you, Senator MacInnes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: Willie Spicer -- Willa. I didn't have my glasses on.

WILLA SPICER: Thank you for inviting me here today. I am pleased to talk on the standards. I would like to begin, however, with introducing myself, because I do not represent any organization in the State of New Jersey. I come here simply as a longtime New Jersey practitioner. I have spent a lot of time on school boards -- nine years. I have been an elementary principal, a secondary principal. I have taught at Rutgers and at Kean College, and I had 15 years in the central office of South Brunswick, New Jersey, at the same time, so it has been a long time in these vineyards and, like a lot of you, I have seen a lot of change that mean nothing and a lot of change that means something. It is with those perspectives that I speak here today.

I need to frame at least to make sure that everybody understands that I am speaking from the belief that good theory and research, combined with intelligent practice and a caring community are the things that are required for students to flourish in this State. In all cases, it takes all of them. It takes the theory, it takes the research, and it takes good practice and the communities. With it, I believe change can, in fact, occur.

So when I look at the content standards, my question is: How will it help to meet this ideal? There are four positive things I would like to say at the beginning:

- 1) The content standards represent a good deal of effort from a variety of community members and professionals within the State, and the

conversation about what all children should know and be able to use seems to have been interesting and instructive. By itself, that is a value.

2) The standards have been designed for all children. They do not speak to the college bound children differently from the kids who are not going to college. They are designed for all children.

3) The people on some of the committees have considered that New Jersey is part of the global economy and have looked at State and international standards as part of their efforts to determine what is important to this State. So the standards put us into the middle of the State and nation and, really, the international community, because we are there whether we want to be or not, and our children must compete in those places.

4) Lastly, I do not believe the standards can do any harm. I believe they are a first step. I believe they are necessary as a first step, but if they are only a first step. I do not believe they also-- (remainder of sentence indiscernible)--

I come to you with that perspective.

The document includes over 250 indicators of progress that let us know if children in the first five years of school are progressing toward the standards that the people in New Jersey wish for them. Actually, I think there are over 300 indicators for the first five years of school to be measured in the 4th grade, supposedly. I have had to put them together, because there are so many of them that I couldn't just give one, so I put a couple of them together. The health curriculum calls for the 4th grader to be able to describe the basic structure and functions of human body systems. In science, it suggests that a child should also explain how these functions are interrelated.

I mean, that is very nice, but I don't know anybody who really believes that kids will be able to do that in the 4th grade. It is nice to have that, because they define where we are going, but I am not sure that it will do any other good.

Now, I am going to tell you a story, because I think stories are instructive: The finest hour I ever had in education came as a parent of a child who, in the 4th grade, was asked to name the 20 parts of a flower. My child could not do that. She wasn't my best student, so she got an "F." I went to the teacher and I said, "You know, I apologize that Jenny didn't know the 20 parts of the flower." The teacher said to me, "Well, you know, she didn't know the 20 parts of the flower. She failed this test. She got an 'F.' You have to sign. I said, "Well, this is November. What would happen if you gave the same test to the children in June?" The teacher, without blinking an eyelash, said, "Well, in June, Mrs. Spicer, no one will know the 20 parts of a flower." That gave me my finest moment. I said, "Well, then, Jennifer is just advanced." (laughter)

MS. SPICER: There is a mentality that will drive us crazy if permitted to--

SENATOR EWING: What are the 20 parts of a flower?

MS. SPICER: I knew you were going to ask. I don't know. Do you know?

SENATOR EWING: I don't know, just the petal and the stem.

MS. SPICER: See that, a petal and a stem. That is what Jenny knew in the 4th grade, and that is what she knows now at 30.

At their worst, 300 objectives for 4th graders have to have that mentality behind them, because there isn't any way that you are going to expect that 4th graders are going to persevere with their knowledge. They might know it on Tuesday, but they may not know it a year later. So we begin to believe that this is a game.

Now, there are things in these standards that are of critical importance. For instance, the standards say that 4th graders should read. They suggest that they-- Well, it doesn't say that, but I am sure that everybody in the State would suggest that they be able to read contemporary literature, that they read children's magazines, that they read newspapers, that they read textbooks. Critical issues. It says here that children should be able to think scientifically, and I don't think anyone would argue that they be able to do so. I believe it says they should know the stories of the founders of this country. I don't think anybody would argue that they would need to do so. These aims are embedded in the standards. There are two difficulties, however:

- 1) These standards have no priority as of this moment, and only a promise for priority setting for the future.
- 2) The lack of specification makes it impossible to know exactly what is desired.

With over 250 equally presented indicators of progress to the 4th grade alone, there might as well be none, except for the school-to-work section. This document is business as usual. The full State institutionalization of the existing lengthy, isolated curricular aims defined by content areas. There is no intention in the document to differentiate what is important from what is not.

As a practitioner, I simply throw up my hands in the face of such overwhelming aims, and await the decision about what is important from the people working on the construction of the 4th grade tests and the promised revision of the 8th and 11th grade tests.

We have thousands of children in the 8th grade, let alone the 11th grade, who cannot read, write, or solve problems competently. They do not think scientifically, and they do not know the things that are currently being asked for citizenship on the citizenship examination given to immigrants.

Now, we know these things because we have made that data apparent. We have given tests to find out what it is that our kids can do, and they tell us what is important. The fact of the test sets the priority, and to the degree that it is effective, provides data for students, parents, and taxpayers on how well each child, each school, and each district is doing. If the data is good, if the various instruments measure those things the State really values, then we will all learn what excellent coaches and band conductors have known forever: To find good worth, give kids constant, accurate feedback on their performance and focus on the prize. No coach I know would fail to adjust his program in midseason if his team was constantly losing. No band director worth his pay would permit a public performance by out-of-tune players. These are not people who find new aims when they are having difficulty. These are not people who turn their backs on the data they have about performance.

I contend that as an educational community, neither are we. The standards are harmless. They are fine. They are an interesting exercise for the

citizens of New Jersey, and I applaud their creation. But they do not and will not change the existing situation for the children in this State.

I worry that the will may not be present when it is necessary to set priorities and measure performance. As long as the public can build long lists, consensus is easy. If asked to choose among competing good things, however, it is more difficult to find consensus. The political process, as in the systems of influence, constantly forces the system to add. It never asks the system to subtract. Therefore, the priorities are very difficult, and the practitioner in the field simply says that they do not exist.

I want to end with telling you how powerful I believe the State tests and testing are and how important the function is for the State to value something. Many years ago -- some of you were around -- I served on the first committee to develop a writing test for the State of New Jersey. At the time, we had very little technology. We asked the parents, the educational teachers and administrators, and the business community the following question. We said: "We want to measure the student's ability to write. We can ask short-answer questions that show if they can edit and they know the rules, etc., and/or we can ask the children themselves to write and measure their writing in that manner."

Which one should we wait? Which one should be more important to us? Now, it has been a lot of years, but the results were very overwhelming. The educational community and the parent community both said, "We will wait for the one where you fill in the answers and circle the little squares, because you can measure that. It is fair. Nobody can have any effect on it." We were able to do that until we got the results from the business community.

The letter I remember the most, the most indicative letter from the business community said, "Are you people crazy? Why are you asking such a question? We want the young people in this State to be able to write, so for goodness sakes, have them write. We do not want them to fill out little sentences or little circles, though that is nice that they can do it. But why are you asking us to comment on whether they should fill out little circles or whether they should write?" As you might know, the State put the money and resources behind the writing examination and changed, for all time, what happened to young people in this State.

From that time forth, every school in the State had a program where young people learned to actually compose. Until then, they had programs where kids learned how to fill out the right light. They knew what the State of New Jersey valued. The community had told them. Now they have said -- and at the time of the test they said, "Well, they should write." And, of course, to this day they write.

I hope these standards are the first step of a progress that will lead to that kind of decision making. If they are not, from my point of view, forget it. If they are, it is of critical importance, from my point of view as a practitioner -- a longtime practitioner in the State of New Jersey.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Are there any questions?

SENATOR MacINNES: Do you have a copy of your testimony?

MS. SPICER: Well, I do not have copies, but I will send it to you.

SENATOR MacINNES: Would you, please?

MS. SPICER: I will, yes.

SENATOR EWING: Through the Chair.

MS. SPICER: Through the Chair, yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, send a carbon to me.

SENATOR EWING: No, don't give him a carbon. We will make sure that he doesn't get one. We will give it to everybody else.

MS. SPICER: I will make sure that it goes through you, Senator Ewing.

SENATOR EWING: I think I put him in his place.

SENATOR MacINNES: I didn't get the September standards that Leo sent out.

SENATOR EWING: Tom Corcoran.

THOMAS CORCORAN: Good morning, Senator Ewing, members of the Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this morning.

I guess I should take a moment to reintroduce myself. I am currently a research scientist at the University of Pennsylvania and Codirector of the Consortium for Policy Research and Education.

SENATOR EWING: Will you push the red light on, please?

MR. CORCORAN: I'm sorry. I'll lean back a little bit.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you, Tom.

MR. CORCORAN: My remarks this morning draw heavily on CPRE's research tracking the development and implementation of standards in over 20 states over the last 10 years, work I have been involved in for the last 4, but I want to make it clear from the beginning that I believe that setting

standards is an essential step, echoing my good friend, Willa Spicer, toward improving the quality of public schools in New Jersey.

I was tempted, listening to Willa, just to stand up here and say, "Amen. I applaud her testimony," and put mine aside. But since I have come here this morning, I will go ahead and say what I have to say anyway.

We have evidence from other states -- as I have mentioned in my testimony here, in my written remarks -- from Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, and also others, that setting standards and assessing performance brings improvements in instruction and increased effort on the part of students, and ultimately will raise performance in the system. This is contingent, however, on the presence of adequate resources so that students have the opportunity to reach the standards. I believe that the case for setting standards is compelling, and therefore, I applaud the efforts of the Department to develop standards and to move forward.

I am going to comment this morning on really three issues: the adequacy of the core curriculum content standards themselves, the linkage between these standards and school funding, and some issues that must be addressed, I think, to implement the standards and achieve the benefits that they promise.

First, the content standards themselves. I reviewed the document and have compared the standards to those adopted in other states. I think by and large the New Jersey content standards seem to me to provide an adequate framework for moving forward with development of curriculum frameworks and new assessments. They are similar to standards developed in other states. Not surprisingly to me, they are strongest in areas such as mathematics and

science, where there is more national consensus about what children should know and be able to do and where more extensive work has been done in New Jersey.

I might point out that there has been work on curriculum frameworks in math and science already done in New Jersey. I think that is reflected in the clarity and specificity of the standards that are now in front of you. Normally, the process goes the other way.

There are places in the document where one certainly wishes for plainer language, greater clarity, and more specificity, particularly in the language arts standards. But the 56 standards are the end product of a long process. Numerous people have devoted countless hours to the drafting of these standards and hearings have been held all over the State. I think that that process and that effort should be respected, and I think that this document should be viewed as simply the first step in a process that is likely to take a number of years and is likely to undergo several stages of revision.

Just a footnote: It has been our experience watching what happens in other states that the standards are written, curriculum frameworks are then written. Based on that experience, which is more specific, people go back and revise the language of the standards. Assessments are developed. Based on that, standards tend to get revisited. There is an interview process that over time builds, I think, greater clarity and greater consensus about what children should know and be able to do, and what we want to hold them and schools accountable for.

But in any case, the proposed curriculum framework the Department has talked about and the specifications for new assessments

should provide the specificity that is sometimes lacking here, and certainly will provide more opportunities for public debate about the standards.

Again, I add this: I think the Legislature needs to stay involved. It needs to monitor the evolution of these standards and, at various points on the way, have, I think, further discussion about their clarity and specificity and exactly how they fit into the accountability process.

The second question I want to comment on is: Can the standards provide a basis for a school formula? I guess the answer, of course, is that they could, if one is willing to build a formula based on a set of detailed assumptions about curriculum, services, and school organization.

I think in answer to one of Senator MacInnes' questions this morning, the Commissioner talked about design of program. He used that term a couple of times. Design of program implies that the State, in fact, is going to write a curriculum, one that will be the undergirding for a school formula. Now, several states have done this, but it leads to a highly complex formula that few understand and, more importantly it seems to me, there is a risk that the specifics of the formula about curriculum and staffing, that is, the assumptions that are embedded in the formula, end up getting treated locally as requirements or influence collective bargaining, that, in fact, we end up through the formula being a lot more restrictive than we would really like to be about what school organization and curriculum look like.

I worry that such a detailed formula would serve as an obstacle to innovations in school organization and the delivery of instructional services. It is also likely to produce an endless debate over whether the specifics of the

formula fit all local situations or whether the proposed funding is commensurate with the standards.

While I support the concept of a foundation formula based on the notion of adequate resources, I am concerned about how adequacy is defined, and I would argue for a more elegant and simpler approach to funding -- one that would be more widely understood and would leave local boards and administrators with considerable flexibility in decisions about resource allocation and staff, the kind of flexibility the Commissioner alluded to this morning.

One approach might be to base the foundation amount on the cost of a set staff/student ratio in a district without designating how these instructional resources are to be used, or even how they relate to the core curriculum itself, and then treating all other costs as fixed percentages of the core instructional costs. This approach still begs the question of what is an adequate level of resources -- a question that simply cannot be answered by research at this point in time.

As an aside, there are several national projects underway trying to address this question of adequacy. It is not an area where there is agreement even within a research community about how you are going to approach the problem, let alone give you a dollar amount or a portrait of what a school ought to look like. At this point, it can only be answered by political judgments about what most people view as an appropriate resource level in the schools, and about what the public is willing to spend.

One approach -- again as an aside -- would be to look at successful districts and look at what their staffing allocations look like, and then work from that level to try to set a standard for others.

Finally, I want to raise a set of issues that I think you should think about as you consider the standards:

1) The process of implementing the standards is likely to take a long time, five years at least -- the Commissioner mentioned six -- and patience is going to be required. There will be a payoff. The evidence, I think, supports that, but it is not going to be seen quickly. Just consider the dilemma of an elementary teacher faced with implementing new curricula in all subject areas, even if it is over the space of two or three years, and you get a sense of the problem and the complexity that practitioners are likely to face as the standards are implemented.

2) The public is not yet aware of these standards, in spite of the open process the Department has run and the many events that have been held. The fact is, the general public at large is relatively uninformed about this and what it means for the schools and for their children. National poll data show that the majority of the public has not yet been convinced that higher academic standards are needed, or even desired. This has produced a backlash in several states, because it is, in fact, then a mishmash between those who seek school reform and the general public, which has not understood the assumptions of the reformers. A public awareness campaign is needed to make these understandable and builds work for them locally. I might add that cannot be left simply seen as a problem of local districts to market the standards. A more general State effort is going to be needed.

3) The sequence of State actions is important. New assessments seem to be moving forward quickly, but the development of the curriculum frameworks and the design of appropriate professional development opportunities should precede the assessments. People need time to make the changes required by the standards. There need to be supports in place for that.

4) Particularly about professional development. The view expressed in the documents I have seen appears to be that providing funds will create a market for professional development and somehow a supply will magically appear. This has not been the experience of other states. Simply providing State funds creates a bonanza for consultants, but does not necessarily provide high quality professional development needed to make the standards real in the classroom. Nor can one rely on districts to design professional development. Most of them do a poor job now, and there is no reason to expect they will do better in the future without some kind of assistance.

We do not need more workshops or more conferences. We need intensive professional development that addresses both subject matter knowledge and pedagogy, includes opportunities for practice, follow-up, and coaching, and is sustained over several years if we want significant changes in teaching practice. The teacher networks that are operated in California and Vermont, the professional development schools operated here by Montclair State and Rowan University, the intensive summer programs offered by the Merck Institute for Science Education are the kinds of professional development that will be needed across the board. There is some national agreement now about standards for professional development and some states

are setting standards for professional development to provide guidance to local districts so that public funds are not wasted on intellectual junk food, which is, I am afraid, the diet we generally get with our professional development money now.

5) To ensure that the standards have the desired effect, the State's employers and the State university system must be encouraged to alter their hiring and admissions practices in accordance with the standards and send clear messages to students and their families -- their parents -- about the levels of effort and performance that are expected if they are to be successful in the workplace or to gain college admission.

6) Not all districts have the same capacity for curriculum development, and it is inefficient to reinvent the wheel over and over again. The states that have made good curriculum models available to districts have had the smoothest implementation of standards. There has been considerable work done nationally, for example, on math and science curricula. It does not make sense to simply write it district by district here in New Jersey when the National Science Foundation has spent millions of dollars to develop models that are quite good. Some of them -- they actually have data to show that they work.

Not all districts are going to know how to access these materials, unless there is some State assistance to make them available. Some states have funded and developed model curricula in local districts and then shared these models with other districts. There has to be a process of providing curriculum models to people out in the field, in order to move the standards forward to implementation.

7) The accountability system in New Jersey needs revision. If high standards are to be taken seriously, then schools must be judged by the progress they make, not on arbitrary absolute levels of performance. If the latter are used, many will be quickly discouraged, blame the students, and give up. We need to focus on progress, and on a more positive, constructive approach is needed than what we have had in the past.

8) There will be implementation costs for assessment, for professional development, for curriculum development that the Legislature needs to be prepared to assume.

Finally, unless the State of New Jersey is willing to invest in services and supports that enhance the quality of life for children born into poverty from conception to age five, you can expect continued high rates of failure in our urban and rural areas, in spite of the sometimes heroic efforts of educators to overcome these problems. Too many children are coming to school ill prepared to learn and with problems that we do not know how to treat.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

SENATOR EWING: Senator MacInnes?

SENATOR MacINNES: I am going to violate the rule that you should know the answer before you ask the question.

SENATOR EWING: I didn't know about the flower. (laughter)

SENATOR MacINNES: I didn't either.

You say basically about the standards that they will change over time, even if the standards are -- in your words -- "as wordy as they are in

language arts.” Would you rather have language arts held back until it is readable, or would you prefer that it be to go ahead on the fast track?

MR. CORCORAN: I heard the Commissioner say this morning that they are doing some editing. I don't want to prejudge the character of the editing. I think, certainly, that it would be better if they were more readable, and it would be better in plainer language. If holding them back for a short while would achieve that, that would be worth doing. They ought to be understandable to the average citizen.

It is true, by the way, that the language arts community speaks a language different than you or I. They really do. That is one of the problems here. But I think holding them back until they are as specific as you were suggesting-- I think that would be an error. I think some of that specificity will appear when curriculum frameworks are drafted. What you are asking for, I think in some cases, is more properly the content of a curriculum framework than the broad set of standards that set the parameters for that work.

There is a process that most states have gone through here, which is setting a broad set of standards in general terms, then writing curriculum frameworks which give more specific guidance about what the scope and sequence of curriculum might look like. The locals can use them to write curriculum locally.

Each of those steps provides greater specificity and clarity about the standards. It tends to be an (indiscernible) process. I think the reason that the math and science standards are clearer is not only that there are good national standards to work with -- which do not exist in the language arts, by the way -- but also because there was work done in New Jersey over the last

two or three years on writing curriculum frameworks in math and science, funded by an Eisenhower grant, and also by the State systemic initiative.

Those documents were available to the committees that were writing these standards, so, you know, there was simply a bigger investment there. I think that is going to happen in language arts. I mean, I am confident that this move forward is going to get clearer and more sharply defined. I wouldn't stop the process and delay it until it was perfect.

SENATOR MacINNES: Nobody asked for perfection, but why should we-- If the language arts community, whatever it is, wants to adopt its own language, why should we be bound to it in the adoption of standards that are intended to be the guide for the State as a whole?

When employers and universities don't adopt the language arts patois, of what value is it to have the State's educational system held captive to the peculiarities of the language arts group? It doesn't make any sense.

MR. CORCORAN: Well, I don't want to quarrel with you about the need for editing, but I think editing could be done here and still you could move forward.

SENATOR MacINNES: But, Tom, we have 19 days before the Commissioner wants to adopt it. The edited version isn't out. Do you think that is adequate time to determine whether there is real clarity, or whether there is muddleheaded confusion on the parts of the people who developed these standards which is reflected in the language they use, which is my bet?

I think if you know what you want to say, you can say it. If you don't know what you want to say, you start using garbage words, and that is

what we have in language arts and social studies in particular. I think it is very damaging.

MR. CORCORAN: Well, you know, I guess I may be influenced heavily here by what I have seen happen in other states. I think a kind of discussion about the language arts would be easier to have if we had a draft curriculum framework for language arts in front of us to spell out exactly what they think these standards mean, and we don't have that. The Department is promising to develop it.

So I guess what I am saying to you is, there is another opportunity. You could do this either way. You can either delay them, but what you would not want to delay is the work on the curriculum framework in language arts, because if we met two years from now-- If another committee worked on these standards and two years from now we met here again, and all they had done was work on standards and they had not worked on the curriculum framework, I think we would probably have the same problem we have here today. They wouldn't seem specific enough, the language would seem obtuse, and we would be having this same discussion.

I would rather move forward, write the curriculum framework, review that, have another discussion that the Department will have to write the assessment specs. That will be another opportunity to look and see what these things mean -- or what they think they mean -- and have another discussion about it. There are going to be several different opportunities to get sharper and sharper and clearer and clearer about what we are trying to do here.

If you delay the process, I think we have an argument that isn't going to reach a conclusion.

SENATOR EWING: Tom, on the other states you mentioned before, did they have as many problems as Senator MacInnes is implying we have?

MR. CORCORAN: Absolutely. The state that is probably furthest along with this is Kentucky. I actually brought with me a copy of what is called a "Working Draft of the Core Content for Assessment" in Kentucky. Kentucky adopted their standards in 1991. They were revised again. They were revised in 1993. People still didn't think they were specific enough, so now they are working on a document that tries to lay out more clearly what they are. This is a much better document out of Kentucky than what was done in 1991. But in the meantime, there has been a lot of progress in Kentucky on working on curriculum and getting the assessment system up and in place.

So it has been a kind of back and forth process there. The same thing has happened in Delaware and Colorado. Colorado, by the way, has used a very different process. The state has set a set of very broad guidelines about what standards ought to look like, and each district is writing its own standards. So in Colorado, it has been a very low-cause process where the locals write the standards, but they write them according to a set of general guidelines set by the state and with state review of them. That is because they made a political decision that these things should be done at the local level, not at the state level.

SENATOR EWING: How much of a role did the legislators take in those states, or was it completely left to the department?

MR. CORCORAN: In Kentucky, the legislature has been very actively involved. There has been constant review of documents like this by the legislature. Legislators have participated in hearings. In fact, in Kentucky, they created a special office, the Office of Education and Accountability, which is monitoring the implementation of reform, and it reports directly to the legislature. So they have created their own office to monitor the implementation, to report to the legislature on their progress, independent of the department.

In other states, it varies, you know, from state to state, how actively the legislature is involved. Vermont, fairly highly involved; Delaware not so involved. You know, it has been different.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, Tom.

Bob Woodford.

ROBERT WOODFORD: On behalf of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, we thank you for the opportunity to make a comment on the core standards.

Our organization was asked by the Department of Education to assist in recruiting cochairs and members of the review working groups that took the initial product of some years ago in the eight areas of curriculum and reworked it. So we had some stake in these.

We have been supporters of core standards in the setting of a high bar, the setting of standards that will challenge the system and, we hope, provide a driving force for change in all of the areas of reform needed within the public school system.

Clearly, there are elements of language that need further work and a short time in which to accomplish that. There will be criticisms of particular standards, but our focus has been on the need to move ahead with the process. I think we would agree with what Tom Corcoran has said, that generally there are so many elements that must now move ahead to make standards an effective change agent in the system, that you cannot prolong the process for too long before you get into the critical elements. The development of the curriculum frameworks, to us, will be the most important element, most important because we hope it will get away from the educational attitude that Willa Spicer demonstrated with her story, which is memorize today, forget tomorrow, survey the world, and carry away no skills that can be applied to the situations in your life and your occupation in the future in that process.

We want to see a system in which the application of knowledge is a capability that the student carries away from the process, not a memorization process. The real doing of that will be described in the curriculum frameworks and in the assessment systems that tell school districts what it is the State expects to be achieved.

There are so many linkages that have to move ahead that require the attention of the Legislature in terms of resources. I listened very carefully to what Commissioner Klagholz said today about separate department, separate function. We have a very high respect for the people we have worked with in the Department who are directing their attention to this function. Whether they have adequate resources, whether they could describe the process through which the curriculum frameworks, the assessment methodologies, the staff development programs will be developed to a high

level of proficiency is an open question. This is not an easy process to manage, but all of these interconnecting elements are essential to success in achieving standards.

The curriculum frameworks have to guide districts successfully in the redevelopment of curriculum. The assessment methods have to be gauged to really measure the outcomes that have been described in the standards. Professional development, as Tom Corcoran indicated today, is, by most accounts, not relevant, not sufficient, not valuable in its context, for the most part today, which means that we will need a very substantial upgrading of the process of bringing the skills of current administrators and teachers up to the task of achieving the higher standards that we now expect.

One element not in the control of the Department is the training of incoming teachers, whose skills must encompass, under these standards, really, a high level of proficiency in the core subject they are teaching, and a high level of proficiency in knowing the educational methodologies and strategies that are likely to achieve the standards.

So we are, as an organization, very much in support of moving ahead with the standards. We understand that there will be areas that will need further refinement that are areas of concern to our committee as well. We look forward to seeing the document with editorial changes that the Department is now producing. But I would say that having seen the earlier drafts of the core standards, the Department made some very substantial and positive changes.

In the last draft, the draft that was presented to the State Board, one of those in particular was pulling out those school-to-work and career-type

skills and crosscutting all of the academic areas with those skills. That was a very positive change from the earlier drafts. If there are other areas where the standards can be used to crosscut academic areas, they would make even clearer the fact that you will not achieve with today's resources and the number of hours in the school year all of these standards, unless there is an intercurricular approach, unless the concentration on certain of these standards cuts across every area of academic training -- writing, reading, expression, the use of mathematics.

For example, scientific method can be employed in many of the subject areas taught in school, and we have not trained today's personnel, for the most part, in interdisciplinary educational approaches. We have not, for the most part, teamed staff. One of the things we hope will drive change in the system in these standards is the need to rethink how we make decisions, how we organize staff, who does the decision making, and who designs the curriculum.

All of these governance and managerial changes within the system will be driven by core standards, but they will require the assistance of the State. They will require leadership. They will require a well-thought-out method of integrating all of these developments that are necessary and interdependent in bringing about the core standards as an achievement, not as a dream.

If there are any questions, I would be happy to respond.

SENATOR EWING: When you talk about training the administrators, what can happen to our older administrators who are in the system now? Are they going to be trainable or not?

MR, WOODFORD: That is a question, obviously, that is faced in the business world when change takes place. Most people are trainable if the procedures are there, if the incentives are there, and if there is a real system of accountability.

SENATOR EWING: Wait, wait, wait. What incentives are you talking about, money?

MR, WOODFORD: Well, on the positive side, I think, the incentive is to make a success, not a failure of the job that is being undertaken when you are being measured on your achievement.

On the negative side, we have advocated a bill that you have cosponsored, I know, that says that administrators should be on long-term contracts and not on a lifetime tenure. That is certainly a system that would parallel the kind of responsibility, the accountability system in the business world, where, frankly, the people at the top are responsible for the whole enterprise's success, are a critical element in that success. You want to assure them a high degree of risk in that venture so that they are on their toes.

That is getting us into another combative area, I know, but--

SENATOR EWING: If they are not, then out they go.

MR, WOODFORD: We really need to take a whole look at the accountability system, the long delays and the costs of tenure adjudication. The entire system for accountability needs a new look. That will be an essential element to achievement of whatever standards the system has.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, Bob.

Nora Radest, Summit PTA/PTO Legislative Committee.

N O R A G. R A D E S T: Good afternoon, almost, right?

My name is Nora Radest. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I am the Chairman of the Summit PTA/PTO Legislative Committee, and we are a member of the Garden State Coalition Parent Network. I am here as a representative of parents and other citizens of Summit who are greatly concerned about the education of all of New Jersey's children. We want to work with you, our elected representatives, in fulfilling your constitutional responsibility of educating today's children for the future.

We heartily support the concept of core curriculum content standards, and we appreciate the thorough and time-consuming work that was required to draft the proposed standards. We are concerned, however, that the implementation of these standards has not been so thoroughly considered, and thus will be problematic for local school districts. For instance, the introduction of world languages in the elementary grades is laudable, but we wonder, how will instruction of world languages fit into the current school day? Teachers already have a very full curriculum, thus the elementary schools will either have to cut existing programs, or extend the school day, in order to accommodate this requirement. Has this basic issue of time allotment been considered by the State Board and the Legislature?

Additionally, has the State Board or the Legislature considered the fact that it is nearly impossible to find bilingual teachers to teach the current curriculum to bilingual students, let alone find enough qualified world language teachers? Without intending to sound skeptical, we think the content standards need a reality check. We have seen many well-meaning

State mandates enacted without proper attention to the implementation thereof.

A further concern is who is going to pay for the costs incurred in carrying out these standards? The citizens of New Jersey overwhelmingly voiced their approval of the State mandate/State pay amendment last November. New Jerseyans clearly do not want the State to increase local responsibilities without receiving the funds required to implement such responsibilities. Any expenses incurred in accomplishing State-mandated curriculum standards must be borne by the State, not the local school districts.

As some of you know, we attended the February 7 meeting in Livingston, along with 1200 other parents, to express our concerns with the “Comprehensive Plan for Educational Improvement and Financing.” We realize that the subject of today’s hearing is the content standards. However, we would like to make one point: As noted, we support the concept of content standards. Further, we support the State’s effort to define thorough and efficient education based on such standards. However, the proposed Plan does not fully implement the content standards on which it is purportedly based. We urge you to obtain the funding data needed to construct an effective bridge between the mutually dependent content standards and the Comprehensive Plan. Without such data, you will not be able to undertake the review and analysis necessary to create an equitable education funding plan.

Finally, as parents, voters, and taxpayers, we are disturbed by a recent comment made by Commissioner Klagholz. When he was asked how local districts were supposed to fund increases due to changes in the curriculum, the Commissioner responded flippantly that districts should fire

some administrators. Summit received an administrative reward last year from the Commissioner's Department. Which administrators in Summit do you think the Commissioner would suggest be fired?

We have a restrictive cap precisely because we have been a financially well-managed district and extremely successful academically.

An excellent and equitable education is the right of every child of New Jersey, and it is the obligation of the State of New Jersey to provide access to that education. The Commissioner's careless response is disturbing to us because the structuring of our education system requires careful analysis and a caring attitude. We implore you, our representatives, and therefore our children's, to study carefully the implications of the content standards. Question how the standards will be implemented, and demand proper and complete funding data in order to determine the standards' financial impact in light of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for listening. We understand the seriousness and difficulty of your charge. The Summit PTA/PTO Legislative Committee and the Garden State Parent Network are willing to help you in any way we can.

David Sciarra, Education Law Center.

DAVID G. SCIARRA: Good afternoon, Senator. You have our written testimony. I want to add another element of concern to some of those that have been raised here earlier, particularly the comments that were just raised by the representative of the Garden State Coalition, which I think are appropriate.

I just want to say that I think part of the concern about the core content standards has to do with the fact that what we are likely to be getting in the next couple of months is the adoption of the core curriculum standards, and then we are going to immediately move over several steps to a per-pupil funding formula. As Tom Corcoran pointed out, there are a number of intermediate steps that have to be taken before you can even begin to discuss basing of per-pupil funding level on these standards, such as the curricula frameworks, the assessments, and all of those things.

I think a lot of the concern about the core curriculum standards and having them move forward now has to do with the fact that these steps, as they have been proposed by the Department, will essentially be junked, and we are going to move from these broad standards directly to a funding formula. I think that is something that you really need to take into account as you go along.

The concern I am going to raise is one that is of long-standing importance to the Education Law Center, and that is: Do these standards meet the constitutional test that has been established by the Supreme Court in Abbott? That is the law of the State, and I think that in addition to whether the standards are clear, whether they are concise, whether they are readable and understandable, whether they make sense, whether they lead toward the correct production of appropriate curricula framework and assessments, whether they are consistent with what other states are doing and with national standards-- That is all important, but the fact of the matter is, we have a constitutional requirement that has been specifically interpreted by the Supreme Court that we also have to look to.

So the issue here is not whether we should adopt core curriculum standards. I don't think anyone disagrees with that. We don't. We support their adoption and, frankly, note that these standards were supposed to be adopted under the QEA by December 1, 1992. I think that is the statute you were referring to, Senator, so we are actually three and a half years behind in their adoption.

But, be that as it may, I think we do support the adoption of curriculum standards, as long as they meet our important concern, and I know a concern of this Committee and the Legislature, which is: Are they constitutional as well?

To look at that test, you have to go back to Abbott II and look at what the Court said when it defined thorough and efficient education. You have to recall that the Court's definition of a thorough and efficient education is grounded in the notion of parity, and I don't mean funding parity. I mean programmatic parity. That is particularly the case when the Court talks about a thorough and efficient education meaning more than the teaching of skills needed to compete in the labor market, as critically important as they may be. It means being able to fulfill one's role as a citizen, a role that encompasses far more merely than registering to vote. It means the ability to participate fully in society, the life of one's community, the ability to appreciate music, art, literature, and the ability to share all that with one's friends. Where that occurs in New Jersey is in the school systems offering the broadest range of courses: instruction in numerous languages, sophisticated mathematics, art, the sciences at the high level, fully equipped laboratories, and hands-on

computer science, everything parents seriously concerned for their children's future would want, everything that a child needs.

I think it is important to read that language over, and over, and over again as we go through this process, because that is what the Supreme Court said is a thorough and efficient education.

How that applies to urban districts is that children in urban districts have to have the same access to that same kind of education, so that they have the ability to compete in the workforce, in the marketplace, and in the democratic fabric of our society with their richer suburban peers. So it is also important to remind ourselves that that is the substantive definition of a thorough and efficient education under the Constitution as the Court has interpreted it.

Now, the Court, in its remedy for funding and in its looking at not only that, but in developing this programmatic definition, had before it the practices -- the educational practices and programs and curricula in what everyone would consider to be the highest performing -- or the high performing districts in this State, the so-called average in the I&J districts, the 120 I&J districts.

I think it is important that in order to assess whether these core curriculum standards meet the constitutional test, there is a step in their development that is missing, that needs to be undertaken. This is different from the kind of concerns that Senator MacInnes was raising about language and about their readability. Frankly, what has to happen is, in order to assess whether they are constitutional, you have to really research the on-the-ground

curricula in practice in selected high performing districts. We have urged the Department to do this but, unfortunately, this has not been done.

In other words, someone mentioned a “reality check.” Frankly, the reality check in terms of the Constitution really would require the Department to go out and profile, if you will, the curricula and the practices occurring in a selected group of high performing districts -- districts that we could all agree were high performing. I am not even talking about spending now. You can pick low-spending districts, districts below the I&J average, or below the State -- or at the State average. You can pick higher spending districts, districts of different sizes, It does not matter. But we need to agree upon, basically, that there are-- We need to pull out a select group of high performing districts and essentially profile their curricula, their core curricula, if you will, and profile it in detail, and why.

You need that information. We all need that information to make sure that this set of core curriculum standards meets the Court’s definition of a thorough and efficient education, and also is grounded in the best practices -- the reality of the best practices in New Jersey in districts that we can all agree provide a thorough and efficient education. That is one of the things that Tom Corcoran mentioned as a way of assessing these standards and assessing the other steps that will occur after those.

So we urge a delay for reasons different than have been mentioned earlier. We urge a delay to send the Department back to do these high performing district profiles, so that you have a sense of how these standards stack up against the best performing districts in this State.

I think that is important. It will begin to help us answer a lot of the other questions that have been raised around adequacy. You yourself, Senator, asked the question: “Well, if you have to do more languages at the elementary school level, what is going to be lost?” What is going to have to be taken away? What is not going to be available? What shifts are going to have to be made?

The Commissioner talked about reallocation of resources and different kinds of decision making. We ought to know, frankly, before we go ahead with this, what is happening in our districts that are providing a thorough and efficient education, how they match up against these core curriculum standards, so that we can assure: a) that they are high; and b) that we can have some sense of what will happen in those districts when these core curriculum are actually implemented.

So we think it is an important step to test the constitutionality of these standards, that you direct the Department to go do that, that you hold off adopting them until that is done, so that you get some sense of how this relates to best practices in New Jersey today, keeping in mind that we have some of the best public schools in the country.

Beyond that, I think it is important to remind ourselves of the other steps that have to occur before we can even begin to talk about funding. We have outlined some of those in our written testimony, but I want to go over them, because I think they are important:

- 1) What assessment criteria and instruments will be developed to assess the performance of students and their schools?

2) What gaps exist between the level of education currently offered in schools?

3) What capacity exists in the districts and schools to close the gap?

4) What professional development opportunities are needed? That has already been talked about,

5) What capacity is necessary for the Department to provide the research, guidance, technical assistance, and professional development programs necessary to help build that capacity?

I stop right there, noting your comment, Senator, to the Commissioner about: Who is going to do this within the Department? The answer was that there are nine people. Well, I think, frankly, before we-- One of the issues that is going to have to be addressed is the State's capacity to assist districts to do the kinds of things that have been talked about previously here, to make sure that what Willa Spicer said doesn't happen, which is that they are only really a first step and they don't have any really direct benefit or direct influence on actual practices in school districts.

6) What are the resource -- which is a question you asked -- implications for course offerings, support services, staffing ratios, etc., etc.?

7) Lastly, what about costs?

Now, frankly, I think the problem people are having with the core curriculum standards -- and the interchange between Senator MacInnes and Tom Corcoran sort of reflected that -- is-- I think what is happening is that a lot of these questions, at least 1) through 6) here, have been left out of the equation, frankly, and the discussion and the conversation that is going on

between the Department and the Legislature and the Department and the public. What we have is this sense that what is going to happen is, the Board will adopt the core curriculum standards on May 1, and then right after that we are going to get a per-pupil funding number.

Now, that is supposedly going to be based on -- supposedly, or at least we are going to be told that that per-pupil funding number is going to be the amount the districts need to teach according to the core curriculum standards. As I have indicated to you here -- and I think this is a really important point -- there are several steps that have been talked about -- curriculum frameworks, assessments, professional development -- which, as has been pointed out, are very interactive. They are going to influence each other.

Before we can even begin to have a conversation about what all this is going to cost -- and I really echo what Tom Corcoran said -- the state of educational research in the country, about what it costs, costing it out, to deliver this kind of education-- That is simply in its infancy. So we are going to go-- I think the tension you feel is not about the core curriculum standards, curriculum framework, and doing all that stuff. What we have is a situation where the Department is going to proceed from step "A" all the way to step "Z," and skip everything in between, and it is going to be forced upon districts. I don't think that is what we want to do.

SENATOR EWING: But it is not all going to be implemented at one time.

MR. SCIARRA: No, but the per-pupil funding formula is going to be ostensibly adopted based on those core curriculum standards.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but maybe that will have to change over a period of time, too.

MR. SCIARRA: Well, I don't think that is what we want to do. I don't think what we want to do is get into a situation where we have adopted a per-pupil funding formula level -- a T&E foundation amount, as it has been called -- that is supposedly, or at least we have been told, designed to enable districts to implement -- to teach the core curriculum standards, when, in fact, it turns out that all of the kinds of steps you need to make sure that that per-pupil funding is really adequate, and you have built consensus around that, and it is constitutional, takes place.

That raises a comment I do want to make. I have made it to you before, and I have made it to every committee I have appeared before over the last couple of months. The September deadline set by the Court does not require that we adopt core curriculum standards or that we adopt a per-pupil funding formula based on those standards. There is nothing in the Court's decree in Abbott that requires that that happen by September 1996. So you should rest assured that you do not have to go down this path at this speed because the Court is requiring you to do that. The Court is only requiring two things by September: a law that guarantees parity between the 30 special needs districts and the I&J districts by 1997-1998 -- next year -- and a law that implements a special program for at-risk students in special needs districts.

That is all you really have to do under the Court decree. That is a lot, and it is going to cost some more money, but you are not under any legal compulsion to implement these standards, or implement a per-pupil funding for all districts that is based on ostensibly what it costs to do that. So I think

that is important. It is important because I think you really have to hear what is being said here. To do this properly, to do standards properly, to do curriculum assessments properly, to do curriculum frameworks properly, assessments, professional development planning, and even to develop a model grounded in New Jersey -- grounded in actual New Jersey practice for a funding formula to deliver all of that, is going to take an awful amount of time and work beyond what we currently have.

So I am urging you to really get off of this track where by September 1 we have to have a whole new school funding formula in place for all districts. Deal with parity, of course. Deal with the at-risk educational program and the special needs districts, of course. But allow this process to go on in accordance with the steps that are required to be taken, so that it is done right, so that consensus is built among the educational community, among all district groupings, among legislators, among the administration, among everyone else, and sort of launch that process into the future.

Again, in terms of the core curriculum standards, we would urge the Legislature, in terms of its authority -- legal authority -- to review these core curriculum standards, to instruct the Department to go back and profile from a curricula point of view several -- a grouping consisting of several high performing districts, so that you have some sense -- so that we all have some sense of how this curricula stacks up against best practice in New Jersey.

If that takes time, if it takes longer than September 1, so be it. You are under no legal compulsion to do that. And if it takes that kind of time, given the magnitude of what we are trying to do, I think it is going to speak to what Willa Spicer said, to make sure that it really does have some

meaning and ultimately it is going to be constitutional and avoid a continuing process where we have to take something ultimately that does not meet that test and it goes back to the Court again, a whole other round of what we have been through over the last 25 years.

SENATOR EWING: What will you people do if we get it all settled one time? You won't have any job.

MR. SCIARRA: I'm ready to do something else. I am going to come to work for you.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, okay.

Thank you, David.

MR. SCIARRA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: Roberta Braverman, New Jersey Association for Gifted Children.

ROBERTA BRAVERMAN: I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you. I have spoken to Senator Ewing and Darby (Committee Aide) on the phone several times about our issues. I would like to start by being somewhat general and giving you a statement from our Association, and then go to something more specific and address some of the issues that were brought up today by the other speakers.

We are the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children, an organization composed of parents, educators, and businesses dedicated to the development of our children's gifts and talents. The purposes of the organization are to serve as a public advocate and to disseminate information about the needs of this group. We are a State affiliate of the national

organization, the National Association for Gifted Children, on whose Board our Governor holds the position of Trustee.

The mission of the NJAGC is to empower students who have exhibited superior performance or potential to accomplish through appropriate opportunities which will enable them to function effectively in our society.

We were an active voice for these children during the Abbott v. Burke hearings held by the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education in each of the 21 New Jersey counties. We have had representatives from the State Department of Education attend meetings of educators to hear our concerns, and to take back to the Department our many ideas and offers of collaboration to help the Department determine how New Jersey can best provide an appropriate education for our quick and capable learners. On March 8-9, 1996, our organization hosted a very successful statewide convention for educators, parents, and children in Princeton.

We appreciate that the standards acknowledge the special needs of gifted students by noting that: “Those students who can do more than achieve this set of expectations must be afforded the opportunity and encouraged to do so.” This is in the Introduction, page 4. At the same time, it is essential to recognize the specific program components needed to make this possible.

We are doubtful that the standards, as they are written, can meet the challenge or provide an appropriate education for these children. There was no mention of instructional technique or training for teachers to provide the appropriate pacing, curriculum compacting, flexible grouping, enrichment, or acceleration that these children most certainly need.

Modifications for special needs students are a gross omission from this Plan, be it for remedial or advanced students. Again we ask: What of the child entering school who is able to demonstrate mastery of the skills and the underlying concepts, who consumes and retains the information at a much faster pace than age-level peers? Where is the entitlement to ability-aligned instruction? We ask how districts will be accountable for meeting the needs of these students.

In light of the recognition that opportunities to go beyond the standards must be afforded to those students who are able to do so, the statement that the standards themselves “define excellence” -- Introduction, P. 4 -- appears to be inconsistent. Rather, there is a need for differentiated standards to reflect the differing educational needs of some students.

This need for differentiated standards is not limited to gifted students. A leading advocate for students with disabilities in New Jersey -- Diana Autin, Director of the statewide Parents Advocacy Network, writing in the winter of 1996 issue of “The Bridge” -- recently commented that the standards are “silent about expectations, curriculum, and standards for students with significant disabilities who will never be able to reach the new ‘standards.’”

The effort to establish standards should recognize that these standards are neither a floor nor a ceiling. Federal law, quite properly, provides that students with disabilities are entitled to receive instruction to enable them to progress from their present level of achievement. It is a sign of society’s progress that they are no longer excluded from school because they fall below the standards for attendance. Similarly, students with an exceptionally high

level of intellectual ability should be offered learning opportunities appropriate for their individual needs, rather than being excluded from the opportunity to make educational progress because they fall above the standards which define a thorough and efficient education.

The Department and the State Board of Education should not undertake the fruitless task of attempting to set standards which every student can achieve, but none can exceed. The inevitable result would be a compromise which might meet the needs of some students around the mean, but would utterly fail to meet those of students with disabilities or with exceptionally high ability.

The significant components of the Comprehensive Plan, the core curriculum document, and the financing package must include specific wording and requirements to districts to provide for these students. We will be happy to work with you to accomplish this goal, and expect that our concerns will be addressed officially through the Department of Education and through your response to our offer of help.

If I may, I would like to go back and give a little history. Our organization was originally composed of educators. We were a Division of the New Jersey Education Association. We were called NJEGT -- New Jersey Educators of Gifted and Talented. We found that when we tried to lobby or advocate for these children, it was perceived that we were feathering our own nests and trying to keep our jobs or programs intact, whereupon parents of these students were also gathering to collectively voice their concerns that their children's needs were not being met in the public schools.

Many parents, when approaching the administration of their local districts and asking for specific directives or individualization for their children, were faced with: “But we are a public school. If you have this need, go to a private school.” I think that is inappropriate and ineffectual. With all there is to learn, I don’t think any child should be capped or a ceiling placed on them due to their chronological age.

I have looked over the core standards and do not see a specific scope or sequence, and I think that when this is left to individual districts, you will then be creating districts that have and districts that have not. Some districts will choose to locally fund provisions, programs, teachers’ support networks for the students, and others will consider it an extra. It may go down with the school budget, and when they start to cut they look at this group as the least needy. These are the children that make them look good on individualized tests or standardized tests.

As a teacher practitioner, I know that the standardized tests that are given in this State are used for graduation purposes, extreme remediation if it is shown for a 4th grader or an 8th grader before they get to 12th grade, or to the 11th grade test. Other than that, the teacher does not receive feedback on the individual students that he or she is accountable for.

So if I were to receive something from a State test that said, “Johnny has a weakness in his language arts skills and they are: he doesn’t recognize capitalization,” or whatever, that feedback is not provided to the individual teacher. So we are spending money to qualify districts on a general basis: “How many of your students passed this test?” not, “What does Johnny

need?” So if we are relooking at how we are testing students, we need to supply that information back to the practitioner.

When Senator MacInnes discussed things about the language, yes, educators do use jargonese. It has taken us a long time to define ourselves as a profession. Would we expect our physicians to use lay terms to diagnose our illness? I think not.

When this type of goal setting comes to the public forum, like the Senate or the Legislature, I think maybe we came through the wrong door. We asked the State Department of Education to create these goals. If the public has specific goals that they want met, it should have started from that end, and the Department of Education could have defined those goals based on what the industry or the citizenry want of their students.

If we have too many in 850, or whatever, I think we need to say, in each of the areas: “What are the five things of all these four curriculum areas that we want our children to be able to demonstrate?” Let the individual districts or the State Department of Education use the jargonese that should be well understood by the practitioners to define and implement these things.

I am looking at the core curriculum standards, and piece by piece you can tear them apart, to shreds, because there is an awful lot of recall, define, locate, identify, which is swallow, regurgitate, and give it back, which is what we have been doing for quite a long time. The fluffier ones, like the social studies curriculum, which is more abstract and creative, uses terms like analyze, judge, decide, compare, and contrast more often than any of the other science or mathematic areas do.

The question is: “Are we looking at just what we can test, or are we looking at what we want our children to be able to demonstrate and perform before they graduate?”

It is our hope, as an organization, and my personal belief, that if we don’t have to decide on these core curriculum standards by September 1, that the whole thing be sent back to the drawing board and more input of the educators, of the superintendents, of practitioners, teachers, be solicited from the Department of Education. When we offer our input, it is like, “We’re done. We don’t want to do anything about it. The only way we are redoing it is if the State Board of Education or the Legislature sends us back to the drawing board.” So here are many special interest groups that would like to contribute what they feel should be in the document, and they are not being received well by the State Department of Education.

Some of these things we would like to bring to your attention with the idea that the financing is the key thing, but we do not want to create districts again, those that have, and those that have not. We are fearful that this will come through the courts, and not through the Legislature; that parents will start to demand equity and appropriate ability aligned in instruction. If the child walks in mastering 4th grade materials, is that child not entitled to be instructed at a level of challenge?

I think that with respect to the educational jargonese and what was written by the Department, the effort was a valued one. I think the revisions that were suggested probably need to take place, and the Department needs to expand and ask for input from both practitioners and superintendents who will have to implement it.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Don't you think there have been enough public hearings out there? Did you go to all of them?

MS. BRAVERMAN: Yes. We got some wording from our participation. We attended the hearings and said, "There is nothing in this Plan for these gifted kids." So it became part of the big picture in the Introduction. We are mentioned twice, but it doesn't say how. It doesn't say anything about funding specifically. Those things we are worried about. You can say you want it, but you may not have it. That is where we are concerned.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Toby Simon, New Jersey School Boards Association.

T O B Y R. S I M O N: My name is Toby Simon. I am Assistant Executive Director of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Thank you, Senator Ewing, for this opportunity to talk about the statewide standards.

You have an extended document in front of you which represents not only some general thoughts that we have about the standards, but also some very specific recommendations that we make about changes, revisions, deletions in individual standards, progress indicators, and descriptive statements.

What I would like to do in my verbal testimony is just highlight some of the general issues, and leave the Committee to review the specifics.

We support the adoption of statewide curriculum standards for several reasons. They will focus the Department of Education and local boards on what really counts: what students know and are able to do. This change from an approach that counts courses or credit hours is a step forward.

Standards are all about what happens in the classroom, and that is all to the good.

Standards to be effective, however, must meet accepted criteria. They must be clear, measurable, achievable, and affordable. While the Commissioner's proposal has cleared up many previous concerns about how the standards meet these criteria, there are problems remaining.

First, we have not yet seen an orderly, clearly understood implementation process for these standards. This is vital if districts are to successfully accomplish the purposes for which they were developed. Curriculum will have to be realigned, sometimes extensively. Boards cannot "just do it," as the Commissioner told our Board of Directors last month.

On page 1 of our document, we explain the importance of curriculum frameworks, and Tom Corcoran has talked about that extensively. Sending them out one year before the subject is added to the State assessment tests -- which the Department has said it is going to do -- is too late. Again, as Tom Corcoran has indicated in talking about what some of the other states are doing, the wheel does not need to be reinvented here. There are many states that already have curriculum frameworks in place. Our standards are not that different from their standards, except, perhaps, in some of the semantics, and the Department can take advantage of the excellent models already developed and by those in the content areas of math and science, and provide them to the districts as soon as possible.

We support assessment of the standards. Here I would echo what I know Willa Spicer would say; that is, if you don't assess the standards, there is no point in having them. If there isn't some sort of assessment or

monitoring, the truth is that the districts won't do it. But the 4th and 8th grade assessments, as explained in our analysis, are designed to alert schools to student weaknesses so that appropriate help can be provided. Their purpose is diagnostic, and their results should not be used in the monitoring process as part of possible punitive actions against districts.

Again, I would echo Tom Corcoran that we should monitor districts' progress in this area, but not just look at final test results on student achievement at the 4th and 8th grade levels.

We support the Department's addition of specific periods in history to the social studies standards. This was added when the Commissioner's proposal went to the State Board. However, we recommend that more specific indicators in the area of geography also be added to social studies. It is not old-fashioned to expect students to know the names and capitals of our 50 states and the location and capitals of countries around the world. Our young men and women fight and die on foreign soil these days; they should at least know where they are.

As was done with periods of history in social studies -- those specific additions -- we believe that the language arts standards would be improved with the addition of specific literature requirements from defined periods and places. Again, as was done with history, themes of study should also be specified.

We are concerned about the requirement that students have work experience during the school day. Such activities have not been proven educationally valuable, are time-consuming, and very expensive, even without

factoring in transportation to jobs. It would take students out of school just when the State is increasing expectations for achievement in academic areas.

As discussed on page 10, we do not agree that world languages are essential for elementary students, and the Commissioner has said that the standards represent what is essential for every student in every grade in every school. A world language requirement means finding time in the school day to add a new, time-consuming subject and providing money, time, and opportunities for 1st through 4th grade teachers to learn a foreign language and how to teach the skill. We believe foreign languages should not be required until high school, where we do think it is essential, and should not appear on State assessments before the 11th grade.

I was encouraged that the Commissioner seemed to be -- I guess you would call it clarifying the thinking that I see, backing away from a world language verbal speaking and reading requirement and going to one where the general characteristics and importance of other cultures would be required instead.

The Association agrees that making technology a cross-content standard is a practical step. We strongly support expectations that all students develop the ability to use and understand technology, but money for facilities, equipment, curriculum development, and teacher training is a must.

I would like to emphasize now the importance of professional development, if we expect the goals of curriculum standards to be realized. There is no possibility that districts will be able to get their students to desired levels of achievement without long-range ongoing training for staff. While many of the standards are not new and most districts' curricula address them

now, others will mean changes in what happens in the classroom. This will take extensive planning, both at the State and local levels, the development of inservice programs related to the requirements of the standards, and rescheduling so staff can take advantage of these programs. While 2 percent of salaries, posited in the Comprehensive Plan as the amount devoted to staff development, may be sufficient to meet the needs of some content area standards, it is unlikely to be enough for the areas of world languages or technology, particularly for elementary school staff.

Supervisors, too, will need training. Staff PIPs will need to be redirected toward strengthening skills and developing teaching strategies to meet the demands of the standards.

The majority of our document -- the remainder of what you have -- identifies the standards, descriptive statements, and progress indicators that we recommend be revised, clarified, or deleted. We include comments on all three of those, because the Commissioner told the State Board that they would be adopting all three, and that all three, including the descriptive statements, would be part of a mandate for boards.

I just want to mention that when we talk about something not being measurable in our document, we mean by a teacher in a school situation, which, after all, is what schools will be required to do.

This is a very brief review of the highlighted portions of our document. I would be pleased to answer questions.

Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Will you give us a copy of that -- what you read from? I couldn't find it in here. I saw the headings, but I didn't see all the other things.

MS. SIMON: I can send you one. I sort of scribbled notes from the other speakers on the top, but I will get you a copy of my verbal comments.

SENATOR EWING: Please. I would appreciate it.

MS. SIMON: Okay.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, Ms. Simon.

Gene?

EUGENE KEYEK, Ed.D.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since many of the issues that are covered in our testimony have been presented, I would just like to take the time to highlight one significant point, which has been brought up by both Mr. Corcoran and the gentleman from the Education Law Center. This is that the Legislature consider developing a cost analysis of implementing the core curriculum.

There is a concern we have that the transfer of the core curriculum to a funding model is not going to work in the manner in which the Commissioner outlined in his Comprehensive Plan. The application of the cost should be done by a neutral third party, such as the Office of Legislative Services. However, as I was sitting here listening to Bob Woodford's testimony, one of the things that came to mind was that perhaps Business & Industry might be in a better position, with all of their accounting staff, to serve as that neutral third party to assist in developing a good cost analysis.

As has been pointed out, this is something that hasn't been done too well throughout the country. I think this is an issue that could be

addressed by NJBIA to provide both the Legislature and the educational community with some assistance.

There is a concern on the part of our members that any analysis completed by the Department of Education may be limited by the availability of funds and an extremely narrow view of how to implement the core curriculum standards. As we look at the model that was generated, we see that there are assumptions the Department has made that we are not in agreement on: class size and average cost figures. I think that all of these things need to be reviewed by someone other than even our organization. We could complete that, but, again, our motive might be suspect. That is why we are suggesting that a neutral third party come in, meet with all the players, and say, "Is this what you really mean? Is this what it takes to implement this particular framework, or this particular phase of the core curriculum?"

There are a lot of unanswered questions: regional cost differences, district configuration, enrollment impact, and a host of other questions that need to be addressed when we look at costing out the core curriculum.

I would be very happy to say that our Association will be available to provide whatever assistance you may need and, also, to provide some input to whatever group you might be able to get to do this.

SENATOR EWING: Have the various groups -- the 10 or 15 groups -- sat down with the Commissioner and his staff?

DR. KEYEK: Not available. There has not been any release of any of the data. I asked three months ago if I could meet with the Department and if they would give me some of the data they used to arrive at their assumptions. As an example, in the Comprehensive Plan, it says, "This data

was obtained from the NJEA statistical reports.” Well, I went to the NJEA statistical reports and I cannot come up with the same kinds of data that the Department came up with. Perhaps the best example: average teacher salary. Well, the average teacher salary that was used in their model is not the same average teacher salary that is found in the NJEA statistical data. So, obviously, what they did was massage some of their figures to meet the three levels of the components they used in their model.

SENATOR EWING: But, Gene, what I was saying before, have you, NJEA, the School Boards, and the other groups sat down in a room like this with the Commissioner and his staff, and then questioned him about the whole thing step by step?

DR. KEYEK: Yes, we did meet with him. You have to keep going back to our telephone system. We have met with the Commissioner. We met on a number of occasions. The NJAPs group met with the Commissioner to review these kinds of things. The Commissioner’s comment was -- which is in my statement -- “One should not be concerned with the pocketbook when considering the development of the core curriculum.” That was the Commissioner’s statement.

We do not feel that way. We feel very strongly that you can’t do one without the other. In the private sector, you would not take a proposal of this type to your board of directors and say, “Well, we will tell you what it is going to cost later.” I wouldn’t do that at the local board of education. I would not take a proposal to the local board of education and say, “Look, buy into it, and then I will tell you what it is going to cost.”

SENATOR EWING: Okay. Thank you.

Bill?

W I L L I A M L E W I S: Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity.

What I have provided the Committee with are copies of the position statement by Michael Johnson, our NJEA Vice President, dated March 20, before the State Board at their hearing on the core curriculum standards. I thought I would just paraphrase some of that for you.

After that time, our policy-making body, our Delegate Assembly, adopted a policy entitled "Guiding Principles of Core Curriculum Content Standards," that in outline form, or bullet form, lists the concerns and what we think should be part of those core curriculum standards.

After testifying at the State Board hearing, we hoped that the suggestions Michael Johnson and the NJEA made would be reflected and considered in the next draft by the Department.

SENATOR EWING: The ones right here were not included in this February draft?

MR. LEWIS: No, they were not. It was a few days after.

We certainly -- as Michael points out -- support high standards. I think everybody has agreement on that. Unfortunately, we feel the Department has not completed its work; that while some of the standards are exceptionally well done -- math and science, as everyone has pointed to -- there are others in the area of English and some other concerns that we feel need more work, that are not nearly up to the level that they should be.

This isn't just lobbyists and the officers sitting down and deciding that this is what happened. We have heard from our--

SENATOR EWING: Let me ask you something, and I am sorry to interrupt: They say these are going to be phased in, so why can't they be improved as we are moving along? They put the first set in, and then gradually do others. Is that the way it is going to work, or not?

MR. LEWIS: I think, probably, the train isn't going to stop. But, also, tied closely to that is the funding. I think folks can probably agree, and even agree to disagree, as to the core content standards and how they can be reviewed, and maybe adjusted and changed over a period of months, or a year or two. But all of that, as we understand it, is going to be closely tied to the funding. As long as that happens and it is expeditious for the funding, then maybe we need to take a closer look at the core curriculum standards now, even though they are being phased in, because we might find something -- we might be able to add something to that that would be crucial in the funding effort.

For example, we have heard from our music educators. They are an affiliated group. They told us that their association is of the opinion that a single set of standards in music is vague and imprecise, and will fail to do what standards must do, namely, provide a basis for writing curricula, developing lesson plans, and evaluating learning -- those kinds of comments.

The School Nurses Association told us that extensive revisions have produced-- They were talking about the Department's revisions of what they had to tell the Department about school nurses and school nursing services. "Extensive revisions have produced a document that is far short of the comprehensive concepts shared by the members of the original project." So it sounds as though some of our members are saying, "Gee, we said things,

but what we see coming out of the Department is so much different than what we thought we had some consensus or some agreement on.”

Speech and Theater think that-- They seem to be reasonably satisfied with it. So it is up and down on that. I did not bring all of them. We have so many affiliates that I didn't bring them all. But we certainly have heard from our phys ed people at the hearings. You have been to so many of these hearings, even more than I, I am sure. That has always been raised.

Concerns -- as we mentioned in the other handout, “Guiding Principles” -- are that it not be totally test driven, that teachers not have to teach to the test. That is all in this one item of the “Guiding Principles.” I think maybe I should highlight it.

Item number two is: “Include opportunity-to-learn standards as an integral part of the State’s responsibility.” The question comes up, “What do you mean by that? Is that some more jargon?” Well, it probably is, but we mean that for individuals who have certain talents, that those talents should be encouraged and fostered, instruction should be provided, and services provided, so that folks who have talent in music and art -- as the young woman who spoke earlier said -- those gifted students, gifted whether academically or in terms of music and art, that sort of thing, so that they be encouraged, and the districts not have to spend all of their moneys on a core curriculum that maybe excludes opportunities for maybe some genius who maybe doesn't do well in math, and maybe doesn't do well in science, but will be the next world-class sculptor, or something -- that kind of thing, opportunities for youngsters with those talents, that they not be ignored. We feel that is important.

SENATOR EWING: But, Bill, do you think we can really afford something like that? You have three children here, and four over in another town, and one here. You know, it is wonderful to be able to do, and it would be nice if we could, but, really, in my own mind, I don't--

MR. LEWIS: There probably are districts that do provide a lot of this, much of this, and I am wondering if, in fact, what they are spending now gets categorized as "excessive and unnecessary," and will cause them to stop doing that -- those leaders in leading school districts, the Lighthouse Districts, that are doing so much of this, and have done the groundwork, and set the standard.

They should not be discouraged and have their budgets subject to being always defeated because they are categorized as excessive. I mean, it bothers me, as a former teacher and a NJEA member, to hear the Commissioner talk about Astroturf and night-lights. While some of that is true, I think there are a lot of great things that are happening in schools that require sufficient funding. Those are just little, narrow buzzwords that I think we need to get away from, and talk about some of the great things that are happening in schools that need to be continually funded.

I said the science standards were really good standards. That was my field when I taught. But I couldn't help but think, "Hands-on experience with science." There are schools in urban districts that do not have laboratories, that do not have facilities. While those standards are great for science, if those youngsters can't go in there and have a hands-on approach to physics, biology, or chemistry, they are missing a great deal and will not be able to compete.

SENATOR EWING: Where the hell were the politicians and the board members? They had budgets and everything. Come on. You know, a lot of the problems are right inside, in a person's inner soul and heart. They don't give a damn about the kids. Look at what they did to the kids in Newark. Come on. Half of those councilmen and half of those board members ought to be in jail, I think.

MR. LEWIS: Well, I would never say that. Certainly, I wouldn't say that.

SENATOR EWING: Or more.

MR. LEWIS: I don't have any information on that, so I wouldn't say that.

I would just say that very probably there are schools, teachers, and students who are doing exceedingly well in Newark, despite all of what has happened to them.

SENATOR EWING: We ought to do as much as we can for every kid, but--

MR. LEWIS: Right. We do not want to deprive any youngster of equal opportunity, which is the basis for the effort being made here.

SENATOR EWING: I wonder what it would cost us to bring all the schools up to Newark that teach science, chemistry, or whatever it is -- to bring them up a decent lab experience. I am just talking about Newark alone. I am not talking about-- There are a lot of rural schools that do not have them either, and they need it. There is no question about it.

MR. LEWIS: Exactly. Right. There are certainly a lot of schools that fall in between the I&J and the Special Needs Districts that do not have

things as well, small rural districts. I spent some time this week, and all the other weeks, down in Salem City in Salem County.

SENATOR EWING: Where?

MR. LEWIS: Salem City--

SENATOR EWING: Oh, yes.

MR. LEWIS: --Salem County, some very poor areas of the State, where the schools are struggling with their budgets and with their programs, and we are working hard to try to pass those budgets and keep those folks encouraged. It is not easy. We are sure there is a connection between people who do not have opportunities and the negative things that some of them pursue as they reach adulthood -- the increased violence, the crime, the feelings of hopelessness, their dependency, and on, and on, and on. We know that we cannot afford for that gap to continually widen, because it is becoming just intolerable.

Thank you for this opportunity.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Is there anyone else who didn't give their name? (no response)

Thank you to all those who stuck by to the end. I have to go to a 1:00 meeting now, on leases -- State leases.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)