

Committee Meeting

before

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

and

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

"The Quality Education Act of 1990 (QEA)"

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LOCATION: Auditorium
Cherry Hill High School East
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

DATE: May 22, 1992
3:00 p.m.

MEMBER OF SENATE COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator John H. Ewing, Co-Chairman

MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman John A. Rocco, Co-Chairman
Assemblyman Fredrick P. Nickles
Assemblywoman Mary Virginia "Ginny" Weber

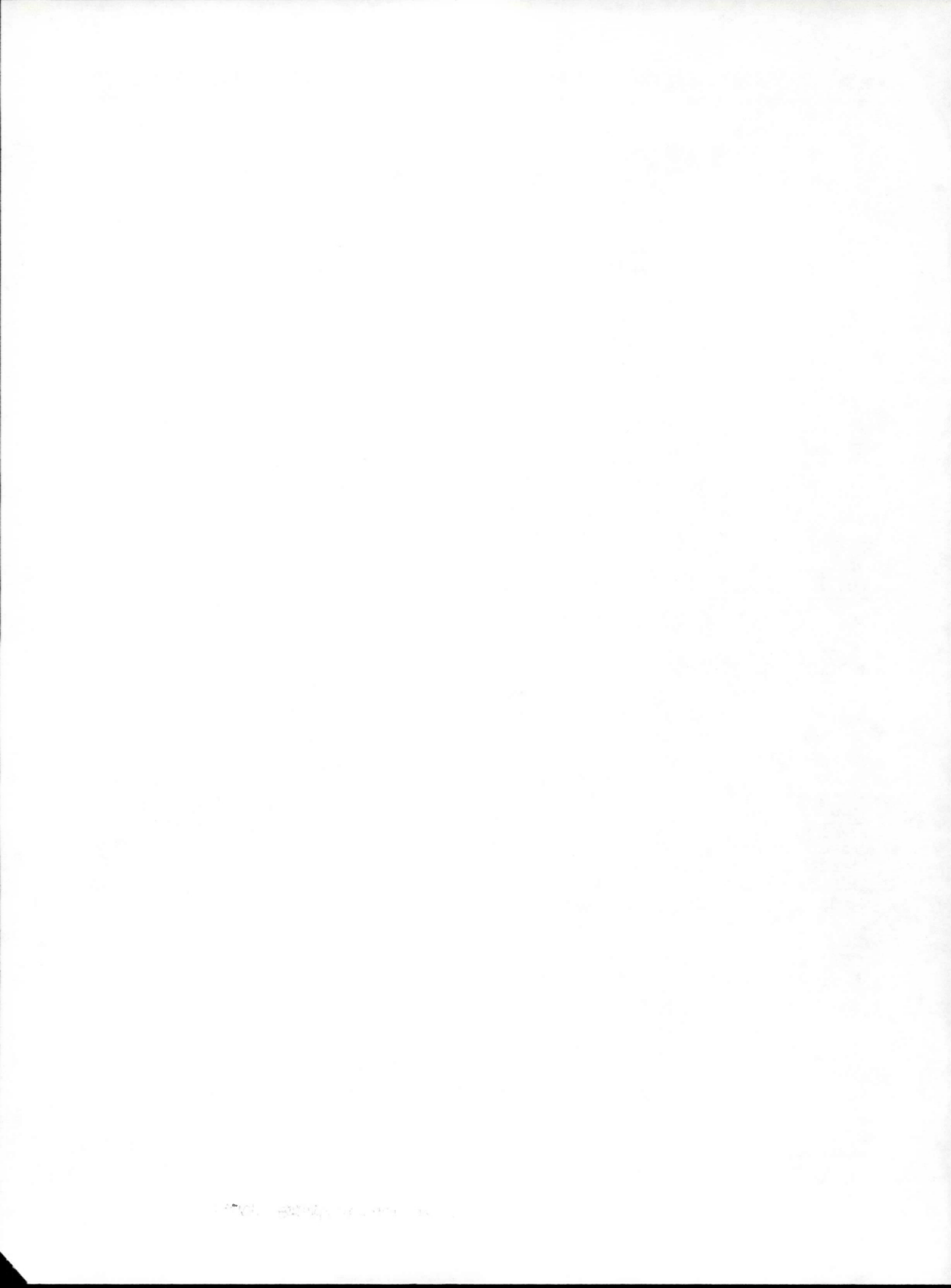
ALSO PRESENT:

Joyce W. Murray
Darby Cannon, III
Office of Legislative Services
Aides, Senate Education Committee

David C. Hesse
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Education Committee



Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
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NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: SENATOR JOHN H. EWING, CHAIRMAN
ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN A. ROCCO, CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING - May 22, 1992

The public may address comments and questions to Darby Cannon, III, or Joyce W. Murray, or David C. Hespe, Aides to the Committees, or make scheduling inquiries to Mary C. Lutz or Bernadette Kmetz, secretaries, at (609) 984-6843.

The Senate Education and Assembly Education Committees will continue the witness list of the joint meeting of May 6, 1992 on:

The Quality Education Act of 1990 (QEA)

on Friday, May 22, 1992 at 3:00 p.m., in the auditorium of Cherry Hill High School East, Kresson Road, Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Issued 5/13/92



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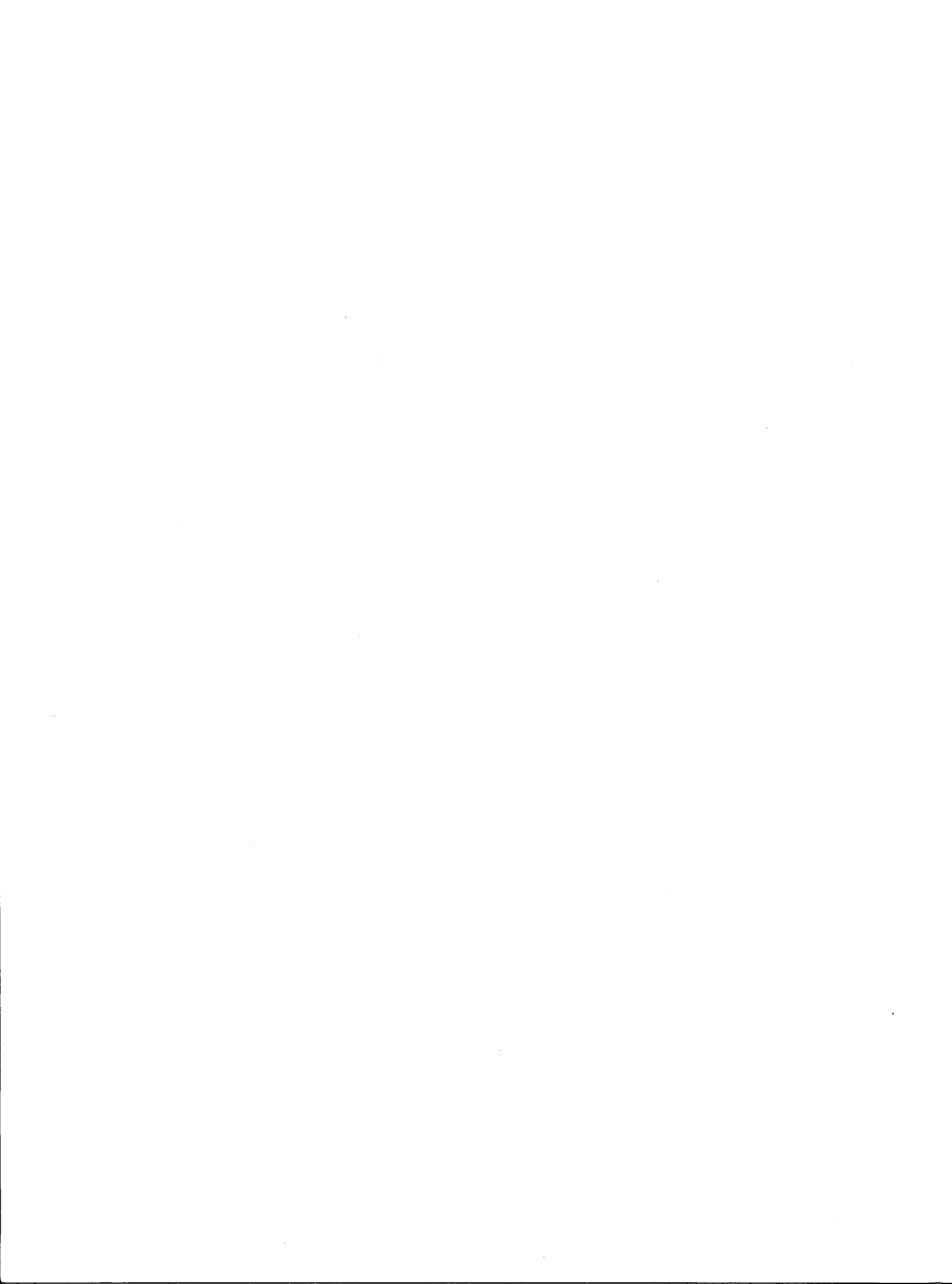
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ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN A. ROCCO (Co-Chairman): I think we will begin. I call the meeting to order. David, I guess we have to have a formal roll call.

MR. HESPE: (Committee Aide): Senator Ewing?

SENATOR JOHN H. EWING (Co-Chairman): Here.

MR. HESPE: Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Here.

Fortunately, we have the Chairman of the Education Committee in the Senate, Jack Ewing, who has always taken the time to come to South Jersey. I want to congratulate Jack once again for making that long haul down here. There are only a few people here at this point, because Senator Ewing has been good enough to add a session to the hearings regarding QEA in North Jersey, so many of the people who were here at our last meeting in Cherry Hill will now be able to go to the second meeting in North Jersey that Senator Ewing has called. That is one of the reasons why we have a smaller group today, and we thank you, Senator Ewing, for that.

Before we begin introducing Jim Marino, who has been on the Cherry Hill School Board and will be our host today, to say a few words, Senator Ewing may have a few comments.

SENATOR EWING: No, John. I just appreciate your arranging the meeting here, and I thank Mr. Marino for allowing us to come over here. These hearings are very important to get the input from the citizens and from teachers and from everybody, because education affects everybody. There are all different ideas and thoughts. Nobody has a corner on them. We are making every effort to hear as many people as possible to put together something that is going to be good for education of the children.

We are not going to please everybody, but we are going to do the best we can. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Senator Ewing.

Jim Marino, Cherry Hill Board of Education member for the last--

J A M E S M A R I N O: Seventeen years.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --300 years.

MR. MARINO: It only seems like that, John, because you and I go back to when you were Mayor -- Councilman and Mayor.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: That's true.

MR. MARINO: As you have been told, my name is James Marino. I am a member of the Cherry Hill Township Board of Education, and I am now the Chairman of the Legislative Committee of that Board.

I want to thank the legislators who are present here today for a discussion on a critical issue for boards across the State of New Jersey, and a critical issue for our young people.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Excuse me, Jim. We are going to transcribe this, so we are going to have to have you talk into a mike. Are you picking it up? (affirmative response from hearing reporter) Okay, so I guess you are okay the way you are, Jim.

MR. MARINO: My big mouth is usually picked up, John, as you know.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: You can still face the audience, but kind of try to pick up the mike as you are doing it.

MR. MARINO: I want to thank the legislators who are present for having come down to our Township. I want to assure them that they are always welcome in Cherry Hill, regardless of whether we agree with you or not. I want to thank the people who took time out of their busy schedules to come down to make inquiry as to the progress of the changes, in support for education in our State.

If I might take the prerogative of the host, might I kick things off by asking a few questions that I really don't

expect to hear answers to right now this afternoon, unless you want to, but I would like to hear answers to them over the course of the next several months, as the Legislature deliberates.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Okay. You would like to put them into the record as questions for the Legislature to get responses to. Is that correct?

MR. MARINO: My first inquiry is--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Assemblywoman Weber has arrived.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: I apologize; I got lost.

SENATOR EWING: It just started.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Go ahead, Jim.

MR. MARINO: My first question is: Is there a willingness in the Legislature to direct the State Department of Education, and other bodies concerned with education in this State, to develop a consensus as to what constitutes an acceptable thorough and efficient education in this State, and then to go ahead and examine what resources the State and the individual districts will need in order to effect this thorough and efficient education?

And, if that happens -- or even if it doesn't happen -- is there a willingness to explore just what we need in the way of financial resources to sustain the educational system in this State, and is there a willingness to make hard decisions about taxes and shifting other resources, in order that we may totally support the children of this State in this important endeavor?

The last question is: Is there a willingness, while we are doing all of this, to continue the present funding that has enabled the districts in this State to reach the point at which they are, in some cases, satisfactorily, and in other cases not so satisfactorily, but at least having the resources that will not put the total State into a bind as to supporting what they already have? In other words, are you willing to

sustain the level of support we have enjoyed in the 1991-1992 school year?

That is the totality of my questions, and you can probably understand why I don't expect full answers this afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Jim.

Dr. Jack Eisenstein, Director of Urban Affairs, New Jersey Association of School Administrators. Jack, I hope I got that title right.

J A C K E I S E N S T E I N, Ed.D.: Assemblyman Rocco, Senator Ewing, and Assemblywoman Weber: I don't want to make a big issue of it, but many of our members perceived this meeting being held today as the Committee not really wanting to receive testimony. I don't think the word has gone out yet that Senator Ewing is going to hold two additional hearings. I know you are going to hold one on Tuesday, Senator Ewing. The word has gone out on that. I assure you that that will be very well attended Tuesday morning. However, many of the people, including a bus load of people from Plainfield, who came to the last meeting and wanted to testify-- (problem with microphone at this point)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Your kind words were missed by the audience.

DR. EISENSTEIN: Unfortunately, the perception, as I said, is that it was ill-advised, in our opinion, to hold this meeting today. Many of the people from North Jersey looked forward to coming down--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Jack, I am not going to be rough on you--

DR. EISENSTEIN: I know, and I don't want to be argumentative either.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --but our determinations are our determinations. We have had plenty of hearings. There is plenty of opportunity to discuss-- Say what you have to say.

Attend the hearings in North Jersey. We are not here to hear you berate us. Just get to the issue that you want to deal with.

DR. EISENSTEIN: I am not here to berate. I just wanted to be on record as I was directed to do.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Anyone who would like to attend, may attend, at any meeting, at any time. It is a heck of a lot better than the last QEA, where you didn't have two words to say.

DR. EISENSTEIN: The other point I would like to make -- and, again, we have made this at hearings with Senator Ewing, before the Senate Education Committee -- is, I think a great deal of attention has to be paid to the Abbott 3 case coming up. I think the decisions of the Supreme Court will certainly influence QEA in the direction -- particularly with the urban 30. I think to act prematurely -- and I know that in your anxiety to maybe straighten out the mess of QEA as it is perceived statewide-- I think a movement too quickly, without waiting for that decision, could be an adverse role in terms of how QEA legislation should go forward in this State.

We are under the impression-- We believe that the courts are going to rule that the urban 30 need additional funding. I know you recognize it, but I think, again, the direction appears to be on a program basis, and that isn't what the Court said. The Court said that all of the youngsters are entitled to equalized funding. It is not to be on a program basis, but is an entitlement.

So, with that, I will sit down. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Jack.

There were some people who were here last time who will be given the opportunity to speak first. Annette Kearney, Plainfield Public Schools. Annette?

SENATOR EWING: How many individuals are here from Plainfield? (indiscernible response from member of audience)

Didn't anyone advise you that we were going to have a meeting up in Hackensack?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: No.

SENATOR EWING: Staff was told to call you. They called some people up in Plainfield. I don't know who they got ahold of.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Everyone we had a telephone number for from the last meeting, we called and advised them of the Hackensack meeting.

SENATOR EWING: Well, I'm sorry the word didn't get out to you. That is why we are having it up there, so people like yourselves won't have to come so far down here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: When?

SENATOR EWING: What?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: When?

A N N E T T E K E A R N E Y, Ed.D.: She asked, when?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: When will the hearing be held? It will be held on Tuesday, June 9, at 4:00, at the Bergen County Vocational/Technical School in Hackensack

SENATOR EWING: At 200 Hackensack Avenue.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thanks, Jack. Annette, before you begin, Assemblyman Nickles has arrived. We appreciate your attending, Assemblyman. Annette is also a Superintendent, I understand.

DR. KEARNEY: Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today. I would like to thank the members of my staff and community who came with us this afternoon, on this Memorial Day weekend. Hackensack, up in Bergen County, is just as far. As a matter of fact, I took a trip up there to look at a prospective candidate, so I know how far it is. I went all the way up to Bergenfield, and, wow, is that some drive, because I drove myself. So coming down here is an equal distance as going up to Hackensack. But we don't mind traveling when we have to go on behalf of our children. We have always had to

struggle and to work hard on behalf of children in urban areas. That just seems to be the fare of the day, when it comes to children in urban areas.

I need to say, on behalf of the Quality Education Act, being the Superintendent in an urban district, that it is not easy. Those of us in the urban areas have had to trim down our budgets for many, many years, and I am going to speak specifically about Plainfield.

For the last five years, we have trimmed our staff tremendously. In Plainfield, for five years, we have trimmed 78 positions. I don't know if you know what that is like, but I do. Every year, we have had to riff and terminate staff. We did not bring them back. On the elementary level, I have class sizes that reached 30. Now, I don't think, gentlemen and young lady, that your families would appreciate having young children in classes of 30. We couldn't do anything about it, because we just don't have the money. Taxes in my district are confiscatory. I can't do anything about that -- \$4.84 a hundred. I wish I could do something about it. Even though we did get tax relief last year, and I kept the budget down so that we did not have a tax increase, it is still a confiscatory rate. I know we get more money from the State, in terms of State aid, than our local levy is able to put in, but that is the state of the business in Plainfield. It is one of those districts.

We attempt to provide a most excellent education with a little bit of money. We struggle against great odds. I have terminated librarians on the elementary level. I don't know how you teach reading without having the support of librarians, but we have done it. My librarians have been gone for three years. We had to move something. I can't move teachers out of classrooms, but I can increase class size to that I can have a teacher in every classrom. So we did that three years ago.

I don't have guidance counselors, and I do have dysfunctional families. So I got a little bit of money in supplemental aid, and I put counselors in. We were only able to buy three, because when you get your money late, and you try to find adequate counselors, they are not available after September. People do have jobs, regardless of what others think.

We had to pare down every year, so I am down 78 people, and that is a great impact when you think about those people who impact on the classrooms. I am smarting. I am not top-heavy in administration at all. I don't have vice principals in my schools. I have one elementary school with a vice principal. There are 630 children in that elementary school with that vice principal. God, I need that vice principal in that school. He works double-time, along with the principal, so that we can provide an adequate education for those children.

So, the Quality Education Act has done something for us, even though it hasn't been a lot of money. Last year, \$3 million, and by the time everything got melted down, we didn't have any new programs. What did I do? A mission statement, and we put \$500 into that. That was nothing much. And we moved some money around so we could have an alternative school. We took some things out so we could have that, and that cost us a bundle of money. An alternative school is very expensive, when you try to provide an education for some children who are disaffected.

We had a summer school for our young people. You have to have a summer school. Otherwise, you have those same youngsters who are disaffected and failed, back in the system again going through the same thing. It just didn't make sense.

Next year, I am getting some \$7-point-something million -- \$8 million -- and we are using it wisely. We are talking about librarians to enforce that -- to undergird the

reading program that we are going to put in. Counselors -- guidance counselors on the elementary school level to undergird my dysfunctional families, not to say-- I am not one to believe that you can't get quality out of a one-parent family. If that one parent is intact, yes, you can. So we still need guidance counselors, and I am putting that in.

We are doing a preschool study, because my children need to go to preschool. I don't like the idea that I have a lot of youngsters at two and three years of age running around, and when they get to be five they come to me anyway. I would like to have them when they are preschoolers, so I can get them ready to come to me. Don't come to me at five not knowing your name; that you have a nickname, and that is your name. Don't call yourself "Poopy," when your real name is George. It doesn't make sense. We will teach you your real name. We want to teach you your name and address, and all of those things.

I don't care about all of those other things -- that those are the things the home should teach. The home should do a lot of things, but when they don't and it falls on us, we'll do it, because we have that responsibility. So we go on and we do it. There are some things that are givens for homes, but they don't do them. But we will do them, and we have been doing them.

With the Breakfast Program, we are doing great things with a little bit of money. With our Lunch Program, we are doing great things with a little bit of money, and we are solvent. We have never been accused of mismanaging any funds for anything -- never ever in Plainfield. Our record is sterling. You need to check us out.

I want you to know that when the monitoring came to Plainfield, the first time we were good. Nothing was wrong. The second time, people played games with it, and they found little tiny things such as all staff didn't understand that there was a counseling program on paper. They played games

with it, so we got marked down as a deficient effort. So now, this time, we just got a 100 percent in grades three and six scores. Everyone passed. That was just this week. Our reports are out, and we are only waiting for our ninth grade scores to come out. Then, hallelujah, Plainfield will be a Level I district again. We are very pleased about that.

John Ellis just sent us a letter, conditional approval, as long as our ninth grade scores are all right. So, we're looking good. We are making great strides. QEA is helping us to do that. We are only asking for that kind of support to be able to do those things.

The Quality Education Act is supporting us, so if we do not get that-- You can't continue to give and take away. I'm saying, I am not one-- I do not fight with my colleagues in the State. They have never lost a thing, and they know that, in terms of talking about losing money under quality education. We talk a good game. I hear people talking about, "I will lose this, and I will lose that." But I don't have all of the resources that they have in districts that are "premier." I consider myself "premier," working against all odds. I do not leave the building at 4:00 in the afternoon. My hours end at 7:00 at night, and I have a seven-day week. My staff here, most likely, do the same thing, and they can attest to all of those hours. They put in a lot of time and effort, and they do not get paid for it.

I thank you. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Mr. Chairman, may I ask--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Assemblyman Nickles.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: You can't come all the way from Plainfield and not have a couple of questions. We have to make it worth your while -- the trip.

First of all, I missed your name. I'm sorry.

DR. KEARNEY: Annette Kearney.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Is it Dr. Kearney, Ms. Kearney?

DR. KEARNEY: Dr. Kearney.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Okay. Dr. Kearney, you are one of the special 30 school districts?

DR. KEARNEY: Yes, we are.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: How many teaching staff members do you currently have?

DR. KEARNEY: Currently-- We had 550; we are down to 499.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Obviously, you must be a K-12 district?

DR. KEARNEY: We are a K-12 district, yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: With about how many students?

DR. KEARNEY: We have 6600. Let me get my figures here.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: That's close enough.

DR. KEARNEY: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Just round figures.

DR. KEARNEY: I brought my budget.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Three years ago, prior to the Quality Education Act, when we were still under the T&E Chapter 212 program-- Looking at that budget year to the last budget year and this budget year, will you, if you can recall, share with us how much of an increase you got, perhaps last year to the current budget year, and the current budget year to the proposed budget year?

DR. KEARNEY: Okay. Last budget year we had some-- That was \$55 million budget. This budget year-- Next budget year, it is a \$62 million budget. The one before that I can't remember -- 44.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Okay. I guess the point I am trying to make is, from 55 to 62-- Is that what you said?

DR. KEARNEY: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Is that the additional new State aid you got in the QEA?

DR. KEARNEY: Additional State aid.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: So that would be \$7 million?

DR. KEARNEY: Seven million dollars; that's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: With that \$7 million, what are some of the programs you have reinstated?

DR. KEARNEY: It is really not all reinstatement, but there are new things that we have looked at. We looked at our programs and said, "We need to reorganize. We need to look at some creative ways in which to embellish and support our student body and our faculty, so we can reach the levels of achievement we want to reach.

Number one with reinstatement is the library program. We have never had counselors on the elementary school level until we got the supplemental aid. So that is a new piece -- elementary counselors. Librarians, like I said-- That is a reinstatement. The new program will be preschool. We want a preschool center for our district. That is a new one. Summer school is going to be a reinstatement, so that is not new. The extended day will be new and old, because we do have an extended day, but it is just homework now. In our town, we don't have a movie theater, a skating rink. We don't have anything for our kids. After school, they just go home. So we want to do some other things with the--

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: You made mention in your testimony concerning the morning program for students. Is that like a morning latchkey or a Breakfast Program?

DR. KEARNEY: That is a Breakfast Program.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Is that something new, or was that already--

DR. KEARNEY: That's new. That started-- As a matter of fact, this is the first year, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Do you have an afternoon program similar to that?

DR. KEARNEY: Well, the after school program is that extended homework program. It is really Chapter I funded. All of our schools are Chapter I.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: When was the last time that you actually had a new building constructed?

DR. KEARNEY: Oh, my goodness. Our new building is the high school -- 1971.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Okay.

DR. KEARNEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: All right. I appreciate your comments. I am just going to share a couple, from me to you, as superintendent to superintendent--

DR. KEARNEY: Yes?

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: We, in our school district, are a K-12 district, with about 4400 students. We have, right now, up to 33 or 34 in a class. Probably the major difference between my district and yours is that we are also building two new facilities which will be housed next year, which will reduce those down to 25. Obviously, you don't have any plans for construction.

DR. KEARNEY: Not at all.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Thank you very much for your testimony, and I thank you and your colleagues for traveling such a long distance.

DR. KEARNEY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Dr. Kearney, before you go, we have a bill in the Legislature, which I am sponsoring, that I am sure the Senate will also be evaluating at some point, that will call for--

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: We can't hear you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --that will call for-- Can you hear me now? (affirmative response from audience) That will call for some of the same types of programs that you have in place in Plainfield. We may be in touch with you at some point

in the future, and would seek your help in that regard. So, thank you for coming.

DR. KEARNEY: Oh, wonderful; wonderful.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: We will move on now to the other speakers. I will have to say that, since there are fewer speakers today, we will not hold you to five minutes. But please try to be reasonable, since all of us would like to get out at a reasonable time.

Doris Williams, from Plainfield.

D O R I S J. W I L L I A M S: Good afternoon. My name is Doris Williams. I am Principal of Emerson School in Plainfield.

QEA funds have truly enhanced parental involvement at Emerson School. In fact, Plainfield's community was very excited about QEA. While many of our parents do not understand how districts are funded, they quickly developed a strong array of hope, because the term "quality education" meant additional services which ultimately denotes school success and school achievement.

Additionally, we have a part-time counselor, who is also here today. He has counseled many students who are in at-risk situations. During those counseling sessions, he has motivated students to get back into the classroom. He has helped them with their self-esteem and self-discipline. But, more importantly, he has helped them resolve family and community conflicts and crises.

We need our QEA funding to rehire our much needed librarians, who do more than exchange books biweekly, and occasionally read stories to K-2 students. As you know, librarians teach study skills, as well as research skills.

Please consider our QEA funds. At Emerson School, we have a pledge that the children listen to every day over the P.A. system, and it goes like this: "I am here to learn. I want to learn. I know I can learn. I will learn something new every day."

Thank you. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you very much. As a former principal, I understand what you're saying.

Kathleen Haughwout, Cherry Hill Board of Education.
Kathy?

KATHLEEN M. HAUGHWOUT: I want to thank you for coming back down to South Jersey.

We have heard many people speak pro and con about the effects of the QEA on their districts. I would like to discuss the QEA on a more statewide basis, and remind you that:

You are the State Senate and Assembly Education Committees. You are charged with taking care of the children in New Jersey and their education. Look at the children behind the QEA. They all have faces and names. No matter what district they live in, look at them when you look at the QEA.

The QEA in its concept was a noble idea indeed. It was supposedly passed to assist all the children of New Jersey, but it has not. Instead, it has dismantled an entire State educationally, and has hurt many of the same children it promised to help.

There is no doubt that there are special needs districts which require extra aid and attention for their children, and they should receive it. No one is denying that. But all of the other districts in New Jersey should not be cast aside as if they were lepers and the children left alone in order to help those special needs districts. In many ways, we are all special needs districts. It is just that our needs are different. What the current funding of the QEA has done is to take apart the entire State and pit district against district, parent against parent, and child against child.

The Bible states: "Act in haste, repent at leisure." This is what has happened with QEA I and QEA II. QEA I was implemented in haste, without study, without thought of consequence, and the entire student population of New Jersey is repenting for it. Our schools in all towns are being called on

for more and more every day in many ways. They are becoming the extended family and home life for students throughout the State, yet they are being subsidized less and less. They are truly the examples of: "Do more for everyone, but do it with less." "Take care of our children, but do not ask for help from your government."

It is a sad commentary when government, which claims to be proeducation, keeps placing educational funding on the back burner of priorities. Still, government is involved in education through State mandates. Compensatory and remedial help are mandated. Help the children; give them more. Yes, the children should receive remedial help, but then what does the QEA enact? Roadblocks. It builds roadblocks in the path of children receiving help, by changing compensatory education funding to the most ludicrous form of funding ever created -- "at-risk funding," funding that is based on whether or not a child receives free milk or lunch, and not on test scores.

I keep hearing that there are studies showing that poorer children are the children at risk, and therefore they should be helped. While I know there is a correlation here, where is the study that shows if you are born above the poverty level you automatically have no problems and require no assistance? Doesn't the State take into consideration that many people, because of false pride, do not apply for these free assistance programs, and many, many more each day, because of language barriers, do not even understand the forms to be filled out?

Yes, mandates -- more and more mandates in the State. Health and drug programs; AIDS and family life programs; core program mandates. We are told, "Have them all, but do it with less funding from us." I believe that any program that is State-mandated should be fully funded by the State no matter where the child lives.

The QEA then, continuing on its path of equalizing education, instituted another form of funding cut: It is called "capping," which penalizes districts where people are willing to sacrifice more and more in order to support the future of our country -- our children.

The entire process of "capping" is unfair, since it also penalizes districts which have out-of-district special education placement students. The cost of these educational tuitions is still included in their school budget caps, which then causes an unfair reflection of money in their district budgets. This is totally unjust, when the State, itself, has mandated that these students must be placed where they can receive a quality education. If nothing else is changed, these out-of-district special education moneys must be removed from the district caps.

Yes, the concept of the QEA is noble. Every child deserves an equal education in New Jersey, and it should not matter where a child was born or what color or race he or she is. But the funding method now being used with the QEA has destroyed the concept of "quality education" in New Jersey, and instituted "reverse discrimination" against quality, and has mandated mediocrity to all districts in the State.

No district in this State can exist under the funding system of the QEA; not the special needs districts, not the foundation districts, not the transition districts. No district in this State can afford paying the pensions and benefit costs which have been paper-transferred to them. No district in this State can afford to provide core programs for quality education, let alone offer more under the funding system of the QEA.

I ask that you ignore State Treasurer Sam Crane's proposal to remove \$207 million which Governor Florio has set aside to aid the nonspecial needs districts in order to help

balance the State budget. We should not be replacing a one-cent sales tax with a tax on children and their future.

Must the children of New Jersey again pay for promises made to adults that cannot be kept without penalizing their education? The children cannot speak for themselves. They cast no vote in an election. They must depend on us for fairness and equity. Yes, keep your promises to the children. Change the funding system of the QEA, and let the QEA finally stand for quality education for all.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Kathy.

Harold Brown?

H A R O L D B R O W N: Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am Harold Brown, member of the Plainfield Board of Education. I am here this afternoon to speak up concerning the problems with financing education in the State of New Jersey, specifically Plainfield, New Jersey.

As the Constitution of New Jersey states, the State has a responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for all the children in New Jersey. Now, I take this to mean: funding equality and opportunity.

Plainfield, New Jersey, is a special needs district. We have many problems in trying to educate our children in Plainfield. Some of the problems that we are experiencing are: Old buildings requiring constant maintenance. There are some special types of maintenance problems we have experienced, such as: Removal of asbestos, which is very expensive; fuel tanks, very expensive; and also painting, replacing roofing, and what have you. These buildings that we are trying to educate our children in are old, very, very old. I would hope that some day in the future, this Committee would provide the means to replace those old buildings we have in Plainfield.

The QEA -- Quality Education Act -- has provided funds for certain programs that we now have in place in Plainfield.

One is the Breakfast Program. We are going to hire more librarians and more counselors for the elementary school, an alternative school, and an adult center. We need to expand the facilities at the alternative school so we can deal with more students. That would mean relocating to a larger building.

I am saying this afternoon, gentlemen, that basically what Dr. Kearney said, I am here to reaffirm; that without the QEA funds, we will not be able to provide the education that is required by the State of New Jersey, and the children will suffer. Remember, the children today have a unique set of problems that we didn't have 20 or 30 years ago. They come to school with these problems. So, in order for us to deal with the child and his problems, we must have the services available to somehow help this child, in order for him to get an education so he will be a productive and responsible citizen to the State of New Jersey and to this country. We cannot do this if we do not have the funds.

I say, in closing, children do not fail. We fail children. I would ask this Committee to think if we do not come up with the answers to financing education for our children in New Jersey, what will these children today have to pass on to their children? To say that the State didn't care about their education?

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: May I react for a second?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Yes, Assemblyman Nickles.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: I just wanted to comment to the honorable Board member from Cherry Hill, and also to the speaker, you know, I believe both of you are right, in that what we have to do is a perplexing problem. I can identify with the problems of Plainfield; I can identify with the problems of Cherry Hill.

The one point that was brought up by the Board member that I do want to react to is the mandate issue. I recently sat at a Committee meeting in Trenton where the State mandates were going to be an issue, but they have eliminated the mandate portion from the schools. I know that just from the 1st of May-- In my school district, I had one student come in who wasn't budgeted for next year's budget or this year's budget, \$50,000, because this individual attempted suicide seven times. I looked at that, and that is almost two teachers. Something has to go. I look at what that means. That means, if we don't have the money, cutting out programs currently existing in order to meet a court mandate, because the courts are now looking at school districts and saying, "Well, you have the money. As long as the person resides -- the young juvenile resides in your district, you are responsible." It just seems like more and more mandates are being placed upon us.

So, I just wanted to share that. I think the Committee, as a whole, recognizes the problems that both sides have in this. We don't want it to be sides. We are trying to find a suitable solution to the problems.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Assemblyman Nickles.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: They will be my last comments.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: For now.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Kabili Tayari. I hope I am pronouncing that correctly. Mr. Tayari is from the New Jersey NAACP.

K A B I L I T A Y A R I: You did pronounce it correctly.

Good afternoon. I am very glad that the Senate Education Committee and the Assembly Education Committee decided to jointly have public hearings on such an imperative and crucial matter as the Quality Education Act. However, I strongly request that the two legislative Education Committees

jointly have at least three more public hearings in three of the "special needs districts" regionally throughout the State.

My name is Kabili Tayari. I am the Education Committee Chairman for the New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP Branches. I am also a member of a Board of Education which is a special needs district, and the most important fact is that I am a parent of children being educated in the special needs district of which I am a member of the Board of Education. For the past six years, I have served as President of the local citywide parents' organization.

First, let me reiterate the NAACP's position during the Quality Education Act hearings of 1990:

1) We upheld that the Quality Education Act is a correct and needed piece of legislation and should remain law.

2) There is a need to amend the Quality Education Act.

3) We are against mismanagement, corruption, and lack of accountability in all school districts.

4) All school districts, especially the districts that have a majority of African-Americans or Latino student populations need equity and parity, and the QEA moneys, as ordered by the New Jersey Supreme Court, assist in providing both equity and parity.

Secondly, there is a concern from some members of the two Houses of the Legislature about costs incurred or expenditures of the QEA moneys, which I will address.

If you remember, those of you who are senior members of the Senate and the Assembly, during the QEA I hearings and the QEA II hearings, the New Jersey NAACP, and other organizations, as well as parents and educators, directed you to assess the unfair burden of poor, low-income school districts -- called "special needs" -- and poor, middle-income school districts -- called Foundation Aid -- as it relates to New Jersey's education employees' pension costs.

In 1991 and 1992, the first year of the QEA, the 30 special needs districts received a total of \$287.7 million, more State aid than they received in the prior year. At this point, it is imperative that I remind you that the 30 special needs districts only received 5 percent of the total QEA moneys -- which I think was \$344 million -- allocated. The wealthiest school districts in the State, such as Alpine, Deal, and Cherry Hill, designated as Transition Aid districts, received 25 percent of the total QEA funds allocated by the Senate and the Assembly. And, districts classified as Foundation Aid/Transition Aid school districts received the remaining 12 percent of the total QEA funds allowed to be distributed by the Senate and the Assembly. Remember, the 30 poorest school districts in the State received only 5 percent -- only 5 percent -- of the total QEA funds, and the wealthiest school districts in the State received 25 percent of the total QEA funds.

As I stated previously, for the first year of QEA, the 30 poorest school districts combined received a total of \$287.7 million more in State aid than they received last year. However, of this amount, \$10.8 million was needed for the 30 districts' increase in employee pension and Social Security contributions -- \$10 million of that 287. Another \$81.6 million was allocated for property tax relief. Let us not forget, the wealthiest districts also received property tax relief.

After you deduct the \$10.8 million and the \$81.6 million, only \$195.2 million of the \$287.7 million jointly received by the 30 poorest districts remained available for educational expenditures -- needed for educational programs, better known as parity. Therefore, this remainder represents a pitifully small increase of approximately 13 percent in spendable education aid.

Another factor we need to look at and remember, is that the aid figures reported in the press are incorrect. The press -- mainly The Star-Ledger -- has alleged that the total amount of additional funding available for educational expenditures, that is, parity for the special needs districts, was \$147.4 million. The correct figure is \$158.8 million. Of that \$158.8 million, \$64.1 million was budgeted for the districts' education improvement plans. We must remember, this was not supplanted. The education improvement plan-- You had to look at your budget that was approved -- for approved programs, and say, "Now, I need this money to help to carry out these programs that I already have."

Much of the remaining amount of increased aid to the 30 poorest school districts is necessary to fund the increases in fixed costs, such as health benefits, salaries, insurance premiums, contractors' services, and, let us not forget, pensions and Social Security.

I have focused and concentrated on costs and expenditures in regards to equity and parity, because equity and parity relate directly to the legislative allocations of QEA. The QEA funding represents a small but substantial increase in the amount of money available in the special needs districts' budgets for educational expenditures. Without such increases in State aid, the only way these districts could afford to initiate parity would be to raise their property taxes -- an inequity and financial burden that the Transition Aid districts -- the wealthiest districts -- do not face, but the poorest districts face this unfair financial situation.

Since the 30 poorest school districts were identified by the New Jersey State Supreme Court as having municipal overburden -- disproportionately high property taxes and low ratables -- as well as inadequate levels of school funding, it is a necessity and fair to the youth in these school districts

to receive the needed mandated equity and party that is necessary.

The goal of QEA is to meet the mandate of the State Supreme Court, which is that the 30 special needs districts attain equity in per pupil spending levels with New Jersey's wealthiest school districts, such as Alpine, Deal, and Cherry Hill. These districts have the highest levels of equalized property value and aggregate income. Also, the wealthiest school districts, like all school districts in New Jersey, receive categorical aid for transportation, special education, at-risk/compensatory education, and bilingual education, as well as full aid for their employee pension and Social Security contributions.

I will close with these facts:

1) Educationally, New Jersey is the third most segregated State in America.

2) Sixty-six percent of all public school youth in New Jersey are in the 30 poorest school districts designated as "special needs."

3) The majority of the students in the 30 special needs districts are African-American and Latino.

We will send you some other data showing you the disparities even within the same county, Union County as an example. Plainfield residents pay about \$9.95 per \$100 of property value, while in towns like Berkeley Heights, they pay about \$2.38 per \$100 of property value. But at the same time, if you look at Berkeley Heights and you look at Plainfield, the education is better funded-- There is a better system of education in Berkeley Heights than there is in Plainfield. We need to look at that property tax relief package, because, although we believe in property tax relief, in equitable tax relief, we need to give that, not just to a Plainfield or a Jersey City, because some people talk about the Foundation Aid districts. We need to look at those cities that really need

property tax relief, really need increased funding, and look at the districts that cannot afford to carry their own weight, and do something, also, about this inequitable pension situation that exists.

I thank you. I have copies of my presentation for all of you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Kabili.

David Kerr.

D A V I D G. K E R R: I want to thank the members of the Committee for allowing me to speak. Quite frankly, I didn't think it would be this soon, because I am not talking about the QEA, although perhaps it is a topic that is somewhat related to it, because we are talking about quality in education for children.

I am not here as a member of any board. I am not here as a member of any special group. I am here as a parent. I appear before this Committee today to testify against the new regulations for certifying teachers in the State of New Jersey.

I am glad the people from Plainfield are here, because what I have to say impacts on their district as well. I appear before you today as an angry, frustrated, disillusioned parent of a recent college graduate who will be directly affected by these new regulations.

As adopted by the Department of Education, the Division of Teacher Certification and Preparation, these regulations are supposed to go into effect in September of 1992. They are known as the "Induction Year for Traditionally Prepared Beginning Teachers," more commonly known as "Mentoring." These regulations were intended to provide new teachers with the support they needed to succeed during their first critical year. But, as we have seen with so many regulations -- and I figure the QEA is one of them -- that which is intended is not always realized in actual practice.

Another example I had in my testimony is, take a look at the 10 percent Federal luxury tax on the shipbuilding industry in New Jersey. That which is intended, certainly proved to be devastating.

I hope that this Committee can be persuaded to see beyond the intent of the regulations now in place for teacher certification and view what the future of the reality is going to be in New Jersey.

The unintended result of the new certification regulations, I fear, will be the State-mandated unemployment of thousands of our university graduates. I fear that my daughter is going to be among the casualties.

Yesterday, May 21, my daughter graduated, with honors, from Douglass College, Rutgers University. She would like to be able to pursue a career in New Jersey teaching English at the secondary level. Lynn worked very hard during her four years in college so she would be an attractive, competitive candidate for employment, which today is a very, very difficult job market. She fully expected to be certified as a teacher following the completion of the State-mandated curriculum in education.

During the last four years, our family spent approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000, at a State University, so that our daughter would be adequately prepared to teach in the schools in New Jersey. Now the Department of Education has decided that all of this training and all of this education obtained in a State University, is inadequate, and that she is going to need further mentoring.

I am incredulous. How can it be that the State Department of Education has determined that teacher training in our State universities is inadequate? Am I being told, as a parent, that our State universities are offering inadequate educational programs? I spent \$30,000. My daughter knocked herself out to graduate with honors, and now I am being told

that her education is inadequate, and that she needs to be mentored.

As the regulations now stand, recent graduates will not be issued standard teaching certificates. Instead, they are going to get something called a "Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing." Well, I don't know what that means.

School districts which seek to employ a provisional teacher must submit a plan to the Department of Education and receive approval to train beginning teachers. These districts that are under the gun with QEA both ways-- They don't have the time nor the resources nor the money to provide for additional teacher training. I thought that was what the State college programs were supposed to do.

However, as reported by the Courier-Post -- and I don't know whether the members of the Committee are familiar with this article or not -- on May 15, 1992, in an article written by Mr. Alan Guenther, I quote: "Many districts are not ready for these new regulations, and they don't have the State-approved training program in place." As an example, this article quotes Alayne Shoenfeld of Washington Township, who says: "We have a committee in place to look at the guidelines. Washington Township has 25 job openings, and we will be hiring experienced teachers who already have their certificates. A lot of districts are adopting a wait-and-see attitude right now." She expected the Township would be ready to hire recent graduates "within six months to a year."

Well, how many other districts in the State are adopting that same position? How many other districts in the State are unwilling or unable to hire recent graduates at this time? How many districts in this State will be discriminating against those candidates for employment who hold this new Certificate of Higher Eligibility? How can it be that the schools were not mandated to put this program in place to level out the playing field?

We have recent college graduates who will not be able to get hired because the schools do not have mentoring in place, yet at the same time they cannot afford to hire certificated people higher up on the scales.

I received a second surprise yesterday. Not only did my daughter graduate with honors, she also got an engagement ring--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Great.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Lucky you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Very nice. I am waiting for my daughters to get one. (laughter)

MR. KERR: --which we had long expected, but we were not-- Which brings another immediate problem: What is a Certificate of Higher Eligibility? If my daughter now wants to get married and move to another state, what kind of reciprocal agreements are these other states going to have? I don't know. As far as I can tell, this is State-mandated unemployment.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Mr. Kerr, let me tell you that, yes, this absolutely came as a regulation from the Department. The Committee didn't know anything about it, I guess, until the regulations were dropped. There is a great deal of concern. You express the concerns of many I have spoken to personally, and I am sure Fred, as a Superintendent, and Ginny, on the Committee, have heard from many others with regard to, mainly the fact that-- Not that it is not necessarily--

You know, I don't want to judge the concept right now, but the fact is, many people went into the programs expecting to graduate with a certification, and I think they changed the rules of the game halfway through. That is the problem.

MR. KERR: I have no complaints--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I promise you that I will be meeting with the Commissioner. Maybe at one of our meetings when we have the Commissioner before us we will bring this up,

but I certainly will relay the concerns to him. As you know, though, the Department does have the prerogative to set the regulations with regard to teacher certification in the State, and actually in terms of the program itself. I have had a number of battles, not only with this administration, but with the last administration, in terms of what they have done to the preparation of teachers.

So, this is just another one in line between Cooperman and Ellis that I disagree with. However, the concerns are more obvious this year simply because of the job market. The best I can do, and the best that others on this Committee can do, is to let the Department know your feelings, and the feelings of so many others, and probably give them some kind of concern by maybe dropping in a piece of legislation -- if anyone on the Committee so desires to do that -- to change that to those who come into the program new, as opposed to changing the rules in the middle of the game. Maybe someone on the Committee would like to do that. I would certainly hear it. I am not sure of what that would do for your daughter, because that could take time.

MR. KERR: A very close friend of my daughter, in fact one of her roommates, graduated yesterday also -- the same school, the same four years, the same program, in special education. They are exempt from these regulations. Why?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Special ed is exempt?

MR. KERR: Yes. The article pointed out that special education is exempt from the regulation.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I wasn't aware of that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: I wasn't aware of it either.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Anyhow, Mr. Kerr, we thank you. We must go on to--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: May I have a copy of that?

MR. KERR: Yes. I will be glad to leave the Committee a copy.

I do appreciate very much, sir, your letting me speak here today. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Mr. Kerr.

Barbara Williams. Is this Irvington, Barbara?

B A R B A R A W. W I L L I A M S: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: The Irvington Public Schools.

MS. WILLIAMS: My name is Barbara Williams. I am representing Dr. Jean Francis, who is the interim Superintendent in Irvington. I don't know whether she testified at the last hearing or not, but I was handed a letter and told to come to this meeting because she could not attend. Had I known that you had the meeting in Hackensack, I would have gone to the Hackensack meeting. I have been on four different highways, I think, to get here, but I am here, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Well, thanks for coming.

MS. WILLIAMS: I agree with you that it is nice to give us an opportunity, because before the other QEA, educators were not allowed to have input. This is the second time that I have had the opportunity to present to Senator Ewing and/or the Committee, because I belong to another organization. Up in North Caldwell I had the opportunity, so this is my second time around, wearing a different hat. But I do appreciate it.

Irvington is located in Essex County.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Barbara, let me just-- We don't want to get into too much give and take, but as I think I mentioned earlier, I think you're right. If more of this had occurred during the first go-around, we may have had fewer problems, and maybe greater acceptance.

MS. WILLIAMS: Right. Irvington is in Essex County. We are a K-12 district. We have approximately 9200 children, and are densely populated in a square mileage of 2.8 square miles. That will tell you the density of the school district. We are surrounded by Newark, East Orange, Union, South Orange,

and West Orange. We are an urban district. Our population is predominantly black and Hispanic, with a strong limited English proficiency population of Haitians and some Hispanic. We are about 92 percent minority out of our population.

We are currently in Level II, with monitoring because of facility. We are grossly overcrowded. In some of the elementary schools, we have classes of 30 to 34. We have a heavy basic skills comp ed program because of the overcrowding. Like the other districts, we need a preschool program. We do not have one. Our class size is large. With the QEA money, which was reduced to \$5 million from \$11 million, Irvington was able to do some after-school enrichment. In other words, we are not just doing remediation. We have done some after-school enrichment programs for the intellectually gifted and the regular child. We also have Saturday enrichment for the high school children. These are optional programs. We were able to put a couple of guidance counselors in the elementary schools. Because we are so overcrowded, we have seven elementary schools. The smallest elementary school we have is about 400. We have two elementary schools, one is 920, the other is 1067. We were able to put Assistant Principals in the schools that are over 600.

Most of the testimony from Plainfield is very similar to Irvington, but I just want to add the fact that we are still in Level II because of facility, not because of what we are doing with the children. Our Basic Skills Program is the largest, due to the overcrowding of the classroom.

The other point I wanted to mention-- The young lady from Cherry Hill mentioned their at-risk funding formula. I don't think anyone is happy with that formula, including the urban districts. Not only are we not happy with the funding formula, we are unhappy about the fact that you do not have guidelines. In some of the districts -- not mine, I am fortunate enough, but in some districts, the at-risk money is

not being used to replace the old comp ed program. It is being used, probably not for the intentions that you wanted it to be used for. I think all of us who are working with at-risk money would like you to tighten that up and give us some regulations, so the money goes where it is supposed to go. Not just Irvington, but I think some of the other districts would like that, too.

I agree that you don't have to be poor to be an at-risk child. In the urban districts, the at-risk money is used for children who are not necessarily on the poverty list, or on Aid to Dependent Children, because we do know that the children who come from the better families are also at risk. But I do think that if you could look at the allocation of those moneys and tighten up the regulations, all the children would benefit.

Again, if you will look at the municipal overburden of the urban districts, a lot of the schools in the urban districts have to have security, and a lot of the suburban districts do not. To pay for security in the urban districts-- I know you have heard this from Eugene Campbell already, but I am going to reconfirm it. The security is really very difficult in some of the urban districts.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify here.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Barbara, thank you so much. Your comments are pretty much in line with some of our thinking here on the Committee.

Anne Schumacher -- and I am probably not pronouncing that one correctly.

ANNE SCHUMACHER: I'm sure your penmanship is all right.

I come before you, at your invitation, Senator Ewing. You were at the New Jersey School Boards Association legislative meeting a couple of weeks ago. I attempted to give you some background, and I was cut short. That was not the

place to tell you of the plight of my school district, only to ask questions. Assemblyman Nickles, I think you recall that, too. So I thank you for the opportunity to do something today that I was not able to do then.

I am not new to education. I am a comparatively new member of the Manchester Township Board of Education, serving my second year. My colleagues have given me the difficult job of being the Vice-President, to go out and speak and plead our case. That is what I am doing today. However, I did spend 33 1/2 years teaching in the school districts, in North Arlington and in South Orange and Maplewood, and I know what quality education is, because I was in a district that had quality education.

I am here today, however, to tell you that I agree with everything that everybody has said so far with respect to the QEA situation, especially the funding formula situation. There are lots and lots of cracks in the QEA. One of the cracks -- the biggest crack that seems to affect most of us -- is the funding formula used to distribute State aid to the 611 school districts.

I need to tell you something about Manchester, so you will understand my very deep concern for my small community. We are unique in two aspects: One, we have just finished with municipal corruption that has had no equal in the State, so the citizens in our district are very suspicious of anyone who wants to take any moneys from taxpayers to serve anything. So we are operating under that kind of a cloud, which indeed is very difficult.

Secondly, we have the highest proportion of retirees in the State of New Jersey. Manchester occupies 86 square miles, but we don't have a post office and we don't have a main street. We don't have a shopping area. We don't look like a town urban/suburban, because we are so completely rural. But in that 86 square miles we have 13 sections -- 13 areas,

community areas -- occupied by senior citizens on very fixed incomes. We have three community areas that are occupied by families. We do not have large numbers of students. Our students are 2700 in number. However, we are deemed a rich district, and because of that we are getting less and less State aid. This year we received \$3 million down from what it used to be. In three years we are told to expect nothing. At the same time, the medium income of 70 percent of our 40,000 people who are senior citizens comes to somewhere between \$13,000 and \$14,000 a year. Our senior citizens can no longer afford to fork out money to pay for the services of government, of which the school funding is one of them. We are very, very badly hurting.

This coming year, the 1992-1993 school year, we have had to cut our budget to the bone. We have had to eliminate areas that formerly we didn't even have to think about. They were just automatic. At every Board meeting I attend, I feel I ought to have a bulletproof vest because of all the bullets being shot out by people who demand that certain things be put back. For example, we recently had a very emotional meeting because in order to meet our cap, which is at 6.8 percent, we had to cut out courtesy busing. Living in a community like Manchester Township, we have no sidewalks, and our kids have to walk to school over major highways -- Highways 70 and 37 principally. We felt that in order to meet our cap and not cut our programs in the academics, we had to cut out courtesy busing. We went through a Board meeting that almost made me quit. I thought that if I had to live like this and face people this way, it wasn't worth it to me -- the risk of my health.

I sympathize with my people -- with my taxpayers -- because they are all in the same boat I'm in. We are senior citizens. Because of the funding formula, we have fallen through the crack and we are down at the bottom. We are very

much afraid that that crack is going to seal over our heads and we are going to be stuck.

What are we going to do three years down the line when we get nothing from State aid, unless this funding formula is changed? We have had to cut out our interscholastic sports program for our middle school. Again the parents are at us. Anyone who knows anything about education knows that the children need this. They need other things besides reading, writing, and arithmetic. They need to move around. Anyone who knows how middle school children, ages 12, 13, and 14, behave, knows that they need lots and lots of activities. We have had to cut out our after-school programs. We have had to cut out our club programs. This is not fair to our children.

Our children, although we have been deemed through an erroneous formula to be a rich district-- I don't understand how Manchester could possibly be called a rich district when our medium income is \$14,000 to \$15,000 a year. I don't understand that. Most of the people in our retirement villages put everything they had into their retirement homes, and they are subsisting on -- some of them on pensions; most of them not on pensions.

We have a very angry population as a result. We have tried to explain to our people when they come to vote down the school budget. They get very angry at us when we tell them what our school budget is. We have to tell them that we must meet the State-mandated costs. They do not understand this. Many of them are beginning to say, "Why do we have to educate these children? We did our share when we educated our children." We very calmly tell them, "This is a citizen's responsibility in a democracy. We all have to do it. At the time we were young and sending our little ones to school, other people also helped to support the school district."

But, we depend upon the State. We have always had State aid. We are now looking down to the future, and I don't

see a light at the end of the tunnel. We have appealed to Governor Florio. We have appealed to Mr. Corcoran. We have appealed to Commissioner Ellis. I have attended the State Board of Education meetings pretty regularly, but no one is allowed to speak there. So I appeal to the people as I catch them going out to the rest room, or whatever, to please look, when you are reinvestigating the funding formula primarily, because that seems to be the soul of this whole picture -- to please look at the individual communities, because we are just as different as communities as the children are in the schools.

You know, Assemblyman Nickles, as a Superintendent of Schools, we deal with individuals. We have to deal with every individual child. You mentioned one child who, because of threats of suicide, a cost had to occur, and yet that is your obligation, because it is our obligation to take care of our national treasure. All countries have a national treasure; that treasure is the children. There are many people who don't give two cents worth a damn for any kid but their own, but there are those of us who care for all our children, because we understand that that is what makes a country great, or what makes a country weak.

We are looking down the tunnel and we don't see a light there. I don't know what is going to happen. I don't know who will want to serve on the Board of Education hereafter when they see what has been happening in our district. But would you please note the name, Manchester Township, and the next time you have a hearing would you please come down to Manchester Township so you can see our area. We have three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. We are pushing our staff like crazy to give all they possibly can in order to compensate for what we had to let go.

I might say to you that when we finally realized what we had done when we cut out the courtesy busing-- We realized that one child's life is worth every single bit of all the

money put into the QEA by Trenton. We reinstated the courtesy busing, because it would just about knock us dead if anything happened to one child who had to walk on those major highways.

I would also like to say that we are looking down the road to more State mandates. Please, anytime the State mandates something, kindly send us the money. Our citizens do not understand this. We are going around now to all the different communities -- this happens to be my job -- to explain to them how education is being delivered; to explain to them what mandates mean; and to list all the mandates that have happened. They are squawking -- the people are squawking -- about all the costs involved in special education. We have to inform them, and we are doing it, to let them know that every child is their child, whether it is biological or whether it is not.

I am here to plead with you to reinvestigate the formula situation. Every single school district needs help from the State. We all pay taxes to the State, and we should get something back from the State. I do say that the 30 special needs districts certainly need their money, and need it badly, but to take it from us to give it to them is not fair. We, too, have children who are in need.

So, please remember Manchester Township and the funding formula. Our citizens would be extremely grateful to you, as I am today.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Ms. Schumacher.

Patricia Lewis.

P A T R I C I A L E W I S: I am Patricia Lewis, Reading Specialist, Plainfield, New Jersey. I come to speak to reinforce what Dr. Kearney has stated concerning class size, librarians in the school, and the money for at-risk children.

Fortunately for our children this year, Plainfield decided to use some of the at-risk funds to support the remedial programs. We don't know what is going to happen in the coming years. We definitely need remedial help. Our students require it, and our teachers need it.

In September we are starting three new programs: a new English program, a new reading program, and a new phonics program. Student teachers need training; students need materials; and librarians are a necessity. We have not had librarians in our elementary schools for three years. Consequently, no books have been purchased, and materials have been lost, strayed, or stolen. Our libraries are in deplorable condition. If we are going to keep up with what is happening in reading in the district and in the United States, the literature approach, or the whole language approach, requires that children have opportunities to read books. Our children do not have books and magazines in their homes. We need to provide them. We need librarians.

We need smaller classrooms. Teachers with at-risk children in a first grade classroom with 28 children-- It is physically impossible for a teacher to get to the needs of those children. We need more staff; we need librarians; and we need continued support.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

Dr. Jeannette Williams, also from Plainfield.

J E A N N E T T E A . W I L L I A M S , Ed.D.: I am Dr. Jeannette Williams, Principal of the Barlow School in Plainfield. I want to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to try to explain to you some of the things that I go through as a principal in Plainfield, the district that I love.

First of all, I would like to dispel the myth that Plainfield and the other 30 needy districts are taking money

away from the rich districts in order to get what we need. I want to make the statement that Plainfield and the other 30 districts never had the money in the first place. We were not given a fair shot from the beginning, and now it is catch-up time.

When I was in college, the first rule I learned in administration was that education is a State responsibility. I couldn't understand then, and I can't understand now, how anybody could devise a formula where we have to depend on a tax levy, when we know that the tax levy is not equal in all districts. So, from the beginning -- from the beginning I think we and maybe the State itself were misled.

I wonder -- and I don't know the gentlemen and the lady up there -- have any of you been to the Plainfield school system? Have any of you set foot in the Plainfield schools?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: No.

DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you. I am sure the Superintendent would agree with this. Come to Plainfield and see us. As Principal of the Barlow School, I particularly invite you to come see me at my school. You are welcome at any time, unannounced. Just come in. The door is wide open. We have an open-door policy. You can come, walk around, sit in the classrooms, visit the students, talk to the teachers and staff, and talk to my PTO and other parents. You are welcome anytime. You don't even have to tell me you are coming.

I say that, and I am sure that is true of the other schools as well, because we are doing a job in Plainfield. We are working. I think you will be amazed at what we do with nothing. I can say that authoritatively because I live in Maplewood, and I know what we get in Maplewood. I am one of those people out there making sure we get everything we need in Maplewood. When I compare what Maplewood has to work with, with what Plainfield has to work with, I will defy anybody in

Maplewood to come out and see what we are doing in Plainfield. I will certainly defy them to come out there and see my school.

You have to see what we do with nothing. If we can do all that we do with nothing, imagine what we could do with something. (applause)

Now, in my school alone -- and I can speak authoritatively for my school; the other principals can speak for their schools-- I am one of those schools where I had 32 students in grades one, two, and three this year. I fought it all year long. Dr. Kearney will tell you. But there was nothing she could do about it. I like to think of my school as being an academic school. Anybody who knows me knows that I stress the academics. When I knew I had 32 in grades one, two, and three, I knew I was up against the wall, because not only are there 32 students, but there are 32 students who are disadvantaged. That was a direct result of those 78 cuts that Dr. Kearney talked about. I was at that Board meeting. I was there fighting. It would have been more if it weren't for pressure from the community and whatever, to do whatever we could to preserve some things.

Now, one of those grades is grade three, which is a State-mandated grade. Thirty-two students in grade three, and then you want to know what we do. We have no assistants -- we used to call them aides; we now call them assistants -- in the kindergarten classroom, and we run an academic kindergarten. You tell me what district would run a kindergarten with no aides in there to help; not only to assist in the academic areas -- and we do teach academic areas in kindergarten-- I was talking to my kindergarten teacher just a few minutes before we came here. There was something she wanted me to see. I told her I would see it Tuesday, because I was coming here today.

We are teaching an academic kindergarten. I want you to come in and see those classes. But we don't even have an

aide in there to help with the usual things you go through in a kindergarten -- the boots in the winter, the coats that have to be buttoned, the little girl who doesn't want to leave her mommy this morning, those kinds of things that go on in any kindergarten. We don't have that kind of assistance, to say nothing of someone to run off the Xerox papers and the academic work we want to do, check the homework, and some of the other things that are done in other districts.

We have an inadequate child study team. My school is located in what we call a "targeted" area, which means that it is disadvantaged. I am a former guidance counselor, so I know what it means to be able to counsel, and not only the students. They need us, but I'm telling you, our parents need us. I do as much counseling of parents as I do of students. Many of them have good intentions. They want to do a good job, but they are depending on us to help them.

Just coincidentally, this morning about 10:00 a parent came in. She wanted her 10-year-old to take a job somewhere doing something, and she came in and asked my advice. She thought it would be good if he had a summer job; he needed a summer job. She was wondering if it were okay; if, in my opinion, it would be all right for that child to take that job.

I said to her, "I will check that out, but I think that particular job for a 10-year-old is against the labor laws. Whoever is offering that job is taking advantage of you." I say that just to show you that not only do we have to watch for our children academically, socially, and so on, but we have to counsel our parents. That is one parent who has enough confidence to come in and ask. Others we would like to bring in who need us. The school is their only hope.

We cut field trips. No field trips for students last year. No field trips. We are right across the way from New York City, with all of the cultural activities, the museums, the places of arts, the theaters. Everybody knows that those

things are important. Our children do not get this through the schools; didn't get this through the schools, because we can't say-- I wrote a few letters home to parents and said, "This is showing at this place," or, "That is at this museum. Take your child there." I would give them the directions, but you can imagine how many of them actually went. They don't have the wherewithal to get over to New York. They don't have a car to get there. They are working two and three jobs. Who is going to take their child to something cultural, or even academic or scientific, because the Principal said it would be good for them? If we could put them on a bus and take them there, they could go. We cut out field trips.

No preschool program. Now, if you meet my children -- and I would be happy for you to come anytime and meet my children and my staff, and talk to any one you want to; I don't even have to be there-- As I said, I am in a targeted area, so those children coming to kindergarten-- Comes the first day of school they come into the kindergarten, and many of them do not know their correct names. You ask them what their name is, and they say, "My name is Butch." And don't ask them where they live, or ask them their telephone number. One reason for that is-- We laugh about it, but it is not funny.

We say that a child is born, stays home, and didn't get anything taught to him until he walked into our kindergarten class. We laugh with the teacher, and we say, "You need to be up at Muhlenberg Hospital and get the babies when they are born. Then maybe we could do something with them before they come to kindergarten." That is not too much of an exaggeration, because we have no preschool at all.

Now, everybody that I know, my colleagues and whoever-- You get your child in school as soon as you can, now at three, sometimes two, and by the time they get to kindergarten they have already had at least two years' experience somewhere. Not our children. They come out of the

homes and into my kindergarten class. Talk about Head Start and all of those programs. We don't have them. Therefore, our children are not getting a head start. And yet I can show you some scores that show we do an awful lot with them. But as I said to you before, if we can do as well as we have done -- and we have done well; we have even been compared with Westfield and some of those other places, and I can prove that, too -- with no help, no extra help from the State-- If we can do that with nothing, it is because of my staff and Superintendent and all of us in Plainfield, who have become so creative that we are finding ways to do things with nothing. It is just a burden that we can hardly bear anymore. No preschool programs.

When I go to my town, Maplewood, we have science labs, writing workshops, writing labs, all of those things, which I am only too happy to pay for as a taxpayer in my town. But my students in Plainfield do not have science labs. I don't have one in my school, with all the latest equipment. If you go to Westfield, the equipment in the science class is much better, more sophisticated than that at the high schools. We don't have any of it. I don't have it in my school, the elementary school. I don't have a language arts lab, a writing lab. I am a former English teacher. I would love to create a language arts lab and a writing center for my school. I would run it myself if you would give me the money to do it.

Instrumental and music-- I see all these signs out here. They have about four or five levels. I don't know if you noticed them -- about four or five levels of instrumental music and whatever. They have four or five different concerts. The advertisements on the walls-- They have this kind of workshop; they have the magical choir; they have this choir, and that band, and this woodwind, and all. We don't have that. I don't have the instruments. I've got a few instruments. My teacher does an excellent job, but my students do not have the kind of a band where I can go out-- In fact, I

asked for it last year. I wanted some more instruments. We didn't have the money for the instruments. My children do not get private education in music and the arts.

Now, I was one of the lucky people. When I was growing up, I went to music lessons and so on. I thank God for it. I appreciate it today. My parents struggled to give us that kind of background. Not that I was rich, but they recognized the importance of that kind of extra education. The students I deal with don't go to music and art and violin lessons and tap dancing lessons and all of that. They get whatever we can give them. We cannot give them a full instrumental program, and yet some of those students -- a few of them -- are very talented, but the school is cheating them. The school district is cheating them, because we are not getting State funds.

One of the things that is very important to me is staff development. I'm talking about what you want the teachers to do. My teachers work hard. I'll tell anybody. I pick my teachers, as far as working and really doing a full day's work. Nobody is sleeping on the job in my school, or in any of the other schools in Plainfield. We work. But I know that they need staff development in certain areas, not only for the new material we are getting -- we are getting some reading programs and some language arts programs this year, and a phonics program -- but they need some other kinds of remedial -- well, staff development in the new techniques of teaching, and all the latest theories. Administrators can use work in all the latest theories that are coming down if we are going to keep up. I mean, IBM is going to keep you abreast of what is going on, and they send their people out all the time. AT&T is going to do that. That is what I want to do with my teachers, and I am sure that is what the Superintendent wants to do with us administrators. That is what I want to do as an

administrator. Hey, but we don't have the money for staff development.

Now, if you want to talk about schools, and you want to talk about how much the children are learning, and you want to know, you know, why are some of them out in the street carrying on, as they did in Los Angeles-- Hey, if the teachers are not being trained in the latest methods, if the schools are not meeting their needs, if you are going to take away what money was promised us -- and the worst thing you can give somebody is hope, and then take it away from them -- what else do you expect?

I would love to have an after-school enrichment program -- enrichment. I am not talking about remedial; I am talking about enrichment, academic standards, and that kind of thing. It was denied. We have no money for enrichment programs. But when I go back home, there is plenty of enrichment going on at Columbia High School, where I live. Why can't my kids have enrichment programs? They need to be enriched, too. And you need to do it at the elementary school level, not just at the high school level. If it doesn't happen in the elementary school, it is not going to happen in the high school. I know because I have had experience in K-12.

I just want you to know that we have done a lot with nothing. I won't get that specific, but I invite you -- and I mean that-- I think when we stand here, you see adults talking to you. But unless you have had the experience of coming into an urban school, you know-- As I said, come to any school. I am sure that Dr. Kearney would go along with that. But I can say to you as Principal of my school that I personally invite you. Come to my school. Stay there for the whole day. Stay there for a week if you want to. Talk to anyone you want to, including the students, the parents, the community, anybody else. Look around. If you want me with you, I'll be with you. If you don't want me with you, you don't have to have me

with you. But you will see for yourselves what we do with nothing. I think when you come back you will be convinced that these people need all of the things that I have suggested, and that other people have suggested, just to be put on an equal footing.

I want a chance to have five different kinds of musical programs. I don't even have a trumpet, you know? I want a chance to have a writing laboratory in my school. I want some enrichment after-school programs. I don't think it is too much to ask for a preschool program for my children, knowing the kinds of homes they come out of. Why do I have to start with, "Your name is," because all the mother ever called you was "Butch"?

I mean, those are just some practical things. There are other things I could talk about, but if you would just hear my plea. If you don't believe what we are trying to tell you, or don't believe what I am trying to tell you, please come and visit and see for yourselves. Feel free to talk to anyone and to ask any questions you want. We will do our best to answer. But you need to come and live with us for a while. See, it is one thing to go and live out in the suburbs -- and I guess I am guilty of that -- and then come into the schools. Come and live with us for awhile and experience what we go through day in and day out. Then jump in your cars and go back to your suburban communities. As I said, I am not knocking that; I do the same thing. But at least I work in Plainfield, sometimes it seems like 24 hours a day. I think until you live it, you really won't understand it.

I thank you for this opportunity, and I thank you for listening. I hope I see you in Plainfield. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Dr. Williams.

Since Dr. Williams was the last speaker, would the Superintendents mind coming to the podium just for a few questions, since we have the ability now to ask some questions

with the time we have remaining? Would you mind that? Not that we will be picking on you or anything, but if Dr. Kearney and Dr. Williams would come, and maybe help to clarify for the members of this Committee some of the points -- the questions that I have, and others have-- At some of the hearings we just had so many speakers we were never able to get to the real questions. If you don't want to answer a question, please don't answer it. We are just trying to get information here that will aid us basically.

My guess would be that in both communities the expenditure per student is approximately \$9000 if you count Federal aid and State aid. Is that pretty much correct?

DR. KEARNEY: That is approximately correct, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: And if we were to look at many suburban school districts, my guess would be that the total aid per student would be about, anywhere from \$8500 to \$8700, which would be \$200 to \$300, \$400 less per student than students in your districts.

I guess the question we always have to answer on this Committee is-- It is obviously more expensive to provide the security and some of the other types of problems that you have -- that all of us face in the urban areas. Do you truly feel that there is a better way that we can get the money down to the student, so that you don't have-- You know, I taught fourth grade and fifth grade. Thirty-three in a first grade class. I mean, it is just impossible to really do the kind of job that has to be done. Is there a better way to get the money down to you, to the kids? What is it that is not happening that you don't have smaller class sizes, or you don't have the appropriate materials?

DR. KEARNEY: Let me deal with this first, and then Dr. Williams might want to add something. Part of it is that, with us, we pared down our elementary division so that we created larger class sizes, so we could manage the budget.

There was no really great educational reason that we have those large class sizes, except that it was driven by the budget. We had "X" amount of dollars to spend, so we had to pare down the number of teachers so we could meet that budget number. That drove the class size up very high. That is unfortunate, but we had to do it that way.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Okay. Let me pursue that just a little. If your expenditure per student is in the area of \$9000, why is it that you would have to pare down? If some of the districts close by which have a smaller class size get less per student -- if you follow my thinking-- I don't know whether I am making myself clear or not.

DR. KEARNEY: I am not so sure what you are driving at. Our taxes are much higher than in the--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Well, forgetting taxes-- I mean, we are talking strictly now about the per pupil total you get. If you add everything together, if you are around \$9000 per student, and districts around you are \$8500, \$8600, \$8700 per student, I am not sure-- Right now, you are not getting the money down to the kids, it seems to me. You are not getting it down into the classrooms so you can have a smaller class size; so you can have musical instruments; so you can have the kind of instructional materials you need.

DR. KEARNEY: I am really trying to isolate it down to where you are. Then I could probably respond to your question more intelligently. We are starting at a very inadequate base, so it takes more for us to build up to that same level where your districts which are much more appropriate than we are--

SENATOR EWING: Let me just interrupt for a second.

DR. KEARNEY: Certainly.

SENATOR EWING: You keep using Union Township and Union County in--

DR. KEARNEY: I didn't use it, but we can use that as a comparative district.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but as I understand it from the Superintendent up there, maybe they spend \$6300 or \$6500. The average income, he tells me, in the community is around \$15,000, and yet he has a kindergarten, and he has a half-day prekindergarten class. He has not complained that he has large class sizes, and yet he is spending only around, as I say, \$6500, and you might be spending \$8500 or \$9000.

What we are wondering is, granted-- I don't know. Maybe he does not have the security problems that you have. That is one issue.

DR. KEARNEY: Yes, Senator, he doesn't have all the costs we have to run our district.

SENATOR EWING: All right, security we know is one.

DR. KEARNEY: Right.

SENATOR EWING: He might be running a Breakfast Program where the Federal government is paying for the food. But you have to pay for the services of people manning the dining room and cleaning up.

DR. KEARNEY: We really have to look at his budget versus my budget. I don't know what his insurance costs are, or any of those other costs, first of all.

SENATOR EWING: Well, is your insurance from the New Jersey School Boards insurance pool, or are you doing it separately?

DR. KEARNEY: Oh, no, no, it is separate. We all run our own separate costs. I don't know what kind of insurance he has, you know, in terms of--

SENATOR EWING: I know, but that is something-- You could see whether the rates would be cheaper going with the School Boards Association. They have a pool--

DR. KEARNEY: Well, of course. I mean, you sit and you talk about those things in negotiation, but I can't talk about them here in isolation. You know, it is very difficult for me to talk about what their costs and what our costs are.

I don't know what theirs are, so I am talking in isolation. If I could see a budget from another district and I could compare their costs with my costs, then I could be very intelligent and able to say to you that, yes, these are the reasons why I can't buy the same things for my district that Union Township can buy--

SENATOR EWING: What do you pay for security, do you think, in your district -- just roughly?

DR. KEARNEY: In the high school, I have 11 security guards.

SENATOR EWING: Are you talking about \$100,000 a year, \$50,000, or \$500,000 a year?

DR. KEARNEY: Each person is about \$25,000. If you multiply that out, what are we talking about? A quarter of a million dollars, and that is just one school.

SENATOR EWING: For one school?

DR. KEARNEY: That's right. That is the high school.

SENATOR EWING: I'm talking about the district.

DR. KEARNEY: You see, I didn't come with those figures in my head.

SENATOR EWING: No, I understand that.

DR. KEARNEY: So about \$275,000.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: If Senator Ewing would be willing, and if you all would be willing, maybe with your Business Administrators, someday could we-- Can we set up a meeting in the future? I have to honestly say that I am trying to find out -- and I need help, I guess, to give myself a better picture, and maybe the Committee a better picture -- how we get the money down to the children in a better way, or why isn't it getting to that level? You know, you obviously have a very concerned group. You have come a long distance to make your concerns known. We really want to do everything possible to aid not only your district, but all of the districts in the State.

I, personally, lack an understanding as to why more money doesn't -- why we don't have smaller class sizes when the per pupil -- when the money behind each student is greater. I know I was in Paterson, and they went through the entire program. Yet, they also have the same problem with class size and building space for preschool programs and so on. I have some divisions of my own that I would like to see more concrete, where we do specify, "Here is the money. Let's get a preschool program." And, "Here is the cost of a building, \$2 million or \$3 million. We can get eight classrooms here. This is what the money has to be spent for. We are going to put some bond money into that," so that every one of the 30 gets at least one facility to deal with nothing but preschool and kindergarten programs, nutrition programs, social services, all those kinds of things that we have to have.

But I have to have a better understanding of why that per pupil cost is driven so high. You should have musical instruments. You should have every kind of program available to all of your kids. There is no doubt about that. Why we are not able to do it, I guess just escapes me.

DR. KEARNEY: I think that is a very rational approach, so you could see it, and I could see it, too. I would love to be able to compare budgets so we could see how we are spending our money per pupil and how another district is spending their money.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So, David (speaking to Mr. Hesse), for the Senator and myself, and the Superintendents here, maybe just have a real kind of informal -- with your Business Administrators--

DR. KEARNEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: Oh, that is a good idea, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --and members of the Committee here--

DR. KEARNEY: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: The one question that I would like to--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: What do you think, Jack -- Senator? (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: I would like to do that. I think it would be good to sit down and compare apples to apples, not apples to pineapples.

DR. KEARNEY: Yes, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: The only way to do that is, not to get the formal budget that is introduced to the public, but the work budget, where it is broken down line item by line item, so you can start looking to see where the problems are.

DR. KEARNEY: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: The one question I wanted to ask-- You informed me that from one year to the next you had a \$7 million increase in State aid. Did all that money go into the education portion of the budget, or did a portion of that go back to the community in tax relief? What I am saying is, \$7 million, if it was added to the tax rate of what it was the previous year, would give you 7 million new dollars for your programs, or was the actual amount less than the \$7 million because property taxes were reduced?

DR. KEARNEY: Okay. Property taxes were reduced last year. Now, for the 1992-1993 year, it is \$7 million.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: So it is 7 million new dollars?

DR. KEARNEY: That's right; that's new dollars.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: The one thing that is important when we talk about taxes -- tax rates -- is, we have to keep the common denominator. The problem with tax rates is that the level of evaluation for the last time that the ratables in the community were updated to 100 percent-- I know in my own county -- Atlantic County -- one district may be collecting-- My tax rate for schools is \$1.38, I believe. Another may be \$4.25, simply because two years ago the community

reevaluated-- The other community of \$4.25 may not have done it for maybe 10 years, and they are only maybe 50 percent or 40 percent. So it is important to know when your community and what the level of ratables actually is, as compared to--

DR. KEARNEY: And we have all that, because we lost \$6 million in ratables this year in Plainfield.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICKLES: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: You know, there is another area that you mentioned, and that was the enrichment program and your teacher in-service programs. I would like to have an idea of what you do. I am a teacher. I have been a teacher -- or, I had been a teacher for 30-some years. I was a kindergarten and first grade teacher, so I am in total empathy with how you feel. I will also tell you that you won my heart when you said, "Don't tell me you are coming," because that is how I always operated. If you had to tell me you were coming, I was dressing for you. Otherwise, you take me as you see me.

What I am concerned about is, I want to have the teachers prepared for their courses, and I want them to be updated. But I also think we could do the same thing that I did in Delaware, which was make a deal with the college -- the University of Delaware. They made our school the Northern Extension of the University of Delaware. We had in-service courses on a graduate level from 3:30 in the afternoon until 6:30. We had a three-credit course. It worked very well. We got the courses that we wanted, and we used the staff of the University. The teachers paid for their course, and that was it. I think it could be done. I think teachers have to have--

I was still taking courses the year I retired, because you must be current. I think there are very innovative ways we can do that. I think we could get businesses that have certain things that are going on, and have-- Businesses have said that they want to be involved in education, because if a student comes out well prepared--

I think this whole business about the certification for the teachers is absolutely ludicrous. After you go through student teaching for half a year -- a semester -- you certainly should be able to handle a class. If you can't, you do not belong in there. I think the Education Commissioner should be encouraged to help to promote some of this in-service training; mandate it. It should be mandated. It used to be; it should be. I don't know. I can't speak for New Jersey because I did most of my teaching in Delaware. But the only way you can be current is to be current. The only way you can be current is to have in-service on what is coming up.

But if you would give me an idea of what you do for in-service, I would really appreciate it. I would like to see that also.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Let me ask one further question.

Dr. WILLIAMS: Well, we do have some in-service four times a year. Two in-services are conducted by Central Office, and the other two are conducted at the local schools by the Principal for whomever she sees fit. We will be having one on June 1, which will be conducted at each building. I have my plans in order for this building. My concern is that, first of all, my opinion is not sufficient, and secondly, we deal with almost crisis issues.

I want an ongoing kind of thing where I can set a theme and know what areas I want to specialize in in a given year, or what I want to do for a given grade level, or even what I want to do for particular teachers who I know need extra help or extra training in a specific area. I want to get specific so I can really and truly meet the needs of the teachers to meet the needs of the students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: That's right, and you know what? My contract in Delaware was mandated, once a month an in-service meeting. There was no question; that was part of your contract.

DR. WILLIAMS: Wonderful. Well, I do hope you will come. I hope I will see all of you there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: Well, I'll tell you-- I will be honest with you. Right now I am not promising anything for June, because we are going-- As I keep telling you, I am new in the Assembly, and they keep telling me that I am going to be busy. I keep listening, so I haven't scheduled anything. I am keeping it clear. I don't know when I go to Trenton if I will come out. (laughter)

DR. WILLIAMS: You are welcome in July or August, except that the children won't be there. But if you let me know--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: Yes, I know. It would be better to come during school time.

DR. WILLIAMS: --you are coming, I will make myself available in the summer for you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: I think it would be better in school time, you know.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I would like to pursue a bill that I dropped in last week, which would require basically full-time kindergarten and preschool programs, with nutritional and social services involvement, coupled with a facilities program that would call for a unit of, you know, probably a quad -- four classrooms doubled, maybe eight classrooms, that would free up some space, only because I think we need something tangible to start with here in terms of saying, "This is where the money goes. We know this is where the kids are going to be helped the most. If we start young, if we work with the preschoolers and the kindergarten program, we are going to get a lot more benefit," not to say that it is not important elsewhere, but basically I think we all know at this point that that is where we can do the most good and get the most value for our dollar in the long run.

I know in Irvington, for instance, that you are probably not too unlike Paterson, where it is just impossible to get facilities. With the codes now for facilities, it really requires buying up space and taking down whatever is there and starting from scratch. Is that pretty much the case in Plainfield as well? Is that a correct assumption?

DR. KEARNEY: Absolutely yes, but if we had money for a preschool program, we would find a facility to renovate, because a school closed -- a parochial school closed in Plainfield, and it is available. It needs to be renovated, but if we had money for a preschool program, there might be money for renovations.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I talked to an architectural firm. They told me that it costs between \$2 million and \$3 million to put up these quads; that if the Senator and I were to push a bond issue in each House, that just to start, I mean just something tangible, just throwing it out now for some comments, that would indicate basically, "Here is the start," you know, 30 facilities in the 30 districts, preschool programs, and move into it, maybe phase it in, maybe move it in as quickly as possible. But, you know, something tangible to give more room--

DR. KEARNEY: That would be great.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --that would pull the kindergarten and preschool programs out of your buildings to give you more space within the existing facilities, as well. I think we need something more tangible. I guess that is what I'm saying.

DR. KEARNEY: Oh, yes.

DR. WILLIAMS: That would be marvelous.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER: I have to interject: You are very fortunate. I'll just say the Assembly Education Committee, because I know them better. I am on the Assembly Committee. Every one of us is involved in education. Assemblyman Rocco has done everything from soup to nuts,

teacher right up to whatever -- to college professor. I have been a grade school teacher for over 30 years. Fred is in education, and so is Wolfe. Wolfe is a college professor, and so is Mr. Martin. So we all have great empathy to education, because we have all been a part of it. I think that helps a lot better than sending a couple of lawyers to be on the Committee.

So, this really represents education. Now, I don't know the Senate Education Committee as well, but I'm sure--

SENATOR EWING: The only one we have is Joe Palaia, who was a principal, and has been in the education system for a great number of years. Out of our four members, he is the only one who has been involved in public education.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Well, thanks for your time, really. Thank you, Senator Ewing. Maybe, Jack, before we leave you will have something additional to say. I would thank the members of the Committee for being here, and I thank all of you for being here. We will definitely have a meeting in the future, I hope, with both districts.

DR. KEARNEY: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Jack, I don't know whether you want the Senate Committee involved or not?

SENATOR EWING: Oh, yes, very definitely.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I think we really need a give and take with some real insights that -- that I don't have anyhow, at this point.

DR. KEARNEY: Good. We would love to have that, too.

SENATOR EWING: I would just like to add that I certainly agree with Assemblyman Rocco. Our general track is the same. The schools have to be used more by the public, and also, the schools nowadays, as was pointed out-- The families, whether they are single parents or husband or wife or whatever it might be, are glad to see Willie and Mary go out the door, and they expect the schools to toilet train them, discipline

them, and teach them manners -- the whole schmear. We really have to work towards getting money out of Health and out of Human Services to put types of services into the schools themselves that will help the parents, and particularly the children, and gradually bring more use of the schools in.

Certainly, early childhood is vitally important. We are doing it in special ed. I serve on the State Interagency Coordinating Council, which is a Federal program over five years trying to get everything coordinated in the State so we can start things at a much younger age. There is absolutely no question, particularly in the special needs districts, because of the socioeconomic problems, the child needs much more help. I mean, it is nothing new to me to hear that some of the children don't know their names; that there are certainly no papers or magazines in the homes. It is hurting the whole State, not just that one community.

We've got to get at it and keep pecking away to try to get more and more done.

DR. KEARNEY: That's right. And, Senator, we believe in the coordination of services, too. We have moneys from Human Services. We have a wonderful school-based youth services program. That includes health, recreation, and work -- employment, teaching young people how to get jobs and all of that. We have a great program. We have attempted to raise moneys on the outside. AT&T is a great support to that program. You might know a little bit about that.

So, we are attempting to coordinate with other agencies -- State agencies and local agencies.

SENATOR EWING: I think we owe a great deal of thanks to those of you who are in the educational system doing what you do with all of the odds against you, starting with the child who comes from a less fortunate background, who is, of course, much harder to work with. You keep persisting at it

because you see the need for it and realize it. And the money part is so important.

DR. KEARNEY: Yes. We thank you again.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you very much.

There is one other person who came from Plainfield who just arrived. So, after that long ride we are certainly not going to sign off without permitting Mitchell to say whatever he has to say.

M I T C H E L L H E S S: I thank you very much for giving me this time. I will try to be very short.

There are just a few things I thought of on the way down from Plainfield, and I jotted down a few notes. I realize you have had so much information, there have been so many facts brought before you. You have already heard a great deal of information, as I have. I would just like to say that I understand the problems you are facing right now. So many of my colleagues from all over the State understand that, as well as my friends and my colleagues in Plainfield.

Again, to keep this short, I felt that what I would like to do is share a gift of some of my students. I am a Counselor at the Emerson School and at the Clinton School in Plainfield. I felt that rather than for me to come down and do a lot of talking, I would like to share with you some information that our students would like to give you. I have brought down -- and it is our gift to you -- some pictures of what some of the hopes and what some of the dreams are of these children we are working with. I know this is a universal feeling for students all over New Jersey. Again, I just felt that it was very important for them to be able to speak. Hopefully, I will be here to represent them, also.

Amy, for example, wants to be a housekeeper. (witness holding up pictures) Jeneal wants to be a librarian. Dominique wants to be a housekeeper. Devon wants to be a policeman. Jeffery wants to be an Army man. Shekeem wants to

be a mommy. Theresa wants to be a doctor. There are so many more that I have here which I would be glad to share. As I said, I want to present these to you.

In the final moments that I have to speak, I guess there is just one more thing I would like to say. I think it is: When you find yourselves thinking about students, for me it is the students in Plainfield; the students I work with; the students that I counsel. But of course, it is the students all over New Jersey and across our country.

I think maybe what we ought to think about is, what will happen if we don't continue the programs that have been established by the QEA; the things that you have planted the seeds for? We are proud of the progress that has been made, and we all share in that progress. I would like all of you to think about how you will feel when you realize that -- and I am sure you do -- you have touched these children.

That is all I would like to say this afternoon. Again, I thank you for this time. I know you kind of extended your hours. I will loosen my tie, and bring these pictures up to you. Thanks again.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Mitchell.

We have our Superintendent from Cherry Hill, Phil Esbrandt, here. Maybe you, as the host, would like to conclude for today.

PHILIP ESBRANDT, Ed.D.: Are you asking me for a benediction on the Committee?

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

DR. ESBRANDT: Okay, I will make it short. It was our pleasure to host the Joint Senate and Assembly Education Committee. We welcome you to Cherry Hill. We are glad you were here. We appreciate the effort the Committee members and staff have made to travel across New Jersey to find out what is really affecting education today, to listen to those concerns

and to come up with, hopefully, plans which will lead to some of the positive changes we need in our educational system in the State of New Jersey.

So, we thank you for being here. We hope to see you again.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Thank you, Dr. Esbrandt.
The meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)



APPENDIX



May 22, 1992

David G. Kerr
107 Setauket Trail
Medford Lakes, New Jersey 08055

609-
654-0622

I appear before this committee today to testify against the new regulations for certifying teachers in the state of New Jersey.

I appear before you as an angry, frustrated, disillusioned, parent of a recent college graduate who will be directly affected by these regulations.

As adopted by the Department of Education, The Division of Teacher Certification and Preparation, these regulations are scheduled to become effective September, 1992.

Known as the "Induction Year for Traditionally Prepared Beginning Teachers", or more commonly, "Mentoring", these regulations are intended to provide new teachers with the support they need to succeed during the first critical year.

As we have seen with so many regulations, that which is intended is not always realized in actual practice.

One need only be reminded of the unintended impact of the Federal 10% luxury tax on the ship-building industry in New Jersey. The motives may have been good, the outcome certainly has been a disaster.

I hope that this committee can be persuaded to see beyond the intent of these regulations and view their future reality.

The unintended result, the reality, of these new certification regulations, will be the state mandated unemployment of thousands of our university graduates. I fear that my daughter may be one of them.

On May 21, 1992, my daughter graduated, with honors, from Douglass College. She would like to be able to pursue a career in New Jersey, teaching English at the secondary level.

Lynn worked very hard during her college years so that she would be an attractive, competitive, candidate for employment in a very difficult job market.

She fully expected to be certified as a teacher following the completion of the state mandated curriculum in education.

During the last four years our family spent approximately \$25,000 - \$30,000, at a state university, so that our daughter would be adequately prepared to teach in New Jersey.

Now the Department of Education has decided that all of this training and education, obtained in a state university, is "inadequate", that further "mentoring" is necessary.

I am incredulous. How can it be that the State Department of Education has determined that teacher training in our state universities is "inadequate?"

Am I being told as a parent, that our state universities are offering "inadequate" educational programs?

As the regulations now stand, recent graduates will not be issued standard teaching certificates. Instead, they will hold "Certificates of Eligibility With Advanced Standing."

School districts which seek to employ a provisional teacher must submit a plan to the Department of Education and receive approval to train beginning teachers. This plan must include provisions for support and evaluation.

However, as reported by the Courier-Post, on May 15, 1992, in an article by Alan Guenther, "Many districts aren't ready for the new regulations and don't have the state-approved program in place."

As an example, the article quotes Alayne Shoenfeld, from Washington Township: "We have a committee in place to look at the guidelines"..
(Washington Township) has 25 job openings. "We'll be hiring experienced teachers who already have their certificates...a lot of districts are adopting a wait and see attitude right now." She expected the township would be ready to hire recent graduates "within six months to a year."

How many other districts in the state are adopting this same position?

How many other districts are unwilling, or unable' to hire recent graduates at this time?

How many districts in this state will be discriminating against those candidates for employment who hold this new "Certificate of Higher Eligibility?"

How can it be that the schools were not mandated to participate in this program?

How will our neighboring states relate to this "certificate of higher eligibility?"

This is state mandated unemployment.

In the same Courier Post Article, Ellen Schechter of the state's division of teacher preparation and certification said, "We are aware of the things that are being said...I think there's been a level of misunderstanding throughout the state about this program."

There can be no misunderstanding here. Recent college graduates will clearly face unequal access to employment.

Schools across the state will not even interview, let alone hire, recent college graduates.

Has the state of New Jersey become an unequal opportunity employer?

The committee must also be aware that the Department of Education has EXEMPTED special education teachers from these regulations.

Why? Why are some graduates eligible for permanent certificates, while others are not?

What possible explanation can the state provide which will explain to me why a candidate for employment in special education does not need to be "mentored?"

I understand that under the new regulations, building principals will have the final authority to determine whether a newly hired teacher with a "provisional" certificate will receive a standard certificate.

Why, after having successfully completed four years of college, nine weeks of student teaching, one year of employment, should my daughter's CERTIFICATION be subject to the recommendation of a single individual?

Perhaps most unbelievable is the \$550.00 fee that a participating school district may charge my daughter so that she can be mentored! What graduating college student in the state has that kind of money to spend to get a job?

I know of no other profession, or business, that charges for new employee training.

I urge the members of this committee to closely examine the details of these new regulations, and legislate them out of existence in their present form.

There must be a better way to improve education in the state.

Respectfully,



David G. Kerr

SOUTH JERSEY

B

Education grads face tough job market

By ALAN GUENTHER
Courier-Post Staff

GLASSBORO — A tough job market will mar the pomp and ceremony of today's commencement activities for many of the 2,000 graduating students at Glassboro State College (GSC).

Particularly hard-hit are the 400 graduates of GSC's school of education. Almost 95 percent of them don't have jobs. Normally, by this time of year, 50 percent of those trained to be elementary and secondary school teachers already know where they'll be working in September,

according to Nick Schmelz, GSC's coordinator for career development.

Schmelz said graduates in many fields are finding a mixed bag of employment opportunities.

The job market is flat in marketing and communications, although prospects are "excellent" for students in computer science and accounting, he said. Students entering special education "have jobs before the ink dries on their final exams."

Lina Tofani, a marketing major, said she was happy that she'd landed a \$25,500 job with Cigna, a large insurance company.

"There's lots of opportunity for advancement," she said.

But after four years of schooling — and after putting out about \$25,000 in tuition and room and board payments — some students at GSC's education school said Thursday they were unhappy with the prospect of accepting low-paying jobs in other fields.

"I guess I'll waitress," said education major Jennifer Malloy. "Or go back to school and put out more money."

"I guess the only thing I can do is get a job in daycare — for \$5 an hour," said Pauline Sneddon.

Schmelz blamed the high unemployment rate for education graduates on tough new state regulations for teacher certification.

The state announced in December that it is requiring school districts to provide a full year of training and counseling for all first-time teachers. Many districts aren't ready for the new regulations and don't have the state-approved training program in place.

Job prospects are bright for special education teachers because they are exempt from the new requirement.

Please see GRADUATES, Page 5B

Graduates faced with poor job market

Continued from Page 1B

In other graduation-related events, GSC officials are anticipating the arrival today of a retired teacher, 81-year-old Margaret Fish Lopez, a graduate of the class of 1932.

She will be attending her 60-year class reunion. She has told the school she will pedal a bicycle about 20 miles from Paulsboro to get here.

A native of the Repaupo section of Logan in Gloucester County, she remembers living on a farm in her youth. She milked a cow — "a Holstein," she said — every morning and evening. The cow gave 14 quarts of milk each day.

Her goal, she said, is to climb the 54 mountains in Colorado with an altitude above 14,000 feet.

GSC also plans today to issue a degree to its first South African student.

Lindelwa Mabuntana, a geography major who hopes to be an urban planner, was brought to the college through the efforts of a group of Quakers in Mullica Hill. The Quakers also raised funds to fly Lindelwa's mother, Philippina, in from South Africa to attend today's ceremony.

Workers Thursday were busy carrying potted plants, stringing banners and hooking up loudspeakers for the commencement ceremonies on the College Green in front of Bunce Hall. About 10,000 students and guests are expected to attend.

As they picked up their year-books and caps and gowns Thursday, students in a variety of fields considered their futures.

Sharreen Lennon, psychology: "I don't have a job yet. . . I'll probably take anything. I just want the money. . . I'll be going back to school to be a social worker."

Christine Zulla, advertising/



PAUL DUDEK
... accepted to graduate school

communications: "I went on about 10 interviews last month. . . I've possibly got a job. . . probably \$8 an hour, doing direct mail (advertising)."

Malika Byrd, special education: "I have no doubts I'll get a job. . . I'm from Camden, and that's where I hope to teach."

Shannon Goehring, marketing: "I'm currently looking at a sales position. . . I'm looking at, at least, \$22,000 to \$25,000 in salary."

Paul Dudek, psychology: "I've been accepted into a graduate program at Loyola University in Baltimore. . . I want to go into clinical psychology."

Jennifer Scavuzzo, finance: "I just got a job at the University of Pennsylvania. . . It's an entry-level position, in the low (\$20,000-range). . . In my field, the jobs were pretty much out there for us."

GSC's education school is one of the largest schools for teacher certification in the state.

About 250 angry students held a meeting Wednesday with David Kapel, dean of the education



MALIKA BYRD
... no doubts about job

school, on the new state requirements. Kapel said he was "sympathetic" with the students and understood that they were "very upset."

State officials said the tougher education standards were long overdue.

Ellen Schechter, of the state's division of teacher preparation and certification, said: "We are aware of the things that are being said. . . I think there's been a level of misunderstanding throughout the state about this program."

About 18 percent of newly hired teachers quit before they complete their first year on the job, she said. Studies show that teachers who received the kind of counseling and evaluation service now required by the state had a dropout rate of only 4 percent, she said.

School districts, Kapel said, can't hire new education graduates until they submit a training plan to the state for approval.

This means many of the unemployed graduates may have to wait a long time — perhaps as long as a year — before districts can legally hire them.

"We have a committee in place to look at the guidelines," said Alayne Shoenfeld of Washington Township. Her 8,500-student district, she said, has 25 job openings.

"We'll be hiring experienced teachers who already have their certificates. . . A lot of districts are adopting a wait-and-see attitude right now," she said. "There are a lot of teachers out there with experience who are looking for a job. We will all be hiring from that same pool, which I suspect will become quickly exhausted."

She expected the township would be ready to hire recent graduates "within six months to a year."



