

Public Hearing

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before

EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMISSION

"Components of an Education Funding Formula"

LOCATION: Woodlane Road
Burlington County Special
Services School District
Mount Holly, New Jersey

DATE: October 18, 1993
6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Priscilla B. Anderson,
Acting Chairperson
Dr. Henry A. Coleman
James Moran
Michael Ritacco
Helen W. Walsh



ALSO PRESENT:

David C. Hespe
Office of Legislative Services

New Jersey State Library

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by New Jersey State Library
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, 162 W. State St., CN 068, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0068



ALBERT BURSTEIN, ESQ.
CHAIRMAN
MARGARET E. GOERTZ
VICE-CHAIRPERSON



New Jersey State Legislature
EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMISSION

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, CN-068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0068

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SECRETARY

HON. PRISCILLA B. ANDERSON
DR. ROBERT BOOSE
DR. JOSHUA CHOW
DR. HENRY A. COLEMAN
DR. VITO GAGLIARDI
THOMAS P. GEYER
DAVID PAUL GOLDMAN
JAMES MORAN
MICHAEL J. PERRUCCI, ESQ.
MELODY SAWYER RICHARDSON, ESQ.
MICHAEL RITACCO
DENNIS TESTA
HELEN W. WALSH

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

The Education Funding Review Commission will hold public hearings on the following dates:

1. October 11, 1993
6:30 P.M.
Toms River High School North
Auditorium
Old Freehold Road
Toms River, New Jersey
2. October 18, 1993
6:30 P.M.
Burlington County Special Services
School District
Woodlane Road
Mount Holly, New Jersey
3. October 25, 1993
6:30 P.M.
Union County Vocational School
1776 Raritan Road
Scotch Plains, New Jersey
4. October 27, 1993
10:00 A.M.
Convention Center
Room 216
Atlantic City, New Jersey

The public may address comments and questions to Kathleen Fazzari, Secretary to the Commission, or make scheduling inquiries to Mary C. Lutz or Bernadette Kmetz, secretaries, at (609) 984-6843.

The witness list for each public hearing will be limited to 20 persons and testimony will be limited to 5 minutes per witness. All persons who are testifying should submit 20 written copies of their testimony. Persons who are not presenting oral testimony may submit 20 copies of written testimony for consideration by the commission and inclusion in the record.

Issued 10/1/93



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Carmine DeSopo, Ph.D. Superintendent Burlington County Special Services School District	2
H. Mark Stanwood Superintendent of Schools Atlantic County	5
Sue Fegley President Burlington County Special Services School District Parents Association	6
David L. Nimmer Former Pupil Burlington County Special Services School District	10
Claudia B. Sumler Director Camden County Library	17
Nancy J. Forester Director Cumberland County Library	19
Paula Haemmerle Citizens Action Committee Roosevelt, New Jersey	24
Teri L. Skye Citizens Action Committee Roosevelt, New Jersey	30
Barry S. Perlman Chairman Committee for Educational Equity and Parity	40



TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Vivian Robinson President Cherry Hill Education Association	43
Gail S. Robinson Acting Director Bridgeton Public Library	47
 APPENDIX:	
Graph submitted by Claudia B. Sumler	1x
Graph submitted by Nancy J. Forester	2x
Copy of "1993 Final/1994 Preliminary Tax Bill" plus attachments submitted by Teri Skye	3x
Report on "Expenditure Priorities Across New Jersey School Districts submitted by Eagleton Institute of Politics Policy Research Seminar" Rutgers, the State University New Brunswick, New Jersey	8x
Statement submitted by Norma Blake Director Burlington County Library System	17x
Statement submitted by Brenda Michaelson Library Director Millville Public Library	21x



TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

APPENDIX (continued):

	<u>Page</u>
Statement submitted by Florence S. Volpe President Board of Trustees Vineland Public Library	23x
Letter submitted by Arnold Shapiro President Friends of the Vineland Public Library	24x

pkm 1-50

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN PRISCILLA B. ANDERSON (ACTING CHAIR.):

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Priscilla Anderson. I am a member of the Education Funding Commission. I am also the Assemblywoman that represents this district in which this beautiful school is located. I'm very proud to be here. You just don't know how difficult it was to get this in Burlington County, because people know-- They go to Camden County; they go to Mercer County and Essex and Atlantic County, but sometimes they forget about Burlington County. So I'm very happy that we're meeting here, and thank you all for coming.

We are going to have a special presentation by our Superintendent of Special Services, Dr. DeSopo, but first I would like to introduce the members of the Commission who are here. I'd just like for you to know that we have a number of Commissioners, but we have a very ambitious schedule. It's very difficult because people -- the Commissioners are from all over the State. We have a schedule, for instance, that we have been meeting every Wednesday during the day, and in addition to that, we have had the meetings -- hearings. This is not a formal meeting in the sense of worrying about a quorum, but this is your meeting. This is the hearing for the public.

We have had meetings every Wednesday, but also just last week-- This is Dr. Ritacco. He is Superintendent of Schools from Toms River. On October 11 there was a hearing in his school district. It's going to go throughout the State. There will be a hearing next week in Union County, in Scotch Plains. There will be a hearing in Atlantic City. So the Commissioners are moving throughout the State of New Jersey. They all cannot make every meeting, but I'm thankful, and I thank each of them for being here.

I'd like to introduce the other Commissioners who are present: Mr. James Moran, and Mr. Moran is -- if I say it incorrectly, you correct me -- he is--

You tell your job. I know you're retired, but it's only been a few days.

MR. MORAN: Right now I'm a private citizen. I was the Director of the School Administrators Association for the State of New Jersey. They've tacked on a title now; it's Executive Director Emeritus. I'm not quite sure what that means.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Then there's this charming young lady, Helen Walsh, and she'll tell you.

MS. WALSH: I am the County Administrator in Atlantic County, one of the other southern counties in New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Okay. I didn't mention my colleague on the left, but I'm sure he's very articulate and he can say about himself.

MR. RITACCO: Mike Ritacco, and I'm Superintendent of Schools in Toms River Regional Schools; a little to the south and the east, I guess.

MS. ANDERSON: Yes. Thank you all for coming, Commissioners and public. At this time--

MR. MORAN: Excuse me.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Yes.

MR. MORAN: By the way, everything that's said here tonight is being taped -- is recorded, and the other Commissioners will certainly be aware of anything said here tonight.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you very much. I was going to say that. As you see, we have the young lady here. This is your testimony -- is official, and it will be shared with all the other Commissioners. So when decisions are made, your -- what you have to say tonight is considered just as important as anyone else who has spoken.

And now I'd like to introduce our own-- Can I say Carmen?

C A R M I N E D E S O P O, Ph.D.: Oh, why not?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Dr. Carmen DeSopo. Okay.

DR. DeSOPO: Good evening everyone, and welcome to the Burlington County Special Services School District. I don't

really need the microphone. Can everybody hear me out there? (no response) Well, our school district is very, very, very proud to have each and every one of you here.

I'm speaking on behalf of 1150 students in grades K - 12. As a matter of fact, we also have some-- Well, I have to correct that. We have one program for teenage, pregnant young ladies. We also have child care in order to assist those people, so that they can make the transition and get them back in the regular schools; get them back into the mainstream as quickly as possible; and give them the prenatal and postnatal support that they need. So we do have youngsters as old as two weeks coming to our school district.

We also have a postsecondary program for those students that are beyond the capability of sheltered workshops and other places that cannot accommodate our students. Most of our students, two things happen to them when they leave our school district: They either graduate to jobs and occupations -- and that is the focus of the entire school program -- or approximately 100 students each year are mainstreamed back to the local school districts. They are returned back to the local school districts. We take students that are beyond the capability of the local school districts.

So the first thing that we do is to encourage local school districts to set up more and more programs in their own communities, and they do. In our county it's been increasing each and every year. Only when they feel that they don't have the program, or the services, or the facilities to accommodate the youngsters in our county-- They have a choice now. The choice is either to send the youngsters to the Burlington County Special Services School District or to private schools -- or to private schools.

So this is a very healthy concept. It's a very healthy concept that we advocate continuously in our county,

which is twofold. Number one, choice: to give the local administrators and boards of education a choice as to where that youngster does go. Every youngster that's admitted to our school district has to go through the State Department of Education, the county office in each county, for approval to make sure that we follow all kinds of rules and regulations promulgated by the State Department of Education.

Also, it's very important that you know that we have here the most comprehensive programs ever devised for these kids, because the most important thing is the final product. Too many-- While it's important to have a good time and to make sure that school is a nice place for the kids to be here, and the staff, and all that -- we work hard at that, to create a special environment for everybody -- but let no one kid themselves, we work hard in this school. Our staff works hard.

We have high expectations of our youngsters and our parents. To the extent that we do have a policy in our school district, we believe in homework. Every student, regardless of the functioning level, does homework every night. We encourage everybody to embrace the American dream; to have -- to take advantage of the opportunities that the taxpayers of the State of New Jersey and of Burlington County have to offer; to make sure that we can maximize these opportunities; to demonstrate to the public that the product -- that the people that graduate from our school districts are outstanding and productive citizens.

I am very proud that we have Priscilla Anderson. Priscilla Anderson is a fantastic educator, and she has been very, very supportive not only of this program, but of education in general. You're in Priscilla Anderson country--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Yes.

DR. DeSOPPO: --and we're very proud to welcome you here, Priscilla.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

DR. DeSOPO: I also want to add very quickly that with the addition of Michael, we have a couple of other superintendents. Tim Wade, from Cinnaminson -- my good friend -- and of course, we have also a representative from another county special services school district. This county is going to do tremendous things because of the leadership of Mark Stanwood, the Superintendent of Schools of Atlantic County.

We're very proud of fine job that you're doing there, Mark.

H. MARK STANWOOD: Thank you.

DR. DeSOPO: And of course, we learned a great deal about administration from Jim Moran. He always motivated superintendents to try to do their very best, and we try to do our very best. The thing that we're noted for in this school district is the community involvement -- the community involvement and the parents' involvement, the partnership. The reason that this school district works is because some people call it a family. Call it whatever you want. Yes, we have a strong, strong attachment with our staff, the teachers, the custodians. We respect everybody's input. No matter-- The best idea can come from a custodian, can come from a secretary, from administrators. We encourage these people to constantly be involved in the decision-making process. The same goes with the parents, and of course the Board of Education. I'm delighted that most of the people on our Board of Education are also parents of our students.

I'm delighted to announce also that Betty Poley, the best board member anywhere -- she's also over here.

Betty, where are you? Betty, so good to have you.

Of course, Betty is also Principal in one of the local high schools. She started as a parent. She was in one of my parents groups back 25 years ago, when we first set up the first mainstream program in the State of New Jersey in a vocational school. She worked her way up. She went to school,

got her college degree, and then moved her way up to become principal of a school. This is what the American dream is all about.

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce the President of the Parents Association. Sue Fegley will give you a little bit more information about the school district from the parents' perspective.

S U E F E G L E Y: Thank you, Dr. DeSopo. I'm Sue Fegley. I'm President of the Burlington County Special Services School District Parent/Teacher Organization, and a parent of a handicapped citizen.

My son, Richard, attended this school district for 12 years. During that time, he was helped by dedicated and caring staff members who gave selflessly to assure he would reach his maximum potential. After graduation, when no other State agency would help my son, this school district and Dr. Desopo came to our rescue.

Today, Richard is employed in the adult workshop sponsored by this district. He is productive and goes to work each and every day. He feels good about himself and he is still learning. None of this would have been possible without Dr. DeSopo and this wonderful program.

I know that I speak for many other parents when I tell you what a godsend this school program has been for our entire family. I believe, as do other parents, that our Special Services School District offers students the greatest opportunity to develop to their fullest potential through academics, vocational, and therapeutic services. As a result of this program, our students become self-sufficient, productive employees, who pay taxes rather than receive public assistance.

At the Special Services School District, Dr. Carmine DeSopo has developed a philosophy of inclusive education which is a national prototype. It was not always this way. I

remember what Dr. DeSopo did in the 1970s. He got the community involved to remodel supermarkets into schools, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. He led the way through the 1980s in securing fine facilities for our children. Now in the 1990s we are a mature school district.

We can now document that we put out a fine product. Our kids get the best education possible at the lowest comparative price. Our students graduate into the world of successful work experience. Each year many pupils mainstream back into local school district programs.

A well-developed program of cooperative mainstreaming provides extensive contact with a normal peer group and the community at large. On a typical day, 350 people dine in our public restaurant served by our students. Civic groups on a daily basis utilize our facilities.

Our parent involvement program has been cited by the Governor as a model by the Partners in Learning Award. We are truly the hub of community involvement in Burlington County. Our parents are truly part of the school team. We publish our own newsletter. We run weekly parent support groups so we can help ourselves and our children. We meet monthly in the evening to better educate ourselves in the field of special education. We support the school and all of its activities from the Superintendent's Scholarship Dinner Dance, to the March of Dimes Walkathon. We are indeed partners in learning.

I know that this Commission is charged with the responsibility to chart a course for the future of school funding in New Jersey. I would ask as you precede with your deliberations that you do whatever you can to maintain and improve the programs for our most needy youngsters, the severely handicapped. Please help our State's special services school districts continue their excellent work, providing them with the resources we so desperately need.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

MS. FEGLEY: We are so proud of our school, and would like if you would please see a little of an "A.M. Philadelphia" tape.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Okay. I'd like to-- While you're getting the tape ready, one of our other Commissioners came in, Dr. Henry Coleman. Dr. Coleman, quickly tell a little bit about yourself, your title other than your name, while they're getting this fixed.

DR. COLEMAN: My name is Henry Coleman. When I'm not enjoying myself with the Education Funding Review Commission, I serve as the Director for the Center for Government Services at Rutgers University. I am an economist by training.

Good enough?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: That's fine, thank you. Everyone said their little piece.

DR. COLEMAN: You got me there.

(pause for showing of VCR tape)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: That's good. That's good.

DR. DeSOPO: While everyone-- We have gotten a little taste-- You've gotten a little bit of the taste of the restaurant and the food, and the reason for that is we want you to come back. So when you're in the vicinity, please stop in. Believe me, the food is delicious.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you do weddings, bar mitzvahs?

DR. DeSOPO: We do all of that. As a matter of fact--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Flower arranging-- Flower arrangements for events?

DR. DeSOPO: So many things, it's an entire community that we do just about everything. People call us for flowers and so forth, but you were talking about bar mitzvah and all those things. We also did the swearing in of a Superior Court Judge. Jan Schlesinger was sworn in. The entire Superior Court came here, and we had the reception here also.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Wasn't that nice.

DR. DeSOPO: So we had a little bit of music and so forth. I don't know if that answers your question.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Everything was excellent.

DR. DeSOPO: We have, at times, five lunches and dinners going out at the same time here in the school. Then simultaneously we have kids that go out and work in the community, because, for example, all the landscape that you see here, it's all done by the youngsters. We have no outside maintenance person. The kids do it all. They planted it; they take care of it, constantly they do that. The latest project, we went to work on a home for the homeless. We did all the modifications, the siding, the basement, and so forth. So there are millions and millions of projects like that.

It's a school that's in session continuously. This is one of the other things that we strongly believe, that these are-- Not only do we talk about current expense money and resources, but also capital resources that should be utilized continuously. I think that much more use can be made of the school facilities, and we want you to know that this school is continuously used. We have an extensive summer school program, where the students come to school right through the summer. Also on weekends we have a respite program, where we take the students for the weekend to give the parents a break. So they stay here on a Friday night, on a Saturday, Sunday and Monday, in order to give the parents a break. So these are the--

Of course, we have many other programs for the community, programs such as 100 people that have heart problems -- heart problems. We have one of the most sophisticated programs. A lot of them are executives, former superintendents of schools, or still superintendents of schools that have had heart problems, and now they come to our program and also use the swimming pool.

So these are the kinds of things that we are so happy and so grateful for the support that we receive from the people in the community. We simply want to give a little bit back for getting so much. We're strong because we have a strong student body full of pride, and full of gratitude for the community.

It's my pleasure now to introduce one of the dearest persons that we -- a person that's actually an inspiration to me and to many people, a former student of our school district. It's my pleasure to introduce Dave Nimmer. (applause)

D A V I D L. N I M M E R: I'm very proud to be here. I think my first immediate reaction to your introduction, Doctor, is just to say that I'm a by-product of a lot of special people, and those would be the employees, the parents, and all the people that are involved with this school district.

I began here 15 years ago as a student who was-- Like the video said, I was in a diving accident. I always kind of say I fell into special education, and it's almost been a blessing in disguise. I had an option to stay in my regular school district, or my other option was to go into a computer programming six-month course that would be held in Philadelphia. It was the type of thing where I just wasn't the type to sit in front of a computer eight hours a day. I was more of people-person, you know. I mean, I was 15 months in the hospital. I was home watching TV, and to me, sitting in front of a computer or sitting in front of the TV is the same thing. Although it would probably be a little more productive in front of the computer, it just wasn't something that I wanted to do.

So I came to the school district through the advice of my high school guidance counselors. We met with the child study team here. You know, I went through the school district at first, and I thought, you know, "This isn't a place-- I don't think I want to be-- There's a lot of retarded kids

here." I didn't think-- I'm not retarded, this is-- You know, I didn't belong here. So I went around; I met some people; I met some kids.

The teacher consultant who showed me around said, "You know, why don't you just stay and check it out for a little while, and see how you feel." So I stayed for a couple of weeks, and I was introduced to a lot of different students. I was higher academically than most of those students, so in a classroom they weren't so much my academic peers, I was more like a tutor/assistant.

I had one-on-one teachers and teacher assistants who would give me instruction, and then, you know, I would go in the classroom and sometimes I would help out as an assistant in the classroom. So during my stay I had physical therapy -- range of motion the physical therapist would give me.

I had nursing care for catheterizations, things like that. What always struck me funny was, like, sometimes I had to go to the nurse for some aid in toileting or something. If she was busy, she'd say, "Go down to the custodial department." I'd say, "Well, what for?" She'd say, "Well, there's a guy down there who'll help you out." I was amazed by this. But I go into the custodial room, and say I'm looking for a guy named John. John comes out and is helping me out in the bathroom. And I'm thinking, "Well, boy, that's really unique. You've got a guy that's working in the custodial department, and he's helping me with something that's sensitive, you know."

Physical therapy, occupational therapy were helping me make devices to write better, to use my hands better. They made these pillows, and then I'd go into the sewing department and they would customize them to match my outfit. I mean, you know, it was just amazing. I mean, we have a fashion show every year at the end of the year. The sewing department has the kids that are making their prom dresses and things like

that. The end of the year -- it's just something that is worth coming back for. If you should ever be in the area, just to watch these kids and see the pride on their faces after making their own outfits, and 30 of them strut down the aisle to music. I don't have enough time to tell you everything that's going on here.

At any rate, I finished my high school requirements. The principal-- The superintendent, Dr. DeSopo, said, "You know, you seem to have done very well here. You're done your high school requirements. Maybe you'd like to stay around as a teacher's assistant?" Which I gladly accepted, you know. I mean, it's my first employment since the tragic injury. And I'm thinking, "Well, boy, now I got a job." I was making money beforehand. I was on a work/study program where I was answering the telephone. So I gladly accepted the offer, but it was conditional that I had to go and try to earn some college credit. Dr. DeSopo had me transported over to Center II in Burlington County College for a couple days a week, and I had to do some studies.

Finally I left the district for a little while and got my associates degree over at the college. I've been back here as a substitute teacher, and now I do some public relations tour guide work; working in the counseling center. Now it's not enough for him. He says I've got to go get my four-year degree. Probably after that I have to get my doctorate, because if I don't-- You know, I think he wants me to take his place. I think he's ready to retire.

At any rate, it's just been an invaluable experience for me. I mean, I think back and I think to myself, "You know, if I hadn't had the school district, and I wasn't going to go ahead with the computer programming, what would I have done?" I don't see myself really doing anything productive, you know. I just kind of see myself aimlessly wandering. I don't know where I would have gone.

I'm very proud to be able to show people around this district. I have people coming in from different counties and, you know, they're just in awe of what we have here. It's something that I think about: how important it is and how many other individuals in the country, let alone the various counties, are like me, that don't have a facility like this and then I-- It just baffles me. I think it's something every county should have. I almost think it's like a mandatory thing.

I look at these news shows "20/20" and "PrimeTime" and I see all the fraudulent and abused funds -- taxpayer's funds. I think of the worth and the value that's going on in this district. I think that if somebody were to crack down and get those funds taken care of and make a district like this for everybody, in every county-- It's just that I know there other people out there like me that don't have what we have here. I just think it's something in this day and age that we should have in every county. I'm just more than proud to be a part of it, and I'd be glad to show any of you around any time and give you the details.

Thank you for listening to me. (applause)

DR. DeSOPO: Thank you very much. We want you to know that we really appreciate all the time that you're taking to travel throughout the State on your time, and all the time and effort that you're putting in to improve the education for all the youngsters in the State of New Jersey. On behalf of all the students, the parents, and our staff, we really appreciate it and thank you very much for coming.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

Dr. DeSopo, he has a question about the funding for this school district.

DR. COLEMAN: Could you just explain for a second to us about the funding for this school district, how it's broken down, the source for the funds?

DR. DeSOPO: I'm going to let Mark Stanwood talk on that.

Mark.

DR. COLEMAN: Welcome to the fire, Mark.

DR. DeSOPO: He's the new kid on the block, and since I fed him, I might as well get him involved.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: May I just say that each speaker, will you please come forward to the mike, because we are recording. We want to hear you clearly and everyone else to hear you clearly.

MR. STANWOOD: I didn't even get dinner. The question was to describe the funding formula for the special services school districts?

MR. RITACCO: Right, for your school district, and include in that-- Can you explain to us about the occupational therapy and physical therapy -- the funding that's involved with that?

MR. STANWOOD: There are essentially three sources for funds for special services school districts: State aid; county aid; and tuition, which is charged to local school districts, which comes out of their local tax dollars.

State aid is broken into a couple of different categories: One is foundation aid, which is reflective of a county's relative wealth. To give you an example, Burlington County is construed as less wealthy than Atlantic County, although some in Atlantic may argue that.

DR. DeSOPO: We make the most of our funds.

MR. STANWOOD: The other source-- The other category for State aid is just a categorical aid for special education. And the way that it works, there are various factors for various handicapping conditions.

One of the categories for funding for special ed is special services school districts. The category for that is 1.38 times the foundation amount, which generates about \$9460

-- if my memory serves me -- in categorical aid for each youngster. The cost of the-- Let's take each kid and the aid that's generated for each youngster. So we've got that much in special education categorical aid. However much a county choses to participate in the program and that-- That is a broad range from Warren and Gloucester through Burlington and Cape May. Each of the aids provide county support at different levels, and the difference of need is made up by local tuition.

The required therapies, whether it be physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy-- Some youngsters are so severely involved, they need an individually assigned aid, regardless of the respective needs as dictated in the Individualized Educational Program. It has to be paid for by one of those three sources. I hope that answers your questions.

MR. RITACCO: We've heard some testimony in recent weeks about the lack of aid for occupational therapy from the State. I think this is a great opportunity for the Commission to hear once again that usually -- if I'm wrong correct me -- it's made up through tuition or other services.

MR. STANWOOD: That's correct.

MR. RITACCO: It's not funded through the State. And I think that's one of the things we're trying to deal with, because it may become a very expensive part of a child's IEP.

MR. STANWOOD: It is very expensive.

DR. DeSOPO: And also the 12-month program is also--

MR. RITACCO: Correct.

DR. DeSOPO: --which is needed for these youngsters.

MR. RITACCO: So if you don't get it through funding of the State, then what happens is, it's made up in the other two areas that you have, either the county or through tuition.

MR. STANWOOD: Which means tax dollars. That's exactly right. When an individualized educational program is

written by the child study team that outlines the very specific requirements that must be provided for this youngster, it would be inappropriate, illegal for us to say, as a receiving school, "Well, I know the IEP says the youngster needs physical therapy three times a week, but we only do it once here." Well, sorry, we've got to do what the IEP says, and we've got to pay for that somehow.

I'll speak for Atlantic County. The nature of our enrollment, as time goes on, is, we're getting youngsters -- new referrals -- who are more severely handicapped and whose needs are greater, not simpler.

MS. WALSH: A quick question, and I think I know the answer to this, but to make sure. Once you establish that municipal tuition, regardless of the specific needs of an individual child, which may be greater than another child coming to the district, the local school district would be paying the same amount of tuition per child? Whether or not one child needed a lot of additional assistance through occupational therapy or other therapies, and another child needed less costly, you've got a flat tuition which levels it out?

MR. STANWOOD: That's correct.

DR. DeSOPO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

At this time, we have a gentleman that I neglected to introduce, Dave Hesper, and he's a genius in education. He knows everything. Ask him.

MR. HESPE: (Commission Aide) Now you'll get me in trouble.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: But at any rate, we do have a list of people who have asked to testify, and we will call them in order. Our first person, Sue Fegley, did in fact testify. She was the first lady there. And the next person-- Is Claudia Sumler here?

C L A U D I A B. S U M L E R : Good evening. My name is Claudia Sumler, and I am Director of Camden County Library, headquartered in Voorhees, New Jersey. I thank you for the opportunity to address some of the funding issues surrounding the public library's role in education today.

I am sure that all of you recognize the many important services that public libraries provide. I ask you to focus on our support services to the educational system, a service that has a long history in New Jersey. Indeed, one of the original purposes for the institution of county libraries in New Jersey was to provide library service to schools. The Burlington County Library system continues to provide direct services to the many schools in its service area as a result of that original charge. Although municipal libraries did not have a similar stated responsibility, various levels of cooperation have always existed between schools and public libraries.

Great strides have been made to provide schools with library and media services. However, the reality is that there will never be enough resources to meet all the students' needs through their school media centers during available hours. The potential for basic partnership between schools and public libraries is great, including specialized deposit collections in schools; continuing communication between teacher, school librarians, and public librarians; class tours of local libraries; and the new possibilities afforded by computers, which permit students to access the holdings of the public library from their schools or homes.

However, an examination of the professional literature shows even more creative projects that can benefit students. Recent articles describe an ambitious reading project supported by both schools and public libraries which culminated in children meeting a variety of children's authors. Another focused on a partnership between schools and the New York Public Library, which resulted in joint efforts on updating

reading lists, promoting library service on Back to School Night for the parents, and a special effort to introduce kindergarten students and their parents to the services of both the school media center and the public library in a neighborhood where many of the parents were recent immigrants and totally unfamiliar with any library service. Many public libraries aid schools with after school and homework assistance programs.

The promises of changing technology offer opportunities for more cooperation and resource sharing. Today many schools can dial into the local public library's data base to see if information needed for school projects is available. Now public libraries are beginning to make periodical indices available via computer, and some are even including the actual delivery of articles as part of this service. It will not be too long before this service will be standard, and schools and public libraries can develop more sophisticated collection sharing. Electronic bulletin boards also offer possibilities in informal problem solving and idea sharing through local networking.

The possibilities are many, but public library funding does not reflect the high priority that New Jersey has put on education, as demonstrated through increased State funding for public schools. On Monday, October 11, the State Librarian, Louise Minervino, testified to this Commission and distributed a chart showing the increase in State aid for public schools, as compared to the State aid for public libraries. At the risk of being redundant, I am enclosing it again with my testimony. I believe it depicts very clearly the benign neglect that libraries have received from the State. Demand for public library services in all areas continues to grow, while State funding has actually dropped from \$8.9 million to \$7.5 million in the past three years.

Public libraries have historically been tied to education in New Jersey, as demonstrated by the very fact that it is housed in the Department of Education. The role of public libraries in education is also linked in the minds of the public. A recent Gallup poll asked members of the public to list the top priority roles of public libraries. Formal education support was listed as very important by 90 percent of the respondents.

I ask that you consider the funding of education in New Jersey; that you give careful consideration to the present and future needs of the continuing bond between the schools and public libraries.

Thank you for this opportunity.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you. Are there any questions from members of the panel? Do you have copies of your testimony for each of us?

MS. SUMLER: Yes, I do.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you. I would just like to ask one question. Do you-- Have you ever been given a reason why funding has been decreased? Have there been reasons given?

MS. SUMLER: Times are hard.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Okay, thank you.

Nancy Forester. Is Nancy here? Could you come closer, please. Thank you, Nancy.

N A N C Y J. F O R E S T E R: I think it's fitting that we're in a library when you're going to hear all these library testimonies.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: True.

MS. FORESTER: My name is Nancy Forester, and I'm the Director of the Cumberland County Library. I've been a public library director in South Jersey for 20 years. I feel very strongly on the subject of this testimony: the direct support of New Jersey public libraries to the public education of students in grades K-12.

As you may know, Cumberland County is the poorest county in the State using per capita income statistics. Three of New Jersey's special needs districts are in the county, and three-quarters of the students reside in these districts. The recent influx of State moneys in Cumberland County public schools has been wonderful and very welcome. Unfortunately, State aid to the libraries in these same property tax poor communities continues to decrease. The attached graph shows how dramatic the decrease in public library aid compared to public school aid has been over the last 20 years -- these 20 years of my career. Our communities are forced to use a larger and larger proportion of local property tax moneys to keep library doors open. Bridgeton, for example, has the State's sixth highest percentage of local tax support spent for their public library in the State.

Despite the shrinking State dollars, the demands of the public school students on the local public libraries in these special needs districts are great. For instance, the public library directors in Cumberland County -- and they're here with me tonight -- estimate that 30 to 40 percent of their total materials budgets are spent on curriculum-related materials: books, magazines and media to help students with homework assignments, term papers, or reports. Also, large percentages of library budgets, as much as 25 percent, are spent on the staff and buildings to support this student use.

Why do we spend such large percentages of our budgets on these curriculum-based services? The answer is simple. Students usually turn to the public library first for their curriculum-related needs. At the Millville Public Library, 25 percent of Millville High School students in all types of English classes, vocational to college prep, were surveyed. Only 19 percent used the school library -- probably because of the limited hours that it was open -- as the primary source for their homework and school projects. Over 50 percent received

assignments requiring library use many times a year. The results of this survey were no surprise to me. Anyone who has spent time in a public library from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and on weekends has seen a disproportionate number of students filling the seats, using the resources, and receiving help from library staff.

I am sure heavy student use of libraries is constant throughout the State, and is a challenge for all of New Jersey's public libraries. In counties like Cumberland, even adequate library service to students is an impossibility. Cumberland County libraries barely make minimum State aid standards for materials and personnel, and cannot begin to supply students with the sophisticated and expensive research tools and new technologies they will need to live and study in the twenty-first century.

I am a member of the Per Capita State Aid Study Committee, which looked at the history of State aid to public libraries. This group recommends that funding for public libraries be part of the new school funding formula, and the amount of 1 percent of the new total that the State spends on school aid programs be allocated to public libraries. I urge you to seriously consider this recommendation. There is no question that public libraries help to educate our youth, and there is no question that public libraries feel a major historic responsibility to the public schools. It is now time for those of you who are planning for the future funding of public education to recognize and support the reality of this public library connection to public education.

I thank you for giving me a chance to say this.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you. Any questions from any member--

DR. COLEMAN: I do have one, please.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Yes.

DR. COLEMAN: I'm interested in how you arrived at the formula that you're proposing for funding the public libraries. The 1 percent of-- I wasn't quite certain. Is it 1 percent of what increase we're likely to suggest?

MS. FORESTER: I think it's 1 percent. I believe that it's 1 percent of the total education budget -- is what we were asking for.

DR. COLEMAN: So, for instance, if the State provides \$4.5 billion to fund primary and secondary education, you're looking for 1 percent of that? May I ask sort of-- Why 1 percent? Why not half a percent? Why not 1.5? Why not three? I'm just trying to get a sense of how you arrived at--

MS. FORESTER: We didn't think we could get two. I think it was indeed somewhat of a pragmatic number. The number is so small now that we can't even chart it. We can't even make a chart of it because it is so minuscule. It doesn't even show up. And I should get down to the--

MR. MORAN: Can you tell us what it is in total dollars?

MS. FORESTER: Maybe someone could help me on that?

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF PANEL: Forty-five million.

MS. FORESTER: It's 0.25 percent. \$13 million. It's 0.25 percent of the education budget.

DR. COLEMAN: That's what it is now?

MS. FORESTER: That's what it is now.

DR. COLEMAN: You're saying you want it, therefore, roughly tripled?

MS. FORESTER: We have really been the -- kind of the underdogs in the Department of Education for many years. We work very closely with the schools and have not been able to share in even their successes.

DR. COLEMAN: Is there any sense that if you were to get some additional infusion -- and let's just go with the tripling for want of a better total here -- would that basically be allocated among the existing public libraries--

MS. FORESTER: Yes.

DR. COLEMAN: --in this same fashion as current moneys are distributed?

MS. FORESTER: It would probably-- I'm guessing, because none of this, of course, has been formulated. It would probably be through the State Aid to Public Libraries Program, which is currently in place. But it would certainly--

DR. COLEMAN: I'm just trying to get a sense of whether the needs are pretty much uniform across all libraries, or whether some places are worse off than others and would need perhaps a greater share of any increased amount.

MS. FORESTER: Some places are certainly worse off than others, just as the schools in property poor tax places are worse off than others. Yes, but none of that has been formulated.

DR. COLEMAN: My final question is-- Again, I'm not trying to put you on the spot. These things haven't been fleshed out; that's fine. Is this all operating, or is this both operating and to meet some outstanding capital needs, as well?

MS. FORESTER: This money is operating money. This goes pretty much into materials and personnel.

MS. WALSH: Can you just tell those of us who aren't quite sure, your moneys that are coming in now, are they allocated purely on a per capita basis?

MS. FORESTER: It's a rather complicated formula that is derived from how much the local community puts into the library, and a per capita rate which slides depending on whether the local community gives more or less. But as you can see, the poorer communities are further penalized because they get less. The rich get rich, and the poor get poorer the way the State aid is currently allocated. So it's very much the opposite of the way the QEA moneys, for instance, have been distributed, which is one of the major problems.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

Any other questions? (no response)

We need your testimony, thank you.

Paula Haemmerle. Is Paula here? Thank you.

P A U L A H A E M M E R L E: Good evening, and thank you for giving us the opportunity to be here this evening. My dinner was unexpected and delightful. We don't have a school cafeteria in our school. I was extremely overwhelmed and very impressed.

I'm a resident, a concerned parent, and part of a Citizen's Action Committee from the Borough of Roosevelt, which is a small town in Western Monmouth County. I'm a little nervous.

In today's hard economic times, households are operating as businesses, running on very tight budgets. Luxuries are cut in order to pay ever increasing taxes and living expenses. Never before has the State of New Jersey experienced such record numbers of personal bankruptcies, as well as home and property foreclosures.

Businesses today have experienced record high layoffs, and have had to cut expenditures, such as benefits and advertising, in order to keep their doors open. The biggest of companies, such as IBM, who had always prided themselves on never having to lay off an employee, are now not only laying off, but they're shutting down their doors all over the country. As the job market becomes more competitive, employers are able to get more applicants at lower salaries. Benefits are costing employees more, yet the cost of living continues to rise not at the same level of personal income.

Cities today, big and small, urban and rural, must look at operating as efficiently as possible. Police and fire departments in New Jersey have been looking at regionalizing as a way of cutting administrative and operational costs. Our town, as well as many over the last few years, is considering

the privatization of our water and sewerage systems. We're realizing that it's not cost-effective to have 330 households cover the cost for improvements. When a large utility company installs a new well, for example, millions of its users share that cost, not the small town residents. The economy of scales makes sense in almost all areas.

Just as personal households, businesses, and towns look at ways to budget and cut back, yet still operate efficiently, public schools must follow the same path. Educational funding should not be looked at as a State, regional, or local issue, but rather as a national budget averaged out across the country. Property owners should not be targeted as the ones responsible for supporting local schools, but rather every household should contribute to the education of our children. Children everywhere deserve the very best educational opportunities regardless of where they live. The same amount of money should be allocated or allotted for every school-age child, and they should receive the same education.

A national standard of curriculum should be set up, guaranteeing that each child be equally prepared for life. If one school district is a strong agricultural area, then perhaps a little more emphasis could be put into that vocation. Also, cost of living could be taken into consideration, just as national companies allow differentials in salaries depending upon where the employee works and resides. The cost to educate each child would be lowered tremendously if the cost was allocated among every taxpayer nationally.

We need to look and see why businesses are leaving the Garden State in search of another state to live in where cost of living is less. Rather than forcing people and businesses to leave, couldn't we come up with a solution to entice people to stay? Ever wonder why Joe Smith in West Virginia, property owner of 100 acres of land, a home, and 4 school-aged children only pays \$800 a year in property taxes, his kids ride a school

bus 3 miles away, and receive a quality education? Incidentally, Joe Smith and his family used to live in Monmouth County, New Jersey, owned a small home on half an acre of land, and his taxes were \$5000 a year.

In my real estate related business, I have the opportunity to work with many people, mostly in search of this economically balanced place to live where they could someday retire and live on a fixed income. My customers are moving out of New Jersey to where the cost to live and educate their children are less, and the stress brought on by not being able to make ends meet is more manageable.

In the '80s, the State decided that each school district should finance and operate their schools themselves, with some if any State aid, most of the costs passed on to each property owner. However, the QEA formulas used have proven themselves not to be an equitable system. Every school district differs in population, size, number of businesses, etc.; therefore, the formula when applied to small towns such as mine, Roosevelt, has resulted in financial ruin for many. Perhaps the State of New Jersey, Department of Education's emphasis is educating our children, but they've got to see that what their demands have done, and the effect on small towns such as ours.

Roosevelt is a very small town in Western Monmouth County, two-miles radius, population 954. There are 330 taxpaying structures, no ratables. Our school taxes are the second highest in the State, making up 75 percent of our local property taxes. Our 1994 school budget is \$1.5 million to support 142 students. The Roosevelt Public School K-6 has only 90 children, the average class size is 12.8. It's lovely; it's very nice to have a small town school that my son can walk to and receive a very personalized education, but at what cost? How can I ever save for college?

Roosevelt has approximately 310 homes that have an average assessed value of \$110,000. When the QEA funding formula took a look at the very low assessments compared to the income levels, we were looked at as a very wealthy community, therefore our State aid was minimal. In a town of 330 households, it is likely that just a few extremely wealthy residents could offset the scale for the rest of the community. Roosevelt is not a rich community. When the State mandates that each school district be financially responsible for special needs kindergarten through age 21, the burden on so few taxpayers is tremendous. We have 10 children now attending special schools outside our district. The school board just approved a bus contract for \$113 per diem for one child to travel 25 miles round-trip each day. That's over \$20,000 per year, and that does not include tuition.

The sharp tax increases over the last few years have had a double impact to residents. From 1989 to the present, New Jersey has experienced a very difficult recession, high unemployment rates, and a record low housing market. Home values in New Jersey have depreciated between 2 and 5 percent a year, yet property taxes continue to soar. While the rest of New Jersey is getting back on its feet, Roosevelt is still suffering. Our taxes are much higher compared to other surrounding areas, forcing our homes to further depreciate. For many of us, our home equity is our life savings, much of which is gone. Realtors do not bring prospective buyers to our town. In order to sell a home, it must be sold for less than its assessed value. And what's saddest of all is that our continuing rise in taxes is not buying our children the new computers. We are cutting very important programs out of our budget, and it is our children that are suffering as a result of State mandates.

I could go on and on, but due to my time limitation, I will close by saying that we can offer a better solution to

educational funding. Let's look at public school funding and education programs as a national issue. Regionalization is necessary to the existence of public schools. We need to cut administrative costs, not books and programs. If we can redistribute the funding nationally, the costs to each person would be lower. Let's give our kids more, not settle for less.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

Are there any questions of this Commission?

DR. COLEMAN: You mentioned the average assessed value in Roosevelt. Do you have any idea what the average income there is?

MS. HAEMMERLE: Not offhand, I don't.

DR. COLEMAN: What's the average tax rate there?

MS. HAEMMERLE: The average tax rate, again, about 300 households have the average assessed value of about \$110,000. I'll speak for myself. My home is assessed at \$212,000. I'm one of the new kids on the block. I'm one of 30 new homes built over the last 10 years. My taxes have gone, from 1987 until present, from \$2400 to almost \$6900 right now. And our taxes-- We're looking at a \$1 million bond kicking in for State mandated school improvements this year, as well as a cap waiver, which was rubber stamped by our council, defeated by the town, and rubber stamped by the council recently. I'll be going up to about \$8500 by the end of this year, so I feel as though if something isn't done right now--

I'm concerned about our future. Our children do not-- As I said, we have a very small town, and we're very, very unique. We have a post office, dirt roads, no school cafeteria, no libraries. The programs that we have in our school are extremely limited.

Part of our Citizens' Action Group has gone before Mr. Singer, legislators-- We've written to Dr. Fitzgerald. We

have seen some action. We've convinced our town and our school board to go for the regionalization study, which we are presently undergoing. However, I think things need to progress a little bit faster. We're in a very desperate situation.

I understand the Education Department's concerns for educating the children. But at the same time, we have a lot of senior citizens in our town that quite frankly-- Mr. Singer and I are becoming fax buddies. Everytime I see a letter on a bulletin board, I fax it to him: hardship cases because of our tax increases; people requiring food stamps that never needed help before; people not able to fix their homes up in order to sell it, and they have to sell it in order to get out from underneath their problems.

There's no simple solution. I just know that something needs to be addressed soon, not in the next five years. I feel as though regionalization is something that should not be left up to the school districts. We've been a sending district to East Windsor now for 20 years. They don't want us. I don't feel-- I think it's something that should not be handled on a local basis. I think the State should come in and say, "This is economically sound after our regionalization studies, and this is what we need to do."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

MS. HAEMMERLE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: I will just tell you this, that I -- a bill that I have sponsored -- it's still in Committee -- to say that what the State mandates, the State should pay, because all of us who have been in a local official capacity realize that there are so many mandates that come from the State, but the local taxpayers and property owners must pay. So it's a problem that we're grappling with now.

Also, you're saying that there has to be a solution now and not years down the road. Well, that's why we're meeting so often, because we are mandated -- legislated, I

should say -- to come up with some sense of a formula for funding by -- to present to the Legislature and the Governor by November 15. Your testimony is certainly taken in consideration, as they all are.

I thank you for that, because we do know the needs of the large districts, and they are important. They're very important, and the court has recognized that. But we have been hearing, too, about the very small districts that are in the same -- a similar situation as your town. Thank you very much.

Teri Skye.

T E R I L. S K Y E: I'm Paula's neighbor, so I hope you don't hear too much of the same stuff. My name is Teri Skye, and I live in Roosevelt, where there are approximately 950 people. Two years ago, my husband and I, and two small children, bought our "dream home" out in the woods on a dead-end, dirt road. The school is a block and a half away, and we thought that was a real nice thing.

At the time we moved in, our taxes were high, at \$5000 and now they are \$7000. We bought our house at a reasonable price because the previous owners were being foreclosed on because they couldn't afford to pay their mortgage or their taxes anymore.

Our school has approximately 90 students this year in grades K-6. For '92-'93, the administrative costs alone were \$639,000. I don't have the exact figures for '93-'94, but I understand that they went up approximately 5 percent, making the total cost for administration alone over \$670,000.

For seven grades we have: eight full-time teachers; two part-time teachers; two aids; a full-time administrator; a full-time school board secretary, who often hires part-time accounting help; a part-time nurse, who works two mornings a week; a full-time secretary; a full-time janitor; and a part-time janitor. This is for 90 kids, with an average of 12 per class.

I don't want to appear to be against teachers, because I feel they are extremely important to our nation's future, and deserve to be well-respected and paid. I simply feel that our school is way overstaffed for such a small amount of children. Roosevelt is 9 percent above the State-mandated cap. Our school has over 12 percent administrators, compared to the State average of 4.5 and regional average of 3.7. As Paula told you, we have the second highest tax rate in the State.

Now, after telling you all this, you'd think that our children are getting a superb education, but they're getting an average education at best. Why? Because the State keeps forcing millions of dollars of mandates upon us. For 1993-'94 our school operating costs went up 0.8 percent, and our overall budget went up 8.8 percent. Our transportation costs went up approximately \$40,000, while our State aid went up \$500. Our administrative costs went up approximately 5 percent, and what our children got was their school books and art supplies cut completely from the budget. For 1993-'94, our children will receive no new school books or art supplies.

That's not the end of it. They had their school field trips cut and their assemblies cut. We had a fund to offer lunches for children who forget their lunches, and that was cut. Our school has no cafeteria for our children to receive hot lunches because the State made us close it. Once a month, the PTA and volunteer parents bring in a hot meal for the children if they choose to. I think you see where I'm going with this. Our children are definitely not benefitting from these State mandates. They are actually suffering because of it. Exceptions have to be made for tiny school districts.

It used to be that teachers and their families were offered insurance benefits as an extra, because they were, quite honestly, underpaid. But that's not the case anymore. Teachers are getting \$30,000 to \$40,000 and often times more, and they get healthy increases. The State increases salaries

of 6 percent. I don't remember the last time I got a 6 percent increase. Most employers are making insurance benefits something that their employees have to contribute to in order to receive. Why is the State not doing this as well? With the rising cost of insurance, I think it should be considered.

Our Roosevelt school has a much larger capacity than is currently being utilized, while the Millstone school is just three miles away and is busting at the seams. Why can't we join forces? Why doesn't the State force something as logical as this? For instance, we have a Millstone family that is so upset with the overcrowding of their school that they have decided to send their child to our small, quaint Roosevelt school and pay us tuition. Obviously we are happy to have the money, but why do they have to pay extra to make this choice?

Why shouldn't the parents have the right to choose where their child goes to school? Why is their child only entitled to State funding if they go where they are told? It is currently costing Roosevelt \$11,000 per student to send one student from seventh grade on up to the East Windsor school system. For \$12,500, I could send my son to a tremendous private school that is miles closer to my home. Why can't I have that \$11,000 that he's entitled to, and pay the extra \$1500 out of pocket if that's my choice? After all, I'm still paying this huge tax bill.

I told you earlier that I am paying -- \$6945.31 are my exact taxes, \$4708.70 goes to the school district. I talked to our chief financial officer on the council last week. He told me to expect a \$1200 increase in the next 18 months because of the cap waiver that just went through. That's \$8000. It costs me an additional \$6000 for child care for my other child to send. All of us know what payroll taxes do, and we get hit with sales tax all the time. It's impossible to live like this anymore.

Our children are our future, and we have to look out for them by offering quality education and a funding system that offers equal education for everyone. Schools that are underutilized should be forced to be brought up to capacity, and schools have got to combine forces and regionalize in order to save on expenses. The idea of, "Send your child where we tell you or lose tax funding," in my opinion is truly unfair. I think that if choice was offered, many of these problems could be solved. Maybe we should look at the other countries in the world that put a true emphasis on children and quality education, and don't overtax their citizens strictly on location and property tax. It's not fair.

I feel that an overall, federally funded program is needed. I also hope that this Commission can do something, and I was glad to hear you say November 15 is the deadline. So we'll see if we can get something done. Thank you. There are a lot of us counting on you for help before we lose our homes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

MS. SKYE: I have other letters--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Are those--

MS. SKYE: If there was something in them-- Well, this is mine, and then I brought some from some residents in town.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: For each of us and so on? Will you give it to us?

MS. SKYE: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Okay, thank you very much.

Any questions?

MR. RITACCO: Just one question. Ma'am, what is your school board's position on regionalization? What is your school's position?

MS. SKYE: We had a huge meeting and hit them with a petition of two-thirds of the town, and forced them to apply for the money and do it. I think our administrator-- Our

school board secretary says it's a horrible thing. Our administrator says it doesn't really matter to her; she's got a job either way. I don't really know. We're forcing it. We're going in by the crowds, and yelling and screaming, because looking into it doesn't mean you have to do it. We have to fight just to get them to do a study. Then when the study comes in, we'll take it from there. But like I said, Millstone is less than three miles away and they're bursting. We have all this room at our school, so I don't know what to do about it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: I thank you for-- Oh, I'm sorry.

MS. WALSH: Just a quick question.

MS. HAEMMERLE: I just wanted to add--

MR. MORAN: Could you please come to the microphone, please.

MS. HAEMMERLE: I'm sorry.

MR. MORAN: If you're going to say something, we can't pick it up if you don't.

MS. HAEMMERLE: I just wanted to also add that I think the biggest feeling among the school board and a lot of the residents -- not a lot of the residents, but a handful of the residents -- the loss of power. Regardless of anything else that may come to be, that may seem to be the biggest stickler, to lose power. And there's a lot more to it than that.

MS. WALSH: My question is, is Millstone, or some of the other surrounding communities, of the same size as Roosevelt, or are they much larger?

MS. SKYE: They're much larger. I think Monroe is smaller. The problem is, according to Dr. Lobman, our administrator, what she's told us is that, "We're a liability and nobody wants us." That's a direct quote. I don't know, but there are nearby schools--

MS. WALSH: Another question that goes beyond -- a little bit beyond educational funding: Is your group also interested in considering regionalization of governmental jurisdictions?

MS. SKYE: Oh, yes.

MS. WALSH: I assume that what you're dealing with in school costs is being replicated--

MS. SKYE: Oh, yes.

MS. WALSH: --in your municipal budget.

MS. SKYE: Oh, yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Another question.

MS. SKYE: I hope I can answer it.

DR. COLEMAN: I heard both you and the previous speaker speak specifically to this issue of the onerous burdens of some State mandates, I assume particularly on the school districts. I was just wondering if there were maybe one or two that stood out more than others that you could direct our attention to.

MS. SKYE: I think it cost us \$20,000 to put the kindergarten toilet in for nine kids in a tiny school. Ninety this year is a big year, I want you to know. We've been less in previous years. It's costing over \$10,000 to remove a siren and then have some work on the roof done. These are actually very small compared to some, I think, ramps, and there's a lot of construction. Actually, we have a huge construction that's supposed to go through.

MR. RITACCO: Are you doing fire retrofit, too? The fire doors, are you doing fire retrofit?

MS. SKYE: I'm not real sure.

MR. RITACCO: Is that what that cap waiver was--

MS. SKYE: See, we have-- I don't really know.

MR. RITACCO: --construction for bringing your school up to code?

MS. SKYE: Up to code? Yes, well, we are bringing it up to code. We were told we are under standards, so we have to--

MR. RITACCO: That's fire and handicap standards, ADA.

MS. SKYE: But we're also somehow mixed in with a historical, so I think we're getting out of couple of building alterations because of this.

MR. RITACCO: School districts have to come into code with fire regulations.

MS. SKYE: That could be.

MS. HAEMMERLE: For the new construction, that's all taken into consideration.

MR. RITACCO: Commission for the Blind and all those things that cost--

MS. HAEMMERLE: All of that to the tune of almost a million dollars this year.

DR. COLEMAN: The ADA has just past through Federal requirements on that. That's not something that New Jersey is particulary--

MR. RITACCO: Big school districts are hit twice because they get these retrofits that always seem to have to be done at the school level and not at the local levels. We're facing the same thing. We're spending like \$3 million to make our doors get a one-sixthteenth of an inch instead of a half an inch. I think all school districts are going through the same thing. We have a very old school. The costs can really start to mount. We're putting braille signs on all the bathrooms and cups by the water fountains. I'm sure you're going through the same thing. It's not cheap to do.

MS. SKYE: Up until just a couple of years ago, we split -- fifth and sixth grades were together. We just split fifth and sixth grade. We're a tiny, little school, and like I said, \$4700 of my taxes go there.

DR. COLEMAN: May I try this one more while I have them both here, as a matter of fact?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Yes.

DR. COLEMAN: If I review the numbers correctly, right now the Federal government on average, I think, provides for less than 10 percent of the cost of primary and secondary education -- provides resources that cover less than 10 percent. I think in a wealthy State like New Jersey, it's even less. If I'm not mistaken, they're 5 or 6 percent. Given that, I guess my question is, what gives you such hope to look toward the Federal government as a greater partner in future years in funding primary and secondary education?

MS. SKYE: Nowhere else to go, I don't know. Like I said, when Howard told me last week to expect another \$1200 within the next year and a half, you know, I can't afford \$8500. My neighbor's paying \$11,000 in taxes now. You know, I mean, that's-- You can't afford to get rid of your house because they qualified for the mortgage, and then they say, "\$800 a month, we don't qualify anymore."

MS. HAEMMERLE: I also just want to add that the town of Roosevelt has the second highest utility bill in the United States. Our residents pay \$140 a month for water and sewerage. We're not a desirable area. We've been begging bankruptcy.

As a Realtor, as well as a citizen and resident of this town, my concern is that my family and her family -- that our average income, middle-class families cannot afford their homes. I fear the loss of the middle class, and I wonder who can afford a home. I also question the benefits of home ownership. I'd be better off renting, and then I wouldn't be paying those taxes.

DR. COLEMAN: Suppose we just abstract for a moment from the Federal government, and I'm not, sort of, doing that, because I necessarily disagree with your objective there. But the fact of the matter is that we simply don't have any domain over the Federal government. We can only make recommendations

to the State. We can't even do that for the Feds. Would your situation be improved any if, say, the reliance on the property tax was lessened, and greater reliance on the income tax was an alternative?

MS. HAEMMERLE: I feel, yes.

MS. SKYE: Yes.

MS. HAEMMERLE: But I also feel very strongly that this needs to be looked at as a national issue. As I said previously, I have an opportunity to go from state to state with my business. The first thing I do is, I ask my customer, "What are you paying in taxes here?" I come home depressed every time I come back to New Jersey. I'm born and raised here, and you know, I'm simply relocating businesses and people to other parts of the country. "Time Magazine" had a big issue on the big drive out West to the Rockies. People are taking their computers. They're working out of their homes, and they're going to less stressful places where they can afford to live.

What's going to happen in 10 years? People are all going to find out about these other places to go, so why not cut it now, and why not distribute nationally? Why should one area, as I said, pay \$800 a year, and somebody else be paying \$11,000 a year? It's just not equitable. We need to look and see, "Well, what are the other states doing right; what are they doing wrong? How can we join hands and give everybody an equal share of the same education?"

DR. COLEMAN: Again, I'm not necessarily disagreeing with the idea that maybe we should look to some other states to see where there are some reasonable models. I think, though, that the same battles that you have here in New Jersey, where you're talking about changing the amount of aid that goes to one school district in favor of more or less aid going to another school district, you take that problem and you magnify it 80,000 times, which is roughly the number of local

governments in this country, and that's the national problem that you're looking at. So it does really make for a much more difficult problem if you look to the Federal government for a larger role, although it may well be that the ultimate and obvious solution to where you go or how you get there is a lot tougher.

MS. SKYE: But when we start cutting books and educational trips and things-- That's what education to me is all about. I mean, I'm not really that concerned that cups be next to the water fountain. You know, I want my kid to have good books. I want him to go to the aquarium. I want him to have these things that to me are what education is about. But when the State keeps making these mandates, it's the children -- that those kinds of things that are getting cut from the budget, you know-- They'll have their cups, but they won't have books. It's just getting out of hand. I don't know.

MS. HAEMMERLE: We just completed a fundraiser yesterday in our town for the PTA, and we worked very, very hard. Planning took a couple of months, down to the wire about 15 individuals really worked for days putting this together, and maybe we'll walk away with \$700 profit. That's peanuts.

MS. SKYE: It's for a field trip that was cut.

MS. HAEMMERLE: You know, our children are not getting assemblies; they're not going on trips. It's not the PTAs anymore that are just giving the little extras, or buying the school a gift at the end of the year. We're paying our taxes--

MS. SKYE: The school is starting to come and ask us for things that are -- things that they need to have. Not only are we paying our taxes, now they're, "Could you help us with this. The school needs this." So we wind up getting it doubly no matter how you look at it.

MS. HAEMMERLE: So we're full-time volunteers, as well as full-time working parents to support our town. Everybody is working three jobs and not home with their kids.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

MS. SKYE: Thank you.

MS. HAEMMERLE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Harry Perlman? I'm sorry, Barry. My eyes are getting tired.

B A R R Y S. P E R L M A N: That's quite all right. I'm just as tired.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: My Aide is somewhere with my glasses.

MR. PERLMAN: I almost want to say thank God I don't live in Roosevelt. But in a short time, I'm afraid that every town will be Roosevelt in New Jersey. Before I start, I guess I'm moved to say the following: While I agree with Dr. Coleman that we can't go to the Federal government for everything, New Jersey is one of the leaders in our 50 states in sending money to Washington, and not a necessarily large winner in getting money back.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: That's right.

MR. PERLMAN: I think one of the reasons why we don't get money back -- and I'm saying this as a personal thing, and not representing the organization I'm speaking for -- is that our government had developed and evolved on a Federal level with an idea that our foreign policy has something to do with sending our brothers and sisters around the world to kill people of white through all colors. Perhaps we spent \$500 billion in that damned Iraqi fiasco, and how many books could that buy -- libraries, schools, food? I'm sorry, but I had to say that.

My name is Barry Perlman. I'm Chairman of the Committee for Educational Equity and Parity. The Committee for Educational Equity and Parity was organized more that a year ago by professionals, educators, bussinesspeople, and citizens, whose primary interest was to study the process of public education management and assist in not merely short-term

reform, but permanent restructuring. Our objective is to produce a model for public education's management structure that will permit our children and their educational providers to be able to meet the demands made upon them by a competitive world economy.

First let us define the problem. The collective organization of public education in the State of New Jersey is bankrupt. By the year 2000, we will have produced a bill estimated to be \$30 billion. We cannot permit this to occur. A debt of \$30 billion will drain every dollar that the State projects it can raise in taxes for every State need, including public education. If any of you doubt the serious, but certain fate that awaits every New Jersey citizen in the year 2000, your role in this Commission will surely be viewed in the future as a pallbearer for the carcass of public education and the body of the State's financial health. What must be done? You must recognize and certify that the financial crisis is no longer a question of greater or fewer dollars, but that the financial problems are the natural result of the system's requirements.

The present management structure is the very core of the continuing financial crisis and requires not reform, but radical restructuring, or we surely will face financial ruin in the year 2000 or sooner.

To this end, we propose the following actions, which lay the ground for an affordable management structure which can provide a thorough and efficient public education for every New Jersey child.

- 1) Eliminate all district employment contracts, establishing a single, master, statewide contract which provides pay parity for every teacher. Pay parity can never be achieved with the present 611 separate district contracts.

- 2) Regionalize the 611 individually managed districts into a new management system of 21 county-based districts, with a single, accountable, full-time, paid school board.

3) Redistribute student populations and staff within new county districts to efficiently use existing buildings and personnel.

4) The full-time school board will replace the present State Department of Education. All curriculum will be developed by classroom teachers in 21 districts. Teachers will be given the empowerment of site-based self-management, eliminating the need for the present nonteacher managers whose statewide costs represent nearly \$350 million within the present \$10 billion education cost, while providing no delivery of direct educational services.

5) Consolidate all purchasing and district business management directly under the offices of the new State School Board, streamlining nonteaching support services, and rationalizing management economics throughout the State.

7) Establish 21 county magnet schools for advanced students and teachers in science and engineering, and arts and humanities. This would utilize school buildings made available through regionalization. Professionalization would be raised by staffing, utilizing only teachers with advanced degrees in the subject taught, rather than pedagogy.

8) With statewide restructuring, a single budget can be developed for all New Jersey education costs.

This new financial and management control permits the State to bundle all current debts of the former 611 districts into a single long-term bonding. Further, by eliminating the current local debt, which is paid through real estate taxes, the effect of which is regressive to the maintenance of stable communities-- We've heard Roosevelt. Debt service can be transferred to a sales tax/income tax mix, with local real estate taxes paying for local governmental needs, less the current 60 percent which has gone to fund schools -- generally on an average, that is.

This program eliminates wasteful bureaucracy, empowers the providers of educational services, and protects the equity of the consumer in the system.

In conclusion, teachers need to be professionalized through self-management, and financial controls must be instituted to prevent further statewide economic decline. The three R's used to stand for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Now they stand for radical restructuring or ruin.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

MR. PERLMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Any questions of the Commission? (no response) I think it's left us awe-struck. Quite profound, this statement. Are there any questions? Still reading? (no response)

MR. PERLMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Okay, thank you very much.

Vivian Robinson.

V I V I A N R O B I N S O N: I am the President of the Cherry Hill Education Association, Vivian Robinson. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

First I'd like to read to you a description of the school district:

* Overcrowded classrooms at all levels: kindergarten classes of 25, intermediate classes of 28, high school classes of 30 to 40.

* No computer labs in the elementary schools to meet the children's needs to deal with the age of technology.

* Various professionals, sometimes three or four sharing the same room and teaching students of different levels.

* Employees with concerns over the cleanliness of the schools due to cutbacks in the custodial staff. Schoolrooms where the floors and rooms are thoroughly cleaned once a year,

in the summer. Repairs not able to be made in labs due to the lack of funds. The build-up of mold and dust causing respiratory problems throughout the district.

* Field trips cut from the budget. Extracurricular activities are cut, and students are forced to attend board meetings and fight for activities for which they are interested. Some of these activities would enable them to receive scholarships for college.

* A comprehensive education is no longer able to be provided to all students due to cuts in staff and programs. Those students who are not college-bound lose the courses that would enable them to be productive contributors to society upon graduation.

* Every February a freeze is put on spending so that money is available for the next year to hold down the tax increase to the community.

* Cutbacks on employees and services that provide students with basic skills math, and also to the accelerated students. Extra help is no longer given to discretionary students.

* In the elementary school there is an attempt to replace a certified teacher with an aide, instead of two certified teachers teaching two class sections. This change dilutes the existing program and brings about a concern for student safety.

* Instrumental music teachers teach on the stage while 63 first and second graders are being instructed in the same room -- the all-purpose room.

* With no extra funds available this district faces increased student enrollment. Where space is limited there's no where for them to go.

The preceding description is of the Cherry Hill school district. Many people, when they imagine Cherry Hill, picture schools with state-of-the-art computer labs in every school,

unlimited field trips, science labs in elementary schools, a better than usual ratio of students to teachers, and unlimited supplies. We have not had any new books either for about the last five or six years in the elementary schools. The above conditions are the result of the leveling down effect of QEA on education in Cherry Hill.

For the school year '93-'94, a no tax increase for the district will result in cutting the present budget by \$8 million.

The Board of Education and the Teacher's Association have worked hard to encourage the citizens of Cherry Hill to pass the school budget. In most years, we have been successful in our endeavors.

In 1990, Cherry Hill received \$20.5 million in State aid; presently we receive \$13.8 million. This is a loss of approximately \$8 million since 1990. If QEA remains in effect, by the year 1999-2000 the district will receive no State aid, and the burden of the cost of education will shift totally to the local level.

In the past, the Board was given one figure for State aid, and then two months later that amount was decreased, so more cuts needed to be made. Then if the budget was defeated, further program cuts were implemented. This does not promote stability, or an environment where districts can plan for the future and continue to provide students with the best education possible.

Each year it becomes more difficult because residents are upset with increasing taxes. The increase in taxes maintains the present programs, and in some cases some programs are still cut. This past year, class size increased, which raised community concern. In the neighboring districts, elementary schools are equipped with computer labs and the use of computers in the primary grades is an integral part of the reading program. This is a luxury Cherry Hill cannot afford.

More importantly, from the onset of the budgeting process until it's completion, the district is in a state of crisis. The relationships of those working within a school are in conflict because of the threat of cuts made in various program areas. Each department feels that their's is the most important, and publicly makes presentations at board meetings to rally the support of parents and students to preserve their programs. This creates an environment of conflict, not cooperation within a school and school district. The focus of the staff and community is on saving jobs and programs, and this indirectly affects the student's education.

Every year districts go through the process from about November until the school board election. It takes its toll on individuals and the relationships of everyone that is a part of the educational community. Cherry Hill has experienced the leveling down effect of the QEA, and looks forward to a more productive way of financing school budgets.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you. You have copies of your testimony?

MS. V. ROBINSON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Good.

Are there any questions from the Commission?

MR. RITACCO: How many students are left in Cherry Hill? I know you had a decline.

MS. V. ROBINSON: Ten thousand, and the enrollment is increasing this year. It increased a great deal at the elementary schools, and we have asked the State-- We're having, I guess, classrooms built on. But even at this point, what they have-- The bid that they put in, it's already -- it will be filled up right away, and most -- a lot of the teachers in the elementary school do not have a working area unless they have a classroom. Reading teachers, basic skills, music teachers -- they push the piano around or they have a CD player that they take -- art teachers are on carts in almost all of

the elementary schools. They are asking the teachers to more or less design programs. They don't want -- we don't have books in science, social studies, and those types of areas.

MS. WALSH: One question, if I could: In order of magnitude, what is the annual budget of the Cherry Hill school district?

MS. V. ROBINSON: Let me see. I think it is \$94 million -- \$92 million or \$94 million.

MS. WALSH: And the loss of the State aid, was that made up by an increase in local aid?

MS. V. ROBINSON: Increase by the taxpayers.

MS. WALSH: And do you know what the average tax is in Cherry Hill for school purposes?

MS. V. ROBINSON: It was 4.859. It was 1.52 higher than the State average.

MS. WALSH: Forty-eight cents, is that what you're saying, 4.8 cents?

MS. V. ROBINSON: I think so. Is it four cents per hundred?

MS. WALSH: Okay, four cents per hundred.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

Gail Robinson?

G A I L S. R O B I N S O N: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Gail Robinson, and I am the Acting Director of the Bridgeton Public Library; that's in Cumberland County. I'm here with about a dozen members of the library community this evening. Some of what I'm going to say will sound somewhat familiar.

A comment was made about the fact that we are meeting this evening in a library. I do want to make the point that this library is closed this evening. I am here with public librarians, all of whom left open libraries. Guess where your students are?

Mention was made previously by Nancy Forester, from the Cumberland County Library, that Bridgeton represents one of the -- is in Cumberland County, one of the poorest counties, and Bridgeton is one of the poorest communities within that county. We're at the top of all the wrong lists, including things like illiteracy rates, teen pregnancy. The school dropout rate is extremely high in Cumberland County, so obviously we need all the kind of educational help we can get there in Cumberland County.

Bridgeton has been designated a special needs area. The point was made previously that despite the fact that your community may be designated as special needs, that doesn't do a thing for the library aid. There is very little in the way of mandated services for library services within the school district. So despite the fact that school districts may get more money, there's no guarantee that those will go toward improving library services. However, the needs of the students still remain, and they end up in the public libraries.

It was mentioned that State library aid is incentive aid: The more money your community gives you, the more money that the State Library then gives you. Of course, if you have a poor community and your community is unable to provide for you, you get a double whammy. It's really very difficult for the poorer communities to maintain the kind of public library services that they require.

State aid to local school districts has risen in past years, and State aid to local libraries has fallen. That graph you're going to see-- I'm sure many times you're going to see that graph. Unfortunately, nobody told the students that that was what was happening. When 2:30 comes, our libraries are full of students, whether or not we have the funding to support the kind of services that they need.

We're the only public facility which is regularly available to students after 3:00. The State Department of

Education has not made access to school libraries -- or media centers as they're known -- a point of consideration in monitoring of schools. Even if an adequate facility exists, it's rarely accessible to students due to scheduling and the fact that the media center is often used as a classroom. Evening hours are virtually nonexistent in schools.

Until the Department of Education -- perhaps with your prodding -- can take appropriate regulatory action to guarantee adequate library curriculum support for the schools, the local public libraries must have the funds to serve the school population. The public library's role in educational support has never been recognized in the distribution of educational funds. We are doing an educational job, and we simply aren't getting paid for it. We look to you to help change that.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you.

Any questions?

DR. COLEMAN: I think I misheard you, but you aren't suggesting that an alternative to additional funding for the public libraries is to simply give more money to the school districts and require that they spend it on libraries within the districts? I didn't-- That wasn't what you meant to say, or did I hear that?

MS. G. ROBINSON: Well, obviously that's one of the alternatives if we -- if the school -- if the educational needs of the students were being met in the schools, and were being met not only during the school day, but after the school day, then perhaps the pressure on the public libraries would not be as great. Absent that, then there has to be support for public libraries to help fulfill the educational role that they are being forced to take on, whether or not they see that as their primary mission. I mean, so far the schools have -- the educational system in New Jersey has had it both ways. They

haven't mandated adequate services or accessibility in their schools, and they haven't given money to the public libraries either. Something has got to give.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

MS. G. ROBINSON: Yes. I do have some testimony here, both from the Vineland Public Library and the Millville Public Library, as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON: Well, that is the end of the individuals who requested to speak. We're really just about out of time, but if there is someone who cares to make a short statement, we will accept it at this time.

Well, I thank you all for coming. Particulary each testimony was very interesting, very informative, and even somewhat heartbreaking, but the libraries really brought it to my attention. I spent many hours as a child, and also as an adult with my own children, in the libraries after school. It really is the only facility that the youngsters have available throughout the State, and probably the country, that they go and they can continue their education.

I'm glad that it was brought to my attention, because sometimes I believe that we just don't think. I certainly have used libraries so much in my life and my family, but had not thought about the funding in the sense that you're speaking. I'm sure we'll all take it into consideration.

Thank you. If there's any statement that any members of the Committee have to make before we close? (no response) If not, then the meeting will be adjourned.

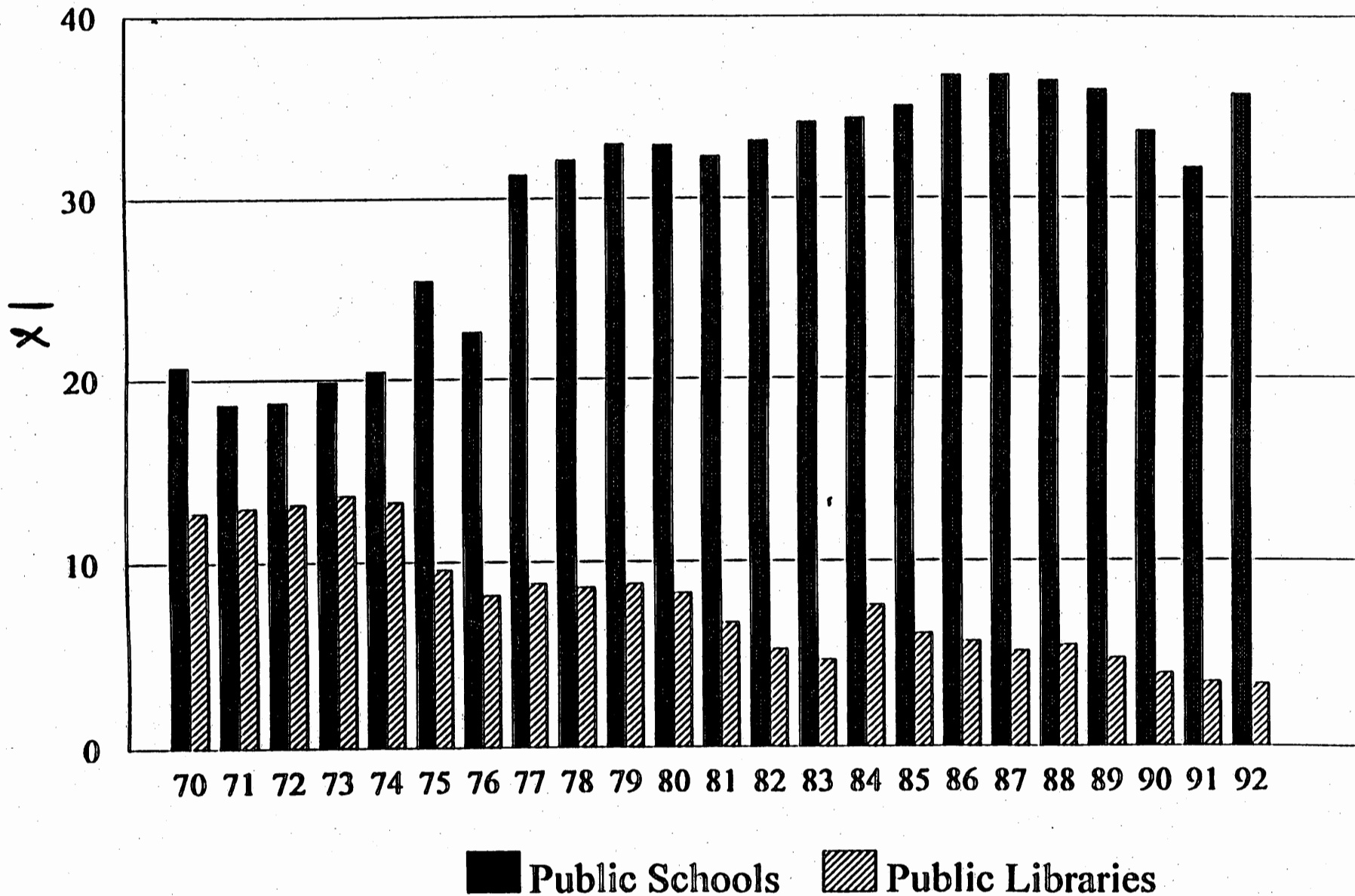
Thank you for coming.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

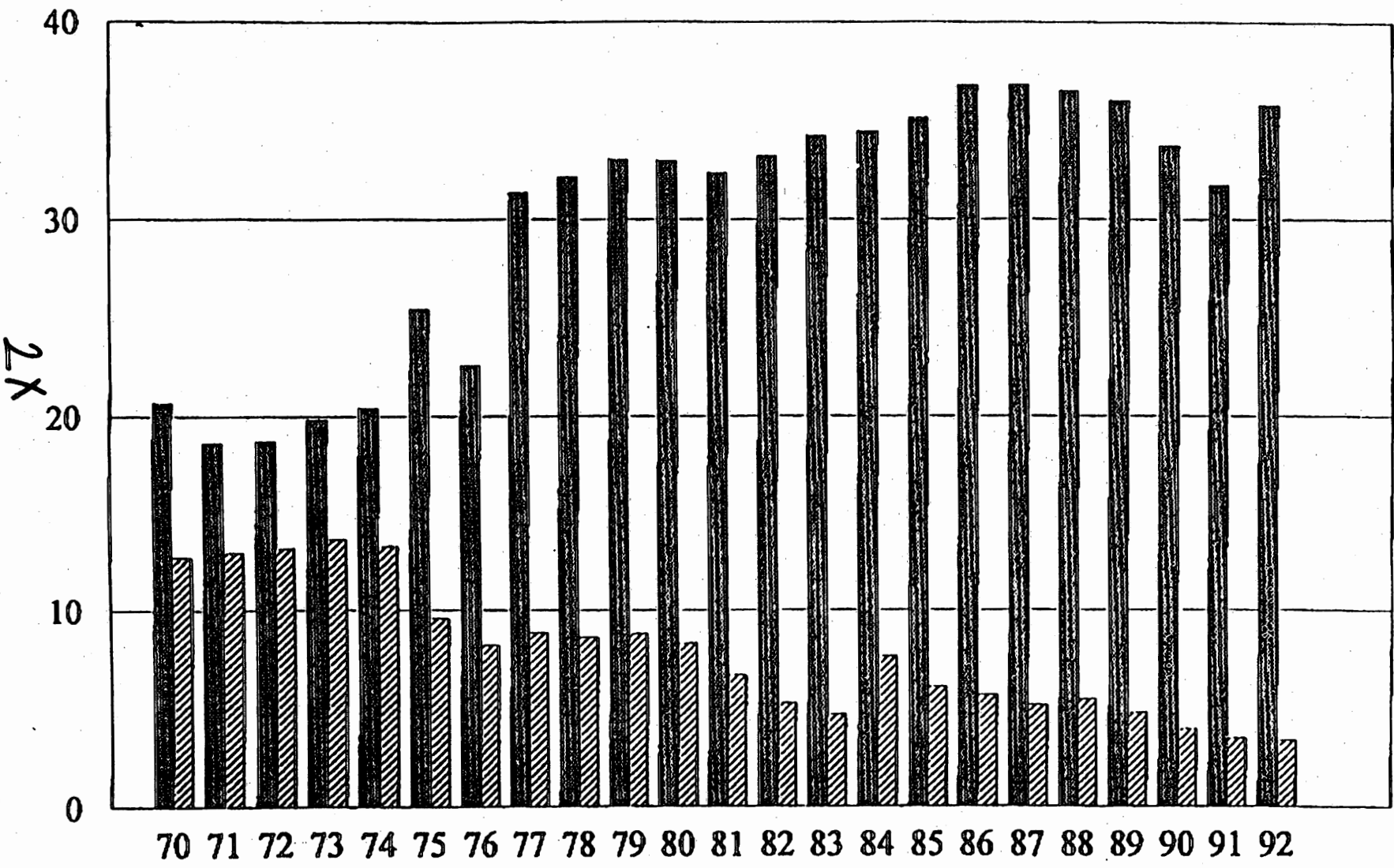


State Aid As A Percentage Of Total Annual Budgets Public Libraries and Public Schools, 1970 to 1992



State Aid As A Percentage Of Total Annual Budgets Public Libraries and Public Schools, 1970 to 1992

10/06/93 10:30 609 934 7999 NJ STATE LIBRARY



Public Schools Public Libraries

1993 FINAL / 1994 PRELIMINARY TAX BILL

BOROUGH OF ROOSEVELT
MONMOUTH COUNTY

PROPERTY QUALIFICATION	BLOCK NUMBER	7	LOT NUMBER	4.01	QUALIFICATION	
	PROPERTY LOC.	4 ELEANOR LANE				
	BLDG. DESC.					
	ADDITIONAL LOTS	2.54 AC				
3RD QTR. DUE AUG. 1, 1993		2110.86	4TH QTR. DUE NOV. 1, 1993		2110.86	
1ST QTR. DUE FEB. 1, 1994		1736.33	2ND QTR. DUE MAY 1, 1994		1736.33	
ACCOUNT NUMBER		00999017	BANK CODE		1175	
			MORTGAGE ACCOUNT NO.			

DESCRIPTION	RATE PER \$100	AMOUNT OF TAX
MUNICIPAL TAX	.574	1222.27
COUNTY TAX	.242	527.62
COUNTY LIBRARY TAX	.018	38.20
DISTRICT SCHOOL TAX	2.219	4708.75
COUNTY HEALTH SERVICE	.008	16.98
OPEN SPACE FUND TAX	.010	21.22
ASSESSED VALUATION		
LAND	60000	
IMPROVEMENTS	152200	
TOTAL	212200	
LESS EXEMPTION		
NET TAXABLE VALUE	212200	
TOTAL TAX	3273	6945.31
LESS DEDUCTION FOR		.00
1993 NET TAX		6945.31
(LESS 1993 TAX PREV BILLED)		2722.59
BAL OF 1993 TAX		4222.72

SKYE, DANIEL & TERI
4 ELEANOR LANE
ROOSEVELT, N J 08555

3X

2110.86 3RD QUARTER INSTALLMENT DUE AUGUST 1, 1993 2110.86 4TH QUARTER INSTALLMENT DUE NOVEMBER 1, 1993

THIS IS NOT A BILL-FOR ADVICE ONLY

DO NOT DETACH - TAXPAYER INFORMATION - DO NOT DETACH
BOROUGH OF ROOSEVELT MONMOUTH COUNTY

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: BOROUGH OF ROOSEVELT
MAIL TO: SALVATORE P. CANNIZZARO
BOROUGH OF ROOSEVELT
ROOSEVELT, NJ 08555

BLOCK 7 LOT 4.01

PHONE: (609) 448-0539

1994 PRELIMINARY TAX IS:

3472.66

PRELIMINARY TAX IS EQUAL TO ONE HALF OF 1993 TOTAL NET TAX

State Aid Used To Offset Local Property Taxes
The budgets of the government agencies funded by this tax bill include state funding used to reduce local property taxes as follows:

Municipal Government	\$	44,967
Local & Regional School District(s)	\$	521,752
County Government	\$	23,929

ENCLOSE SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE FOR RETURN OF RECEIPTED TAX BILL. PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE OF BILL FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

1736.33 1ST QUARTER INSTALLMENT DUE FEBRUARY 1, 1994 1736.33 2ND QUARTER INSTALLMENT DUE MAY 1, 1994

THIS IS NOT A BILL-FOR ADVICE ONLY

MICHAEL L. TICKTIN

Attorney at Law

P. O. BOX 298
ROOSEVELT, NEW JERSEY 08555

448-0363
AREA CODE 609

October 18, 1993

Educational Funding Review Commission,
CN-068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Commission Members:

As a resident, taxpayer and public official of the Borough of Roosevelt, a municipality that has consistently had one of the highest effective school tax rates in the State of New Jersey, often the second highest, I appeal to you to consider ways in which such unreasonable tax burdens can be avoided.

The most direct answer, in the case of a small municipality like Roosevelt, is regionalization, so that educational services can be provided with less duplication of effort and in a more cost-effective manner. A procedure has to be established based on a presumption that regionalization should be carried out when it can be shown to be cost-effective. A municipality/school district that believes that it would be cost-effective for it to regionalize with a neighboring district, or with a district with which it has a sending-receiving relationship, should be able to advise the other district and the Commissioner of its desire to regionalize. If the other district objects, it would be the responsibility of the Commissioner to determine if such a regionalization would be cost-effective and educationally advantageous. Based on the Commissioner's findings, regionalization would or would not be ordered, with any aggrieved district having the right to challenge the order through the appropriate administrative and judicial processes if it so chooses.

I realize that this proposal would violate many people's concept of "home rule." But "home rule" for a district that its neighbors or sending-receiving partners are unwilling to regionalize with only means the right to pay unnecessarily high property taxes for a service that is constitutionally an obligation of the State. It is a "right" that taxpayers in municipalities like Roosevelt would be better off without.

Very truly yours,


Michael L. Ticktin

4X

ROOSEVELT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box No. 160
Roosevelt, New Jersey 08555-0160
609-448-2798
FAX 609-448-2881

July 23, 1993

Dr. Mary Lee Fitzgerald, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
CN 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald,

From your visit last May, you learned quite a bit about Roosevelt Borough. Among the topics we discussed were the tax rate, one of the highest in New Jersey, and our efforts to explore curbing expenses through regionalization. Accordingly, we have submitted a Feasibility of Regionalization Study application together with Plumstead, Millstone and Upper Freehold, the latter as the L.E.A. of record.

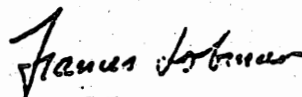
Feasibility studies take time. If the data show that regionalization with the above-named districts would not be advisable, then we will have lost time to solving a tax problem that needs immediate attention. We need to do more than one study simultaneously.

Roosevelt is a community of 330 families and virtually no ratables. The smallest rise in expenses for our one school, k-6, walking district can represent a substantial taxpayer increase. This year, our overall budget increase was 8.8%. Our school operating expenses rose by 0.8%, while transportation and tuition to the East Windsor School District accounted for the balance. We have requested a voters' cap waiver for tuition and transportation. The waiver is on appeal. Should the appeal be denied, we would have to cut at least one staff member and combine at least two classes of two different grade levels. Should the waiver be approved, the average school tax increase per household would be approximately \$650.

Our taxpayers need immediate relief and cannot wait to finish one study before learning if we need to begin another. Since we have had a sending-receiving relationship with East Windsor for over twenty years, we would like to explore the possibilities of regionalization with this neighbor as well. My Board of Education and I are asking permission to apply for a second Feasibility of Regionalization Study grant. The impetus for this formal request to you emerged during a recent meeting with our Citizens' Action Committee, Monmouth County Superintendent Michael Maddaluna, and Assemblypersons Robert W. Singer and Melvin Cottrell.

Added to the above request is the plea for a speedy decision on our pending cap waiver. The education of our children depends upon our ability to plan carefully and without haste.

Sincerely,



Frances Lobman, Ed.D.
Chief School Administrator

FL/11
c: R. Davis
M. Maddaluna

5X

May 1, 1993

Dr. Mary Lee Fitzgerald
Commissioner of Education
225 E. State Street
CN 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

We are writing to you as chairpersons of a group of concerned residents and taxpayers of the Borough of Roosevelt (Population 954). Our town is and has been experiencing financial difficulty due to our inability to support our small school district of 142 students.

Our school taxes are the 2nd highest in the state making up for 75% of our local taxes. We also have the added burden of a \$140.00 per month water and sewerage bill which is the 2nd highest in the United States. At this time we have also sent correspondence to our local, state, and federal officials. We feel that the magnitude of this ever increasing problem is beyond the capabilities of our school board and local officials.

We are currently faced with an approximate 1.5 million dollar budget, which is 3.2% above the state mandated cap. This is for a district of 142 students of which only 87 are housed in our local school building; class sizes average 11 students. Our school has no cafeteria, only a part-time nurse, no structured computer classes, minimal extra curricular activities, and other programs too numerous to mention which are available in larger districts. As you can see for this 1.5 million our students are receiving the bare minimum. Salaries and benefits alone are \$643,225 at the Roosevelt Public School (87 children).

Small towns such as ours have unique problems, for example; the school board secretary is married to the mayor, who is presently involved in the school budget negotiations due to the town's recent defeat of the budget. The taxpayers voted down the budget only to be told by the school board at a public meeting a few days prior to the election; that they had already received a cap waiver, and "our vote really didn't matter"! **WAS THIS A DEMOCRATIC ELECTION?** We were not told of the open budget meeting until 1-2 days prior, and were made aware of who our candidates were only when we asked, one week before elections. Please realize that in a town such as ours, the main source of information is a monthly newsletter "The Boro Bulletin". Included is a monthly calendar. The public budget meetings and the voting date and times we feel were conveniently omitted.

We are told by the school board that many aspects of running the school are state mandated; ie., class size, certifications, etc., of which they have no control. One of these is special education which costs us \$147,120 to take care of 10 children. One child alone costs over \$40,000. With only 338 taxpaying households, these costs are difficult to absorb. Two of these children are foster children. We are told that these children's education is our town's responsibility. Is not the care (health, housing & education) of these children the state's financial responsibility.

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page-2-

Please understand towns of our size can no longer support ourselves; school and municipal taxes. We have already petitioned the school board into agreeing to apply for monies available for a regionalization study (bills 1822 & 1063). Prior to receipt of our petition the board stated that a study would not be feasible at this time due to monetary and time constraints (never mentioning the new bills to us). Besides our current budget which could raise some of our taxes \$2,000 this year, we are faced with an additional increase next year to cover a school improvement bond. This million dollar bond will only cover state mandated improvements needed just to allow the school doors to remain open. Is there anyway to put a temporary hold on this construction until a regionalization study is completed?

We feel that due to the small size of our community and limited resources that perhaps there is additional state funds available that we not unaware of.

Dr. Fitzgerald, we appeal to you to please assist us in our community effort to find the means and ways of dealing with these problems. Taxes are making our town undesirable and unaffordable not only for ourselves, but for those looking to buy homes in the area. While our taxes continue to climb, our property values become more depreciated; no longer to be considered an investment.

We would like to know if it would be possible for us to meet with you at your convenience. We feel as though we represent approximately 2/3 of the town; and are being cheered to continue our mission.

Sincerely,

Citizens' Action Committee
P.O. Box 390
Roosevelt, N.J. 08555

Chairpersons:
Teri Nachtman
Paula Haemmerle
Joan SanNicola

cc: President Clinton
Hillary Clinton
Ross Perot
Governor James Florio
Senator Bill Bradley
Senator Frank Lautenberg
Chris Smith
John Dimon
Melvin Cottrell
Robert Singer

7X

**Expenditure Priorities Across
New Jersey School Districts
FY90-91**

Summary of Findings

October 20, 1993

**Funded By
The Commission on Business Efficiency
of the Public Schools**

**Prepared By
Eagleton Institute of Politics
Policy Research Seminar
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ**

**Elizabeth Atwood
Karen Boylan
Carol Cronheim
Shantelle Goodall
Renee Haider
Stacy Maltzman
Louis Mastria**

**Brianna Nagle
Manuel Rivera-Figueroa
Sari Siegel
Susan Swords
Keith White
Marva Williams**

**Henry J. Raimondo
Associate Professor**

Summary of Findings

The report analyzed school district budget data which were organized around spending for administration, instruction, and non-instruction activities. Alternative definitions for administration and instruction were presented. In one case, principals, supervisors of curriculum, and their secretarial support are considered instruction (the traditional definition); and in a second case, these budget items are considered administration (the alternative definition).

The traditional definitions of administration and instruction are called "Administration1" and "Instruction1" in the attached figures. The alternative definitions of administration and instruction are called "Administration2" and "Instruction2" in the attached figures.

Administrative Costs

- (a) In terms of spending per pupil, administrative costs have grown from 1986-87 to 1990-91, but not as fast as total current spending. Therefore, as a percent of school district spending, administrative costs have modestly declined. Under the traditional definition, administration accounted for 4 percent of the school district budget (or \$302 per pupil). Under the alternative definition, administration accounted for 10 percent (or \$680 per pupil).
- (b) There was virtually no difference in the percent (4.0 percent) of the school district budget allocated to administrative costs across regions. In spending per pupil terms, the North region spent the largest amount, \$299; next was the Central region, \$271; and the South region the smallest amount, \$239.
- (c) The type and size of a district influenced administrative costs most in the case of K-8 districts. Administrative costs as a share of the district budget decreased as K-8 enrollment increased; from a high of 7.45 percent in the districts with less than 500 students (\$537 per pupil) to 3.99 percent in the districts with more than 1,999 students (\$228 per pupil).
- (d) Administration costs as a percent of the budget varied little by District Factor Grouping (generally less than 4.0 percent). The exception was districts in DFG J which allocated 4.3 percent. Spending per pupil on administration increased as the DFG moved from Special Needs to A to J districts (\$240 to \$387 per pupil).

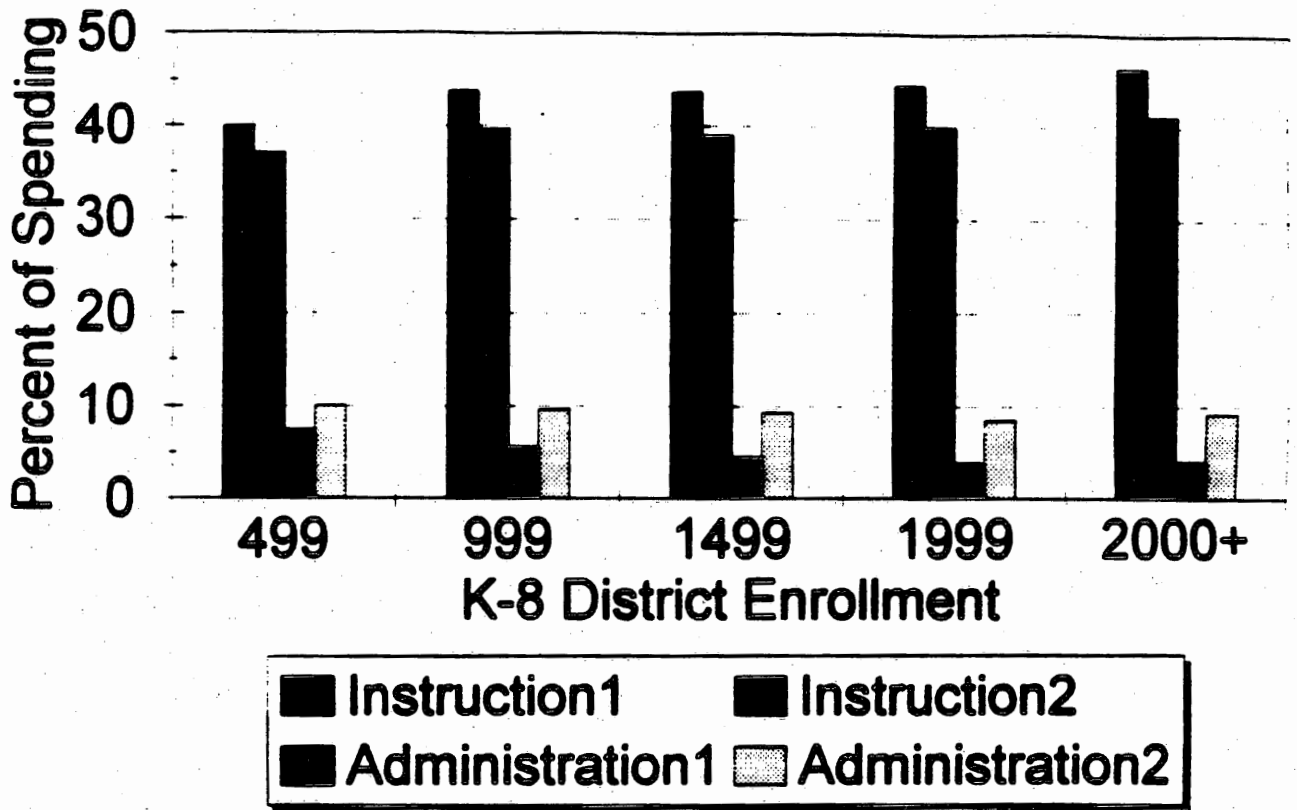
- (e) School districts allocated a greater percentage of their budgets (lowest quintile: 3.7 percent to highest quintile: 4.5 percent) and spent more per pupil (lowest quintile: \$250 to highest quintile: \$398) on administrative costs as their property wealth per pupil increased.

Instruction Costs

- (a) In terms of spending per pupil, regular instruction costs have grown from 1986-87 to 1990-91, but not as fast as total current spending. Therefore, as a percent of school district spending, regular instruction costs have declined. They accounted for as much as 46 percent of the school district budget under the traditional definition and as little as 40 percent under the alternative definition.
- (b) Regular instruction costs varied by region in percentage terms and dollars per pupil. The North region allocated approximately 48 percent of its budget to instruction (or \$3,626 per pupil); the Central region 47 percent (or \$3,432); and the South region 45 percent (or \$2,873).
- (c) With respect to type and size of districts, K-8 districts showed the most significant change in regular instruction costs. Smaller K-8 districts (less than 500 students) allocated 40 percent of their budget (or \$2,857 per pupil) to instruction. Larger K-8 districts (more than 1,999 students) allocated 46 percent (or \$2,645). Spending per pupil decreased as enrollment increased.
- (d) Generally, the amount of the school district budget allocated to instruction was the highest in percent and spending per pupil terms for the DFGs I and J. Compare the extremes. The Special Needs districts allocated 41 percent of their budget (or \$2,851 per pupil) and the DGF J districts allocated 54 percent (or \$4,584) to regular instruction.
- (e) School districts allocated a smaller percentage of their budgets (lowest quintile: 41 percent to highest quintile: 50 percent), and spent less per pupil (lowest quintile: \$2,783 to highest quintile: \$4,420) on regular instruction costs as their property wealth per pupil increased.

Instruction and Administration, FY91

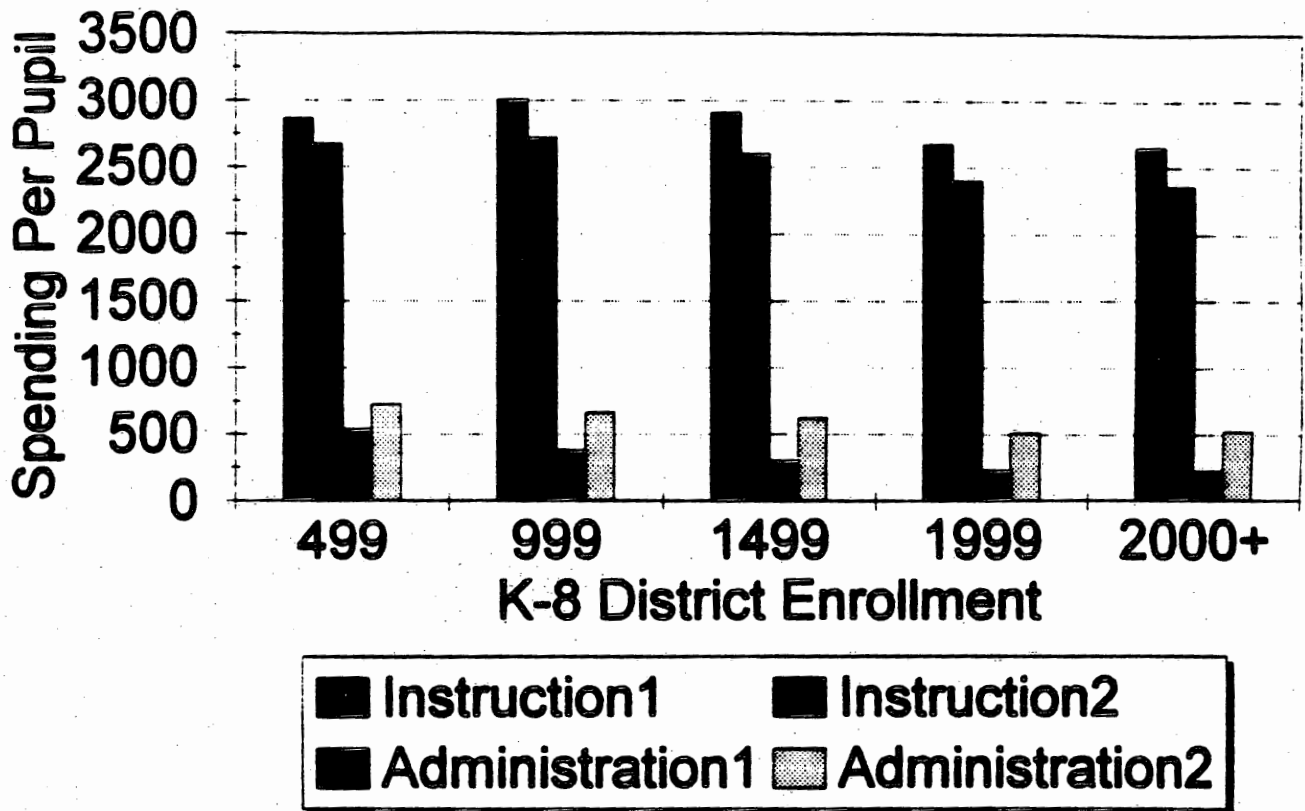
For K-8 Districts By Enrollment Size



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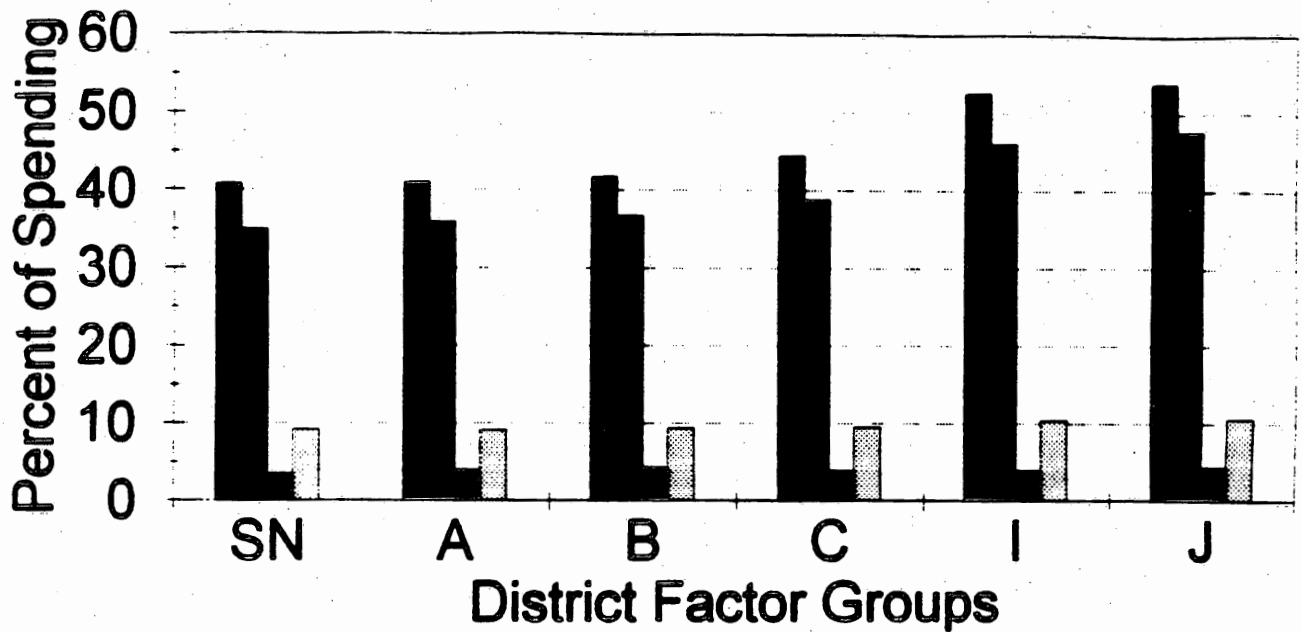
Instruction and Administration, FY91

For K-8 Districts By Enrollment Size



Instruction and Administration, FY91

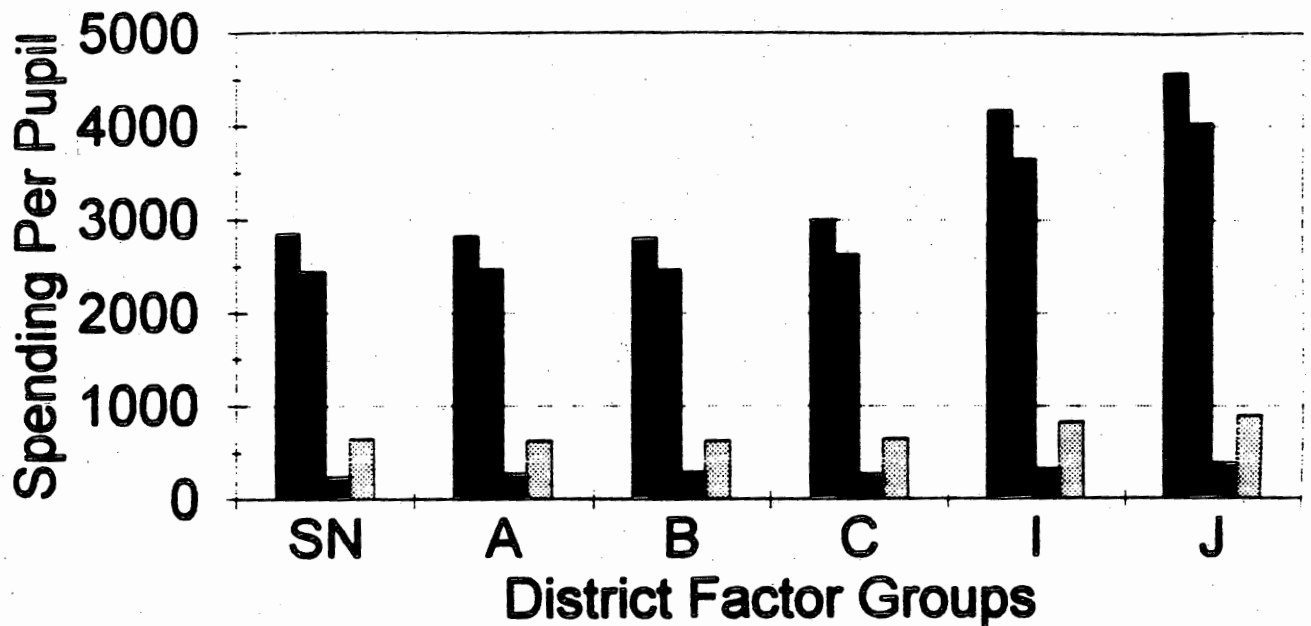
By Selected District Factor Groups



■ Instruction1 ■ Instruction2
■ Administration1 ■ Administration2

Instruction and Administration, FY91

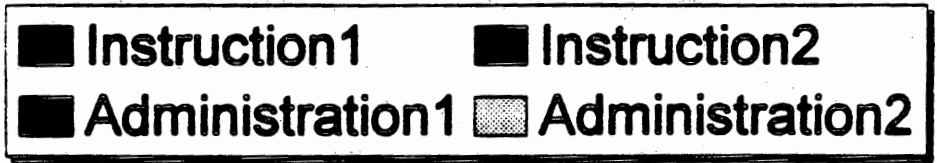
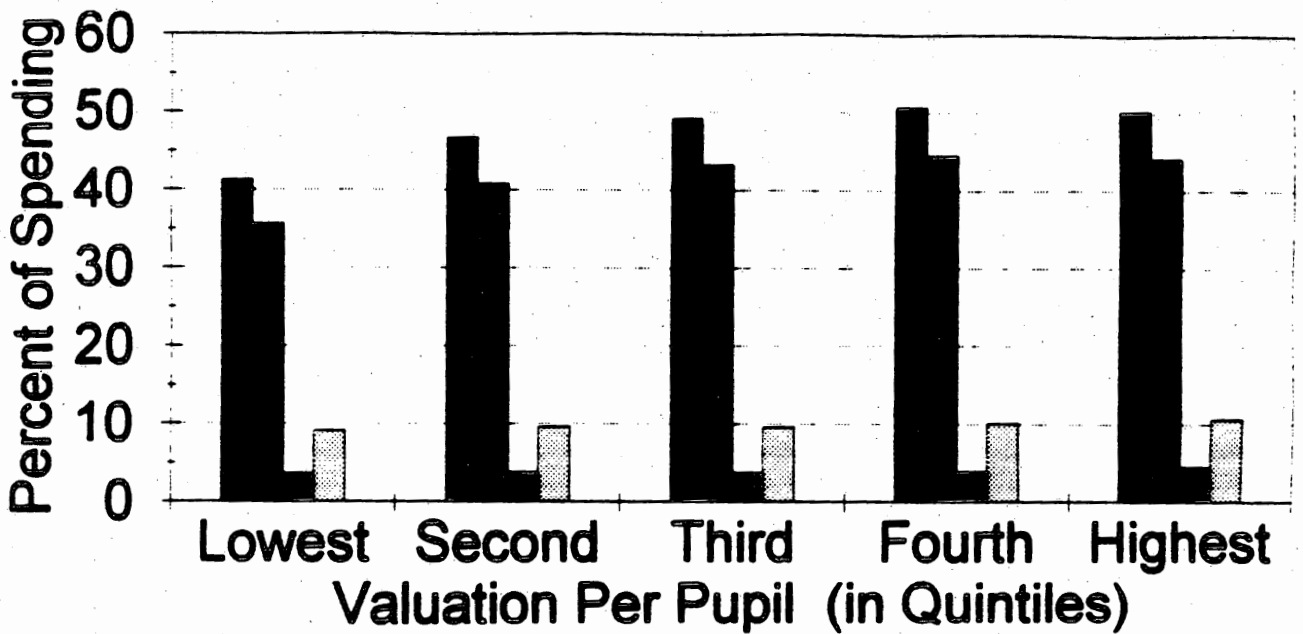
By Selected District Factor Groups



■ Instruction1 ■ Instruction2
■ Administration1 ■ Administration2

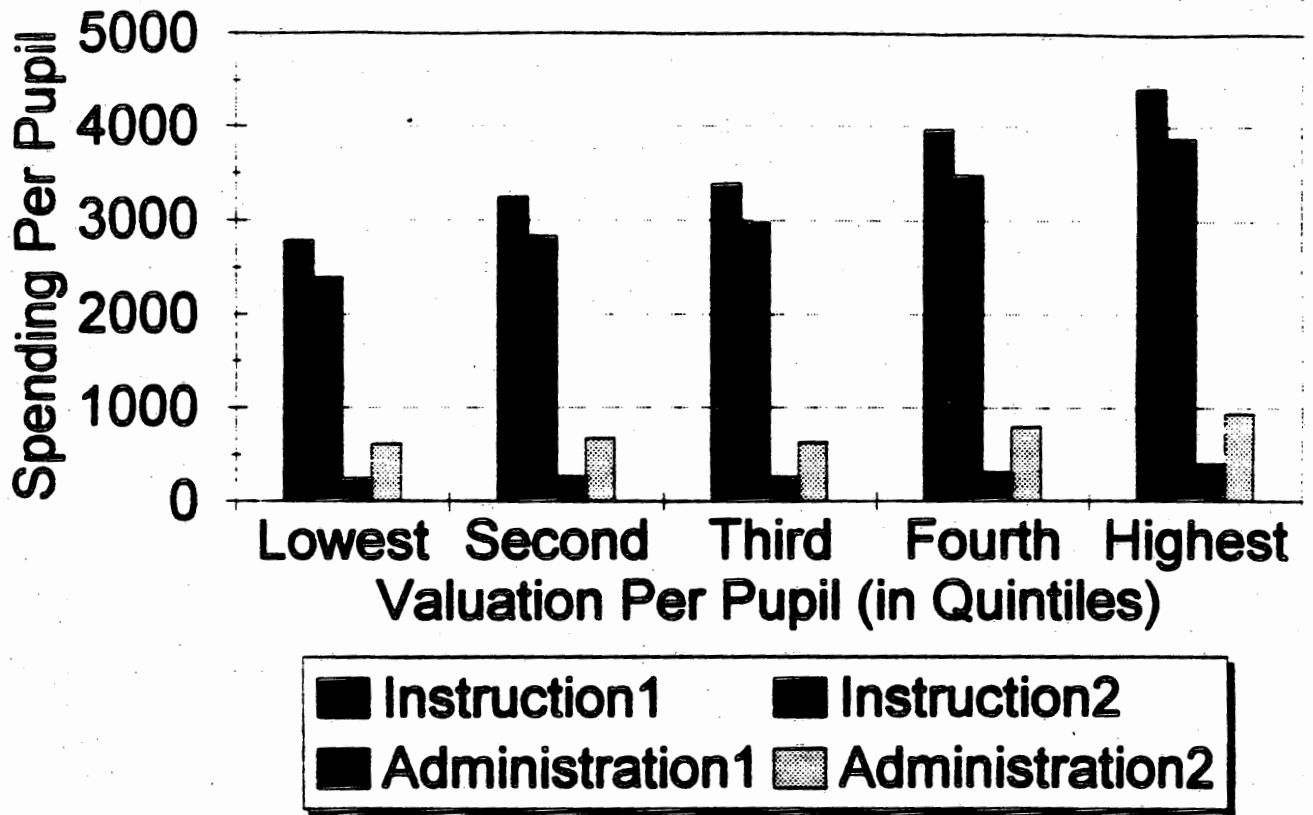
Instruction and Administration, FY91

By Valuation Per Pupil (in Quintiles)



Instruction and Administration, FY91

By Valuation Per Pupil (in Quintiles)



16X



Burlington County Library 715 Woodlane Road Mt. Holly, NJ 08060
Norma E. Blake, Library Director

**EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING, OCTOBER 18, 1993
Burlington County Special Services School**

**Testimony Presented by Norma Blake
Director, Burlington County Library System**

My name is Norma Blake. I am director of the Burlington County Library System and president of the New Jersey Library Association. I appreciate the opportunity to inform the Education Funding Review Commission of the vital role the county library system plays in K - 12 education in Burlington County. I urge the Funding Review Commission to find additional funding for state aid to public libraries so that the total would be no less than 1% of state monies allocated for education purposes. Only then can we be assured that the important linkages between schools and public libraries won't be lost.

The Burlington County Library System's School Services Department is one of our most valuable services. The public library staff, school librarian, and classroom teacher are able to work together to improve the quality and quantity of materials available to students in Burlington County.

The School Services Department supplements school libraries by providing special collections during the school year. For example, a teacher can call School Services and request materials on astronauts suitable for a six grade class. The staff will put together

books and supporting materials to add to what is already available at the school. Since January of 1993 over 5,400 books have been loaned to schools at their request.

The School Services group also gives tours of the County library headquarters facility and offers bibliographic instruction to older users. Over 3,000 students of varying ages have attended programs designed to promote a love of reading and an introduction to the library so far this year. The youngest library users are not forgotten. Special kits containing easy reading materials, posters, and props are sent to nursery schools to help teach about colors, seasons, and shapes.

The School Services Department is also actively involved in answering reference questions. Their special relationship with school librarians and teachers enables them to be particularly knowledgeable about homework assignments and to ensure that the required materials will be available both within the County Library System and the schools. This year over 3,500 questions have been answered. During July and August special reading clubs are offered by the County Library System to help keep reading and research skills sharpened in a fun way until school begins again in September. Almost 2,000 children participated this summer.

The staff provides consulting services to school libraries. A popular topic is what to buy for these libraries. Titles, editions, bindings, and sources for purchasing the items are recommended. As the new books arrive the staff also provides weeding advice to ensure that the shelves contain classics as well as materials of current concern and interest. The staff also helps plan school libraries by working closely with teachers, librarians, and volunteers. Recently, two new elementary schools in Marlton, the Marlton Elementary School and the De Massi Elementary School, received "starter" collections of 2,500 and 3,000 books respectively. Selections were chosen after consultation with the school librarian and teachers.

A grant awarded by the New Jersey Department of Education will fund computer hook up for two county schools and the County Library. Students in the Lumberton

Middle School in Lumberton and the Steinhauer Elementary School in Maple Shade will soon receive computer hardware and software which will enable them to dial into the County Library's computer catalog and search for authors and titles as well as for materials on any subject for school assignments or for recreational reading. The system will also allow the students to put holds on materials not currently checked in. The student will be notified when the items may be picked up. It is hoped that there will eventually be a link between all of the Burlington County schools and the County Library.

The schools in Burlington County rely on the County Library System to enhance their materials and continue the education process outside of the traditional classrooms. Libraries need strong financial support in order to continue this crucial partnership.

Norma Blake
Library Director

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Access to library is elementary

Grant funds link between schools and county library

MOUNT HOLLY — A recently approved grant will allow an online link-up of the Burlington County Library's computer system with two public schools in the county.

Lumberton Middle School in Lumberton and Maple Shade's Steinhauer Elementary School will hook up with the county system to receive computer hardware and software to enable staff and students to dial into the county library's computer catalogue.

The grant money is from the State Department of Education through an academic/school/public library cooperation grant.

Marie Klimkowski, school services coordinator at Burlington County Library, is project director. She will work with Jan Pask, Lumberton Middle School's librarian, and Cheryl Fritsch, librarian at Steinhauer School, to implement the new service during the current school year.

The students and staff at both schools will be able to search the computer catalogue for specific titles and authors, as well as materials on any subject.

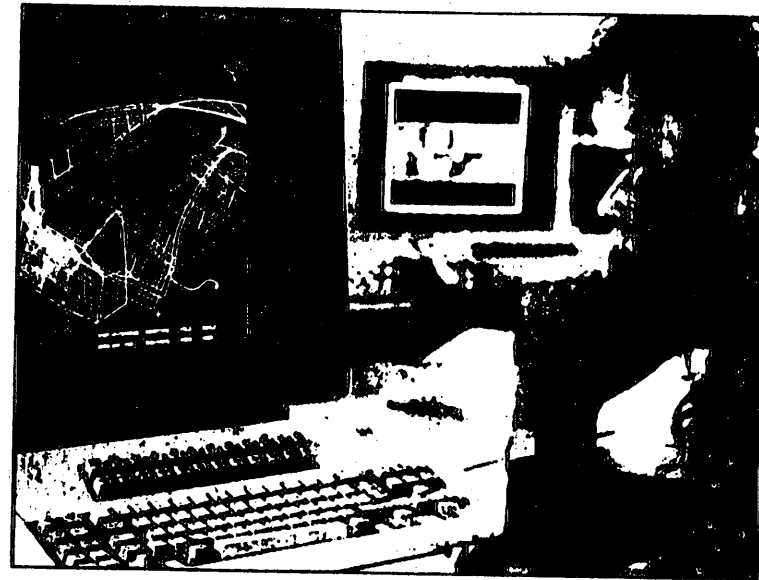
The system will allow users to reserve materials not currently checked in, and the system will notify the user

when the items may be picked up.

Students and staff will be able to request county materials through the school librarian, who then will contact the county library's school services section. The county library will arrange for delivery or hold items for patron pick-up.

Students and teachers will be trained to search the catalogue, and the two schools involved will serve as models for other county schools that wish to institute this type of service in their media centers.

For further information contact Klimkowski at 267-9660.



Online: Elementary students will have access to more materials with the new link to the county library.

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*Millville
Public Library*

210 BUCK STREET - MILLVILLE, N. J. 08332

FOUNDED 1864

EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING, OCTOBER 18, 1993Written testimony presented by:
Brenda Michaelson, Library Director
Millville Public Library

I am writing to urge your support of an equalization factor in state aid to libraries. Millville is in Cumberland County, one of the state's poorer counties. Cumberland County has a high rate of unemployment.

Public library services to school-age children and preschool age children are well used. The Children's Department provides a number of educational experiences for the children of Millville.

During the summer we have a reading program to encourage reading skills while the schools are closed. Special classes are offered as part of the summer program. Topics have included multi-cultural backgrounds, folktales, Mother Goose, the environment and health issues.

We have year-round programs including storytimes for preschool children starting with 2 year olds. These activities help prepare for reading readiness and more formalized education.

Help is available with homework, research reports and group projects. We give instruction in the use of the computer catalog.

Students come to us because we are open in the evenings and on Saturdays when the school library is not accessible.

Information is the key to personal success, and the library is often the source of this information. Unfortunately due to the curtailed funding, not all of our information is as up-to-date as it should be. In fact, much of it is really quite out-of-date.

Last spring I had the opportunity of visiting a library in a wealthy part of Essex County. At the time that I went, I was not aware of how well off the area was. I noticed that the library was much larger than Millville's library. It appeared to have more books and newer books. It appeared to have a larger staff, and my assumption was that it had a much larger population. My assumption was wrong. It had a considerably smaller population than Millville, but a much larger tax base. I verified this by checking New Jersey Public Library Statistics. I think until then I did not realize how big the differences were between the "haves" and the "have nots".

In short, we need some kind of equalization in funding if we are to do the kind of job we are expected to do and that we would like to do.

VINELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

1058 EAST LANDIS AVENUE - VINELAND, NJ 08360 (609) 794-4244

October 15, 1993

TO: THE NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMISSION

The following is intended as written testimony for the Commission's consideration and inclusion in the records of public hearings held this month.

Speaking for the Board of Trustees of the Vineland Public Library, I wish to endorse in the strongest manner the recommendation that State funding for libraries be increased in an amount equal to one percent of the State dollars allocated to education.

The need for this increase is clear and compelling. Well equipped and staffed libraries are a critical factor in a quality educational process for our young people. Students need accurate and up-to-date information. The demands on libraries to meet those needs are increasing--as are costs--while library budgets are shrinking.

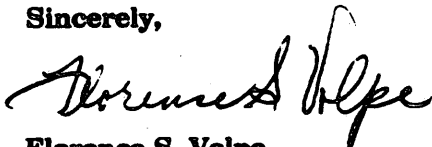
The public library supports our educational system in many ways. Surveys indicate that reference staff alone spend at least 30 percent of their time helping students find and use information for assignments and research.

Our involvement with children begins long before their classroom education, and much of that involvement is oriented toward learning and reading readiness. Summer reading clubs help hundreds of Vineland's children maintain and improve their skills over the summer.

Last year, our library offered three programs to assist parents in helping their children with schoolwork. We continually respond to teachers' requests for materials and ideas and cooperate with schools to develop needed programs and resources. Our commitment to multicultural services grows with the needs of our community.

Vineland is an economically distressed community. Recognizing the acute financial need, the State supports Vineland's schools through the QEA. The public library is left out of the process. We urge you to begin to support our public libraries at a level that reflects their critical contributions to education.

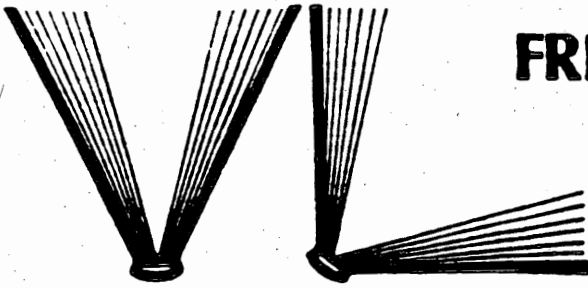
Sincerely,



**Florence S. Volpe
President, Board of Trustees**

FSV:al

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FRIENDS OF

THE VINELAND LIBRARY

1058 East Landis Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey 08360

609-794-4244 FAX 691-0366

October 18, 1993

Dear Members of the New Jersey Education Funding Review
Commission:

I am writing to you as President of the Friends of the Vineland
Public Library, an organization with 760 members.

This organization was formed primarily to enhance the educational and
cultural programs and services of our community's library, and we
have done an excellent job. Over the years we have raised more than
\$100,000 to make special programs and materials available to our
community. In recent years, however, there has been pressure to use
the Friends' contributions for basic materials, including resources
needed by students. The Friends cannot be responsible for providing
basic resources for our community and its young people.

Our local government also recognizes the importance of its public
library. However, this is an economically depressed area, and local
funding levels have not kept pace with the demands on our library.

As a frequent library user, especially in the evening, I am a witness
to the demands students place on our library. The public library
has a mandate to serve the community, all ages and a wide range of
needs and interests. Services to students require a disproportionate
share of the library's resources. Our educational system does not
financially support those services.

I understand you are considering a recommendation to increase State
aid to libraries by one percent of the amount allocated to education.
I strongly urge you to act on that recommendation.

Sincerely,

Arnold Shapiro