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PUBLIC HEARING
before
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
on
S-1154

(Provides for high school graduation standards)

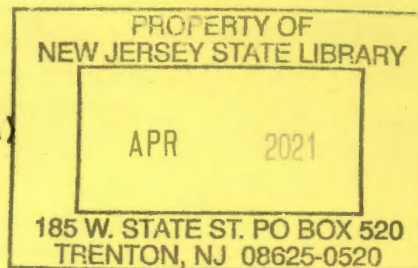
Held:
June 20, 1978
Senate Chamber
State House
Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Matthew Feldman (Chairman)
Senator Charles B. Yates
Senator Wynona Lipman (Vice Chairman)
Senator Wayne Dumont, Jr.
Senator John H. Ewing

ALSO:

Deena Sadat, Research Associate
Legislative Services Agency
Aide, Senate Education Committee



New Jersey State Library

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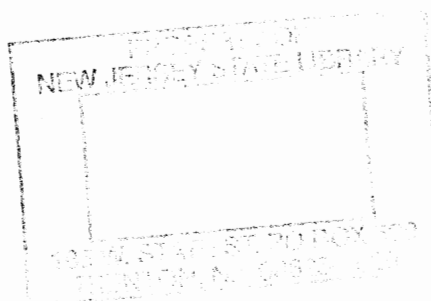
Robert Woodford
New Jersey Business and Industry Association

17A & 15x

ALSO SUBMITTED:

Statement from Aubrey J. Sher
Superintendent of Schools
Teaneck, New Jersey

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SENATOR MATTHEW FELDMAN: I would like to welcome everyone here this morning for the hearing on S-1154. The hearing is being held to give the public an opportunity to express views on this bill which provides for high school graduation standards. Before we begin, I would like to make a few comments about my intention in introducing this bill, and, also, I would like to clarify some misunderstandings which may exist with regard to what the bill actually requires.

First, it will not make a child's entire life depend on the passage of one test. True, there is a test. But testing begins in ninth grade, and special programs must be provided for those who fail. If we must strengthen the bill to try to insure that these special programs are effective, we will do so. This is not meant to be an excuse to fail students. It is to be an incentive to teach children those skills necessary to succeed, not just in school, but in life.

Moreover, beyond the test, each district will develop their own requirements consistent with their own goals and objectives, using whatever measurement procedures they feel are best for their children and for their community.

Secondly, this bill does not penalize students who are about to graduate. It provides for a two-year planning process. The first class to be affected will be the graduating class of June, 1984. If the planning is effective, and if the districts are responsive and sincere, then many of the problems which led to this legislation will be resolved long before these six years are over.

Third, this bill does not establish an academic Regents diploma. It does provide for an honor's diploma. But honors will be defined by each school district. Honors should be consistent with local goals and objectives, and should be attainable by any student whose performance is outstanding, whatever his or her chosen curriculum.

Finally, this bill does not seek to stigmatize or to punish students. That is what we are doing today when we award diplomas to students who cannot read and who cannot write. We cannot continue to do so to our children. I know that there are differences of opinion about the details of this legislation. The purpose of this hearing is to air these differences, but I hope we can all agree that the issue is not a test; the issue is not a piece of paper; the issue confronting us is the quality of an education, or its alternative, a lifetime of illiteracy. We are at the crossroads today, and we must make a choice. Those who are leaders in the community, those who are testifying here today, and we as Senators - such as Senator Ewing who serves with great diligence on the Education Committee - have to decide is it quality of education that we want, or a lifetime of illiteracy for thousands of New Jersey students.

I am pleased now to present our first witness, Mr. Gustav Heningburg, Head of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition.

G U S T A V H E N I N G B U R G: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to share some thoughts about the bill, which are those of the Urban Coalition and the New Jersey Education Reform Project.

There are three bills which are presently being considered by the New Jersey Legislature which would establish the program of graduation standards for secondary school students. The possibility that the State might develop and implement statewide standards of pupil proficiency for high school graduates has already triggered very heavy debate, and I am sure there will be much more to come.

Those who support graduation standards feel that minimum proficiency levels are an integral part of the concept of a thorough and efficient education. The

opponents insist that minimum proficiency levels are punitive, and in practice will do more damage than good to students and will result in nothing less than social and educational chaos.

One argument that is used most often against graduation standards focuses on urban and minority youth. Large numbers of these youth are expected to fail the proficiency test and thereby become ineligible for an academic diploma, and all kinds of other terrible things are assigned to that possibility as well. The recent experience in Florida and the subsequent lawsuit filed by the N.A.A.C.P. are cited as sufficient reason not to establish graduation standards. However, I think it is important to understand that what happened in Florida is a result of circumstances that are unique to Florida and have no relationship whatsoever to this bill or to the proposal in New Jersey.

I might add parenthetically that we talked with the general counsel of the N.A.A.C.P. yesterday, and he assured us that their position is not opposed to graduation standards at all, but to the Florida situation, and the relationship between that and what is here have absolutely no relationship. I want to emphasize that because over and over again we are hearing that the Florida experience ought to say, "Don't do this." I would also like to add, Mr. Chairman, that I am instinctively wary of the new champions of urban and minority youth who are using them as an argument not to have graduation standards.

It is maintained by some that a high school diploma is a reward that should be granted to every student who spends the required amount of time in secondary school, and that numerical and letter grades, rather than proficiency tests, are sufficient indicators of competency. Statewide standards, it is argued, will penalize the student who diligently "did his time" by identifying that he either succeeded or failed to achieve minimum competency in the basic skills.

Among some observers the preceding argument is extended to conclude that proficiency testing and graduation standards are inherently racist because large numbers of minority students fail to exceed the standard. One of the underlying assumptions of this position appears to be that most minority students are incapable, somehow, of passing minimum proficiency tests and basic skills. If this is the case, the position that argues against standards because many minorities are bound to fail, may in fact be much more firmly rooted in racism than the position that champions standards.

If the argument against graduation standards assumes that large numbers of minority students will fail because they lack inherent ability, it is obviously racist and undesirable. If, on the other hand, the argument against graduation standards assumes that large numbers of minority students will fail because the school systems they are forced to attend are inefficient and unable to provide an adequate education, the argument becomes misdirected and irrelevant because it protects the school system rather than the students. The real issue is whether school systems will continue to be rewarded for failing to educate by being allowed to award diplomas that bear no relationship whatsoever to competence or proficiency and whether students have the right to a document that relates their effort and achievement as well as the quality of their educational system, to a uniform statewide standard.

One of the most serious shortcomings of the argument cited above is that it ignores the manner in which the current "academically neutral" diploma penalizes the proficient minority student. Despite allegations to the contrary, students are currently labeled or stigmatized by the school system they attend in the

community where they reside. Many people are not anxious to admit that, but that is a hard educational, social, and racial reality in New Jersey. A diploma that certifies a student has achieved minimum competency would at the very least require prospective employers, educational institutions, and post secondary training programs to individualize the specific student rather than make judgments based on a school district's or community's reputation.

Graduation standards, as long as they involve early assessment and the identification and remediation of skills deficits, will do more to aid the student who falls below the minimum proficiency level than the current system. The most profound effect of the standards should be on all levels of educational staff who will have to explain and account for the outcome of their efforts. If non-school related problems are the cause, they will be identified. If the cause of the problem lies within the educational system, that also will become apparent.

An important issue here is whether or not the high school diploma should have some real significance, whether students, parents, and the society at large are entitled to know that a particular type of diploma is a certification that the bearer has achieved minimal competency in the basic academic skills necessary to function successfully as an adult in, I might add, a universal public education system which the children are required to attend by law.

One of the dire predictions that has been made here is that the dropout rate will mushroom; that students faced with the frustration and disappointment of having failed the proficiency test will leave school rather than work harder to pass the proficiency test at a later date. Actually, there is very little, if any, hard evidence to suggest that this will occur. In fact, the reverse would probably happen, and in those school systems where minimum graduation standards have been imposed, in fact the reverse did occur. There was no major dropout of students at all. Early assessment, along with mandated remediation could become encouragement enough for a potential dropout to remain in school, especially if the diplomas they will earn certify mastery of some basic skills. But this is also pure speculation, which, like its opposing argument, lacks the hard evidence to make it credible.

Ten years ago a graduation standards program was initiated in the Denver, Colorado Public Schools. The Denver program featured early assessment in the ninth grade and emphasized diagnosis and effective remediation. The graduation standards program did not result in an increased dropout rate. Denver's Administrative Director for Secondary Education stated to us just a few days ago that no drastic increase in the dropout rate occurred, and that the dropout rate increases have never been related or connected to the graduation standards program. That program, incidentally, has been in operation for ten years and may warrant some inquiry by this Committee.

Another argument against graduation standards maintains that proficiency standards are useless, because there are far fewer job openings in the State than there are high school graduates, or that not everyone needs to be minimally proficient if only a chosen few will eventually be in employment, because the job market in their community happens to be depressed. This argument ties graduation standards to the availability of jobs in the immediate locality or State. It overlooks the fact that the graduate might choose to relocate to another community and obviously overlooks the high mobility of the American public and suggests that you need to be minimally competent in order to compete in the broader labor market. The argument also implies that short-term considerations in the aggregate economy should

be the basis for the acceptance or the rejection of competency standards for high school graduates, and this implication certainly appears inconsistent with the theory in practice of a thorough and efficient education.

I would also like to add parenthetically that all of the projections indicate that the growth industry in the New York metropolitan region for the next twenty-five years is in-service industry - advertising, insurance, banking and the rest. These are industries in which competency in reading comprehension and computation are absolutely critical. Those projections, no matter who makes them, come out consistently to say the manufacturing of those industries in which mechanical skills are necessary will constitute, perhaps, fifteen percent of the work force in this region. The meaning of that is very clear and very simple. The growth industry in this region is in those areas where skills and computation comprehension are absolutely mandatory, and if we do not develop some system to guarantee at least a minimum level of competency in those areas for our children, we will be perpetuating a population segment whose unemployment will be guaranteed by the failure and the absence of such a standard.

The bottom line of the argument against graduation standards is that the standards will hurt students. Some will invariably be denied academic diplomas. This argument is supposedly rooted in a perversion of the "humanistic psychology theory" that strives for a society without failure, with standards where standards do not exist. In addition to being totally unrealistic, this argument side-steps a most critical question, what greater hurt can there be if one lacks the minimal skills necessary to lead a productive adult life. If a student leaves a New Jersey school unable to read, compute, or adequately express himself in writing, how can graduation standards or a non-academic diploma hurt or damage him any more than his present unskilled condition.

Statewide graduation standards are an absolute necessity. The student who achieves or surpasses the standards will earn title to an objective indicator of his proficiency in those basic skills. The student who fails to achieve the standards should become the recipient of adequate comprehensive diagnostic and remedial services. And those services should be automatically figured by the system, and that burden should not be placed on the individual child.

Both of the Assembly bills which concern graduation standards are unacceptable to us in their present form and could be very damaging to large numbers of students. A-335 and A-780 are too limited. They merely mandate statewide standards and an exit test. These bills lack the two essential components of an equitable and efficient program of graduation standards, early assessment and corrective remediation.

Senate Bill 1154 is a much more comprehensive and equitable proposal. Early assessment, diagnosis, and corrective remediation are integral components of the proposed program of graduation standards. The bill also does not deny students a high school diploma. It proposes different types of diploma levels based on one's proficiency in those basic skills.

The one shortcoming, Mr. Chairman, as we review the bill, is a weak statement regarding the relationship between the Commissioner of Education and the local school districts, page 2, lines 16 through 19 in the bill. This section should be revised to permit and even to require a much stronger role for the State Department of Education in regard to monitoring and providing assistance to local school districts. Such a system should automatically be provided by the State Department of Education whenever a specific percentage of graduates fail to pass the statewide

graduation test, and this provision, we believe, should be written into the legislation. The effect of such a provision that mandated technical assistance from the State Department of Education, both the Departments, and the districts in question, would have to address the problem of unacceptable proficiency performance levels. We believe the absence of an automatic technical assistance provision in the bill to be its most serious deficiency.

Mandated standards should be supported and reinforced by mandated technical assistance, rather than having the Department of Education's role and responsibility and influence diluted by the effect of interest group politics during the process of drafting an administrative code. It is our recommendation that lines 16 through 19 on page two of the bill be revised similar to the following statement: "The Commissioner of Education shall upon request of the local board, or upon the failure of a school district to graduate a specific percentage of pupils who meet state graduation standards as determined by the Commissioner provide such technical assistance and oversight as may be necessary to aid a district in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the educational program in which those students who do not achieve the standard are enrolled."

S-1154 amended as recommended above would be consistent with the intent of the thorough and efficient provision in the New Jersey Constitution. In its present form, we believe it falls short of insuring as much help as possible to support the students if a graduation standards program is developed.

It must be stressed here in closing that the proposed legislation is only the first step in a process of establishing graduation standards, nothing more and nothing less. Whether or not the program mandated by the legislation will be a success will depend on many other factors, such as the level at which the standards are set, the reliability and the validity of the assessment test, the extent to which diagnosis and remediation are emphasized, the adequacy of the resources of the local school district, and the willingness of the State Department of Education to provide the necessary leadership, direction, and technical expertise.

We believe, incidentally, and I am sure this is one of the arguments which will be raised against this, the professional educational community in America is incapable of designing an adequate instrument to do the testing. That is absurd. It is clear to us that such an instrument can be developed and will be developed whenever there is a market for it. We encourage the Senate Education Committee to approve the bill with the modifications previously recommended and hope the Legislature will enact it into law. Once that is done, however, constant oversight is necessary to be sure the pitfalls can be avoided.

The graduation standards, the minimal acceptable level of proficiency, must be set at a meaningful level. If the standards are too low, all of the activities and processes associated with the program will have been an exercise in futility. Nothing will have changed. There will be a great tendency, incidentally, if local districts are permitted to set the minimal standard, to set standards so low as to guarantee a high level of achievement in their own districts. Therefore, the State minimum is absolutely mandatory. The graduation standards program must also be tied to effective diagnosis and remediation. To do less is to penalize the student, and therefore blame the victims. To accomplish this goal, the State Department of Education will have to resist interest group politics and base their decisions and behavior on a foundation of solid professionalism. Lastly, local districts must have adequate resources, both fiscal and professional. The

resource disparities presently existing among districts must be corrected if any meaningful change is to occur.

S-1154 with the modifications recommended above will neither create nor avoid the pitfalls cited here. That is not the purpose of any legislative act. S-1154, we believe, is a necessary, but not a sufficient, step in the right direction. Graduation standards are an essential component in a thorough and efficient education.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I want to thank you, Dr. Henningburg. Senator Ewing, do you have any questions?

SENATOR EWING: Doctor, can we get a copy of your statement?

DR. HENINGBURG: Yes, I have some copies here.

SENATOR FELDMAN: May I suggest that the future witnesses give a copy of their remarks to our reporter. Thank you very much.

The next witness is Thomas Corcoran, Special Assistant to Commissioner, Department of Education.

T H O M A S C O R C O R A N: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to read, if I may, testimony prepared by Commissioner Burke who unfortunately could not be here this morning.

"I appreciate the opportunity to speak before this Committee this morning on Senate Bill Number 1154. This is an extraordinarily significant piece of educational legislation because it would, if enacted, affect all of the youth who attend our public schools, and for many its influence would extend into their adulthood, affecting opportunities for further education, careers, and incomes. I believe that with only minor changes this legislation will have a positive impact on schools and students and will contribute to our efforts to improve education in the State of New Jersey.

"Graduation standards should provide strong incentives for both teachers and students to work harder. The existence of such standards might bring more focus to the curriculum and direct more attention and resources to students in the greatest need. Graduation standards also may lead to a decline in the much abused practice of social promotion which pushes children through school regardless of their level of mastery, and such standards may motivate school boards and the general public to ask hard questions in cases where actual performance falls short of expectations.

"We are already experiencing some of these changes as a consequence of the minimum standards program that this Legislature enacted in 1976. There is already considerable emphasis being placed by local school districts on improvement of basic skills instruction and on the provision of remediation. Nevertheless, I believe that graduation standards might be taken more seriously by students and teaching staff members than the current program.

"However, I must stress that this is merely my belief and that neither I nor anyone else can demonstrate at this point that graduation standards will produce these positive outcomes. The evidence is simply not available to us, because to date there has been little experience with such policies.

However, my conviction about the ultimate value of the approach taken in the bill must be tempered by some serious reservations that have arisen from my own observations of events in Florida, Oregon, and elsewhere, from analyses conducted by my staff, and from the critics of the minimum competency movement. There clearly

are significant costs, fiscal and human, associated with the implementation of graduation standards. We cannot ignore these costs, even if we cannot be precise in estimating them. I feel obligated this morning to bring these potential problems to your attention in order that we can do everything possible to reduce the negative consequences of implementing graduation standards in this State.

"What are these potential negative consequences? First, there is the possibility that graduation standards will result in an increase in the dropout rate. There are two reasons that this may occur. Students who fail the test the first time may decide that it isn't worth it to try again. Certainly, few will be motivated to attend in order to get a certificate of attendance, and principals and teachers fearful of the public reaction to poor results may encourage under-achieving students to leave. There are many subtle ways to push students out. A second consequence will be high failure rates in our urban areas. There may be a disproportionate number of minority youth among those who fail to pass the test, as there was in Florida. Unless alternatives are provided, graduation standards could penalize youth who must struggle against economic deprivation, prejudice, and inadequate facilities, and the results may initially set back our efforts to improve our urban schools. If you were to ask me why I expect such results, I would remind you that over 4 out of 10 black children in this State are raised in poverty and that black adolescents can hardly be expected to be highly motivated when they face a 39% unemployment rate, 2 1/2 times the rate for white teenagers. And minority children, more than others, often attend school in old, crowded, and unsafe facilities, facilities that do not contribute to an atmosphere of learning.

"Increased fiscal costs will also arise out of the increased need for remediation and from the testing itself. It is difficult to project the remediation needs, but the testing at the State level will cost over half a million dollars initially, and three to four hundred thousand dollars thereafter annually. Not only are additional financial resources likely to be needed, but we can expect that remediation in the basic skills will become the major mission of our high schools, and that other areas of the curriculum will suffer as a consequence. I appreciate the efforts of the authors of this bill to give consideration to all areas of the curriculum, but if the State test is a basic skills test, then the emphasis will be on basic skills.

"Related to the above will be the legal costs associated with lawsuits arising out of proficiency requirements. There could be suits involving test bias, suits involving the lack of equal opportunity due to unequal school funding, or to segregation, suits based upon inadequate preparation, and suits arising out of federal law affecting job discrimination. I may have missed some possibilities here, but I think that I made my general point. Lawyers could be the chief beneficiaries of graduation standards.

"There also may be increases in the number of handicapped students, and therefore in State aid, if these students are exempted from proficiency requirements as they must be. Consider the temptation of the School Administrator who can receive categorical aid for students who will not be counted in the analysis for the graduation standards, and who under mainstreaming can remain in their normal classrooms.

"There are other potential problems which I will only mention in passing. The most serious of these is the problem of the bilingual population. Should they too be exempted from graduation standards, or be included? There are sound objections to either course of action and possible additional legal actions as well. In addition, there may be problems associated with test administration, test security. There

may be problems arising from the refusal of teaching staff to take on classes of well achieving students."

Just as an aside, I note the debate that is going on over teacher evaluation and the use of pupil's progress data in that area. If we are to institute a system of evaluating our teaching staff, we are going to increase the anxiety associated with graduation standards.

"I cannot predict the precise magnitude of these problems. I do not know how many additional students will drop out, or if any additional students will drop out. I do not know with certainty if there will be any lawsuits. I do know that we are entering uncharted waters, and that we should prepare accordingly. I believe that some of these potential problems can be controlled, if not eliminated, by some minor changes in the bill before you. These changes would include a provision for alternative routes to the diploma for students who fail to meet one or more of the proficiency standards. We must recognize that there will be students who are going to achieve excellence in some field and still fail a test in mathematics."

When I left home this morning, my wife reminded me that she was one of those students, and I should bring her case to your attention.

SENATOR EWING: But she can compute a sales tax.

MR. CORCORAN: That's right, she can. She has the life skills, but not the academic skills.

"We must recognize the need to keep such students in school to provide them with a suitable program and to reward their achievement, therefore, I would propose that students who fail the basic skills test twice be granted a diploma if they complete a specific course of study approved by the school and their parents that includes job training and work experience, or if exceptional attainments in other curricular areas can be documented.

"Secondly, we must allow a provision for local districts to continue to set requirements for course completion, attendance, citizenship, et cetera, as well as demonstration of proficiency."

I realize it is not the intent of the bill to prohibit that, but I think that this bill is not clear on that point.

"Three, there must be a provision for adequate funding for both State and local assessment procedures, and for the technical assistance and staff development needed to implement such a policy.

"Four, we should permit the exemption of bilingual students until such time as acceptable assessment procedures can be developed.

"Five, I think we should eliminate the provision for multiple diplomas. The diploma is an award. The transcript is really the important credential. The transcript displays test scores, grades, attendance, and other information relevant to colleges and to employers. In fact, the high school transcript has always been more exhaustive than its college counterpart. We should not trade this useful certificate for a bi-polar, or tri-polar, yes/no diploma. Offering several levels, a diploma will result in a highly arbitrary decision and will not be uniformly applied. Honors diplomas will not mean the same thing across district boundaries. This should remain a local option as it is at present. It is my own judgement that we must make further improvements in the transcript and insure that it is available to everyone.

"Six, there should be a change in the language of the bill from statewide tests to statewide assessment programs. We need to have the flexibility to experiment

with performance assessment as well as paper and pencil tests and to find new and better ways to assess the skills of our students. The American College testing program, for example, is working at present with South Brunswick High School in a new approach to assessment that emphasizes performance, not merely selecting the correct responses on a test.

It is undoubtedly clear to everyone here that these changes do not address all the issues that I have raised this morning. Nevertheless, I remain convinced that graduation standards can be educationally beneficial. As you consider this legislation, I ask you to remember that the public schools must serve all students, not merely the college bound, and they all must be given every possible chance to succeed. We need standards, but we also need justice in their administration." Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Corcoran. I wonder if you would comment on a quote of Gus Henningburg, which I feel should be a common thread. It is what motivated me, and it is what motivated my co-sponsor, Senator Ewing, and we want to learn here, listening to experts.

What greater hurt can there be if one lacks the minimal skills necessary to lead a productive adult life? If a student leaves school unable to read, unable to compute or adequately express himself in writing, how can graduation standards for a non-academic diploma hurt or damage him any more than his unskilled condition? When we talked about dropouts and the fear of the unknown---

MR. CORCORAN: I think the Department would agree with the sentiment of that comment, however, with a qualification. I think this is a complex issue, and it affects the lives, directly, of many individuals. We should recognize, as we have tried to point out in our testimony, that there may be students who are excellent mechanics or excellent welders but who cannot pass the math test. I do not think that we should create such a situation where we discriminate against that person by barring his access to a diploma. So, I think the Department also feels that standards are important, but there will always be exceptions. And we must make some provision for those exceptions.

SENATOR EWING: What are the observations in Oregon?

MR. CORCORAN: Oregon attempted to several years ago implement a competency program dealing with life skills, and focusing not just on the basic skills, but on a broader range of skills.

SENATOR EWING: Similar to this bill?

MR. CORCORAN: Similar to some of the implications of the bill, such as when you talk about ---

SENATOR EWING: Just the implication.

MR. CORCORAN: Yes, that's right. I think that what we learned from Oregon was that the school districts in fact lack the sophistication and skill and assessment to be able to handle such a program. It is our judgement that we need to deal with the basic skills first, and other skill areas at a later time, once we have learned how to do that correctly.

SENATOR EWING: Where is elsewhere?

MR. CORCORAN: Elsewhere is the other 31 states, other than Florida and Oregon who are experimenting with minimum competency requirements. That includes New York where they have problems with controversies over the standards and the level of standards, and in Arizona where they have been using a rather simple-minded standardized test to test all students for graduation, and so on. There are 33

states, including New Jersey, by the way, that have minimum standards programs of some type.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. Lutz, Director of your department, and the Basic Skills Council, commented that the recent tests demonstrated very clearly that 30% to 40% of new college students need remedial work in reading, writing, and mathematics. They are college tests, it is true. But, coupled with Dr. Lutz's statement, have you a statement from the Commissioner on this? I felt very distraught that this news came a day or so before this hearing - even on a college level we in New Jersey have to give remediation. These are state high school graduates. They are not coming from out of State.

MR. CORCORAN: I cannot deny that there are many students who come out of New Jersey high schools poorly prepared in the basic skills, and it is certainly not my desire this morning to do that. In fact, I think I said we support the concept of graduation standards.

However, Dr. Lutz is talking about, if you noticed, college students. It is not the sole mission of high schools to prepare students for college entry. I think I might wish to add that if the colleges weren't quite so aggressive in seeking to recruit enrollment, and in trying to expand the level that is needed for job entry, they would not have inherited quite the same problem. Even at this point, the colleges would in fact like to move vocational programs from the high school level into the county colleges, and the more they do that, the more in fact they want to be faced with these problems of remediation, which are not new to the public schools.

SENATOR EWING: Those figures, Matty, might not be right in that article. Look who wrote it. That is certainly not a very fair standard to go by.

On page three you say, students who fail the test the first time--- Are these the Commissioner's words or are these your words?

MR. CORCORAN: These are the Commissioner's words.

SENATOR EWING: Well, don't you feel there is going to be a remediation?

MR. CORCORAN: Yes, I think that there is, but there are some students who simply do not experience much success in formal test taking situations, and those experiences are an additional discouragement to them. Now, I noted earlier that Dr. Henningburg pointed out that the Denver program had not experienced increased numbers of dropouts. I think we can point to other local school districts that have successfully implemented proficiency standards. But, we do not have any data on any statewide program. There will be districts that won't be as responsive or sensitive as the Denver program where students in fact may not have many options other than to drop out. We simply don't know the consequences of a program such as they implemented in Florida, for example, on dropout rates.

All one can do at this point is say it is something we are going to have to be concerned about. We don't know the parameters of the problem.

SENATOR EWING: On page 4, you seem to be worried about the cost. Certainly, with the budget that you are running over there, the \$3,000 to \$4,000 annually is not that great. They spend money on other fringe benefits. Is he really serious when he says that he looks at that as a major stumbling block?

MR. CORCORAN: Yes. It is a stumbling block because we will have to find the funds to pay for the administration of the statewide test, and it will be more expensive than the current program, because we will have to be more concerned about test security, and we will have to have multiple forms of the test available;

we will have to re-administer the test to students or provide for its re-administration.

SENATOR EWING: Well, don't you think it is worthwhile to really try to find out which students are--- Isn't that really the main purpose for crying out loud?

MR. CORCORAN: Yes, I do.

SENATOR EWING: Then why did you mention it?

MR. CORCORAN: I think that is the way the Commissioner feels as well. We just wanted to call to your attention that it is going to cost something.

SENATOR EWING: It costs a lot to run that Department, and the results are not very great, are they.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You don't have to comment.

MR. CORCORAN: Thank you very much.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I want to welcome Senator Yates and Senator Lipman to the hearing.

SENATOR EWING: Why do you say you are skeptical about the handicapped student? Don't you think we can make up things to try to help them in life?

MR. CORCORAN: Of course I do, and we are trying to do that with the program that is being developed which requires an individualized program of study. What I am skeptical and concerned about is the possibility that we are going to get an increase in the number of students who are classified, and I guess I am being somewhat cynical about human nature. If I were a school principal and my job was on the line based on how many students would graduate, and classified students didn't count, it might be quite tempting to want to in fact push more students into special ed. and avoid having them take the State test. I think that is something we ought to be concerned about.

SENATOR EWING: Do you feel that all categories would be exempt then?

MR. CORCORAN: All the categories of special ed.?

SENATOR EWING: Yes. Do you feel there are some that can be included, or not?

MR. CORCORAN: There may be. Just before this hearing began, one of my colleagues brought something to my attention which I had not been aware of, and the Commissioner had not been aware of, that in fact it may be in violation of recent federal law to exclude handicapped students. We may have to include them if their parents wish. And we will have to go back and in fact check on that. I do not know exactly the details on that.

SENATOR EWING: I think it is a hell of a commentary when you say there may be problems arising from a refusal of teaching staff to take on classes of lower achieving students. It will be interesting to see if the N. J. E. A. backs you up on that or not. I just can't believe it.

MR. CORCORAN: Well, the reason I had put that in was because the representatives-

SENATOR EWING: You or the Commissioner? You said these were the Commissioner's words.

MR. CORCORAN: They are, yes. I helped the Commissioner prepare them. The reason that is in there is because representatives of the N.J.E.A. at a recent hearing of the State Board on teacher evaluation said exactly that. So, I think we have to assume that in fact that may indeed be a real problem.

SENATOR EWING: That is a sad commentary. I hope that is not for 100% of their teaching staff. I am sure there are a lot of dedicated teachers.

MR. CORCORAN: I am sure there are as well.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

SENATOR YATES: How about a little cross-pollination to fertilize his train of thought? (Laughter)

SENATOR FELDMAN: Then, I will call upon you.

SENATOR EWING: At least I got here on time. Let me ask you another question. This has been brought out to me by other people, Tom. Would there ever be any point in getting a standard diploma on which will be printed the transcript right on the diploma itself? Certainly this is the part that the employer should be looking at. I couldn't agree more.

MR. CORCORAN: Yes, there is that possibility. As a matter of fact, I think the Commissioner expressed his view that he would like to replace diplomas with performance transcripts. He has not aggressively pursued that, because of a feeling that there was sort of strong opposition among the educational community, and there is a lot of tradition associated with the diploma, but it is his feeling that they should be combined in some manner, and that every student should receive one, demonstrating whatever attainments the student might have.

SENATOR EWING: Does any state have anything like that which we could look at or copy?

MR. CORCORAN: As far as I know, there is no State that has this policy. There are local districts and individual high schools that have such policies. There is no state that I am aware of.

SENATOR EWING: Well, the State doesn't set up any standard now for the diploma or anything like that, each school makes its own up?

MR. CORCORAN: That's right.

SENATOR EWING: Do you think there is any validity to having a statewide form?

MR. CORCORAN: Well, at a time when everybody complains about state interference and centralization and increased paperwork, I am hesitant to say that the State should assume that we know how to do it best. There may be a need for the State to provide models the districts could choose from, or copy. We shouldn't always assume that Trenton can do it better than every one of the 611 school districts.

SENATOR EWING: I don't.

MR. CORCORAN: I didn't think you did.

SENATOR EWING: Nor the legislators, either. Okay, thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Senator Yates.

SENATOR YATES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask you, do you have any reaction to the suggestion in Dr. Heningburg's remarks that the academically neutral, I think is the expression, diploma in fact may be a great unfairness to the minority student coming out of a school district that is not thought to be a good one, but who in fact has learned quite well.

MR. CORCORAN: I think I agree with him. However, I think he overlooks the fact that for employers and for colleges, the diploma is not the significant document, and never has been. It is the transcript that is a significant document, and if we can improve the transcript and put more information on it, including test results, I think that would overcome that problem.

SENATOR YATES: Is that really true, don't most employers of any reasonable degree of sophistication have entry tests of their own? They purchase a package, and they quite quickly tell you how well the applicant has done.

MR. CORCORAN: Well, some do, but because of the influence of the equal opportunity guidelines - in which they must show that their job hiring criteria

relates clearly to job performance - there has been some move away from the use of standardized tests. As a matter of fact, employers are taking a lead in moving toward performance assessment which involves actual simulation tasks or actual performance of tasks, rather than a test of reading or mathematics. I think we in education can learn a great deal from going to the Bell Telephone Company or the Xerox Corporation or I. B. M. in watching how they assess. They do a better job than we do.

SENATOR YATES: I have to say, it occasionally occurs to me that maybe my own experience in industry is wildly out of whack with the rest of the country. I don't think that is the case. I don't think our company has looked at a high school transcript in the history of the company. I don't in fact think we have ever seen a high school diploma. There is usually a box that the applicant checks on his form that tells us that he thinks he has or he thinks he hasn't--- I don't think we have ever checked on that, because we have an examination that quite quickly tells you they can add and subtract, read and write, understand good language and express themselves and so forth.

MR. CORCORAN: I hope nobody brings a lawsuit against you under Title 7. I think a lot of employers do what you do. I don't deny that. However, I think that your personnel people would also learn a great deal by looking at transcripts, particularly if we could get more information put on those documents.

SENATOR YATES: Do you have on your transcripts a place that will show if they had three weeks of the mumps which caused them to fail, say, history, or English some year?

MR. CORCORAN: In some schools there is an explanation of circumstances that might affect grades. That is right. Transcripts are very uneven, that is why I think the Commissioner feels they need to be improved. In some districts they are very thorough and complete documents of the student's performance and the reasons for that performance, and in other schools they are just a pro forma listing of the grades, and you don't know what the grades mean. And your personnel people may have found the latter to be the case, and have found them not to be useful. I don't know.

SENATOR YATES: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Corcoran. Senator Lipman yeilded her time to Dr. Heningburg, so we will now hear from her.

W Y N O N A L I P M A N: I have a prepared statement, but I might deviate a little from my written testimony. Senate Bill 1154, which is before us, calls for the establishment of statewide graduation requirements. I am here to say this morning that I believe that the establishment of such requirements and testing alone will not solve the problem of why students who are graduating from high schools cannot perform basic arithmetic, or read at the eighth grade level.

I am sure that we may pass this legislation since 37 other states have already passed it. A recent poll showed that 58% of the people of New Jersey are asking for legislation like this. Last week I went to a P. T. A. meeting in Newark and I heard from a mother that her son had brought his high school diploma home, and his seven year old sister had to read it to him.

So, you can see at the outset, I want to emphasize I am in favor of any program which improves student skills. My concern is, unless some changes are made in this bill, the legislation may hurt instead of help urban students. If, after years of social promotion throughout the elementary and junior high grades, we abruptly

impose one test which graduation from high school is based, then results of this testing will be disappointing to say the least.

A diploma received on graduation from high school should imply or mean that a certain level of proficiency has been reached. Perhaps it would mean giving a deficient student five years in high school instead of four. This fact is emphasized by Commissioner Burke's statement that a thorough and efficient method with its minimum standards program included will begin to bear fruit in New Jersey in the next five years.

Once we have identified deficient pupils, we must be certain also that school curriculum provides the opportunity for them to improve their skills after failing this test at the ninth grade level. There should be special remediation for these people who fail, otherwise the dropout percentage of students who lose all hope of passing this test for graduation will be especially great in urban areas.

Last Sunday I was speaker at a graduation for an eighth grade class at the Fifteenth Avenue School in Newark. The most important message that every speaker gave from the platform was, now that you have reached eighth grade, try to stick it out until twelfth.

As the February report of the National Academy of Education stated, "American education should be paying more attention to the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic beginning with ages five to eight." Serious remedial programs should be begun in elementary schools. Remediation should be provided at that level for each student who fails the minimum standards test. This program should be continued in high school. It should not begin in high school. Reading levels of children tend to reflect the reading levels of their parents. As Christopher Jencks, a noted educator said, "Our method of schooling is helpful to the middle class, and crucial for the lower-class children." Therefore, the task of education in economically deprived areas and bilingual areas becomes more difficult. But, would we brand these children as "dumb" by giving them a certificate of attendance, or will we devise remediation and enriched curriculum to help them reach that level of proficiency necessary to receive a qualified high school diploma?

The new thorough and efficient program of education which we have instituted in New Jersey has a serious challenge in this legislation. Certainly we owe each New Jersey child the right to develop to his highest potential. Certainly we need to tighten standards for high school graduation to assure that a Jersey high school diploma means that a certain level of proficiency has been reached. At the same time, however, so as not to repeat the disastrous results and chaos which occurred recently in the State of Florida with the sudden imposition of minimum competency testing, for graduation requirements, we in New Jersey must make the needed changes in the curriculum to assist high school students who reached that level of proficiency required in this State.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you. I just want to make a comment to clear the air, if I may. Senator Lipman, you say, "We abruptly impose one test on which graduation from high school is based. The results of this testing will be disappointing, to say the least." Prior to your coming in, I tried to clarify some of the perhaps misunderstandings that people have about this bill. This will not make a child's entire life depend on his or her passing the test, the one test. True, there is a test. The testing begins in the ninth grade, and special programs must be provided for those who fail. We have to strengthen the bill, and I am looking to you to help us strengthen the bill. Gus Henningburg mentions strengthening the bill.

The testing will insure the child will have skills, not just the skills to

pass a test in school, which is really insignificant, but they will have skills needed for later life. They will be able to go out there and carve out a living for themselves, in a world that can be very insensitive if one cannot read or write or compute. So, there will be programs, if the test is failed, to try to overcome the shortcomings. There will be tests given in the tenth grade and the eleventh, and the twelfth grade, unlike Florida, where they give only one test. This is the reason Florida is in trouble today.

SENATOR LIPMAN: The practice of social promotion where we pass a child on to the next grade because of his physical size, rather than his mental ability, is a situation which I think must seriously be looked at. That is why I suggested, even if it takes one year longer in high school, it would be helpful. I know this bill states it is for four years, from the ninth grade to the twelfth. The practice of social promotion is deadly. They go from grade to grade because of physical attainment. This is a practice which we may continue to observe, which we must, because we really can't get rid of that.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Senator Lipman.

SENATOR PLIPMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. James M. Rosser, Vice Chancellor, Department of Higher Education. I would also like to welcome Senator Dumont.

J A M E S M. R O S S E R: Senator Yates, Senator Dumont, Senator Feldman, Senator Ewing, Senator Lipman, it is a pleasure to be here. Unfortunately, Chancellor Hollander was called away, and I have been asked to read into the record a statement which the Chancellor prepared regarding Senate Bill 1154.

"I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 1154, for although the bill does not directly relate to higher education, it could have impact on the preparedness of high school graduates who will continue their studies in college, or at least some form of post-secondary education.

"As you know, the colleges and universities in this State have reported, based upon their own tests, that 30% to 40% of their first year freshman are under-prepared for collegiate level work. These students are all high school graduates. By under-prepared, I mean they cannot comprehend college texts; they cannot write coherent examination essays; they do not understand elementary algebra. This year the State's public colleges will test every incoming first year student using a statewide uniform basic skills test. Although the primary purpose of the program is to aid the colleges in assessing their student's academic needs, and in developing programs responsive to those needs, the results of the tests will help identify the full dimensions of the underpreparedness problem for our colleges and universities, at least for those students who choose to go beyond high school.

"The responsibility for remedying student deficiencies falls upon all institutions which educate our young. The colleges and universities in New Jersey now spend millions of dollars in compensatory education programs. They will have a responsibility to do so, as long as the need persists.

There are some who would argue that the establishment of high school graduation requirements should be left to the individual school districts. They would argue that tests of minimum standards are difficult to design and that the minimums are hard to establish. I disagree. The American Council on Education has for many years offered national examinations for high school equivalency diplomas although the maximum cut-off scores are determined by the state boards of education. New York State for many years has offered statewide subject matter

examinations, minimally assuring that all students enrolled in academic courses receive the same level of instruction regardless of the high school they attend."

I would like to deviate a little bit from the prepared text and suggest to the Committee that a diploma really means more in terms of the full growth and development of the potential of an individual than whether that person can do math at a given level, and can read and write at a given level. We are talking about an education that spans a twelve year period of time that ought to encompass more than just whether or not a person can read at a given level, or write at a given level and comprehend mathematics at a given level. Education in this democratic society has meant more than just those kinds of things, and I trust that when we look comprehensively at this very difficult problem we will take into consideration the fact that education is supposed to be geared to enhancing the full growth and development of every human being, both in terms of their cognitive, as well as their affective and other attributes. I only offer that as a slight deviation from the Chancellor's prepared text.

"Education is a state responsibility. The State is obligated to provide each child with a thorough and efficient education. Is it not also an obligation of the State to define the minimum requirements for attainment of a high school diploma? Should not every child in the State be expected to demonstrate a minimum level of competence? In an increasingly complex technological society, we should expect that every high school graduate attain a level of proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics, sufficient so he or she can play a useful and informed role in our society. We perpetuate a species of fraud upon every child, and upon society, if we award bogus diplomas for non-existent skills. New Jersey should keep pace with the rest of the country in maintaining minimum competency standards.

"What began as a startling idea in 1975-76 when the states of Florida, California and Oregon adopted such legislation has gained widespread acceptance. As you know, 32 states as of March 1, 1978, have mandated the establishment of minimum proficiency standards for high school graduation. I believe the concept represented in S-1154 will prove to be an effective stimulus for unproving basic skills instruction in the public schools. It seems to have worked well in other states. Perhaps the best example is that of the urban evolved county school system in Florida which established its own minimum proficiency standards for high school graduation several years before the State of Florida adopted such standards. Only 52% of the Duval County students passed the computational test the first year it was administered. I was recently informed by the Director of the Duval Student Assessment Program that this spring only 160 students, 3%, failed to pass this test on the first round. The Director attributes these dramatic results to the mandated minimum proficiency testing and remediation program. While I agree that it is judicious at this time to devote greater attention to skills development in grades nine through twelve, I would respectfully suggest that eventually it would be appropriate to extend the effort into the elementary, middle, and junior high levels.

"I believe that the earlier we are able to identify basic skills deficiencies the easier it will be to remediate them. Perhaps at a later time tests and standards might be developed to serve as minimum requirements for promotion in the various lower units in a manner similar to the system currently being used in Kentucky and in Maryland.

"Yet, I do urge you to delay passage of S-1154 in order to give the Board of Education an opportunity to establish minimum standards for high school graduation.

The Board of Education should be permitted broad discretion in the development of such standards, for it is uniquely equipped to do so. S-1154, inspite of its merits would restrict the discretion of the Board. The Chancellor, as a member of the board, would urge the establisheemnt of standards effective from 1983, in order to provide the high schools with the opportunity to design programs that would permit students to meet the standards. You are also urged that New Jersey avoid the mistakes of other states which offer more than one type of diploma reflecting different standards of high school performance. He believes that every student, regardless of specialization, should be required to meet a common set of standards that define attained levels of reading, comprehension, writing ability, and mathematical skills. We must set our standards high enough, so that those we recognize as high school graduates can function effectively, when they graduate, either in the work force, or in the continued collegiate study. A single diploma should be awarded to all who demonstrate this level of achievement.

"We must at all costs avoid the stigma of a second class diploma. If thorough and efficient is to be more than a slogan, or a justification for more money, we must place meaning back into the high school diploma." Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you. Any questions?

SENATOR EWING: When is the State Board planning?

DR. ROSSER: It is my understanding, Senator, that the State Board is I guess moderately along in its efforts to establish a set of minimum graduation standards that perhaps could be reviewed, and I guess, adopted later in the spring of next year.

SENATOR EWING: Deena, do you know?

MS. SADAT: A report was given to the State Board and their Commission. Whether that has been accepted by the State Board, I---

DR. ROSSER: It has not yet.

MS. SADAT: It has not been formally accepted by the State Board as yet; what the time schedule is or what is proposed, I do not know.

SENATOR EWING: They are postponing it until July? Tom Corcoran, do you know?

MR. CORCORAN: The Commissioner had told the State Board that he would bring a formal proposal to them at their August meeting on graduation standards.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Senator Yates.

SENATOR YATES: Dr. Rosser, I would like to take up the very last part of your remarks. You sort of took a passing shot at the second-class performer. That is not exactly, I guess, the subject of this bill, but I was interested, is there now a theory of education that says that is a very bad idea? It strikes me that the minimum standards that we are going to want to apply, let's say, to a graduate of a vocational high school, or a business graduate, that is, a person hoping to enter into secretarial practice, may not be the same for a young man or young lady wanting to go to college.

Now, in the past, we have had this academic diploma, general diploma, and I think even in some places there is a business diploma, or what have you. Is that all a bad idea now?

DR. ROSSER: Well, Senator, at least from my point of view, and having grown up in an urban school system which is somewhat similar to Newark's I personally would have to say, yes, I think it is bad. Either a high school education in terms of what a diploma means is suggested or a person having attained at least some

minimum level of functional competency. That is not to say that there won't be individuals who will achieve above that level, but at least for people who will exit from our schools, regardless of whether they are in a vocational high school, they are going to function as citizens in society, just like a person who perhaps graduates with an academic diploma and goes on to college. They will end up being people who will have to decide how to vote. They will be consumers of a variety of services, and they will have to be able to intelligently deal with what that means, over and above whatever that vocational skill they acquire may happen to be.

SENATOR YATES: On that I have no quarrel, because even with the general diploma, you are referring to the kind of life skills students need. What I was interested in is, what I gathered to be a suggestion in your remarks, let's say we have a body of students who have accomplished that, they won't have any trouble passing this minimum test. They will pass it flying. And, as a matter of fact, they have also gone on to take courses not all required for minimum competency, such as physics and chemistry, maybe even foreign languages, and those courses form the basis for getting the, shall we say, first-class diploma that is a college entry diploma. Now, is that hurting somebody?

DR. ROSSER: In my judgement, I would say---

SENATOR YATES: We are not asking all the kids to get college entry diplomas, or are we?

DR. ROSSER: Education is supposed to be a life-long process, and by virtue of what happens to you at a given point in your life that may debilitate your ability later in life to move ahead. It then places an additional burden on an adult who may not have achieved a minimum level of competency in reading, writing, or mathematics, who later in life decides he doesn't want to be a secretary or auto mechanic but who wants to go on to get a collegiate education. Should not that person at least have attained some minimum functional level of competency with respect to that, so that when that person enters college there isn't an additional cultural shock, or some other post-secondary educational arena?

What you are in effect suggesting, it seems to me, to some extent, is that people by virtue of what these diplomas or certificates mean may really be relegated to a position in society that makes it even more difficult for them to move up in a vertical context.

SENATOR YATES: I would like to deal, perhaps, in an analogy to make my point clear. If you are dealing with the skills it takes to go from being a journeyman apprentice in a factory up to a first-class mechanic with a whole lot of skills, the thrust of what you are saying seems to be that it is wrong at any point along the way to say that you have earned the skills that make you a second-class mechanic, but if you earn more skills you will be up to the first-class mechanic. In other words, we are not proposing that every kid who gets out of high school - at least I don't think we are proposing them as minimum standards - should meet college entry standards. The thrust of what you are saying is, yes, but if you make a distinction, then you are going to hopelessly hurt these poor people who didn't get the college entry because they only got the minimum.

DR. ROSSER: No, Senator, I am disagreeing with you.

SENATOR YATES: What I am saying is, take this down. All right, say, at this point you have achieved minimum standards, and you are entitled to a general diploma and, by the way, if you are interested in college, then there are these

additional courses and additional examinations in order to get the additional diploma. In other words, I don't think it is fair to say in order not to hurt anybody in their future development the best thing we can do is to not even look, or not even ask what their competencies are.

DR. ROSSER: Let me put it in another way, Senator, in attacking your analogy, respectfully. What you would suggest would sort of read like this: At every level, if I graduate from high school and I should decide that I want to go to Harvard to get a B. A., that means if I can't read at a given level, then I have to go somewhere within the educational system to acquire whatever those skills are to get into Harvard. After I get my B. A. from Harvard, if I want to go somewhere to get an M. A., then there are standards again that I am going to be confronted with in terms of mental competency levels to be able to function, so that at every step in the educational cycle - and it is a hierarchy in terms of this whole certification system - there are going to be additional burdens in terms of requirements.

I guess the question that I am raising here with you is, shouldn't people who exit from the secondary school systems exit with what we might define as minimum functional competency levels that at least places them in a position, if they want to be a first-class mechanic or a second-class mechanic, to at least have the opportunity to read the materials and understand what the requirements are rather than maybe having someone get a high school diploma and then have to have a seventh grader read the diploma to them.

SENATOR FELDMAN: That is what we don't want. We don't want to stigmatize the children or punish them, but we also don't want to award diplomas to students who cannot read or write. And, I think we are being unfair; we are being cruel if we award a diploma to one who cannot pass minimal standards.

If I may, Senator Yates, I would like to say something on the subject of honors that was mentioned by Dr. Rosser. Doctor, do you believe in the concept of a valedictorian or a salutatorian in a high school class?

DR. ROSSER: Sure, yes, I do.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Okay, on the same basis, the bill at the present time does not establish an academic regions diploma, but it does provide for an honor's diploma where the school district will determine just what the criteria will be if one is to achieve an honor's diploma. Now, we know that some students really put out in school, and there should be some acknowledgement given to them. They are not the valedictorian, and they are not the salutatorian, but they did achieve some degree of proficiency and excellency, and why shouldn't they be acknowledged if the school district determines what level of performance will have them eligible for an honor's diploma. It is like winning a letter.

DR. ROSSER: Senator, how is that any different from what the schools have the option to do now, which they do, using the transcript. The most effective piece of paper that a student graduating from high school or college gets is really not that certificate per se; it is really that transcript, that recorded data and information on that student that leads up to that.

SENATOR FELDMAN: But the Commissioner of Education through his representatives today said that many school districts do not comply fully with the transcripts as they should be presented to students upon graduation.

SENATOR EWING: It is not standardized.

DR. ROSSER: Well, I would say that that is an administrative matter that

certainly the Commissioner and the staff of the Department working in the local school boards could correct. When we hire a person in the Department of Higher Education, for example, it matters as much what is in that transcript in terms of what that person took and how well that person did, as where that person graduated from. I think you are finding now that employers are making the same kinds of judgements. I mean, all institutions of higher education are not equal. I think - and it has been said before-sometimes it matters perhaps where you go to college rather than whether you go to college at all or not, in terms of what a collegiate degree means, because there are different values that are associated with that. A student who may be determined to be in need of remediation, let's say, at Princeton may have scored 1400 on the College Boards, because the nature of the clientele attending each institution is different. The standards that they adhere to have to be based on what the needs, interest, and comprehensive ability of the students that attend the institution happen to be.

SENATOR YATES: Mr. Chairman, I just want to get one very simple thing straightened out. Are you saying in effect then that the minimum standards diploma should be the only diploma? Is that the sum total of what you are saying?

DR. ROSSER: I guess as far as a state standard is concerned, if there is to be a state standard, Senator, yes. I will go one step further with regard to how we describe students and the information that a student takes away from a learning environment with him to emphasize a need for a much more regularized process with regard to what a transcript is and what it contains. That is really the information that tends to be extremely important, both to the student in terms of later life because it covers other kinds of things, other than how well he scored in math, such as was he a good citizen in the school, and how involved was he or she relative to the social dynamics of what is supposed to be a formal learning environment. There are other attributes.

SENATOR YATES: The colleges have always had a mind-set against kids that tend to be a little introverted. I would just like, for the record here, totally unrelated to this bill, to say that is totally unfair. Being introverted as a child maybe sometimes is plenty good. Not all kids should join the teams and the clubs.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Senator Ewing was introverted as a child.

SENATOR EWING: It is only under the Democratic administration that I began to come out of it.

DR. ROSSER: Senator, don't misunderstand my comments to suggest that I am talking about stereotyping individuals in terms of their behavioral attributes by virtue of this. If the schools are to function like schools, then the best interest of the student has to always be put utmost and foremost in the minds of educators and administrators in the school setting.

SENATOR YATES: I think I understand exactly what you are saying, and I want to just suggest that I think the question of minimum standards for a diploma need not be the very same question as whether there should be only one diploma. I can easily see that some people feel that the one directly leads to the other. I would like to suggest that the one is a very important thing, to make sure that the diploma means something, but I am not sure that means that should be the only kind of diploma a kid can strive for in high school simply because there are some young people who need that better goal out there. They need you to say, "Sure you are going to get a diploma. You will get it easily, but why not go after the academic diploma."

You are smart enough to do it." If you don't have that beacon out there for them to be looking for, they won't be striving for the languages and better mathematics than just basic competency in mathematics. I think it is important. But I don't think that doing that makes meaningless what we are trying to do here.

DR. ROSSER: The only response I would have to that is, we live in a society that is achievement oriented, and we live in a society that places high value on the kinds of things that you are talking about, the educational systems reflective of that. I don't disagree with you as far as that is concerned. I guess what I am saying is, because at age 10 I might not see that beacon, you ought to at least provide me with the fundamental necessities. If I should choose later in life to aspire toward that goal, I should be able to attain it with the least personal cost to me, and at the least amount of cost to the State. That is all I am saying. Everybody ought to be at least guaranteed that minimum functional level of literacy.

I would argue even one step further that what we are really talking about with basic skills is not a diploma, because basic skills don't really represent. They are just suggesting what a high school education ought to be. Basic skills, at least in terms of what you are talking about with regard to minimum standards, are at least a level, a set of characteristics, that you want a student at, some minimum level, to be able to demonstrate. But you recognize that a high school education means more than the ability to do math at a given level and to read and write at a given level. A high school diploma ought to really mean more than just basic skills. Because if that is the case, then why provide the twelve years of learning and schooling. Why don't we just set up what one might define as a self-pace system and let individuals go at it on a one-to-one basis, and once they achieve that level, we give them a diploma.

But a high school education and how we define education in this society is supposed to mean more than that. We are dealing with content in terms of curriculum. We are dealing with the ability to deal with rather complex concepts.

SENATOR YATES: Maybe what we ought to do is change the Constitution; instead of saying that the responsibility of the State is to provide a system of free public schools up to the age of eighteen, we should say each citizen has a right to acquire these basic skills. At whatever age they show up at a school and say, "Here I am; I don't have basic skills and I want them," there should be a school there to provide it.

DR. ROSSER: You raise an interesting question, because I noted in some of Senator Lipman's comments, and some of the Commissioner's, that they talked about the dropout rate where you end up in urban communities with what are defined as adults, and what is available for adults now with regard to their ability to acquire skills they couldn't acquire in the normal school setting. Adult education is a serious problem in this country today, especially in New Jersey, because New Jersey is a State that is growing older at a little bit faster rate than other states in this country.

SENATOR YATES: I know we have the worst cancer in this State, but how does a state grow older?

DR. ROSSER: That means that the birth rate in New Jersey---

SENATOR YATES: Our average ages are higher.

DR. ROSSER: That's right. I knew you knew that answer. Those are some of the comments that we wanted to share with you today. I guess we basically believe that there ought to be statewide minimum standards, but we believe that the notion

of what a diploma is goes beyond that, and to provide a thorough and efficient education means more than just basic skills competency. We agree with you in principle in the terms and direction that you are going, but I guess because we are in a similar situation, a state agency established by the Legislature to oversee higher education, there is a State agency established by the Legislature to oversee education. The responsibility, the public responsibility, with respect to that is there. The admonishment and the direction that you want them to move in is properly and appropriately the responsibility you have.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Senator Dumont.

SENATOR DUMONT: Is there no flexibility under the present system or law for a local board of education to note on the graduate's diploma that the year she is graduating with honors or cum laude or summa cum laude?

DR. ROSSER: They can do that, yes. That is an option that most of the schools at least that I have been familiar with do exercise. They indicate whether a student finishes in the top 10% of their high school graduating class, and they in many instances define this as being with distinction or with highest distinction, and there are indications on transcripts.

SENATOR DUMONT: So you really don't need more than one diploma, because whatever is to be noted can be put on there now.

DR. ROSSER: That is true. That is basically true.

SENATOR DUMONT: Okay, if this minimum standards was a good concept, then why should it take five years to implement it? The Chancellor is recommending 1983.

DR. ROSSER: There is a whole range of school services that are associated with the implementation of this, if it is going to add any meaning, that have to be adequately planned for. I think this is something that has to be phased in. Perhaps starting at a lower grade level than what the Chancellor suggested in his report.

The important thing to me, it seems, is that it is possible to establish minimum grade level standards in terms of movement from one grade level to another, and it is possible at those grade levels to assess whether or not a student is functioning at what we would consider to be a level that would enable them without difficulty to do what was done in Duval County down in Florida.

Senator, I guess what the notion here is, rather than laying this on a high school graduating class in the twelfth grade, let's try to cue this in in a way that provides no harm to the system and enables faculty and administrators to develop a system that not only you will be proud of, but one that will be effective.

SENATOR DUMONT: I still don't see why the schedule anticipated in this bill, which is two years from July first, might not be enough time, rather than allowing five years, unless we are simply going to impose more paperwork and more bureaucracy on the school districts.

DR. ROSSER: Well, I can probably give you an anecdote about how long it took in terms of just dealing with the State bureaucracy to get a bid waiver with regard to the Statewide basic skills assessment program that would perhaps give you some indication as to why it is necessary. It is not very easy for those of us who operate in the public environment to go out to a sole source vendor and decide this is the test we want to use and to implement. There are a lot of steps, in terms of the way the State has established a system of accountability, that require a considerable amount of time. Whether we like it or not, we are confronted with that. It took us somewhere on the order of about a year and six months, about eighteen months, to get ready to implement a statewide basic skills assessment program

in New Jersey, and given the fact that we are talking about educators who have to be involved in the process by virtue of our living in a democratic society, and when you take into consideration the implications and ramifications of collective bargaining, and what this means in terms of faculty or teacher prerogatives with regard to academic standards, I don't think it is an improbable situation to suggest that if you did do it in two years, I am not sure that you would be satisfied with the results.

SENATOR DUMONT: So, all this contemplates is one test to be given in the ninth grade, and then other tests could be developed from that without postponing the whole thing for five years, it seems to me.

DR. ROSSER: Well, I don't mean to speak for my colleagues in the Department of Education. Maybe they are much more efficient than we in terms of doing some of these kinds of things. We have sort of prided ourselves over the years on being very effective and efficient. It does take a considerable amount of time to do this. When you take into consideration the number of school districts in New Jersey and the whole planning process that has been established over a time, you either push that aside and take an exception and move ahead with respect to this, or you have to work through the mechanisms that you have established over a time and thus far at least have proven to be acceptable.

I think this is what they are faced with having to live with in terms of a reasonable amount of time. I believe that when T & E was passed, it was suggested that it would take five to seven years before you would even begin to see the impact of that.

SENATOR YATES: Within one year we already had reports declaring it a failure from some very sophisticated outfits.

DR. ROSSER: I understand that. Senator, consultants are usually hired by people who have an interest in proving a point.

SENATOR DUMONT: Whatever their point is.

SENATOR EWING: That's right.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Dr. Rosser. Mr. Frank Totten, President, New Jersey Education Association.

F R A N K T O T T E N: Good morning. I am Frank Totten, President of the New Jersey Education Association, an organization that represents over 100,000 teachers, college faculty and other school and college employees directly concerned with improved education. With me is Dolores Corona, Associate Director of NJEA Government Relations.

In today's complex world, there are many concerns about the education of our young people. There should be, for these young people who attend our public schools today are the people who will occupy your seat and mine tomorrow. The concern that the schools of New Jersey provide all their students maximum opportunities to develop proficiency in basic academic skills and other skills needed in everyday life is one which is shared by teachers throughout our state. The truth is, Mr. Chairman, that teacher concern for student learning is the basis for NJEA's testimony before you this morning.

A movement to require minimum competencies for graduation has made gains in the past few years. The companion idea of a test for high school graduation has gathered support, also. However well-meaning, the imposition of statewide standards of graduation on local school districts and statewide assessment tests on students can only lead to serious problems affecting the lives of children. In a report, Improving Educational Achievements, made public on March 2, 1978 by

Joseph Califano, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, appeared this morning, "...any setting of statewide minimum competency standards for awarding the high school diploma - however understandable the public clamor which has produced the current movement and expectation - is basically unworkable, exceeds the present measurement arts of the teaching profession and will create more social problems than it can conceivably solve. The report further states, "If social policy increases the social trauma associated with educational sorting devices by increasing the stigmas of scholastic failure, more is at stake for the society at large than the elevation of average standards."

The New Jersey Education Association shares the thoughts expressed in those words. In our testimony this morning on S-1154 we will attempt to detail for you our reasons for opposing the bill, our observations of the real needs of our students, and our suggestions for working together with you, as Legislators and parents, for the continuing benefit of our public school students.

Mr. Chairman, the New Jersey Education Association has always endorsed standards and values the local district's educational obligation to establish minimum standards for those students being graduated from New Jersey schools.

The T & E provisions in the Administrative Code already require that the district board of education, after consultation with the chief school administrator and teaching staff members, establish reasonable pupil minimum proficiency levels in the basic communication and computational skills. What we strongly object to in S-1154 is the imposition of statewide standards and statewide assessment tests for the purpose of determining who gets a diploma. We believe that the responsibility of developing standards and administering assessment should be local district prerogative with state oversight. We respect the local control of the schools and the desire of a community to set its own educational standards. Curriculum in our schools must reflect the diverse needs of children and the communities in which these children reside.

The introduction of differentiated diplomas as outlined in S-1154 gives us concern, also. As you, we want our high school students to be properly prepared for life, but limiting the number of students who receive a diploma merely describes a problem and doesn't solve it. Our goal must be to have as many children as possible receive the diploma and we must do that by providing the best education for them.

So that the record is straight, the NJEA believes there is a place for tests. The major use of tests should be to diagnose learning difficulties enabling the teacher to plan activities in response to those learning needs. Tests must not be used in any way to label and classify students, to determine education programs, or to perpetuate an elitism.

It's been no secret that NJEA has been on record in opposition to statewide testing for a long time. Our rationale has been unswerving. Statewide tests (1) don't do what they purport to do, (2) seldom correspond to any significant degree to local learning objectives, (3) do not measure growth over a short period of time, (4) often compel schools to jump to unwarranted changes in curriculum, and (5) may be used to justify plans for tracking students into career decisions.

Back in 1976 when the current law on statewide minimum standards was being deliberated by the Legislature, the NJEA showed great concern over the issue. We feared then that the adoption of a statewide policy on standards would lead to the use of a single test to determine whether the child had met those standards. Comprehensive evaluation of children is an essential ingredient in educating children. We testified then that a single instrument of evaluation would place a burden and

blame upon our urban children through an identification process that would actually exaggerate social separatism and diminish the state's efforts toward improved learning.

Two years have passed and our concerns have been confirmed. Although the Code provides that the statewide test is not to be the only instrument in evaluating students for compensatory education, the truth of the matter is that in many cases it is. There is no monitoring or specific guarantees that comprehensive assessment techniques are being used locally to "validate" that the student really needs remedial help. Children who don't need remediation have "failed" the statewide test - children who do need it have "passed" the test. Those districts that need the comprehensive evaluation the most can least afford to supply the child study teams to evaluate. And so we ask, just what have we accomplished in providing a statewide program of testing? Have we increased learning? Would the situation not have been better if assessment and evaluation were left completely to the local district where the student is known as an individual and not a statistical element in a state computer printout, where children would be examined on the curriculum being taught in the schools of that local district and where the money now spent on the statewide testing program might be put to more meaningful use?

The New Jersey Education Association is currently surveying teachers throughout the state on their reactions to the April 1978 State Basic Skills Tests. At this time we have made a preliminary finding of approximately three hundred returns to our survey questions and comment areas. We have found few positive replies. Here is what we are hearing from the practitioner in the classroom:

"I realized the test evaluated minimum basic standards, but, really, much of it was so minimum the pupils were almost insulted."

"Many of the reading passages were followed by questions that could be interpreted in several ways."

"Tests were uneven. Answers to reading comprehension were debatable. Many spelling words were irrelevant."

"There was too much concentration on fractions and not enough on decimals."

"Content related poorly to our 9th grade programs."

"The sequence by which material is taught is important to teaching. Test did not consider this."

"Reading selections were long and inappropriate. Mathematics section was long and repetitive. How many times does a kid have to get a sample wrong (or right) to prove he doesn't know it."

"Not all schools use the same program in mathematics, so that in several questions skills were required which had not been adequately drilled. This is not fair to anyone. No student would appreciate being tested in an area not covered in the classes taken. I understand the problem --- but that is one big reason why statewide testing is not too good. If that is the case, then we will just have to have statewide curricula, ugh."

"Test in reading had welfare application -- a job application would have been more appropriate."

"Many of the questions were tricky. If we truly want to test knowledge of basic skills, then we should not include instructional techniques, such as adding and subtracting on a number line."

"Division by number with decimals in the divisor, we do not consider a minimum basic skill. Verbal skills necessary for interpretation of charts were too complex for minimum skills."

New Jersey State Library

"No consideration is given for the varying abilities of students. Why frustrate the slow learners? Why humiliate them? This system does not consider the plight of children."

"Students with high absentee rates and/or severe discipline problems also took this test. The results made by these youngsters curtail the performance of the other youngsters. So long as the above-mentioned types of students took these tests and tried, their results will count. Yet, in most cases, these types of youngsters did not do well because of their lack of effort in school or lack of attendance. There is no way for a school district to illustrate these facts. Consequently, district scores are pulled down. This does not seem fair."

"They were a waste of time and money, since they are not valid in measuring progress. They do not teach the administration anything previously unknown."

"The whole program is an antiquated philosophy. It proves very little and is wasting the taxpayer's money, when the money could be put to much better educational use."

"Who determines what the basic skills are? It is very difficult for teachers to have children prepared for this test because of social promotions and the children move up without the fundamental skills of basic addition, subtraction, division and multiplication."

Mr. Chairman, please take what I have just described regarding the current program in minimum standards and transfer the similar and inevitable problems to the high school graduation situation. S-1154, while including provisions for remediation procedures, consideration of local goals and objectives, a statewide monitoring process and early administration of the basic skills test as early as the ninth grade, still presumes that, if a student does not perform satisfactorily on a statewide assessment test, but satisfies the local district's graduation standards, he/she will receive a mere certificate of completion upon graduation. There's the rub. The NJEA must ask the Committee to contemplate the responses to two very fundamental questions --- (1) What skills are so important to the state so as to coerce children into learning them? and (2) What purpose is served in stigmatizing a student by giving him a certificate of completion rather than a diploma?

We feel that many people could list a lot of skills they think are basic in addition to the reading, writing and arithmetic usually thought about. How about personal hygiene and health, human relations, driving an automobile on our roads in New Jersey, the environment, and various mechanical skills, just to throw out a few. I have attached to the back of this testimony a copy of an article by Henry Brickell, Director of Policy Studies in Education a Division of the Academy for Educational Development, and he states some of the complexities of establishing minimum standards, and I hope you will have an opportunity to read that. (See page 11x.)

If we look at what is happening in Florida now, a state which administers a 117 question test of mathematics and communication skills to juniors, last October 36% failed mathematics and 8% reading and writing, but racial breakdowns reveal stunning new dimensions of the problem, and as a result, NAACP as you know is filing a suit against the State of Florida. We don't want New Jersey to get into that fix.

Other advocates of the diploma test see the test as the easy way out. If students pass a minimum requirements test, why worry. As already happened in California, the law would permit and maybe even encourage such minimum achievers to drop out if they passed the test. The minimum standards might be the most some

WITNESSES: [illegible]

students would be given. I was very interested to hear the former presenter from Higher Ed. make those points about the fact that a high school education has to be far more than a set of minimum standards. We don't want to encourage that.

The real question on state-imposed diploma requirements is whether those who advocate them want to help students succeed or to penalize those who do less well than others. And I would like to pause here to ask a question. From the testimony that was given this morning, and from the bill itself, the question is, don't I have an obligation and a responsibility to educate every child in the State of New Jersey? And do not people very often think that the logical outcome of that education is the diploma saying that you have gotten to a certain point in your life. Whether or not businesses rely on the diploma for hiring or not, whether you just check it off in a box, or whatever, the question is, what happens to those students who can't make it, the students who now drop out? What happens to those students who can't pass that no matter how hard they try.

I would like to give you an example. Years ago I taught a fifth grade class, and there was a young man in that class who couldn't deal with the minimum language skills and mathematics skills. He had a great deal of difficulty. I just had him in the fifth grade, and then he eventually went through the school system. I don't know whether he managed to get into high school or not, because I left that school district shortly thereafter. I did meet him many years later, though. I know that a fifth grade student, who couldn't learn to read or write, no matter how hard he tried and I tried, was making more money than I was, making salads at the Far Hills Inn. At that time there was a Far Hills Inn. So, there is a use for every skill, I guess. I don't think he would have passed minimum standards. That is my thought.

SENATOR YATES: Let me turn the question around. Is the substance of what you are suggesting the fact that there are no adequate means for students that don't make it, for one reason or another, in the traditional high school to make up for that deficit at some later time, that our equivalency program is insufficiently available? My impression was that even now in the county colleges you can make up what you missed in high school, or the armed services often offer such programs. I know industry has programs which encourage people in the ranks who have that problem to face it squarely and just take it head on in your twenties and get the diploma. Sometimes it only takes two months of cramming and it turns out they have learned enough on their own in the meantime to get it.

MR. TOTTEN: True, there are programs. I don't think those programs are equally available everywhere in the State, but there are good programs, and more and more they are coming into existence.

SENATOR YATES: Maybe that is why some people are worried when you say, well, let's leave it up to the local districts to decide whether they want to have programs of that kind with minimum standards. It may be important. It may not be available uniformly.

MR. TOTTEN: Well, you see, we think it is a good idea to have standards. We think that those standards should be developed locally. We think that the State Board of Education can say --- There was a study made on high school graduation standards, and we think those are pretty good and ought to be followed. But we think the State Board of Education can say to the local boards, okay, now you have to have a set of standards. We also think there ought to be some alternatives, because unless you change this bill, no matter what happens, if a student can't pass that minimum basic test - whether he can't take tests well, or whatever, - he won't get

the diploma under this legislation. Now, that is the way it is written here. Maybe you don't mean that, but that is the way it is written here.

SENATOR YATES: I think we do mean that. In fact, the problem I see is this: Let's say we go with your plan and say the standards have to relate to the local community, the result is going to be that you will look at the diploma and say, "Oh, this is a Newark diploma. Too bad it isn't a Morristown diploma." Do you follow what I mean? That is exactly what we are aiming at. We would like to look forward to the day when a person presents a diploma and says, that is a New Jersey diploma and that will mean something. We want that to mean it comes from one of the best educational systems in the United States. Now, I think we have an obligation to make that day happen, but we are not going to do it if it turns out that we are doing it by saying, well, let a Newark diploma reflect the problems in Newark and a Bernardsville diploma is going to be a super diploma. That is exactly what we are trying to avoid.

MR. TOTTON: Well, you see, I don't agree with that.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Frank, we don't want to bequeath a lifetime of illiteracy to young people coming up. Now, you mentioned statewide requirements. You are against statewide standards and statewide testing and you talk about the NAACP going to court in Florida. The NAACP endorses this bill, and with a great deal of articulation Mr. Gus Henningburg, representing the greater Newark Coalition, spoke very vigorously, and he was speaking in my opinion - and nobody speaks for the total community, but he is a man of position and leadership in the urban community, in the black community - for the concept of the bill. He went on to say, "Statewide graduation standards are a necessity. The student who achieves or surpasses the standard would earn title to an objective indicator of his proficiency in the basic skills. The student who fails to achieve the standards should become the recipient of adequate comprehensive diagnostic remedial services." This is what you talked about and this is what you are in favor of, remediation and diagnostic services. Well, if they fail this test, the minimum standards tests, then we know there has to be the additional services.

We want these young people to pass. We want them to read. We want them to write, and that is all the sponsors and the co-sponsors of this bill are seeking.

MR. TOTTON: I think we are in agreement on the objective. The difference is how you go about having the objective occur. For instance, as I said, we are in favor of the report on state high school graduation requirements, but before you ever get to high school, throughout the elementary school, we are in favor of a constant diagnostic testing situation for each child, so that we know whether or not he or she is learning the various skills; it is very important.

The question is, what do we do with the students who will not be able to - no matter how well they have done in those skills - pass that minimum competency test when they give it statewide. Perhaps not all of the skills on that test, however it is devised, reflect this adequately. I cited the fact that we have a couple of concerns - it may become the maximum and not the minimum.

What I am suggesting is that it is very possible for the State to say to local boards, you must set standards, and those standards must have alternatives, because what you just told me is, there is no alternative for the student who just can't pass that test, and to our way of thinking, this would be a disaster to at least a limited number of students who may be able to develop, as was testified by Tom and a couple of the other testifiers, and there might be a performance test

designed for some students who can perform in other areas, and I tried to show that by the example of this young man who was earning more money than I was, even though he couldn't read or write.

SENATOR YATES: I thought you were making a point for the poor pay scale for teachers.

MR. TOTTEN: Well, if you would like to take that point as well, that is okay. What I would like to do is make a few more points that I have written here, but before I do that, I think it is important to say that we are kind of at the end of an era whereby back in the sixties and so on when there were a lot of innovations, some of these innovations in education that were introduced were not favored necessarily by the teaching staff members. They have always wanted good standard but they wanted a fair and honest standard. They want something that a child can look to and manage. That means that a standard, if you are going to have a differentiation, needs to have levels of gradations, so that the students who aren't able to do much at all have a standard, and those who can do a great deal have to meet their own standard, and not one down here.

In the testimony I have some suggestions that I would like to point out to you. I will just make them quickly. On page seven, the NJEA believes that the current curricular requirements mandated by the State should be augmented. Now, to make that clear, those augmentations would be recommendations of the State Committee on High School Graduation. That would add four years of English to be required, and two years of math, a year of science, in addition to present requirements. In other words, we are in support of that report.

The second thing we are looking for is, student evaluation should be of a diagnostic nature, and should enable the design and delivery of appropriate developmental and/or remedial instruction and related services. Evaluation should be comprehensive and include teacher observation, parental or guardian interview, formal and informal evaluation techniques, cumulative pupil records, testing results, and medical examination. The use of or sole reliance on a single test instrument should be specifically discouraged and so stated.

The elements of a comprehensive evaluation should be conducted each school year as part of an on-going process and reviewed at the end and beginning of each school year.

The NJEA believes that the schools of New Jersey should provide their students maximum opportunities to develop proficiency in basic academic skills in reading, spelling, oral and written English and arithmetic. Where students have clearly not achieved to the degree of their ability in reading, spelling, language usage, and arithmetic, modifications of basic course offerings as well as remedial efforts shall be provided for students who need it. Such identification of needs shall be made as early as possible in the student's educational career, and a constant reassessment made.

A closely articulated K to 12 grade curriculum should be given continuing attention to proficiencies cited. Greater respect for the individual student, however, should be expressed in terms of student progress toward proficiency levels and curricular offerings. No assessment procedure should assess knowledge or skills unless the opportunity to acquire such is part of the district's educational plan to provide appropriate curricula.

Local school districts should be prepared to provide those educational opportunities beyond the twelfth grade in order that students meet basic and other requirements.

You know it is entirely possible, as one gentlemen said, that it might take five years to go through high school. Well, as far as I am concerned, six years wouldn't discourage me if the student is willing and wishes to take it at a slower pace.

SENATOR YATES: You really, I think, mean beyond the twelfth year.

MR.TOTTEN: That's right, you might spend six years in high school, and eventually end up graduating from the twelfth grade.

We agree, as was stated before, that transcripts of high school experiences should be available for job related or advanced educational planning in accordance with appropriate federal and state student record and educator, save-harmless, statutes and regulations. Consideration might be given to a standardized transcript for all school districts.

Any fiscal restraints that exist at both the state and local school district levels should be eliminated in order to facilitate comprehensive programs with the required emphasis on basic skills.

Gentlemen, I would like to say that I have worked with my local board of education in New Brunswick for many years, and I remember a past president of the Board, Eddie Litman, who would complain that there was another state mandated program and no money to pay for it. How do you deal with that? The state has done better, certainly, with the new income tax and so forth, but I would just ask you to keep that in mind. If you want a new program, who is going to pay for it, and what other ramifications are there?

In order to guarantee maximum participation of educational offerings, it should be necessary for schools to carefully review how student absenteeism can be reduced and how the amount of parental interaction and responsibility in such areas of concern can be increased. We believe that there should be child study teams, the ratio of one team for every fifteen hundred student pupils, and I think that includes the main points of my testimony today. (Statement appears on page in the appendix.)

SENATOR FELDMAN: Any questions?

SENATOR DUMONT: Your results from the State of Florida contrast considerably with those listed by the Department of Higher Education. I realize that they only quoted from Duval County, and you are perhaps taking the whole state.

MR. TOTTEN: This is the whole state.

SENATOR SDUMONT: It seems to me that maybe there should be some further check into the results, because they certainly are a long distance apart in the two sets of testimony.

MR. TOTTEN: I think he mentioned that Duval County had started that test. Maybe he was quoting their own, Duval County's own, test.

SENATOR DUMONT: You said only 3% of their students failed to pass this spring. You have a percentage which is a lot higher for the State of Florida.

MR. TOTTEN: This was the State of Florida, statewide.

SENATOR EWING: I would like to go back to the remarks made by Commissioner Burke. Do you agree there may be problems arising from a refusal of the teaching staff to take on classes of low achieving students?

MR. TOTTEN: Well, I am glad you asked me that, because I didn't think that was used quite in the right context. Those persons who said that were testifying at a State Department of Education meeting. They were talking to teacher evaluation, and they said, it is possible that should they be evaluated on pupil progress, that is, how much the pupils achieve on certain test scores, it would be advantageous for them to have brighter pupils who could achieve more. What they were trying to do was to point out to the State Board the problems with using that, and things that you hope would not happen. So, that is the context in which that was said. In terms of what you are saying here, we don't think that is appropriate, although there are inordinate pressures brought to bear on teachers and administrators, and you may think it is going to be a nice, professional, educational job, and you hear some of the same people tell you that we have to have higher standards and that you are not looking out for our children, when their own particular children are ready not to graduate because those children have not met a certain standard. The pressures are horrendous by some of those same people who talk out of both sides of their mouth. I have a lot of respect for teachers and administrators who run into that problem, and I have a lot of sympathy for those who get buried by them, because some people do get buried by them.

I think that is one of the possibilities of a statewide assessment test. If you do have to show, because you are going to be evaluated on how many of your students eventually pass that test to graduate, it would be certainly to your benefit to have a class of students who were all bright and could pass it, if that is what some people are going to look at. We don't want that to happen.

SENATOR EWING: In your recommendation here on page 9 you say in order to guarantee maximum student participation in educational offerings, it should be necessary for schools to carefully review how student absenteeism can be reduced. Isn't there a concentrated effort going on in that area all the time? Isn't the NJEA coming up with ideas as to how that can be corrected? My God, if a child is not in school, whether this thing goes through or doesn't go through, they are missing a hell of a lot.

MR. TOTTEN: Yes, that is correct. Certain school districts in the State have an inordinate problem with that. They just cannot muster the resources to deal with it.

SENATOR EWING: Well, then why should more emphasis be put on it with this program than there is right now?

MR. TOTTEN: Well, what I am pointing out to you is, when there is a high rate of student absenteeism in school, it will make it difficult for those students to master those basic skills. What we would very much like to do would be to attack the problem of getting students in school and keeping them in school, and that is where some of our resources need to go. Some of the school districts just don't have enough personnel to go out and find out why they are not in school by parents consistently refuse to send their children under the law? It used to be that if you had one or two truant officers for a rather large district of four and five thousand pupils, you could manage this. In today's world, no, you can't. To put your money in those types of resources means that you have to subtract it from some place else. Our school systems, at least some of them, are in a constant problem state with that. So, we think that part of this effort has to be made to help school districts attend to that problem.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you. Lawrence S. Schwartz, President of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

L A W R E N C E S. S C H W A R T Z: Good morning. I am Lawrence S. Schwartz, President of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Sitting with me is Dr. Lloyd Neubacker, our Acting Executive Director of the School Boards Association. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you today on behalf of New Jersey's 5,000 school board members and on behalf of the communities, and ultimately the children they serve.

We are addressing a very serious question here today. S-1154 is far more significant than any other education measure of recent years or now on the horizon. The lives of 100,000 potential high school graduates a year would be affected by passage of this bill. The question, and the only question, is whether the State-determined high school graduation standards will benefit or harm these young people.

The concerns that are behind this bill are legitimate. They are shared by the entire educational community, parents, and the public at large. We are all dismayed by the decline in test scores over the past decade. We are all disturbed by the lack of skills found in some of our high school graduates. We are all united in wanting to see the quality of education improved for all, but especially for those students who somehow pass through our schools without a solid grounding in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics.

The problem has received much attention in the media, even though many schools in this State are doing a good job of educating their students. New Jersey has taken some major steps in the last several years to address the problem of low achievers in our schools. The Legislature has set in motion a program of remedial help for every boy and girl in the public schools of this state falling behind in these basic skills areas. We have asked the State Board of Education to establish minimum proficiency levels in reading and math and they have done so. A uniform statewide test is administered every year in the 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 11th grades. Every student who fails this test must receive a remedial program, and the State contributes compensatory education aid to make this possible. This program assures that help begins in the early years when it can do the most good.

The philosophy behind this program is an excellent one. The New Jersey School Boards Association has supported it fully and will continue to do so. It may very well be that New Jersey is addressing the problem adequately through its remedial program

requirements. But conclusive evidence will not be available for at least several years. Educational deficiencies cannot be corrected overnight; children do not reverse direction on command.

In New Jersey's compensatory education program, the emphasis is clearly on helping students, and there is little potential for harm. At the worst, a student may receive some special attention he or she does not really need. But statewide high school graduation standards are a different story altogether. There the potential for harm is great. The lack of a high school diploma, in our credential-crazy society, may very well mean that a young person will not find a job. The lack of a diploma may not mean that the person could not do that job. It simply means that he or she could not pass the state test.

Let's talk a little bit about tests. Now, I am not an educator. I am a layman like you. I am an attorney and a school board member. But I have read and listened to a great deal on this controversial subject of testing. It appears to me that many professional educators are telling us not to make extraordinary decisions about a student on the basis of one test, particularly when that test is as much a measure of the school as it is of the students. A test might be used to identify problems in curriculum or students with particular needs. This is a far cry from the use of a single exit exam to certify that the student is prepared to meet the world.

I would like to quote to you from a report prepared recently by the National Academy of Education Committee on testing and basic skills. This was a panel of distinguished scholars called together by Mary Berry, Assistant Secretary of Education of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. This Committee was to advise on the subject of basic skills and minimal competency. It included many of the "big names": Stephen Bailey, John Goodlad, Robert Glasser. The panel wrote: "We believe that any setting of statewide minimum competency standards for awarding the high school diploma - however understandable the public clamor which has produced the current movement and expectation - is basically unworkable, exceeds the present measurement arts of the teaching profession, and will create more social problems than it can conceivably solve."

The Academy panel also recommended strongly against the creation of a national test for very much the same reasons and because of the danger of creating a federal curriculum.

The NJSBA Delegate Assembly, which is the Associations' policy-making body, went on record several weeks ago in opposition to statewide graduation requirements until such time as the educational community has an opportunity to study in-depth the many critical issues involved in this area. We will establish a task force of board members within the next few weeks to examine the ramifications of state high school graduation requirements. Their study will be presented to our Delegate Assembly next October. We would hope that on an issue this significant the Legislature will not move without sufficient deliberation and comment from all sectors of the public.

The NJSBA Delegate Assembly went on record at the same time in favor of the concept that local boards of education be required to establish and administer their own graduation standards. This requirement for local graduation standards is already a part of the State Administrative Code for T & E. Local standards are a natural outgrowth of the T & E system with its emphasis on local goal setting and local involvement. Local requirements can take into account not just the few hours spent on the State test, but also the student's entire school performance in determining

whether a diploma will be granted or denied. We believe that placing the authority for graduation policies at the local level respects the needs of the people to have some power over decisions that most deeply affect them and their children. In this increasingly centralized and anonymous society, we must leave the decisions close to home, close to the local level, whenever possible. This is also consistent with Chapter 212's recognition that we should be preparing our students to function in a democratic society.

To the extent that S-1154 calls for local boards of education to set high school graduation standards, we can support the bill. However, we are hesitant on the provision for guidelines to be set by the State Department of Education without knowing what form those guidelines would take. It is difficult to know to what degree they would usurp the power of local boards of education to determine their own standards. If this is meant to be another form of state control, we would cry out in opposition. If there must be state guidelines, we would suggest that the authority for these guidelines be placed specifically with the State Board of Education so they would be subject to public scrutiny and comment and to adoption by a lay board rather than a quiet promulgation by bureaucracy.

There has been much talk in the Legislature recently about the danger of labeling children. We share much of that concern. In that respect S-1154 appears to be a step in the wrong direction. The bill provides for three different types of diplomas, three different classes of high school graduates, those who don't pass the test, those who do, and those who win honors. One hundred thousand students cannot be divided into three clear-cut categories in any meaningful way. If the purpose of this provision is to let employers know who they are hiring, then we suggest that a transcript of the courses taken in high school, and the grades earned, would be far more useful. The problem of diplomas for special education students is not adequately addressed in S-1154. Under the bill, the Department of Education is required to establish special provisions for graduation standards for pupils classified under Chapter 46. But that is more easily said than done.

Given the variety of handicaps and learning disabilities, it is not clear what such a standard would encompass. The bill does not state clearly whether handicapped students will receive a special diploma. NJSBA would oppose such a move as unfair to those special students who work to the fullest of their capacities.

What does S-1154 encompass other than state testing and standards in communication and computational skills? The bill calls upon the Department of Education to establish a program of standards for graduation from secondary schools which shall include, but not be limited to, the State test. This could be an open invitation for the State to decide what every student should know before graduation. That would be tantamount to a State curriculum, a State dictate, on education for all.

Just to give you an indication of what might ensue, let me cite for you the report of the State Board of Education Committee on high school graduation requirements. This group has recommended that all students should be required to demonstrate proficiency not only in reading, writing, and math, but also in work and consumption skills, citizenship and civic skills, and self-maintenance skills. The latter includes such things as understanding the role of the aesthetic expression and the skills necessary to establish individuality and to maintain inter-dependence with others. Can you imagine denying a high school diploma because a student cannot demonstrate proficiency in these abstruse areas? Can you even imagine how one would assess or test these proficiencies?

In closing, I would like to say that I hear the bandwagon coming. It has rolled through many other states. It is the latest panacea, the thing that will make our students learn and our schools do their jobs. But are we certain that graduation standards in and of themselves will add anything to the thrust New Jersey has already begun? It will immediately result in more dropouts. It may very well be counter-productive by diverting most of our time, attention, and resources to the high school years, where the chances of making a difference for a student are least. Most children who will do poorly in high school can be identified in the third and fourth grade. Research clearly indicates that early intervention and remediation are more effective than later assistance. We must continue to focus our efforts on these younger children if we are to have a reasonable chance of success. Let's not be too quick to jump on this bandwagon. Let's see where it is going first. I would urge caution.

I would urge you to give State graduation requirements an opportunity in the several states that have adopted them and to let us study their effects. Let's see if they really help kids to learn. In the meantime, let's put our full force behind the efforts of New Jersey's school districts to provide immediate programs to all children who are falling below the State standard at all grade levels. Perhaps New Jersey has the best answer and doesn't know it. Perhaps New Jersey will show the rest of the nation how to get the schools working and the children learning. Thank you very much.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Schwartz. Many of the arguments you have raised have been presented by others.

SENATOR YATES: I would like to ask you this question, which is kind of departing from your text, would you say right now there are some districts where a diploma from that district means more than one from another district to an employer or to a university that may be looking at an applicant? In other words, is a diploma from, let's say, the Camden School District regarded quite as well as a diploma from the Princeton Borough? I keep moving my wealthy district around. (Laughter)

MR. SCHWARTZ: I heard Bernardsville before. Perhaps not in the eyes of a university or maybe in the eyes of an employer. But, are minimum standards going to solve that problem?

SENATOR YATES: Well, I wanted to first get you to say, no, it probably doesn't mean the same thing. Because I was going to ask you what you propose to do about that. Do you think that is okay? Maybe we should do nothing about it, leave it that way, or maybe we should do something about it. If we should do something about it, then the question is, what, how?

MR. SCHWARTZ: Well, if it does not mean the same thing to all, to graduate from different districts, then I think it is incumbent upon the local school district to raise their performance level, and that is what we are striving for, to begin early. Beginning in the twelfth grade is not going to solve that problem.

SENATOR YATES: Well, suppose the state was to say, beginning in the twelfth grade is not going to solve that problem, we want you to begin earlier. If the state did say that, do you think it would be wrong for the state to say that?

MR. SCHWARTZ: The state is saying that already with the statewide testing.

SENATOR YATES: Yes, but the whole text of your statement is filled with a concern that the state is going to say anything. We all want too much state control, and here we have to make sure the local district is unfettered. What would be wrong with the state saying, we have to begin--- In other words, what I would like to do

is take every one of the points you consider to be important and suggest to you that maybe the State ought to be saying that. Now, if you like your points, what would be wrong with having the state make those points?

MR. SCHWARTZ: The State should not take the place of local control over education. I think the state can certainly set up what they have done already concerning statewide testing and remediation if those certain tests are not passed. But, then, it is up to the local board to implement that remediation using the State funds. I think we are doing the job.

SENATOR YATES: Suppose the state wants to find out whether or not in all districts a high school diploma has meaning, and to do that, the State says, "We want to find out what these kids know by the time you have given them a high school diploma," which is, in effect, what this bill is doing. Now, is the state wrong to do that? If the state finds that there are meaningless diplomas given out, should the state turn its back on that and say, "Well, it is under local control, and if they want to give out meaningless diplomas --- What should be do about that?

MR. SCHWARTZ: But, that is assuming the fact that there are meaningless diplomas given out.

SENATOR YATES: If there weren't meaningless diplomas, then they could come to us and say, if we disagree on the question as to whether or not meaningless diplomas were given out, we should hold different hearings and determine that. I think pretty much everyone would agree that is pretty well demonstrated.

SENATOR FELDMAN: There is going to be input from the school districts throughout the State. This is not a question of home rule versus a state mandate. We need input and there will be input from the local school districts.

Again, we can have differences of opinion, but we are not talking about a piece of paper. We really are not. What we are talking about is quality of education in New Jersey as against a lifetime of illiteracy. I hate to keep using those words over and over again. You said, maybe New Jersey can lead the way or will lead the way. That is fine. These words stir up passions for our State. But when I see a state paper with a headline saying that thirty to forty percent of high school graduates from New Jersey need remediation in their freshman year at a State College, something is wrong. Something is wrong.

SENATOR YATES: And those are our good graduates he is talking about.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Senator, I agree with you, and I agree with the idea that we must have high school graduates who can perform, certainly, the basic skills in their lifetime. I believe, in the two years- and pretty soon two and a half years- of my term as President of the School Boards Association I have seen more things good in education happening than any other period of time. And I agree with you that we must have those graduates. But where I disagree with you is, just establishing minimum standards for graduation is not going to accomplish the goals that you are setting, because if you deny someone a diploma because he or she does not have those minimum standards, that is not going to make the person have the minimum standards. What we have to do, and what we are doing, is starting in the early grades with remediation, with the statewide testing, attempting at that level to give them the basic skills. Once they get to the twelfth grade, all you are going to do is deny a student a diploma.

SENATOR FELDMAN: But shouldn't a diploma mean something? Isn't it something that a young person has worked for and not just a certificate of occupancy for four years,

or five years? We don't just say, "You have graduated." This is the whole point, a diploma should be meaningful, and we should try to encourage young people to achieve this academic plateau by receiving an accredited high school diploma that means something. I think we are being cruel and heartless to people just to give them a sheepskin and shake one hand and give them a diploma, and say, you have graduated, go out into the world now. Some of these young people cannot read or write and don't have any comprehension of basic mathematics. This is what the bill is all about.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I again agree with the intent of it, but I don't understand how this bill is going to correct the situation other than to deny a diploma.

SENATOR FELDMAN: We are giving remediation. There are going to be diagnostic services, if they fail the test in the ninth grade. If they did not receive a test on the eve of graduation, then I would say we are the ones who are cruel, but they are receiving this test, the minimal standards test, in the ninth grade, and then again in the tenth, if they don't pass it in the ninth, and then again in the twelfth grade.

SENATOR YATES: And with a program designed in the meantime to help them through the areas they are missing.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Right, with remediation.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It still must begin in the early grades. That is where all education begins, in the third and fourth grade.

SENATOR FELDMAN: It begins on the mother's knee, too, some people say.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It begins in the womb, some people say.

SENATOR YATES: If you guys will help us to find out how to do it right in the third and fourth grades, I think we can work together on this bill. But if you tell us, forget the bill, forget the standards, leave it all to the local districts, then, I am afraid we have to go ahead on something like this.

If you want it in the third and fourth grade, show us where to amend the bill, and that is something we will have to take a look at.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I think it is too early to say whether this program is working or not. I personally think it is working. I think with proper remediation after statewide testing in the early grades, it is going to work. It is not going to happen overnight. It is going to take years to work, but I think we have to stay a step ahead. You have to see where it is going to go. Merely because we are going to give a series of exams which have to be passed to graduate is not going to solve the problem. I don't believe New York students are any more well prepared for life, than New Jersey students, with their Regents.

SENATOR YATES: They sure knew whether or not they could do algebra. I mean, I am a product of the Regents system. For years I have been hearing what a tragedy the Regents system is, and all I can remember is, by the end of the term, you had to know it; there was just no way around it. You either were going to pass that test, or you weren't. If you didn't pass that test, you didn't pass algebra or French or German or whatever it was. I thought it was a good system.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Again, we are talking basic skills. A lot of students are not going to know algebra, and will never know algebra. I have to admit to you that I have completely forgotten my algebra, anyway.

But the point I am trying to make is, if we are talking about basic skills, reading, writing and arithmetic, number one, we must evaluate earlier; number two, the fear I have with statewide testing, especially Regents exams, is that teachers begin teaching to the test.

SENATOR YATES: In other words, teaching basic skills.

MR. SCHWARTZ: No, no, that is more serious than you think, because teachers have a habit of knowing what types of questions are on the exam, and will teach just towards that exam, and they are teaching basic skills and they are teaching other basic skills. I know I am using semantics.

SENATOR YATES: I will agree with you that they do that. Do you know something, I think even that is a healthy exercise. I have sat with my own kids going through the prep for the S. A. T.'s, and anybody who doesn't prep their kids for the S.A.T.'s has really missed an experience. You are learning something when you are learning to read that question carefully. Tell me what that question is asking you. No, it is not asking what you think. That is a part of learning too. That is analysis, making sure they think carefully. It is making them extract accurate meanings from given words. Learning how to take tests is a life skill too. I don't think teaching kids how to take tests or teaching to tests is that bad a thing, either.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I think you can miss some of the basic skills if you are just teaching to one exam or one type of exam. I don't know if exams are the answer or testing is the total answer, but I do maintain again that education has to begin in the very early primary grades. By the time they get to ninth and tenth grade, I think it is too late already. That is where remediation has to take place. The full effect is the primary grades, both in the inner city schools and suburban schools.

SENATOR DUMONT: I have a couple of questions. Larry, you haven't come to any definite conclusion here about whether there should be one diploma, but I sort of infer that from the remarks that you made; is that correct?

MR. SCHWARTZ: Our Delegates Assembly a year or so ago had vetoed the idea of more than one diploma. They think there should be only one given to all high school graduates. Again, you are discriminating against a certain person who may not achieve that status and therefore they will receive the inferior diploma. We don't think that is fair. A high school diploma should be uniform throughout the State.

Now, again, I am not referring to a special education diploma. That might be in a different category. I am talking to an achiever, an underachiever, and overachiever, there should be one diploma for all.

SENATOR DUMONT: The basis of your statement really is to some degree the fact that 60% of the cost of education comes at the local level, that is, it is raised from the local property taxes, and the districts at least ought to have as much to say and not more than state government should have; is that correct?

MR. SCHWARTZ: That is correct.

SENATOR DUMONT: I don't see anything unreasonable about that. I would like to ask you one more thing. Did you and the NJEA collaborate on these statements in advance? I noticed you both used the same quotations from this recent report.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Had we collaborated, certainly one of us would not have used the same quotation. But, it shows that on certain issues, certainly, the New Jersey School Boards Association and the New Jersey Education Association are of the same mind. We don't disagree all the time.

SENATOR DUMONT: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Schwartz. I would like to recognize Dr. Anthony Catrambone, the last speaker for this morning's session.

A N T H O N Y C A T R A M B O N E: Good afternoon. I am Anthony Catrambone, Superintendent of Schools in Vineland representing the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. On my left is Philip Kirshner, Esquire, the Legislative Counsel for our organization.

On behalf of the NJASA, I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to share with you our views on this most important subject, minimum high school graduation requirements. As School administrators and advocates for children, we know that all New Jersey students deserve, and their parents expect, an education which will enable them to possess at least a minimum level of competence to function in our society.

Most of our efforts during the past few years with the implementation of T & E and compensatory education have been geared towards helping students achieve as much as possible, particularly in computation and communication skills. We know that graduating students who do not possess certain basic skills damage public credibility and support for the public schools. Therefore, we support efforts to insure that our high school students graduate with a minimum level of competence.

The key issues, as we see them, are, what are the best ways to go about educating our pupils so that they possess these skills, and what role should demonstrating minimum proficiency on a statewide minimum basic skills test play in determining whether a student graduates?

NJASA believes that student achievement on a state minimum skills test should be one basis in determining whether a student graduates. Testing is indicative of a certain level of achievement, and test results can be quite useful in assessing competence. We think such a test might also give children and their parents an incentive to take school more seriously, and we support that portion of the bill that requires that the district's policies on graduation standards be given to each student and parent. However, performance on one statewide testing instrument cannot and should not be the "be all" and "end all" of determining whether a student will graduate from high school.

Test results on one test instrument are not a perfect indicator of student achievement. We believe that alternatives to proficiency on the statewide test should be developed by the local school districts to determine whether in the judgement of the local community - not just the State - the high school students of the public school district have competence in the basic skills. The local school district is the most appropriate entity to determine minimum graduation requirements.

The need for alternative assessment techniques is clear. For instance, some districts right now use local tests or assessment instruments to monitor student achievement. These tests are geared to assess student competence in what has been taught locally according to local T & E goals and objectives. It is possible that some students might score well on the local test but below the minimum proficiency level on the state test, or vice-versa. This would not mean that one test is harder or easier than the other, only that they go about testing the subject matters in a slightly different way or emphasize different things. For example, the state might think that every student has to know how to read a passage from the classics. The local district might feel reading a want ad for content is even more important.

We feel, therefore, that the local school district should be able to consider achievement on its instrument in determining whether a student demonstrates the required proficiencies for graduation. We also believe that a district should be able to consider a student's grade point average. Some students who study very hard and get reasonably good grades do poorly on tests that have to be completed in a short amount of time. We do not believe that a student should be penalized for this if he or she demonstrates competence otherwise.

Therefore, again, while we believe the state has a role in determining high school proficiency, the local district should set the standard for graduation.

The state's role should be limited to developing a minimum basic skills test, setting the minimum proficiency levels on the test, and monitoring the use of this test data at the local level and monitoring the adequacy of the local criteria for graduation.

Thus, whether students graduate or not is a matter best left to the local community with proficiency in the state test surely playing the part.

On the issue of mandated differentiated diplomas, the school administrators strongly believe that the use of the state minimum basic skills test to determine what type of diplomas the local district will grant is best left to the districts. We cannot support the granting of three different types of diplomas. We feel this will unnecessarily differentiate, stigmatize, and label students. It would be much better to make it permissive for the students to use different diplomas for failing to master minimum proficiencies and to have the level of proficiency as determined by the state test and other local criteria be part of the transcript or available upon request by a college or an employer.

This insures that the information is readily available but doesn't necessarily stigmatize a student forever. We have had many students who were quite poor achievers in high school, who after a few years, matured and then successfully entered our colleges and community colleges.

There are also a number of other substantive pupil impacts that requiring students to demonstrate a minimum level of competence on a statewide test will have. There are also some technical aspects of utilizing tests that we should look at.

First of all, we agree wholeheartedly that any testing for purposes of determining proficiency should be started as early in a student's career as possible, and there should be multiple opportunities to pass it. Ninth grade is the latest that assessment instruments should be given. This is because in these early years the tests can be used as diagnostic tools to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses.

The schools should then embark upon a program of remediation to alleviate any deficiencies a child is having in a subject area. However, we caution this Committee that the legislature must commit itself financially to remedying deficiencies in the basic skills if we are to be successful in having a system in New Jersey where just about every student can demonstrate competence in the basic skills. This testing program and remediation will be expensive for the state and localities to implement. If a stable financial commitment to back these programs is not present, local districts will be seriously handicapped in their efforts to achieve the goals of S-1154.

Another impact that you as legislators should know about is that there will be some students who, even on a variety of criteria, will be unable to demonstrate the required proficiencies and who will drop out of school as a result. This is contrary to our efforts in recent years to do everything possible to keep a child in school. As administrators, we believe that this would be an unfortunate result. Schools have been criticized recently for their efforts in doing everything possible to keep students in school, because certain students graduate without the basic skills. However, we want to point out that every year a student stays in school his verbal and mathematical skills grow a little, and he makes some progress. Again, we have no problem with including a student's proficiencies on his transcript so that employers and colleges know how well or poorly a student did in school. However, we still believe that students should stay in school as long as possible.

Another key area is the timelines for implementation. The bill currently envisions implementation in 1980-81 for students graduating in 1983-84. We feel that

the implementation date should be extended for at least one year. The reason for this is that T & E and compensatory education have not yet had a chance to work. This year for the first time the state developed a minimum basic skills test for four different grade levels. This year we have also completed the first year of monitoring under T & E. We want time to analyze our school programs and our efforts in compensatory education to determine what helps students achieve, what does not help, and what is the magnitude of the job to be done to teach the basic skills.

Implementation in three years would give the Legislature the information it needs in order to know the depth of the job that has to be done and to plan financial help for the districts. Our own districts need time to plan financially for the implementation of local assessment programs.

Also, it is very important that the minimum basic skills test and local instruments be relevant, that is, test competence in skills that are really basic and essential. It will take time to develop instruments and criteria on the local level to assess relevant skills.

Also, possibly the most explosive impact these statewide requirements might have, if Florida is to be a guide, is that there may be great disparities between the achievements of minorities and other students. Surely, part of the reason for this is that some of these minority children went to schools of much lower quality than other children. The net result will be that many of these children may not be able to meet the proficiency requirements. There is no question but that this will cause hostility and resentment at the local level and create many problems for the local districts. Many of these children can demonstrate proficiency in other ways than on standard paper and pencil tests. This is yet another reason why many alternatives should be available.

Another impact that could occur in New Jersey, particularly with tight budget CAPS, is that subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics will be neglected because most of the limited available resources will be targeted for the basic skills. We believe that this would not be in the best interests of children and the message from the Legislature and Department of Education should be clear that this should not happen.

A final technical problem concerns graduation standards for children classified as handicapped. For years the policy has been to mainstream these children instead of differentiating them and to believe that somehow they could achieve like the rest of the non-handicapped children. Special graduation standards for them will acknowledge that there are basic differences between classified and non-classified children and that in all probability they cannot achieve at the levels set for regular students. Also, there is a danger that because of different standards for classified children, many more children will be labeled learning disabled if it becomes apparent that they cannot meet the standards for pupils in the regular instructional program.

To summarize them, the administrators acknowledge and believe that there is a need for educating our pupils better in the basic skills and to have them demonstrate proficiencies in these skills upon graduation. Therefore, we support the inclusion of student proficiencies on minimum basic skills tests as part of the criteria that the local districts should use in determining high school graduation requirements. However, we want to emphasize that minimum proficiencies cannot be legislated statewide. It will be much more effective and meaningful if the districts set their own standards using the proficiency tests as a guide.

The administrators pointed out to you today some of the problems in using only one test instrument rather than many alternatives to determine proficiencies and in mandating different diplomas, not because we are naysayers, but because we want to have a system of minimum graduation standards that is realistic, workable and meaningful on the local level.

As school administrators, we stand ready to cooperate with the members of the Legislature in working toward such a system. Thank you again on behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators for permitting us to express our views.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Doctor. Are there any questions from members of our panel?

Thank you, Doctor. We will now recess for lunch. It is now one o'clock. We want to begin the afternoon session at one forty-five promptly.

(Whereupon a luncheon recess was taken.)

AFTERNOON SESSION:

SENATOR FELDMAN: Good afternoon. I would like to begin our afternoon session. Is Jaime Vasquez, representing the Puerto Rican Congress, here?

If not, as we renew our hearings, I call upon Dr. Crosby Copeland, Thomas Obrzut, and Dr. Glenn Grube. I believe they are working in concert with each other.

D R. C R O S B Y C O P E L A N D: I am Crosby Copeland, President Elect and Principal of Trenton Central High School and also President Elect of the New Jersey Association of Secondary School Principals and Supervisors. My colleagues and I are here to present a position statement on graduation requirements as outlined in Senate Bill Number 1154. We will make our presentations, and then will entertain questions.

Each year, thousands of students participate in graduation ceremonies throughout America. In recent years, the question "But what does graduation mean?" is being asked more and more frequently. Members of my generation are frequently heard to say "In my day the diploma meant something." It is our belief that the meaning of the diploma is the crux of the matter. To generations extending back to the early beginnings of America, education was an important symbol in the lives of parents and children. Education meant liberation from ignorance, from sweat shops, from farm labor, and from poverty. Education was considered a passport to success, to a higher social standing, and to the enrichment of the mind and spirit. Education really was something sought after by everyone. Today's youth hear more from their parents and the media about what is wrong with teachers, administrators, school boards, schools, grades, athletics, et cetera, than they do about the importance of education. Thus, in the minds of our young, educators and education is degraded. Excuses for poor performance on the part of the students have been accepted by society and now the profession is blamed for it.

What is really happening is that society has changed its expectations of education and now wants us to focus more on skill development and less on social development. Where new teachers in the fifties and the sixties were being trained to de-emphasize language usage skills, and concentrate more on developing interests in literature and understanding the language and developing the whole child, teachers must now be trained to teach the skills. Where the new math was to de-emphasize drill and emphasize understanding of processes, now the emphasis has returned to developing computational skills which must include drill.

The demands for the use of competency indicators, competency tests, graduation requirements, back to basics legislation, et cetera, is society's way of saying "Do something. We don't like the results of what you have been doing."

The New Jersey Association of Secondary School Principals and Supervisors accepts the fact that changes are needed in some areas, but we do not feel that legislation is the way to go. We feel that the mandates of T & E will go a long way towards addressing the problem of skill development, but the full fruits of our efforts will not be evident until the first graduates have come through the complete cycle of the T & E process.

We also believe that the work of the Department of Education Study Committees on Adolescent Education and High School Graduation will result in the adoption of policies by the State Board of Education which will further advance the cause of improving skill development on the part of all students in our schools.

I will now specifically address the issue of multiple certificates and diplomas as provided for in Senate Bill Number 1154. This legislation would award

diplomas or certificates upon graduation from high school to correspond with the varying achievement levels of high school students. Testing would begin in the ninth grade. All students who cannot pass the statewide testing will be awarded certificates of attendance. General and honors diplomas will be obtained by students whose performance meets test requirements or is outstanding.

Our major concerns with this aspect of the proposed legislation are the societal implications that it would have. We believe that the issuance of varied certificates and diplomas would be regressive in that such an action would restore all the evils of labeling, classifying, and segregating graduates which legislators and educators have fought to eliminate over the past twenty years. Can you imagine an employer even considering a student who received a certificate of attendance for employment in his business? This certificate would probably serve as a lifelong passport to the welfare rolls.

Our Association feels very strongly that there are better options to explore. These will be presented by Dr. Glenn Grube. We feel that this provision of S-1154 would have a negative effect upon graduates of New Jersey high schools and should not receive further consideration.

If one examines the results of recent testing for high school requirements - and I am going back to that popular state again, Florida - the implications of such testing are extremely disturbing. In spite of the recommendations from a panel appointed by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, which warned against the unfairness of these requirements, Florida moved ahead with the testing. The results of the 117 question test were as follows: The failure rate in Math for white students, 24%, for Hispanics 39%, and for Blacks, 77%; in communication skills, Whites, 3%, Hispanics, 7%, Blacks, 26%.

We hear that some minority students in Jacksonville, Florida, have gone to neighboring states, to Georgia, for example, to avoid the testing, or dropped out of school altogether. What will New Jersey do about the students who fail?

Our education system is charged with the responsibility of providing a thorough and efficient education. Why wait until the ninth grade to begin testing and implementation of remediation? Why can't we accept the basic skills test in grades three to six and also accept the locally developed tests in these early grades? Then we could give the student a chance for remediation all the way up to elementary and junior high school.

The NJASSP also recommends that an attendance requirement be included in S-1154. We cannot teach basic skills or provide remediation for students in need if they are not present on a continuous basis.

Mr. Thomas Obsut will be our next speaker.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I would like to clarify a point which Dr. Copeland made very vigorously. We cannot equate Florida with New Jersey. I believe this was very eloquently stated this morning by Mr. Gus Heningburg. The NAACP went to the courts in Florida against their testing program. They look upon this bill with favor. Florida's testing was in the twelfth grade, and there was no remediation. The student was lost. No one was trying to help the student. If he didn't pass, then he didn't graduate. What we are trying to do is a continuation of T & E. We are not in opposition or competing with T & E. This is dovetailing with T & E, an extension of T & E, and the first test is being given in the ninth grade, and then if there are any problems, he or she can have remediation. They will then take it again in the tenth grade to see if they can successfully pass basic skills - not calculus or algebra or intricate readings from Shakespeare - in order to read an employment contract and to be able

to sign their name. All of us were sad to read that 40% of our high school graduates cannot even pass a basic skills test on a college level.

What this bill is all about is having the graduate from Trenton High with the same pride as the graduate from Teaneck High School, or Newark, or Bernardsville. The diploma must mean something. I just don't want anyone to misconstrue the purpose of the bill. We are concerned about illiteracy; we are concerned about young people not being able to cope in a world where they need some basic skills. If we have a successful educational system for all these years, this would not be necessary. Some of us feel this change is necessary, and sometimes it is the fear of the unknown that is bothersome. Nobody wants to rock the boat when things are fine. But things are not fine, and we are all concerned about it.

I just wanted to respectfully shed some light on the purpose of this. We are not out to punish children or to stigmatize them. We want to help them, as you want to help them, and that is the purpose of the act.

SENATOR EWING: On page two did you say, you do feel legislation is the way to go, or you do not feel that legislation is the way to go?

DR. COPELAND: We do not feel legislation is the way to go.

SENATOR EWING: You did not say "not" in here.

DR. COPELAND: That is a typographical error.

SENATOR EWING: I thought I heard you say not. It makes a big difference.

DR. COPELAND: It sure does.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You may proceed.

THOMAS OBRUT: I am Thomas Obrut, Director of Guidance, North Brunswick Township High School. I would just like to list further concerns that we have.

One, the high school transcript is a far better identifier of a student's achievements and competencies than the diploma. Colleges and employers rarely ask to see a copy of a student's diploma, but are most interested in what the student's high school courses were, and how proficient the student was in these courses. The transcript most often contains rank, which is an exact designation of the student's standing in the graduating class.

Why does the Senate Education Committee single out high school graduation - why not the elementary diploma or the middle school diploma? We contend that you are not as concerned with these certificates because the student is assumed to be continuing on with education. In this day and age, should not that be the emphasis of our high school training - a transitional stage of more training which is certainly necessary in our highly technological society. I note that New Jersey industry requires the highest technical competence in the nation. Are we not giving the educationally marginal student the message that high school completion should terminate education? Is there something magical that will happen by conferring a special diploma or certificate? We contend not. Nothing more will be available or different.

The only effect the special diploma or attendance certificate would have is a punitive one. We have the means of honoring our high achieving students now. The most basic is class rank contained in the transcript which relates, within the measurement parameters established and explained by the district, how students stand in their graduating class, the Honor Society, honor rolls, the National Merit Organization, and even the state in its new financial aid program which gives certificates of merit to the "good" student.

We certainly support the proper use of testing. In North Brunswick we test with nationally standardized instruments at every grade level from 1st through the 12th grade. The State's attempt to bring all students to achieve to the upper limits of their capacities, such as the compensatory education program does, is totally supported by our organization and we encourage more of this type of help from the State. We do see problems with a state imposed basic standards test for graduation.

Statewide standards would have to be no higher than the low performing districts, and in the majority of districts these standards would provide little incentive to students.

The problem of affecting the curriculum by "teaching to the test" must be addressed. In fact, would it not make more sense to revise the curricular requirements for graduation on the State level, as the majority of districts have done on the local level?

Should not remediation be only a small part of the role of the high school but have more emphasis on the elementary levels and continued emphasis where needed in the high school? Is this all the knowledge that is important? What about life skills, career objectives and other competency requirements of adult life? Should not the high school place more emphasis on these areas?

There are other factors which are related to poor school achievement - attendance, lack of motivation, lack of direction, and poor self-concept, to name a few. These are complex areas that have their roots within the individual, the family, and society. We heartily endorse the State increasing the means for the schools to more effectively deal with these problems. We will welcome the funding and the increased personnel that would allow us to deal with these problems both in identification and remediation.

We encourage the State to set competency guidelines and would urge the inclusion of other equally important competencies besides the basic ones proposed, such as the measurement of work competency, consumer competencies, and citizenship competencies. These would not be tied to a punitive system of a special diploma but based on a state supported remediation system which will be forthcoming from the Commissioner and the State Board of Education, and developed locally.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Are there any questions?

SENATOR WEWING: Would you people back doing away with diplomas and just having a standardized transcript that would be issued to students?

MR. OBRZUT: I don't see any real harm in a situation like that, personally.

DR. GRUBE: The diploma does have, however, certain meanings, Senator Ewing, for the family, and it certainly has a meaning in terms of receiving it.

SENATOR EWING: Then the transcript would, too.

DR. GRUBE: The transcript has a far more---

SENATOR EWING: For a few years, it would be different, but then it would be accepted, and it would mean as much as the diploma did.

DR. GRUBE: I don't know that you would put a transcript up on your wall, though.

SENATOR EWING: If you were proud of it you would.

DR. GRUBE: Not necessarily.

SENATOR FELDMAN: If something was made meaningful--- Golfers have their trophies, and if something is meaningful to the individual, I think you would put it on the wall. I have a daughter who has a master's and she has her master's up in the kitchen.

DR. GRUBE: Not the transcript.

SENATOR FELDMAN: No.

SENATOR EWING: I have another question on that. Does every school in the state give diplomas at each one of those levels? You mentioned eighth grade and some others.

MR. OBRZUT: At the finishing of the elementary education.

SENATOR EWING: They all give diplomas there?

MR. OBRZUT: I couldn't say whether they all do or not, but they usually give a certificate of some kind.

SENATOR EWING: A certificate, but is it a diploma?

DR. COPELAND: Junior high school, yes.

SENATOR EWING: Before you go to senior high?

DR. COPELAND: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Would that be true in a K through 12 district?

DR. COPELAND: In 1946 Trenton High gave the diploma and it also attached a transcript. This just gives the course, the date of completion, and the grade received.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Do we promote because of social reasons or do we hold back students as was done perhaps 20 years ago or 30 years ago? Are you inclined to promote someone, even though he or she doesn't meet the standards, just to get them out of school?

DR. GRUBE: I think there would be a difference between the elementary and the secondary school levels.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, generally speaking.

DR. GRUBE: At the secondary level this would not be true, because students can be freshman, sophomore, whatever, in their fourth year, and they must attain, however, that 20 units for graduation. It can take them four years, five years, or six years in some instances.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, what about in elementary school?

DR. GRUBE: In the elementary school, I would say there is probably more retention than there would be on the high school level, because a student, as I say, can progress at his own pace, pretty much, through a high school situation.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. Grube.

D R. G L E N N G R U B E: My name is Dr. Glenn Grube, Principal of Bergenfield High School in Bergen County. You have just heard two members of the New Jersey Association of Secondary School Principals and Supervisors speak directly against a graduation test which would stand as a single barrier to a student's graduation and the receipt of a diploma and against a proliferation of different kinds of diplomas and certificates which might be awarded upon completion of four years of high school. The New York Regents Examination has not been successful in demanding quality education for all children. The Florida competency tests have been a farce. Oregon has had a disastrous affair with state testing for graduation, and Delaware wisely viewed what was happening in other states and abandoned a state mandated program before it got off the ground.

The State Board of Education in New Jersey wisely eliminated a number of years ago the multi-type diploma in this state and followed up in the early seventies with an equalization of credits for all approved subjects based on time in class. In essence, they eliminated any stigma of minor courses or less than academic programs.

The New Jersey Association of Secondary School Principals and Supervisors

and other educational associations and personnel in this State certainly agree that change has been needed. We have not assumed, however, that the overall quality of public education in New Jersey has been in a state of decline, but have assumed that the problem has been in a change in the demands in the schools from increasing rates of graduation to an emphasis upon raising the levels of achievement, especially in the basic skills area.

Working toward the improvement in learning requires a far more subtle and complex strategy than merely implementing statewide high school graduation tests or multi-types of diplomas. It means maintaining a close proximity between the classroom and the locus of decision making, between parents and policy makers. In some it means local control over curricular and standards of achievement, and it means a state strategy that protects and enhances the ability of local communities to shape their own educational policies. Indeed, it is in the interest of state government to promote and support good management locally, for state government cannot efficiently and effectively manage the public schools. Schools are fragile institutions. They require commitment and dedication. Education remains more an art than a science, and there is no single instructional prescription that can be shown to be best for all students.

Senator Ewing, as one of the sponsors of the bill which we oppose, you have in your hands - and you have had it for about a year now - a four-page summary of concerns which were prepared by the Graduation Requirements Committee related to the value of the diploma. Senator Feldman, as my Senator from Bergen County, you accepted an invitation to visit Bergenfield High School as part of a legislative day in the spring of 1977. We set out to have you recognize that the Bergenfield staff was working very hard to create the finest possible learning environment for our students. We hoped that you would be able to grasp the flavor of the kind of atmosphere which we believe contributes to the maturing of our young people into solid community leaders. I quote from a letter sent to me by you about our school, "Clean, well maintained, a decorum in the halls, a program meeting the needs of many students, happy faces on those I met My image of Bergenfield High was turned one hundred and eighty degrees."

May we suggest, Senators, that the kinds of achievement, the meeting of the needs of all students, and the quality of graduates that you hope to legislate already exists in many fine schools in this State. The pressures of a State test and differentiated diplomas will only serve to do what the CAPS have done, to legislate mediocrity and a loss of quality for many of these fine schools. Important curricular and extra-curricular programs will be eliminated in order to finance teaching to the test. Administrators will be overwhelmed with arguments as to who gets an honor's diploma, which will still have a different meaning for each district.

Furthermore, good schools exist because teachers are accountable for quality instruction. It is the administrators, principals, the directors and the department chairpersons jobs to be certain that a teacher is using the best possible classroom techniques, is creating an environment conducive to learning, and is working hard toward insuring that every student has the opportunity and is encouraged to learn to his or her fullest potential. A graduation test will only encourage poor or less than able teachers and administrators to strengthen their holds on classrooms and schools, because their "success" will be determined not by broad aspects of learning or happy faces or meeting needs, but by the testing results, regardless of how these results were obtained, with little concern about the environment which would produce these results, and with lessened ability of the

administrator to challenge poor practices as the test results might support a belief that good teaching had occurred.

May I divert just for a second? Please do not make the mistake of believing that simply because the students can pass the test that good teaching went on.

The more important factors in teaching are the personal and environmental in combination with pupil growth as measured by a variety of factors. To allow one factor, that of testing, to become critical to evaluation, graduation, and the type of diploma received will defeat the whole process of quality education, that of working with and developing the many diverse potentials in every child.

We thank you for listening to some of us who are providing quality educational experiences for our students. We strongly oppose the legislation of Senate Bill 1154, and recommend that this be tabled until the Commissioner makes his recommendations to the State Board of Education in August. The Adolescent Study Commission, the Graduation Requirements Committee, and the many review committees have worked very hard to provide some input upon which the State Board of Education can build. T & E can work in New Jersey, but not under the dictates of mandated graduation testing and differentiated diplomas. You should not believe that you can legislate quality education. You can only foster it by supporting and encouraging the very best environment and teaching techniques that are available. Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Glenn, I want to re-emphasize for the record what I said about the Bergenfield High School. It is unique, and it was refreshing to visit with you and your students. Perhaps if 611 school districts had high schools like Bergenfield, there wouldn't be a need for a bill such as this.

However, I want to correct an erroneous impression I may have left with you in my enthusiasm for Gus Heningburg's remarks, he representing the Urban Coalition. The NAACP has not endorsed S-1154. The NAACP is not against graduation standards per se. They are only against standards as developed in Florida. The Floridian standards they are against. They are not against the standards as announced in S-1154. But they have not come out publicly to say they are in favor of the entire bill. So, I wanted to correct that, in case I gave you the wrong impression.

DR. GRUBE: Certainly, the Graduation Requirements Committee and the Adolescent Study Commission have not been against standards established by local districts, and graduation curriculum requirements established by the State.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Are there any questions? Senator Ewing.

SENATOR EWING: Dr. Grube, you said on page three, with regard to the kinds of achievement, "...the meeting of the needs of all students and the quality of graduates that you hope to legislate already exists in many fine schools in this State." Well, what are they going to do in the ones they don't exist in?

DR. GRUBE: I would suggest that the way the Adolescent Study Commission started out was to look for model schools in the State of New Jersey. When you find these model schools, find out what they are doing. Find out the kinds of programs they are running that are good.

For example, you talked earlier about attendance. We can speak of schools with 94% and 95% attendance at the secondary school level. That is excellent. We can speak of schools where the cut rate, the cut as far as students being out of class when they are in school, is less than one cut per year per student. We can talk about other schools, perhaps, where the number of disciplinary infractions and suspensions are very, very limited. These are not in highly academic schools. We are not talking about those schools that are sending 90% and 95% on to college.

We are talking about the average school in the State of New Jersey. The secret would be, perhaps, to find these schools, locate them and find out what they are doing well, and put these things into practice.

SENATOR EWING: Don't you feel an awful lot of that is the relationship between the teacher and the administrators with the students?

DR. GRUBE: That is exactly what I have been saying throughout my entire statement. It is that relationship that Senator Feldman saw when he came to Bergenfield High School, as an example.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but you are not going to be able to necessarily place that in every school district, because every human is different.

DR. GRUBE: You've got to believe that you can. That is what we are all about. You've got to believe that, and you can't legislate that.

SENATOR EWING: That is what Bobby Littell said in the Assembly one night, you've got to believe.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I know a few ministers who say that same thing.

SENATOR DUMONT: I believe in Mr. Grube. He came from Phillipsburg. (Laughter)

SENATOR FELDMAN: You did mention the New Jersey State Committee on High School Graduation. I remember in the recesses of my mind they came to a conclusion, and they concluded that there is a legitimate cause for concern about our high school graduation requirements.

DR. GRUBE: That is correct. And what they did about it, as a member of that Committee, which I was, was make a suggestion that the State increase from six to thirteen the number of required subjects. They also indicated that the basic skills testing in the grades three, six, nine and eleven is most acceptable when used for diagnostic purposes for remediation, and they went on to express that each school district should be asked or encouraged by the State to provide for competency testing in three other areas, work and consumption skills, citizenship, and one other area.

SENATOR FELDMAN: One of the reasons I decided to sponsor this legislation was I felt that it was unfair to the students who have a right to a decent education to find themselves the real victims of great inflation, social promotion and social graduation. They have worked; they have tried to achieve. That diploma means something to them, and yet as they look around, the diploma really is meaningless in some instances. Do you agree with that?

DR. GRUBE: I would imagine that would have to be true, but, on the other hand, I am sure that in those good schools that, at least, there are a few in the State, there are probably students who cannot pass a state graduation test. But they will be tremendously skilled people in their respective field, whatever that field may be.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Are there any further questions? I was just looking for that one quote from the New Jersey Committee, and I quote, "It is noteworthy that representatives of school districts most likely to be affected by proficiency testing are the most supportive of such standards for graduation." Now, this quote is from your Committee. They are talking about the poorer districts.

DR. GRUBE: And turning it around, perhaps the districts who are already doing the super jobs, or the very good jobs, and the good jobs are the ones that are most concerned about being hurt by this, because your minimum, as stated just before, may well become your maximum. That is what we are most concerned about.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but don't you think educators as a whole would not let it go down that far? Why would they let that become their maximum?

DR. GRUBE: Because you begin to teach to the test, Senator Ewing.

SENATOR EWING: They don't have enough pride in their profession, then.

DR. GRUBE: You will begin to teach to the test simply because that is what you are going to be measured by. That is the problem in the State of New York right now with the Regents. That is all that happens. At the beginning of the year they hand out some examinations, and they say, this is what we are going to prepare for; we are going to take them in June.

SENATOR FELDMAN: We have no further questions. We thank you for your time and effort and input.

SENATOR EWING: That was a very good presentation.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Leila Sadat, President of the New Jersey Student Association.

L E I L A S A D A T: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am Leila Sadat, President of the New Jersey Student Association. The New Jersey Student Association represents 70,000 students in New Jersey's state colleges and university. We are appreciative of this opportunity to appear before you today to present this brief statement on Senate Bill 1154.

Data on basic skills achievement levels of high school graduates across New Jersey and the United States is both devastating and frustrating. The New York Times reports that employers are finding more and more graduates of the nation's high schools unable to handle the basic writing and calculating skills necessary for entry level jobs. Scholastic aptitude test scores have been steadily declining for a decade. A federally funded study has estimated that thirteen percent of the nation's seventeen year old population is functionally illiterate.

But why is the New Jersey Student Association, a college representative organization, noting all of this information? Our concern is the student attending New Jersey's higher education institutions. We are concerned with the impact of this trend on a student's academic opportunities.

In a study of Temple University sophomores, a literacy test found one-third of the students unable to write on a freshman level. Finally, and most devastating, are the results of New Jersey's first college level basic skills test. The examination showed students to be seriously deficient in mathematics ability, and in addition, only about fifty-six percent of the students were able to answer any given question correctly.

New Jersey has an honorable tradition of offering higher education to all New Jerseyans irrelevant of their economic ability and social status. We laud this and hope to see this tradition continue. The New Jersey Student Association is committed to the support of the minority and economically disadvantaged student. We hope that the opportunities to fulfill graduation requirements will be made available to the student.

The NJSA feels that trends in skills deficient students will cause New Jersey's public higher education institutions to lower their quality and options. Present estimates predict that over twenty percent of next year's freshman class in New Jersey will require basic skills tutoring. Who will supply this tutoring? College faculty will be drawn upon to teach basic skills tutorials and classes. We are not speaking of a small number of teachers or classes here. We are dealing with at least one out of every five students in our higher education system.

S-1154 by Senator Feldman will require high schools to examine and pass their students in the basic skills before awarding recognized diplomas. We feel that this bill is an excellent effort toward the resolution of a sorry situation. We support the concept of a statewide examination. If a high school diploma is

to be the means by which students apply to and enter colleges and universities, it is essential that it carry a recognized value. In addition, we oppose local testing as a means of solving this problem. A statewide standard will ensure a true evaluation of a student's ability in the basic skills.

Only if elementary and secondary schools begin to carry the burden of educating their graduates in the skills necessary to compete on a college level will colleges and universities be able to offer wide varieties of courses and programs. If faculty is spending time and the state's money teaching basic calculation and reading and writing skills, who will teach literature, the sciences, the social sciences and all the subjects and programs which make a school indeed an institution of higher learning?

The New Jersey Student Association asks this Committee to report S-1154 and urge its adoption by the Legislature. Following this adoption, we urge the enforcement of the provisions of this noteworthy piece of legislation. Only if enforcement is real will the results be positive. Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I have no questions.

SENATORE EWING: I do. Did your mother help you write that?

MS. SADAT: No. I am the Executive Director.

SENATOR EWING: What do you think of three different diplomas?

MS. SADAT: Well, when I look back at my average in high school, I wonder.

SENATOR EWING: But you are an exception. What do you think the other students would think about it, then?

MS. SADAT: I think, again, it depends on whether the remedial work and the preparation is enforced. If they turn out to be three real diplomas, and if the preparation for those diplomas is adequate, I think they are fair, and we would support the bill.

SENATOR EWING: What year are you now?

MS. SADAT: I am a junior.

SENATOR EWING: When you talk to friends of yours who have been out for a year or two, have they used their diploma when going to get a job at all? What did the diploma really mean?

MS. SADAT: The high school diploma?

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

MS. SADAT: Well, it is very difficult to get a job without a high school diploma.

SENATOR EWING: You mean companies will not even test you? Mr. Yates says that in his multi-national corporation they don't even know whether people have diplomas.

SENATOR YATES: Some of our people can't even speak English.

SENATOR EWING: You really think the diploma is necessary, then?

MS. SADAT: Well, yes.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You came here this afternoon as the President of the New Jersey Student Association, not as the daughter of Mrs. Deena Sadat. This is the important thing.

MS. SADAT: Thank you.

SENATOR DUMONT: Where do you go to school?

MS. SADAT: Douglass College.

SENATOR DUMONT: Where did you go to secondary school?

MS. SADAT: Montgomery High School.

SENATOR EWING: Somerset County.

SENATOR DUMONT: I am familiar with it. It is right near the borderline with Mercer.

SENATOR EWING: That's all right, it is in Somerset.

SENATOR DUMONT: Was there any statewide testing going on when you were in high school?

MS. SADAT: I didn't take any test.

SENATOR EWING: By and large, don't quite a few go on to college from that high school?

MS. SADAT: Yes, from Montgomery, especially.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I am pleased that you have the sensitivity for students going to school in the inner city. That is very important. This has surfaced in your remarks.

MS. SADAT: We hope, as we said, that you support also the enforcement so that minority and disadvantaged students will receive the full benefit.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you. Mr. William Pascrell representing the Board of Education of Paterson.

W I L L I A M J. P A S C R E L L, JR.: Mr. Chairman, my name is Bill Pascrell. I am a member of the Paterson Board of Education. I am also Director of Policy Planning for Mayor Kramer and the City of Paterson. I mention that latter point for a very specific reason, the point being that it is about time the State did become involved, and government did become involved in the process of education in the State. For too long, I think, we have been laboring under the assumption that government had no business in education. I disagree with that assumption, and I feel that is primarily the reason why we have the problems we do. With that in mind, if I may, I would like to begin. I hope my statement has been presented to you.

I begin with a military aphorism, "In order to make an omlet, you have to break some eggs." Unfortunately what I have heard today from the NJEA and the NJSBA, and the NJSA, and the NJSSA, they have chosen not to rock the boat, and I think their statements can be summarized in the last page of Mr. Schwartz' statement representing the New Jersey School Boards Association when he said, "Let us not be quick to jump on a bandwagon. Let's see where it is going first. I think that the leadership is lacking, and I think you are absolutely correct, Senator, in your statement of this morning when you said, "Where are we going with this thing." The situation is not going to correct itself. From the mouths of babes, though, we have just heard, they shall lead us, probably, I don't know. (Laughter)

In his book, The Second American Revolution, which was published in 1966, H. Wentworth Eldredge describes the quality of education in the United States with the following words, "Johnny, with some glorious exceptions, can't read, can't write, can't figure, doesn't know geography or history, and doesn't want to, for such is the central educational climate that reigns in the mass city systems with few exceptions, and the suburban togetherness institutions also with few exceptions." In the next thirteen pages of that book, the author goes on to identify with unusual precision the essence of the consumer fraud charges that have been leveled at education over the past twelve years.

Educational egalitarianism, in the name of equal opportunity - and we have heard so much of that in the past three hours- is the belief that everyone coming into that classroom outside of his human dignity is equal. We are different

in our talents; we are different in our abilities. Educational egalitarianism, cost deficiency, the elective fetish which has taken hold over the last ten years, the edifice complexes which are more important at board meetings than basically what goes on in the classroom, life adjustment theories, what will ever happen, if he does flunk, God forbid, but let him go out into the world not being able to put a sentence together, Hosanna, were just a few of the maladies which prompted Eldredge to recommend national academic standards for all grade levels, with a graded system of grants that would entice states and local districts to lift local standards. Local autonomy would be preserved only through success which could be measured in such areas as computational skills, reading and writing. This whole process would be overseen by a Department of Education and Science, complete with national exams and subsidies to local education authorities, and run by the keenest products of our leading universities.

Perhaps Mr. Eldredge was a bit ahead of his time. He was certainly no big brother advocate, as none of us are in this room, but Eldredge, like Conant, like Rickover, gives us food for thought particularly in our study of graduation standards. I have read S-1154 very carefully. In view of the in-depth study of the matter by the Lewis Commission, I would suggest the following priorities or agenda: First, the State should increase the mandated curriculum requirements for graduation. We truly have gone beyond the two year's history, four years gym and health requirements. I agree with the Lewis report that we legislatively add to the mandate, four years of English, two years of math, one year of science, and then, secondly, the State begin the process of establishing minimum standards in each of the areas and that these be applied universally throughout the State of New Jersey with the methods of implementation being optional among the local districts.

Section 3a, b, and c of S-1154 lends itself to solving of the egalitarian problem in public education today. That is the section that deals specifically with the differential diplomas. Each of us is different. We learn differently. Each of us can learn just so much. The levels of expectations and achievements are not anti-democratic, but rather reflect our honest look at the hodgepodge within New Jersey's educational mess today.

I interpret S-1154 to mean put politics aside, which will be very difficult for you gentlemen and ladies to deal with, over the next six months in dealing with this particular legislation. You are sitting on a time bomb here, because it not only affects the student standards, it affects the very question of accountability that we are struggling with in the State of New Jersey, as well as across the land. Now, you are either going to face it, or you are going to back off and deal continuously with guns and circuses down the road.

We in New Jersey wish to create minimum proficiency as a prerequisite for a high school diploma or a certificate. That standing must be created by the State Department of Education, and must be monitored by the State Department of Education, and it must be enforced by the State Department of Education. It is totally ridiculous in this day and age that as of September, 1977, only one State in the union, Arizona, required proficiency in at least a ninth grade ability to read, write and compute. I might add, I would ask you gentlemen and ladies of the Committee to please examine the testimony that was presented here today by NJEA, the New Jersey School Boards Association, and the New Jersey Secondary School Principals and Supervisors Association in terms of which states are using what

kinds of prerequisites for a diploma. Much of that testimony is inaccurate. It is excerpted; it is taken out of context, and I ask you, I implore you to please examine it. It is interesting that they took, when they did respond to the areas which do require certain standards, only the problems; they did not speak of the achievements. Arizona is one state in particular, and the city of Denver is another specific place where proficiency has been tried, standards have been set, and they are working. In 1976, in the city of Denver, the amount of people who were not meeting standards in the ninth grade was less than three or four percent, and they had tried this over a three or four year period. The State of Arizona is the only state, really which requires proficiency on the ninth grade level. I ask you to examine those states which are also considering this, including the State of Delaware, which, by 1981, to correct the gentleman again, will have a state test to reflect proficiency in reading and computation.

If and only when a state standard is promulgated will the public be able to hold the teaching profession accountable. To take the edge off that term "accountability" I suggest the teaching profession have equal input into the establishment of the standards by which they and their students will be judged. High school graduation requirements will push teaching towards its proper end. It will become subject grounded rather than techniques oriented.

Educational quality and the pursuit of excellence can only be achieved in an atmosphere where talent is respected, where it is recognized, where it is encouraged. Now, talent is frequently handicapped, personified in many of Kurt Vonnegut's novels where those who have the talent are dragged down with some handicap in order to be equal with everybody else. That is a sad day. You have heard it today yourselves - "what if, what if." Alfred North Whitehead said over sixty years ago, "In the conditions of modern life, the rule is absolute, the race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed. Not all your heroism, not all your social charm can move back the finger of fate. Today we maintain ourselves; tomorrow science will have moved forward yet one more step, and there will be no appeal from the judgement which will then be pronounced on the uneducated."

To the teacher organizations who are so uptight about the establishment of statewide performance standards in reading, writing and mathematical tasks, let me quote an award winning teacher from, of all places, Pinellas County, Florida, who was fed up with their fellow teachers being constantly shielded from criticism concerning student performance, and she wrote this, "We should be conscious of our teaching skills and demand of ourselves a high degree of excellence . . . I am not excusing any type of inadequate or careless teaching. It is the teachers who must guide the children into knowledge by using every creative skill they can muster, not accepting defeat. . . A positive approach, coupled with competency will not produce children who fail to learn and learn to fail."

In January of 1978, Mr. Chairman, the Paterson school system passed a resolution, and in that resolution commencing with June of 1980 we had directed the Superintendent of our school system, Frank Napier, to certify for graduation only those students who have reached a specific grade level in the basic subjects required for graduation. We think that the State should make a beginning. We think that you are on the right track. I believe that S-1154, while certainly not the best piece of legislation that any of us have probably ever put together, is an excellent attempt to deal with a very critical problem. What disturbs me is that in listening to the testimony this morning - and I don't mean to be critical,

because I think everything has been presented in good faith - I am extremely concerned. Looking at three of the statements, and looking back at the Florida testing situation, there is reference made, not obliquely, but directly, to the question of minority students. I think, Senator, you hit the nail on the head this morning - we are not doing justice to any student in this State unless we have a standard by which ability and achievement is measured. We stand behind it; we monitor it; and we make sure it is enforced.

I think that the New Jersey Education Association statement is shocking, when they ask, "What skills are so important to the state so as to coerce children into learning them?" I think that is a shocking, shocking statement. That is very shocking. Think about it. We are talking about survival in the City of Paterson where one-sixth of the juniors and seniors drop out of school and don't even go on to graduation. We are dealing with young people, young men and young women who are going to have to learn to survive. If they cannot read, we have not done them a service. We cannot blame it on television; we cannot blame it on the parents. They are all factors, true, but when the child is in the school system, we have a specific obligation.

I support this legislation, and I hope it passes very rapidly. I agree with the young lady, thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Mr. Pascrell, just a personal question. Are you an educator; are you an administrator?

MR. PASCRELL: I taught in the public school system for twelve years, and four years ago I became an aide to Mayor Kramer, and I hope for the next four years will continue in that capacity.

My latest kamikaze mission was going on the Board of Education eight months ago, which I cherish. I take that responsibility very seriously.

SENATOR DUMONT: How much of your school budget is provided in the City of Paterson in the form of State aid?

MR. PASCRELL: The budget is \$50 million, which is \$6 million above the entire city budget, and I believe that percentage-wise State aid is close to 75%.

SENATOR DUMONT: Do you have an elected or an appointed board?

MR. PASCRELL: We have an appointed board, Senator. The board is appointed by the Mayor of the City of Paterson. They serve three years.

SENATOR DUMONT: Does he make that appointment solely, or does it require confirmation by the City Council?

MR. PASCRELL: Those appointments to the Board of Education do not require Council approval.

SENATOR FELDMAN: There is no advice and consent.

MR. PASCRELL: Not on that one. Everything else, the directors of departments, yes, but not the Board of Education. I think this is one of the criticisms, one of the things that Mayor Kramer has attempted to deal with - what is the delicate line that separates City Hall from the Board of Education and educational matters. You are damned if you do and damned if you don't. You have heard yourself--- So many things have been hidden behind that argument of local control. What exactly does that mean? You don't talk about local control when you go to Trenton with your hand out, or you go to Washington. I think you have an obligation to get involved with this educational situation. We are serious about it in Paterson. We are very serious about it. And, we support your efforts.

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SENATOR DUMONT: Do you think you would feel the same way - and I understand your situation because I was born there - if you were providing half or more than half of the total cost of operating the school system in Paterson?

MR. PASCRELL: I don't really think - if you are asking me directly, and I assume you are doing that - so, no. I would answer that question, no. I think that the city, the county, which provide facilities in the area of vocational-technical, and the State have specific obligations. We are hung up with that idea.

Europe has a system, and in many countries that system works. There is a proviso for different kinds of abilities and different kinds of talents, yes, it is a tracking system, and, yes, it is ability grouping, but it is done in a dignified manner. No one is slighted. In fact, people are then able to work within their expectations. In the system as it exists right now, the student doesn't know what is expected of him, the teacher doesn't know what is expected of him, and that is where we are going. That is where we are heading. I wonder where we will go at the end of three or four years of T & E. I wonder.

SENATOR DUMONT: Do you have a nine-member board?

MR. PASCRELL: We have a nine-member board, sir.

SENATOR DUMONT: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you very much, sir. The next witness is Doctor Mellander, President of Passaic County College.

G U S T A V O A. M E L L A N D E R: First of all, I wish to congratulate the sponsors of this bill. It is most assuredly a step in the right direction. I want to thank you for allowing me to speak this afternoon, as well as the other citizens who have come here all day long. This bill puts the issue on the table, and it puts everybody, teachers, administrators, and citizens in general an opportunity to comment on this.

I would submit, however, that the bill does not go far enough. I think we need minimum statewide standards, and we need them for every grade along the way from the first grade through to the twelfth, and, indeed, during the college years as well. We must draw the line and we must hold the line.

I sit here today in my capacity as President of a Community College, and I can't believe that the experience of Passaic County Community College is that different from most other colleges in this State.

At present, as you well know, twenty percent, twenty-five percent, and even thirty percent of the students who come to us, not just at our college, but at other colleges, that many students have serious remedial problems. Many of them cannot read, cannot write and cannot compute even at the tenth grade level, and yet they all hold freshly minted New Jersey high school diplomas.

I would submit that their parents have been misled. They are not high school graduates. They have not acquired the basic skills that they need to survive in our highly technological age. They come to us horribly crippled. State colleges then spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, to teach these students what they should have learned in grade schools and in high schools.

I think there is only one word to describe our public schools, and that word is shocking. I don't say that to be discouraging, but I think it is shocking when twenty and thirty percent of the high school graduates, who are the best of the high school graduates, those who have decided to go on to college, have grave deficiencies. I think the system has serious problems which we must address.

I would ask the Committee to strengthen its proposal to help eliminate such public waste. We are wasting millions of dollars, but more importantly we are wasting the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people, young people who may well be crippled for all of their lives because of their lack of basic skills. A person who does not master the basic skills is doomed to a life of failure and frustration. I call the basic skills the survival skills because one needs them to survive and to reach their full potential.

How do we turn this around? I suggest we have minimum statewide standards along each step of the way in the first grade on through college. For example, a child should not be promoted to the third grade unless he or she has mastered the skills and knowledge we expect of a second grader, and so forth, and so on, and so on. I think we should have tests each and every year. It is as simple as that. We draw the line and we hold the line. We must eliminate social promotion, which, in spite of what others have said today, is still widespread in this State. We must eliminate counterfeit diplomas. I don't believe we should promote students willy-nilly through grade school. We should test them every year. We should identify the problems that those students are having and then, of course, establish the necessary remedial programs to help those who have fallen behind. I am afraid if you wait until ninth grade that is a little bit too late. I am worried about the students who have not been served during the elementary years. I feel elementary education is very important. They are perhaps the most important learning years of all. I have gone so far to suggest publicly time and time again that perhaps we should spend more money in elementary schools, even if we have to refuse the amount of money we spend in higher education. I need not tell you that has not made me very popular among some of my colleagues in higher education. I think our budgets may be topsy-turvey. I am not suggesting, however, that we simply pour more money into the existing system. Obviously I am suggesting that there be a reformed new system before we channel more money into it.

I would like to say a word or two about Denver. In 1960, eighteen years ago, four hundred businessmen in Denver were so concerned over the inadequate basic skills of high school graduates that they organized a study of the program. Denver now has a program, as I am sure you know, in which they test children in the third grade, sixth grade, ninth grade, and twelfth grade. They try to catch the problems early on, and provide remedial work in the fourth and fifth grade for those who had problems in the third grade. So by the time they get to be seniors, very few students do poorly. Two years ago, only 1.5% of all seniors did not fulfill the competency requirements for seniors. The system has worked in other states, and Denver, Colorado, is a good example. Long before back to basics was popular, Denver was improving their educational system.

I always have difficulty recognizing myself when I read about myself in the newspapers. I was introduced as a representative from the Hickory Board of Education, which took me a few days to figure out. So, let me tell you what I am not saying. I am not saying we should go back to the days of David Copperfield. I am not saying that children should be beaten, as I have been accused of saying. I am not saying that we should have inhuman or inhumane school settings. I am not suggesting that we systematize education to the point where schools become little more than cookie factories spewing out robots. I am not suggesting that. All I want is for children to be able to read and write. All I want is, when a person gets a high school diploma, as Senator Feldman said, it means something, and

that it means something significant. I want that. Although I am only forty-three years old, I know that those who work hard, and those who are educated are the only ones that have a chance in our world. Let's not cripple our children any longer. Thank you.

SENATOR DUMONT: You say that in Denver tests have been given since 1960 to the third, sixth and ninth and twelfth grades. Now they are being given in New Jersey in third, sixth, ninth and eleventh grades, but only for the past couple of years. What basically, then, is your difference. You have given Denver eighteen years to determine whether or not those tests are working out. In New Jersey they have only been going on for a year or so.

DR. MELLANDER: I guess I am so disappointed and disturbed with what we have heard already that I don't have much confidence in the validity or the usefulness of those tests. I think you have to cap it with a graduation examination, which we do not have in New Jersey.

My point in mentioning Denver is to show that other states have, I think, succeeded in facing up to the basic skills problem. There is nothing magical or nothing impossible about this problem, as some would lead us to believe. We all know what we expect. When we say the third level, we know what a third level means.

I think also, interestingly enough, in Denver they didn't ask for a lot of money to set up their exams. They simply bought standardized tests and gave them to the children. I don't think we have to re-invent the wheel.

SENATOR DUMONT: Are you spending a lot of money in your community college to remediate, if that is the right word, the students who come from the high schools?

DR. MELLANDER: Yes, an enormous amount. One third of our students are in what we call the learning center, and those are students who performed below the test grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics. Once they have raised the skills above the tenth grade, they will let them start in the regular college level courses. There have been fully one-third of our students in that category.

SENATOR DUMONT: How long does it take them to get them on the level that you want them?

DR. MELLANDER: We have had some dramatically successful stories, and some great failures as well. It is very difficult. It is very expensive, and there is a lot of tutorial, one-to-one, teaching. Some students do improve two years or three in one semester, others do not. It is not easy; it is very expensive, and it is rather late in the student's life. That is why I tend to believe so strongly that it might be wiser to spend more money or place more emphasis on elementary education.

SENATOR DUMONT: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDMAN: If there are no further comments, we want to thank you very much for sitting and waiting for your turn to testify. We appreciate your input.

Robert Woodford, Vice President, New Jersey Business and Industry Association.

ROBERT WOODFORD: You have had a long day, I know, and you have heard just about every aspect of this question covered, and I am going to therefore be very brief, and I won't refer much to the speech that is being placed before you.

I am Vice President of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association. We have a committee of educators and businessmen that provides its educational

policies for the 13,000 member businesses. The question of high school graduation standards and questions of minimum standards and the entire T & E process has been a matter of great interest in which we have involved ourselves.

To be very brief, we support the concept of Senate 1154 with some reservations on the particulars. We do support the requirement of State basic standards in the minimum skills as a graduation requirement. We do so against the background of what has already been done in New Jersey, that is, we have a testing program, we have state standards, we have requirements that school districts respond to the deficiencies of students in meeting those standards, and we also have an obligation of the State Department of Education to monitor and oversee the implementation of those things. Having taken those steps, we think that it is necessary to know that there is some substance to the high school degree.

We would, however, limit state standards and degree requirements to the basic skills, computation and communication skills. We would provide an option in the Commissioner of Education to extend the deadline provided in this bill for certain districts who have problems of a much greater magnitude than the average districts. Some districts have problems simply because so many students fall below the standard and may require more time than is provided in the bill. We say this, however, recognizing that the Commissioner has the responsibility to oversee the development of remedial efforts in those districts under the present state standards, and we assume that job will be done effectively.

We do not agree with the idea of the three different degrees, the completion certificate, the diploma, and the diploma with honors largely because we see the completion certificate as possibly a means of pushing out the student who may be willing to continue toward the basic standards. This is a means of saying, here it is, and that is the end of your educational experience, partly because this is, in some respects, the shell of the old social promotion policy - we hand you something; our job is done. As an alternative to the diploma it would certainly not have in any way the effect of opening doors for the student. It would not signify anything in particular other than the logging of years in the school system. Therefore we would urge that we stay with the single diploma, perhaps with an option, on the part of the local school districts if they wish, to award a diploma with recognition for honor's performance. But at the state level, we would limit to the basic skills and the state standards.

The bill does call for guidelines for localities. We do not disagree with that. These guidelines, we think, should not take the form of specific state standards in other subject areas at this time.

In our opinion, the diploma that is awarded today provides greater inequity for the students who have not reached minimum standards than the denial of a diploma under this bill. The option is always open for the student to pursue a high school degree or equivalency certificate. The present day diploma, when awarded to a student who has not attained the minimum basic skills, has robbed that student or has given that student certification when that student has in effect not come out of school with the minimum essentials necessary for personal success and success in the economy. There are exceptions. We heard of the salad maker in some fine Somerset restaurant. There can be many exceptions. That doesn't mean that an individual is totally defeated when he does not receive this diploma, but in a system in which the diploma is awarded without success, without sufficient work, unfortunately we provide no incentive for the student to meet the requirements of the educational minimum that the society expects. And, we wouldn't pretend that

this is a cut and dried subject in which there are not two sides to the issue. There isn't any decision made in government or individually in which something isn't surrendered for what is gained. But with the present minimum skills testing, the basic skills testing, the standards that the state has, and the system of T & E that we have, the time has come for setting these basics into the laws and requirements for the diploma.

I don't want to take any more of your time, unless you have questions.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I would just like to clarify something. If one does not pass the minimal standards as prescribed by the State of New Jersey, and that individual then is entitled to, and given remediation over four years, what if he still doesn't pass the basics? Should that individual be given a high school graduation diploma?

MR. WOODFORD: As I read the bill, they would not receive it.

SENATOR FELDMAN: No, in your opinion. Do you agree?

MR. WOODFORD: With the exception of those who do not have the capability, those who are classified students who should be dealt with separately, I think that the diploma ought to signify that a certain level of achievement in these basics, which are really the building blocks for learning throughout that student's life, have been attained satisfactorily.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Are there any questions? If not, I want to thank you very much, for participating.

This will close the hearings for today, unless there is someone here who wishes to comment who is not on the agenda. I want to thank all the witnesses and the spectators who are here for being in attendance and for participating in a bill that might very well shape the future in some manner of education in New Jersey. This will close our hearings, and the Education Committee will meet during the recess to deliberate on this, as well as other bills which have come before us. Thank you.

(Hearing concluded)

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Statement for presentation at a public hearing on June 20, 1978 before the Education Committee of the New Jersey Senate on S-1154 by Frank K. Totten, president of the New Jersey Education Association.

I am Frank Totten, president of the New Jersey Education Association, an organization that represents over 100,000 teachers, college faculty and other school and college employees directly concerned with improved education. With me is Dolores Corona, associate director of NJEA Government Relations.

In today's complex world, there are many concerns about the education of our young people. There should be, for these young people who attend our public schools today are the people who will occupy your seat and mine tomorrow. The concern that the schools of New Jersey provide all their students maximum opportunities to develop proficiency in basic academic skills and other skills needed in everyday life is one which is shared by teachers throughout our state. The truth is, Mr. Chairman, that teacher concern for student learning is the basis for NJEA's testimony before you this morning.

A movement to require minimum competencies for graduation has made gains in the past few years. The companion idea of a test for high school graduation has gathered support, also. However well-meaning, the imposition of statewide standards of graduation on local school districts and statewide assessment tests on students can only lead to serious problems affecting the lives of children. In a report, Improving Educational Achievements, made public on March 2, 1978 by Joseph Califano, secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, appeared this warning -- "any setting of statewide minimum competency standards for awarding the high school diploma -- however understandable the public clamor which has produced the current movement and expectation --

is basically unworkable, exceeds the present measurement arts of the teaching profession and will create more social problems than it can conceivably solve. The report further states, "If social policy increases the social trauma associated with educational sorting devices by increasing the stigmas of scholastic failure, more is at stake for the society at large than the elevation of average standards."

The New Jersey Education Association shares the thoughts expressed in those words. In our testimony this morning on S-1154 we will attempt to detail for you our reasons for opposing the bill, our observations of the real needs of our students, and our suggestions for working together with you, as legislators and parents, for the continuing benefit of our public school students.

Mr. Chairman, the New Jersey Education Association has always endorsed standards and values the local district's educational obligation to establish minimum standards for those students being graduated from New Jersey schools.

The T&E provisions in the Administrative Code already require that the district board of education, after consultation with the chief school administrator and teaching staff members, establish reasonable pupil minimum proficiency levels in the basic communication and computational skills. What we strongly object to in S-1154 is the imposition of statewide standards and statewide assessment tests for the purpose of determining who gets a diploma. We believe that the responsibility of developing standards and administering assessment should be local district prerogative with state oversight. We respect the local control of the schools and the desire of a community to set its own educational standards. Curriculum in our schools must reflect the diverse needs of children and the communities in which these children reside.

The introduction of differentiated diplomas as outlined in S-1154 gives us concern, also. As you, we want our high school students to be properly prepared for life, but limiting the number of students who receive a diploma merely describes a problem and doesn't solve it. Our goal must be to have as many

children as possible receive that diploma and we must do that by providing the best education for them.

So that the record is straight, the NJEA believes there is a place for tests. The major use of tests should be to diagnose learning difficulties enabling the teacher to plan activities in response to those learning needs. Tests must not be used in any way to label and classify students, to determine educational programs or to perpetuate an elitism.

It's been no secret that NJEA has been on record in opposition to statewide testing for a long time. Our rationale has been unswerving. Statewide tests (1) don't do what they purport to do, (2) seldom correspond to any significant degree to local learning objectives, (3) do not measure growth over a short period of time, (4) often compel schools to jump to unwarranted changes in curriculum, and (5) may be used to justify plans for tracking students into career decisions.

Back in 1976 when the current law on statewide minimum standards was being deliberated by the Legislature, the NJEA showed great concern over the issue. We feared then that the adoption of a statewide policy on standards would lead to the use of a single test to determine whether the child had met those standards. Comprehensive evaluation of children is an essential ingredient in educating children. We testified then that a single instrument of evaluation would place a burden and blame upon our urban children through an identification process that would actually exaggerate social separatism and diminish the state's efforts toward improved learning.

Two years have passed and our concerns have been confirmed. Although the Code provides that the statewide test is not to be the only instrument in evaluating students for compensatory education, the truth of the matter is that in many cases it is. There is not monitoring or specific guarantees that comprehensive assessment techniques are being used locally to "validate" that the student really needs remedial help. Children who don't need remediation

have "failed" the statewide test -- children who do need it have "passed" the test. Those districts that need the comprehensive evaluation the most can least afford to supply the child study teams to evaluate. And so we ask, just what have we accomplished in providing a statewide program of testing? Have we increased learning? Would the situation not have been better if assessment and evaluation were left completely to the local district where the student is known as an individual and not a statistical element in a state computer printout, where children would be examined on the curriculum being taught in the schools of that local district and where the money now spent on the statewide testing program might be put to more meaningful use?

The New Jersey Education Association is currently surveying teachers throughout the state on their reactions to the April 1978 State Basic Skills Tests. At this time we have made a preliminary finding of approximately three hundred returns to our survey questions and comment areas. We have found few positive replies. Here is what we are hearing from the practitioner in the classroom:

"I realized the test evaluated minimum basic standards, but, really, much of it was so minimum the pupils were almost insulted."

"Many of the reading passages were followed by questions that could be interpreted in several ways."

"Tests were uneven. Answers to reading comprehension were debatable. Many spelling words were irrelevant."

"There was too much concentration on fractions and not enough on decimals."

"Content related poorly to our 9th grade programs."

"The sequence by which material is taught is important to teaching. Test did not consider this."

"Reading selections were long and inappropriate. Mathematics section was long and repetitive. How many times does a kid have to get a sample wrong (or right) to prove he doesn't know it."

"Not all schools use the same program in mathematics, so that in several questions skills were required which had not been adequately drilled. This is not fair to anyone! No student would appreciate

being tested in an area not covered in the classes taken. I understand the problem -- but that is one big reason why statewide testing is not too good! If that is the case, then we will just have to have statewide curricula, ugh!

"Test in reading had welfare application -- a job application would have been more appropriate."

"Many of the questions were tricky. If we truly want to test knowledge of basic skills, then we should not include instructional techniques, such as adding and subtracting on a number line."

"Division by numbers with decimals in the divisor, we do not consider a minimum basic skill. Verbal skills necessary for interpretation of charts were too complex for minimum skills."

"No consideration is given for the varying abilities of students. Why frustrate the slow learners? Why humiliate them? This system does not consider the plight of children."

"Students with high absentee rates and/or severe discipline problems also took this test. The results made by these youngsters curtail the performance of the other youngsters. So long as the above-mentioned types of students took these tests and tried, their results will count. Yet, in most cases, these types of youngsters did not do well because of their lack of effort in school or lack of attendance. There is no way for a school district to illustrate these facts. Consequently, (district) scores are pulled down. This does not seem fair."

"They were a waste of time and money, since they are not valid in measuring progress. They do not teach the administration anything previously unknown."

"The whole program is an antiquated philosophy. It proves very little and is wasting the taxpayer's money, when the money could be put to much better educational use."

"Who determines what the basic skills are? It is very difficult for teachers to have children prepared for this test because of social promotions and the children move up without the fundamental skills of basic addition, subtraction, division and multiplication."

Mr. Chairman, please take what I have just described regarding the current program in minimum standards and transfer the similar and inevitable problems to the high school graduation situation. S-1154, while including provisions for remediation procedures, consideration of local goals and objectives, a statewide monitoring process and early administration of the basic skills test as early as the ninth grade, still presumes that, if a student does not perform satisfactorily on a statewide assessment test, but satisfies the local district's

graduation standards, he/she will receive a mere certificate of completion upon graduation. There's the rub! The NJEA must ask the Committee to contemplate the responses to two very fundamental questions -- (1) What skills are so important to the state so as to coerce children into learning them? and (2) What purpose is served in stigmatizing a student by giving him a certificate of completion rather than a diploma?

In answer to the first question, there are those of us who could give you a list of many skills we feel are important in addition to those related to communication and computation. How about making certain that our students learn about personal hygiene and health, human relations, automobile driving, the environment, and various basic mechanical skills, just to name a few? I have attached to my testimony a copy of an article by Henry Brickell, director of Policy Studies in Education, a division of the Academy for Educational Development. The complexities of establishing minimum standards are set forth in a very interesting manner.

The NJEA recognizes that there are some very well-meaning individuals who advocate diploma standards and tests as a means to solve a problem. On the other hand, there are some of the "diploma test" advocates who make no bones about it. They want to limit the number of students who walk out of school with that "sheepskin." Only those who are really successful in a broad range of high school subjects deserve "diploma recognition," they say.

It is disheartening to see what is happening in Florida now, a state which administers a 117-question test of mathematics and communications skills to juniors. In tests given last October, 36% failed the mathematics sections and 8%, the reading and writing section. The racial breakdowns reveal stunning new dimensions to the problem and, as a result, the NAACP is filing suit against the State of Florida for racial discrimination. Mr. Chairman, the NJEA does not want New Jersey in the same kind of imbroglio.

Other advocates of the "diploma test" see the test as the "easy way out."

If students pass the "minimum" requirements, why worry? As has already happened in California, the law would permit -- maybe even encourage -- such "minimum" achievers to drop out if they passed the test. The "minimum" standard might be the most some students would be given.

The real question on state-imposed diploma requirements is whether those who advocate them want to help all students succeed or to penalize those who do less well than others. If the state is genuinely interested in helping students, then there is much which can be done to address the issue of preparing children to meet the complex challenges of life.

The NJEA offers to you, Mr. Chairman, as sponsor of S-1154 and the Committee, what we believe are sincere means to build the better school for the students we serve.

● The NJEA believes that current curricular requirements mandated by the state for graduation should be augmented. Courses in basic skills of communications, computation, citizenship, science and physical education should be offered consistent with the recommendations of the N.J. State Committee on High School Graduation Requirements. However, we firmly believe that there should be guarantees that the local districts will provide additional course offerings to meet not only the state goals for education, but those set by a local school district in order to provide a comprehensive educational program for all students in keeping with the mandate of Chapter 212. The NJEA would not want to see students deprived of courses, programs, and services that currently mark a comprehensive program nor denied the addition of such courses, programs, and services to improve curriculum offerings within a high school. State-mandated curricular requirements should be prescribed and so stated as "minimum requirements."

● Student evaluation should be of a diagnostic nature to enable the design and delivery of appropriate developmental and/or remedial instruction and related services. Evaluation should be comprehensive and include teacher

observation, parental or guardian interview, formal and informal evaluation techniques, cumulative pupil records, testing results, and medical examination. The use of or sole reliance on a single test instrument should be specifically discouraged and so stated.

The elements of a comprehensive evaluation should be conducted each school year as part of an on-going process and reviewed at the end and beginning of each school year.

● The NJEA believes that the schools of New Jersey should provide their students maximum opportunities to develop proficiency in basic academic skills in reading, spelling, oral and written English language usage, and arithmetic.

Where students have clearly not achieved to the degree of their ability in reading, spelling, language usage, and arithmetic, modifications of basic course offerings as well as remedial efforts shall be provided for students who need it. Such identification of needs shall be made as early as possible in the student's educational career.

● A closely articulated K-12 grade curriculum should be given continuing attention to proficiencies cited. Greater respect for the individual student, however, should be expressed in terms of student progress toward proficiency levels and curricular offerings. No assessment procedure should assess knowledge or skills unless the opportunity to acquire such is part of the district's educational plan to provide appropriate curricula.

● Local school districts should be prepared to provide those educational opportunities beyond the twelfth grade in order that students meet "basic" and other requirements.

They should provide on-going information throughout the student's school experience about educational options to all students who fail to satisfy local proficiency requirements by the end of the twelfth grade. Such efforts should begin at the ninth grade level since it would be unfair to the student to wait until the twelfth grade.

Students should be encouraged to stay on in high school for a fifth year or even a sixth year -- if that is what they need to meet requirements of basic skills, to be ready for college, or to meet other special vocational requirements.

● Transcripts of high school experiences should be available for job-related or advance-educational planning in accordance with appropriate federal and state student record and educator save-harmless statutes and regulations. Consideration might be given to a standardized transcript for all school districts in the state.

● In order to assure delivery of such programs and services and precipitated by state mandates, it shall be necessary to provide state finances. Any fiscal restraints that exist at both the state and local school district levels should be eliminated in order to facilitate comprehensive programs with the required emphasis on basic skills.

Such efforts shall be made to protect the comprehensive programs of schools that are necessary to meet the total range of student needs. Unless the caps are removed, the local educational goals of a community respected, and the comprehensiveness of a secondary education pursued, current school programs will suffer.

● In order to guarantee maximum student participation in educational offerings, it should be necessary for schools to carefully review (1) how student absenteeism can be reduced and (2) how the amount of parental interaction and responsibility in such areas of concern can be increased.

● Local boards of education shall provide the services of child study team personnel at the ratio of one team for every 1,500 pupils to insure back-up services for students in need as well as providing the services of a speech therapist and making available, if necessary, medical examinations.

These are some of our suggestions and concerns regarding graduation standards. Indeed, there is no simplistic or quick answer considering all the problems confronting our schools today. The resolution rests with all of us and with our

ability to consolidate and responsibly use teacher/parent and society strength in the resolution of the problems.

Mr. Chairman, in your notice announcing this public hearing, you stated that, "I realize the same aspects of this program are controversial and I hope the public hearing will lead to a full and frank discussion of the issue. However, we must recognize that action is necessary if we are to fulfill our basic obligation to our state, our community and especially to our children."

I hope that NJEA has given you the candor you requested. However, we ask that you proceed with caution in your desire to act on graduation standards. We are beginning to see the repercussions in other states and we must learn from their mistakes. After all, the implications on children's lives are many.

Thank you.



Sullivan Way, Trenton, New Jersey 08607

609-771-0600

STATEMENT ON SENATE BILL 1154
(High School Graduation Standards)

to the

New Jersey Senate
Committee on Education
June 20, 1978

The Committee on Education of New Jersey Business and Industry Association is comprised of businessmen and educators selected to develop educational policy for the Association's 13,000 member businesses. The Committee's views on S-1154 are the result of considerable involvement in the development of the "T&E" code and state minimum standards in the basic skills.

S-1154

S-1154 proposes to employ State graduation proficiency tests in communication and computational skills. The tests would be administered to students beginning in the ninth grade. A student's performance by the twelfth grade in meeting local requirements and the State graduation test would determine whether the high school graduated that student with a certificate of completion, a regular high school diploma or an honors diploma.

formerly New Jersey Manufacturers Association

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Standards would be first imposed for pupils scheduled to graduate at the end of the 1983-84 school year.

Without specifying the use of the State's new minimum basic skills test series, the bill would seem to suggest this course of action. Special education students would be subject to alternate requirements.

STATE STANDARDS TIMETABLE

NJBIA could support S-1154 with certain modifications.

We agree that, after an appropriate implementation period, the awarding of a high school diploma should be conditioned on a student's satisfactory achievement of the State minimum basic skill standards. We also agree that other areas of the curriculum should be subject to locally determined standards.

The existing combination of the State's minimum basic skills standards, the requirement of school district action to respond to the needs of students below the standards and the State Department of Education's monitoring and enforcement activity should provide a basis for the upgrading of basic skills programs in the public schools. Placing State graduation standards in effect for those graduating at the end of the 1983-84 school year provides a reasonable timetable for most districts; however, we would suggest some flexibility in regard to the timetable for districts with a substantial percentage of students presently falling below State standards. Adequate time should be permitted for upgrading local educational efforts to ensure an opportunity for students to meet the minimum standards.

The present policy of social promotions obscures local school failures while depriving students of essential skills which are of far greater importance than a diploma. Meaningful graduation requirements are more equitable to students than a continuation of the current facade which graduates too many students with serious educational disabilities. Meaningful degree requirements would provide an incentive for students to work, rather than coast, through their school experience.

The overriding need for an adequate high school preparation dictates the application of State standards. We are in an age of population mobility which necessitates the use of common benchmarks developed at the State level, although we believe such State minimum standards should be limited to basic communications and computational skills.

DIPLOMAS

We favor the awarding of a single form of high school diploma evidencing successful completion of State and local degree requirements. There is no apparent advantage to be gained in the issuance of completion certificates (which are the shell of social promotion policies). The completion certificate might be used inappropriately as a means of pushing out students willing to continue trying to upgrade their skills to the minimum standard.

SUMMARY

Modified to provide some flexibility in implementation timetable and to continue the awarding of a single form of high school diploma, we would support S-1154 because it would better assure an adequate high school preparation and would create a useful incentive to encourage student effort.

New Jersey Business & Industry Association
Committee on Education

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Teaneck

New Jersey

June 30, 1978

TO: Senator Matthew Feldman

FROM: Aubrey J. Sher
Superintendent of Schools

RE: Standards, High School Diplomas. Competency Testing

I would like very much to talk on two relevant topics. The first deals with standards and competency testing. The second deals with standards and high school diplomas.

We have heard often that minimums often are translated into maximums, so that a minimum expectation, in surrendering to human foibles, can emanate into being the ultimate expectation of the school system; if not the school system, then the classroom teacher. You may or may not believe this to be the case as you further the argument, that, if the Superintendent and Board properly explain the minimum standard to the school community, the minimum will be considered just that. I say this not as a cop out, but as a fact through experience that this is easier said than done. Therefore, I urge you as you plan legislation regarding minimum standards that you set the minimum high, or, better, continue to permit each school district to set its own standards - such standards are arbitrary anyway - and I urge you not to tie any minimum standard in with a retention plan.

Competency testing is essential, and T & E already mandates it. It is essential that it identifies those programs that need to be modified or eliminated. It identifies children in need of remedial instruction. It should not be used to retain children throughout the grades or to prevent

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them from receiving a diploma, if current state and school requirements are met. Perhaps, the place to begin might be the strengthening of the state requirements. As you are quite aware, the State of New Jersey requirements for high school graduation in terms of required course work include only two years of American History and physical education for every year a child attends public schools. Contrary to common belief, English and math are not state requirements, although English is probably a local requirement in almost every district in New Jersey. Therefore, the State must fatten its requirements by adding English to its list, some math, science, and certainly some industrial and/or fine arts. I wish it could be deemed sensible by my colleagues and you fine people sitting here to include foreign languages among this mandatory group. I understand that this would be asking too much. I should like, however, to suggest a caution in this recommendation. That is, it means certainly adding more classes, more sections, perhaps more teachers to the local school systems, many of which are struggling to meet some very low cap restrictions. We find this to be the case in Teaneck where we have instituted earlier this year a competency test program in math for all ninth graders; those who failed it will be entering a math program (math was not heretofore a required high school program) in 10th grade next fall. As a result, we must add a teacher to our staff. The student will continue on with a basic math program throughout high school until he or she passes the test or graduates, having met all our requirements. Therefore, we do not intend to use this test as a standard to retain a child or keep the child from graduating provided all other requirements are met.

Rationale for selecting the ninth grade as the test grade, and only for math, is as follows: T & E requires most intense monitoring on each child in each program throughout the school system. It is safe to say, especially in Teaneck with its numerous grants, SCE, and Board funding, all children functioning below grade level are being remediated. Arithmetic, language arts or English, social studies, and science are required subjects for all elementary and junior high school programs throughout the State and Country. However, as soon as these youngsters enter the high school, whether it be after the eighth grade, or ninth grade as in Teaneck, the requirements are lessened. Since English is a local requirement in Teaneck, a competency test in English at ninth grade is not needed. The youngsters through T & E testing are identified and placed in basic writing, reading and communications classes at the high school. Now in math, this will be happening as well. The ninth grade is selected for competency for another reason. In Teaneck, and I am certain in every other community where a certain amount of transciency is experienced, the percentage of new students is tremendously high in the junior high schools. This means that an inordinate number of youngsters have not benefitted, at least in our community, from a thorough diagnosis and a continuous treatment. They need to be identified and prescribed a long-term required program. The ninth grade is ideal for us; the eighth grade would be ideal for K-8, 9-12 districts.

I would like to comment now on required standards for passing and for the attainment of the high school diploma. I could talk at length on the stigma attached to being left back or to being denied a high school diploma on the part of a hard-working but slow or handicapped pupil. I do believe that there are students we may be failing in more ways than one, students whom we have failed to educate, whose attendance is excellent, whose desire and industry

are remarkable, but whose ability to pass tests or to grasp is less than adequate. Maybe we have failed, ourselves, to find the ways to reach these kids, or maybe, they just can't learn now, no matter what. In any event, there are children like this who should move on socially with their peers, because retention, with all the research I have read, has not accomplished a damn thing. These are the children who should receive their diplomas provided their teachers in high school have passed them even with the lowest passing mark that may fall below the lowest imaginable standard anyone would set up. Why should these slow learners or handicapped students receive the diploma? Because, it harms no one if they do. They certainly are not going to be competing with the college group, but the self-worth a diploma will bring them is worth more to this society and the future of this country than spending filibustering hours on the purported declining value of the high school sheepskin. Incidentally, this diploma should be the same one that the youngster going to Princeton will receive. The value placed upon the diploma will be quite different to each of these youngsters; personally, I think it will be worth more to the kid on the bottom than to the kid on the top.

I know, for a fact, and I use my own community as an example, that the inner city transients will suffer with any set minimum standards for graduation. As is the case these days, when we speak of inner city youngsters, we speak about minority youngsters. As a group, they are performing below par; it is no myth, and I am not saying that minority children cannot learn. I am saying, however, that when the inner city child joins the suburban child in a school setting, and knowing the years of poor education

that the inner child has experienced, it is only natural that the catching-up in suburbia is a near impossibility, especially in the child's adolescent years. You will find, as was evidenced in Florida, I believe, that setting minimum standards for the high school diploma will result in the inner city or minority students being the ones in an integrated school system deprived of the diploma.