

NJ
10
E 24
1990e
U.3

PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

"Current regulations and procedures for State Department of Education monitoring of local school districts under the "T&E" law (P.L. 1975 c.212), as these regulations and monitoring affect overall educational quality in local school districts"

March 20, 1990
Voorhees High School
Auditorium
Glen Gardner, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Gerard S. Naples, Chairman
Assemblyman Anthony J. "Skip" Cimino

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblyman C. Richard Kamin
District 23

David J. Rosen
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Education Committee

* * * * *

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
CN 068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

New Jersey State Library





GERARD S. NAPLES
CHAIRMAN

WILLIAM J. PASCRELL, JR.
VICE-CHAIRMAN

ANTHONY J. "SKIP" CIMINO
JOSEPH M. KYRILLOS, JR.
JOHN A. ROCCO

New Jersey State Legislature

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0068
(609) 984-6843

REVISED

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Assembly Education Committee will hold a public hearing on the following issue:

Current regulations and procedures for State Department of Education monitoring of local school districts under the "T&E" law (P.L. 1975, c.212), as these regulations and monitoring effect overall educational quality in local school districts.

The hearings will be held at the following places at the date and time listed:

Tuesday, March 6, 1990
9:30 a.m.

Toms River High School North
Auditorium
Old Freehold Road
Toms River, New Jersey

Tuesday, March 13, 1990
9:30 a.m.

Ben Franklin Middle School
Auditorium
Taft Road
Teaneck, New Jersey

Tuesday, March 20, 1990
9:30 a.m.

Voorhees High School
Auditorium
Route 513
Glen Gardner, New Jersey

Tuesday, March 27, 1990
9:30 a.m.

Glassboro High School
Auditorium
Bowe Blvd.
Glassboro, New Jersey

*Tuesday, April 3, 1990
1:30 p.m.

New Brunswick High School
Auditorium
Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, New Jersey

The public may address comments and questions to David J. Rosen, Committee Aide and persons wishing to testify should contact Joanne Rafalski, secretary, at (609) 984-6843. Those persons presenting written testimony should provide 10 copies to the committee on the day of the hearing.

Issued 02/27/90
Revised 03/02/90

200

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Raymond Mammano Principal Voorhees High School	4
Louis M. Ripatrazzone Superintendent Stanhope Borough School District	5
Thomas N. Turner Superintendent Franklin Borough School District	15
Joseph M. Stracco Superintendent Lenape Valley Regional High School District	22
Francis X. Heelan, Ed.D. Superintendent Manville Borough School District	30
Dennis Sabo Principal Manville High School	35
Pat McGrath Teacher Wallkill Valley Regional High School	37
Peter Merluzzi Superintendent Phillipsburg School District	43
Jerry A. Clymer Superintendent Pohatcong Township School District	46
Albert Purdy Superintendent Lopatcong Township School District	48
Arthur R. Smith Superintendent High Point School District	56
Anthony DeCanzio Superintendent West Amwell School District	61

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Suzane Krewson Teacher Holland Township School District	66
Dale Briggs Chief School Administrator Bloomsbury School District	74
Anthony A. D'Ovidio Superintendent Somerset County Vocational Technical Schools	79
Theodore Arnold Principal Pinebrook Elementary School President-Elect New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association	83
Frank McLaughlin Principal Point Pleasant Borough High School	87
Joseph P. Sabo, Ph.D. Superintendent Watchung Hills Regional School District	93
APPENDIX:	
Statement submitted by Frank McLaughlin	1x
Statement and newspaper editorial submitted by Joseph P. Sabo, Ph.D.	4x
Statement submitted by James E. Swalm, Ed.D. Superintendent Flemington-Raritan School District	11x
Statement submitted by Irene Pines, President Philip Kinney, Vice President Washington Township Education Association Long Valley, New Jersey	14x

* * * * *

ASSEMBLYMAN GERARD S. NAPLES (Chairman): I have an announcement to make before we begin. There is a gray Honda in the parking lot. Whoever owns it, congratulations, but I would also tell you that your lights are on. Gray Honda in the parking lot, the lights are on. If I make it, in another hour it will be lights off.

I'm about ready to begin. I'm Assemblyman Gerard Naples, Chairperson of the Assembly Education Committee, 15th District -- that's the Trenton District.

With me on my left are Assemblyman Cimino from the 14th District, and your own Assemblyman, Richard Kamin, of the 23rd District.

Before we begin I'm going to ask Dick Kamin to give greetings as the host Assemblyperson. Dick?

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to all of you, and for all of you who don't live in the 23rd District, welcome. This legislative district is unique in that we represent parts of five counties. This is the northern part of the region. We have Hunterdon, Warren, Sussex, I live in Morris, and we also represent parts of Mercer.

We're all here today to address probably the most important issue in the future of the State of New Jersey, and that is education, so that we can turn out a work force that can compete not just with Pennsylvania and with Delaware -- that can compete worldwide.

It's my view that the real issue is not education dollars, because we're number one in the country. We spend \$8500 per year per student. I think the real issue is how we spend those dollars, and although I'm not an educator, I think it should be our effort to focus on making sure that teachers go back into the classrooms, that regulations are not restrictive to the point that they strangle -- to continue to strangle -- to free up that local decision-making process; to allow school boards and administrators to work together in

cooperative atmospheres that sometimes just do not exist. That's how we're going to make the adjustments to turn out a quality student that can function in the State of New Jersey.

I guess this school in this district is an example of where we excel, where we do well in education because of the commitment and of the partnership with families and parents who care about their school system. That's not always the case throughout New Jersey. We know what happened in Jersey City, where the situation was those involved with running the school system in Jersey City were more concerned with patronage than they were with educating students, so it's hard for many of the education leaders in this neck of the woods to understand why a school takeover was necessary, but it was.

I welcome all of you here. Your task is a momentous one, and we as legislators, pledge our support to help in any way that we can to make sure that the quality of education continues to improve here in New Jersey. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman Kamin. A very, very nice greeting. Let me say something on what you said. We disagree on more than one issue. I don't like to use political terminology, but I'm considered a liberal and Dick is considered a conservative. But to the extent that we both have New Jersey's best interests at heart, we're mutually committed. But you said something which moved me. You said, "I'm not an educator." Well, let me just say this: I'm an educator, I'm a principal. Skip is a former school board member. We'd better all be educators in this day in the generic sense, if education is to survive. We have to focus attention on the myriad of problems which confront us day in and day out.

Let me say something and let's get started. I'm going to lay some ground rules down. I made a statement and I faxed a copy to Jim Moran today, to send out. He's the head of NJASA, and a couple of superintendents-- This is a statement

that I made in February. I said are we spending so much time -- we, I'm principal of a school myself -- on compliance that we have no time for education? Think of that, i.e., my exact words, to the point we are spending so much time proving that we're doing nothing wrong, we have no time to do anything right. Weigh that against the number of hours in a school day.

That is the backdrop. Are we spending all of our time trying to please the State, or is the State giving us shape and direction which we -- by we, I mean professional educators -- lack? This is what I want to find out, and I've invited the State Department of Education to attend every hearing. Sandy McCarroll and I are going to talk-- Well, I was supposed to have talked with him last week. He called me yesterday -- I think I slipped up -- about the shape the meetings are taking.

There will be a cross fire. The State will have its own point of view, the county superintendents will have their own point of view, and in a controlled cross fire the truth will emerge, and from that -- this is a legislative hearing -- legislation could result. We could determine what is statutory, what is regulatory. Suggestions could go from us to the Department of Education. Legislation could be dropped in the hopper.

Obviously, something is wrong. Seven districts are either taken over -- six more ripe for takeover in this State; I don't have to mention the six other districts -- but there are 604 other districts struggling to stay out of Level II and I'm concerned about those districts. Assemblyman Pascrell, who is also a member of this Committee, the Vice Chairperson, is chairing a committee on school intervention, and we're going to work very, very closely together on that.

Are you spending all your time -- people in the Glen Gardner and the Toms River and Teaneck areas where we've held previous hearings -- trying to stay out of Level II? Is it hampering your attempts to meet your mission as professional educators? I don't know. We're here to find out.

I have switched to a de facto subcommittee system so I don't have to drag people all over the State, and two or three people have been able to handle the meetings so far. I would ask one thing: That when you come up with a prepared -- I won't say prolixious statement; some of them are six or seven pages -- that you hand it in and paraphrase. You can do a much better job of evincing your point of view, and I promise that the Committee members will not make soliloquies. We will just respond. We're here to listen. Once in a while I, or Dick, or Skip will ask a question to sort of give direction to the meeting, not unlike my teaching a class to give some direction to a class discussion. I don't mean to treat you like students -- you're certainly not -- but I will have to do that from time to time.

You have a very fine principal here, Ray Mammano. I want to thank you for the hospitality you have afforded us, and if you care to say a few words, you're more than welcome. And thank you, it's a beautiful facility.

R A Y M O N D M A M M A N O: Thank you. I'm a bit prejudiced, I think it might be one of the nicest in the State.

I would like to welcome all of you to Voorhees High School in the North Hunterdon Regional School District. An interesting note is: Late January, beginning of February, guess what we went through? Monitoring.

I'm anxious to hear some of the testimony that takes place here today. I will say one thing as I look at all the wires hanging around here (referring to microphone wires): I don't know if the County Monitor is around, but we may fail, so I ask all of you to remove this before the county may come back.

Welcome, and I'd like to remind you that a bunch of folks in Trenton have passed legislation that says we cannot smoke in a public building. We extended that in our district to not smoking adjacent to the building, also. We do not allow

our students and we would hope that those of you who do smoke, you can wait and hang on until you leave the property. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Let the games begin; (indiscernible) as they say in French before the jousts. Wayne-- You know, last week I had a lot of problems with Italian-American names, a good Italian boy like me. Boy, it was terrible. Wayne -- don't help me -- Threlkeld, Superintendent, Hopatcong Borough School District. I had a relative who lived in Lake Hopatcong, and I spent many happy hours up there. Doctor, would you please come forward? (no response) If the Superintendent is not present, then we're going to go to the Assistant Superintendent -- that's a lot easier -- James Clark, Hopatcong Borough School District. Dr. Clark? (no response)

I'll tell you what. We'll try to come back to them. Perhaps it's a mite early.

Let's go to Lou -- oh, my -- Ripatrazzone, Superintendent of Schools, Stanhope Borough School District.

L O U I S M. R I P A T R A Z O N E: It's pronounced Ripatrazzone (pronounces name). Close, but no cigar.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Six corrections in two hearings, oh my, heavens to Betsy.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Good morning, gentlemen. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to share my thoughts on two subjects. I am the Superintendent of Schools in Stanhope, and I also wear a second hat in that I represent Sussex County--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, could you speak into the microphone, please? I think the people in the back are having difficulty hearing you.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: I wear two hats this morning: I am th Superintendent of Schools of Stanhope, and I also serve as the Sussex County representative to the NJASA Small Schools

Committee. Yesterday we met. I have some thoughts from those folks, and I also have some perceptions that I would like to share this morning.

Per the Public School Act, the purpose of monitoring is to review whether a district has met the standards established in the 10 essential elements and indicators necessary for a thorough and efficient education. I think that term, "thorough and efficient education," is the key issue. My comments will deal primarily with those of us that are serving in capacities in small school districts.

My particular school district has 350 students; we have two administrators. We went through monitoring last January and through the first week of February. It was quite an educational process. There are many things that I feel strongly about where the monitoring process improved our school district. We took a look at our school district and we corrected many deficiencies. There are some aspects of monitoring that I feel are inequities. We are there to educate children and I feel that some of the time that we spent in preparation for monitoring was spent on those kinds of functions that have little or no impact on children.

Serving in my capacity -- you used the word "myriad" earlier -- I receive a myriad of issues via paper from many different forums. Quite frankly, it's becoming increasingly more difficult to serve in my role, chief school administrator, and oversee the school district and be able to address all of the issues that I receive from so many different forums.

I think the present monitoring format has inherent inequities with regard to the small school. Specifically, in Element 8 we're required to have 75% of our students pass the standardized test instrument that we utilize in grades 3 and 6. In my particular school district we had one more student than 75% score lower than the minimum level.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Excuse me? I did not have the presence of mind to bring the elements and indicators with me. Does anybody have a copy with him or her? I'd like to follow along. Jeff Moran had the good sense to bring them two weeks ago. I'll give them right back to you.

Thanks a lot, sir. Thank you very much.

Go ahead. Continue please.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: With regard to Element 8 whereby students in grades 3 and 6 -- my district is a K-8 district -- students in grades 3 and 6, we must have 75% of the students attain the minimum level of proficiency. We had a situation whereby one student caused us to score below 75%. In the present regulations there are no specifications to deal with special circumstances. We had two students move into our district one month prior to that test taking place, and two of those children moved out one week after the test, but they took the test. Consequently, when we're dealing with a class size in grade 3 of 34 students, each individual student's results has a substantial impact on the percentage that score above the minimum level.

I'm pleased to note that the State Department, last March, did establish the administrative relief process which enabled me as the chief school administrator, through our Board of Education, to petition our County Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner McCarroll to give us the opportunity to prove ourselves with the next test process. But, gentlemen, I feel strongly that there needs to be a revision in some of the elements, and that's one specific one.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Any other ones?

MR. RIPATRAZONE: I will address some comments that were made to me yesterday with regard to all of the elements.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Inconsistencies throughout the State: These were issues that were brought to the table at the

Small Schools Committee. Nightmare stories; in one county this is acceptable, in another county that's not acceptable. I had numerous conversations with the Sussex County Superintendent with regard to the issues in my district, and I know that he checked frequently and he indicated to me that there were numerous meetings with the County Superintendents to avoid that. But, in actuality, based on the comments that were shared with some of my colleagues yesterday, they indicated to me that there are inequities that are taking place with the monitoring process throughout the State.

My experience was that the premonitoring conferences that I had with county people were fantastic. When the gentlemen came through for our facilities, it was an education for me -- being a new superintendent -- having that opportunity to review the needs of my particular school district, that has two aging facilities.

In terms of basic skills I had a premonitoring conference with another person from the County Office. In terms of the process, I met a number of times with the County Superintendent. I found that those experiences helped me to better serve my school district, but my concern is that if we are dealing with the process that quite honestly, I believe, looks for things that you're doing wrong and not for things that you do correctly, it creates paranoia and it doesn't serve our students well. I think we need a monitoring process, I really do, but I don't believe that the present format enables school districts, especially those that are small, to have their chief school administrators, their administrative principals, or their two or three administrators, serve the best needs of the children.

Compound the issue with the State funding situation. Last Friday in The Star-Ledger there was a headline that the funding arrangement will be disastrous for school districts. Gentlemen, I'm here to tell you, that disaster hit in

Stanhope. We were supposed to be funded last year to the tune of \$938,000. We received \$733,000. We got 78% of our full funding. My understanding is, throughout the State, the average was 92%.

This year the picture gets worse. We were supposed to receive \$881,000 for funding. The story came out that we were going to get 83%. I said, "Okay, we can live with 83%. We can live with \$731,000." Gentlemen, we received \$604,000 in my school district. In two years we will have lost over, or just shy of, a half-a-million dollars. This year we are over a quarter million dollars.

Thorough and efficient education? How do we have a thorough and efficient education when there are essentially only two things that we as administrators can recommend to the Board? Pass that funding shortfall on to the taxpayers, or cut programs. We simply cannot expect taxpayers to take this burden. The law says that the State of New Jersey is to fund a thorough and efficient education. It's my understanding that with this present arrangement that was announced on Friday, Sussex County was one of the hardest hit counties in the State. We were funded at approximately 73%. My school district was funded at 68%. I don't quite understand, with the myriad of other issues that we must deal with, how we can be expected to deliver a thorough and efficient education to our students.

We held the line on our budget. Our budget is only going to increase 4.8%. We have a 24 cent tax increase for the municipality. If we were to fully fund our budget, we would be sending another 25 cent to 30 cent tax increase to the voters. We don't have ratables in Stanhope. We do have students who need an education. Under the present format we have two choices: One, cut programs. The first choice I mentioned was to pass the tax increase along to the taxpayers. Secondly, cut staff, which in turn cuts programs.

I really don't understand how we can be expected to deal with these numbers and deliver a thorough and efficient education to our students.

I ask you to continue your review of the monitoring process. I believe that there are elements of the process that have merit. We should have a review by a higher authority. We need to toe the line, but, gentlemen, I don't know what's going to happen in education if we don't have the funds to educate our children. I ask you as Education Committee people to please assist us. I have been reading the newspaper. I see where in some counties, school districts are getting \$3.8 million more, \$3.5 million more, \$2.9 million more, than the so-called 83% funding. That's an inequity that I don't understand. It smacks to me of reverse discrimination and, quite frankly, I believe that there's got to be some politics involved.

I'm a chief school administrator, I'm not a politician. But it says to me that when some counties and some districts -- voting districts -- are getting more, there's got to be some reasons, and I don't quite understand what the reasons are.

I thank you for the opportunity to talk with you this morning, and I urge you to continue your work on monitoring. But please, you indicated that you, as an Assemblyman, wanted to help us in education to educate our children. The one way is to help us with dollars. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. I'm going to go to my far left with Assemblyman Kamin. I never thought Dick would be on my far left but, Assemblyman Kamin?

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: Thank you very much. For those of you who are not familiar with the 23rd Legislative District, we have-- Of all of the municipalities that are getting school aid, there are only six that have an increase -- a net increase, that's not formula now, a net increase -- over the

previous year. So that means 34 of the municipalities are being adversely hit, hammered with these formulas.

You asked how it's happening? It's like we normally in Trenton handle tax reform. It's called, "Cheat the other guy and pass the savings on to you." We're essentially cheating the schools that perform, that are good, that are excellent, and where maybe folks choose -- by making a decision to move into that community because it has a good school system. That expands the ratable base. That works against you in the formula, and in fact, the school systems that are not doing the job, that maybe under the pressures of second level monitoring are the ones that then get rewarded for the inefficiencies, and in fact, the formula works to give them more money. That's the way the Distressed Cities' formula works, in that cities that do not operate their local municipal governments up to snuff and are monitored by the State Office of Legislative Services (sic), when they are inefficient, they get more money.

It's not fair and it's something that needs to be addressed. I'm not sure if we're going to get some direction from Abbott v. Burke, but clearly this is a nonpartisan issue. We all have to address that all of us representing different districts have similar situations, but the 23rd Legislative District ranks 40th. As far as fairness, we are at the bottom of the scale, and we are being hurt the most.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman.

Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you. Mr. Ripatrzone, I understand your statement about the funding, and everybody in the State Legislature, as well as the Governor, understands the inequities that are occurring, and how we got here is a question of much discussion. I don't think we're going to solve that issue this morning. However, there is Abbott v. Burke, and the Governor himself has come up with a new formula

called a foundation formula, that will be analyzed and looked over in the course of the next four months. But, get beyond the funding for me. Talk in terms of a world where there is a funded school system and tell me what it is about monitoring that you, as a small school administrator, or the Association, within the context of the Small School Administrators-- What would you make as recommendations to improve the monitoring system or to eliminate the inconsistencies or the inequities that you see?

MR. RIPATRAZONE: It brought to my attention that the philosophy was to try and eliminate the inequities. They would share teams or send monitoring teams to different counties. I really feel that that's a serious mistake. I found, being a new chief school administrator, that the assistance that I got from my County Office, quite frankly, helped me to get through the process, as did the assistance that I got from my fellow colleagues.

I think that you hit the nail on the head. There are school districts right now that are being penalized for doing things right. The time that we need to spend to insure that a school district passes monitoring is far too great. For those districts that are able to get through the process, possibly a suggestion might be to have them go instead of every five years through a review, maybe extend it to seven years. I think also, we need the review process but take some of the threatening aspects out of the process. Go in and look for things that are being done well, not just for things that are being done incorrectly. Use that premonitoring process to assist school districts that have problems to correct them prior to the monitoring process being initiated. We're in this for a single goal: to improve the instruction and the education of our children. If we can accomplish that, then the monitoring process is worth it. But I wonder sometimes, when we are concerned with the myriad of paper that needs to be in place, that we are accomplishing the education of our children.

Thank you for the opportunity.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you, Mr. Ripatrazzone.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman.

Very quickly, Doctor: First, I concur wholeheartedly with what my two colleagues just said. Let me just comment on what Assemblyman Kamin said. The small districts don't have it made, contrary to what a lot of big city public officials think. I'm a big city public official, and I've never believed that for a moment. The smaller districts and the smaller municipalities have their problems. Anyone who does not concur in that should disabuse himself or herself of any notions to the contrary very, very quickly.

When you say, consent with T&E, you're talking about T&E in the Chapter 212 sense, or the constitutional sense? I would hope that you're talking about it in the constitutional sense to give you a little latitude. It's more of a statement than a question, because it's possible that Chapter 212 could be reviewed before this entire process is over. By process, I mean in the weeks following the last hearing in New Brunswick on November 3.

Let me ask you this: Do you think -- and I'm concerned about negativity myself, but I will say this, too, and I would like to know whether you agree with me -- that despite the fact that there is negativity on the part of some monitors, they look for things wrong, do you believe that there is a cabal among county regional services, the Commissioner, and the county superintendents against local school districts, or whether it is a question of process and certain monitors?

Anybody can answer it as they come up.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: I certainly don't think that there's a conspiracy. I can only use my experience with my County Office people. I found that every kind of assistance was afforded me to accomplish a successful Level I review, but I will say this: There are tremendous rumors out there. I'm

putting my hat on as an NJASA Committee member with the Small Schools Committee. There are tremendous rumors that folks at the table yesterday shared with regard to these inequities. You know, there are feelings that the monitoring process should only be for the urban schools. Go out and find out what the urban schools are doing incorrectly. My feeling is, every school district needs to have a review, and we have to look to our State Department people for assistance in this process. To say that there's a conspiracy to go out and-- The process is such that it's so paperwork oriented, that I feel that that's where there's clearly a weakness in the process.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I don't believe -- as you do-- I don't believe there is a conspiracy. I do believe that there is a lack of communication among county and regional superintendents and county and regional services, and I'm going to speak to Sandy McCarroll in the next couple of days and Tom Corcoran, also. There is a lack of communication, there, I think, and I have reasons-- I won't go into it now. I think quite often there is not that communication flowing from the local school districts to the County Offices in the form of complaints and questions which I think are part and parcel to monitoring. Letting the people know how one feels, I think is crucial.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Assemblyman Naples? Let me say this with regard to my school district.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Sure.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: We did go into administrative relief. We had two issues that we needed to correct that impacted on whether or not we were going to go into Level II.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Two?

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Two issues: One in Element 1 and one in Element 8. I will say this: I know for a fact, because I had numerous conversations with my County Superintendent, and I had numerous conversations with Sandy McCarroll. My

situation, as I am told, was discussed at the County Superintendents' meeting, which apparently is chaired by Sandy McCarroll. My particular situations were reviewed and it was a group decision that allowed my school district to go into administrative relief, which allowed us to correct those two areas and then be certified that summer. I think that's fair. I think that if there is something wrong, give us a chance to fix it.

You know, the constituents that we deal with-- It's a public relations business. To go into Level II, I don't care what the problem is. That's a bad public relations situation, and it's a matter of pride for people who work in that school district, also. Give us an opportunity to correct the problem so that it doesn't impact negatively with regard to public relations, and quite frankly, that's what happened in my school district. We told the community what the problems were, we corrected those problems, and we were certified in August of that last school year.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right. Let me conclude by saying -- very quickly because I want to move on -- that we're going to take a close look at the disparities that were alluded to earlier, and I'm going to ask you to do something for me. On or about April 4, when the hearings are concluded, could you give me a call in my district office? I'd like to talk with you after all the testimony is in.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I thank you. It was a very, very real, spontaneous, helpful presentation that you just made.

MR. RIPATRAZONE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, that's easy. Thomas Turner -- boy, if I screw that up -- the Superintendent of the Franklin Borough School District.

T H O M A S N. T U R N E R: Thank you. Assemblymen Naples, Cimino, and Kamin, I thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding monitoring, and I will try to be succinct.

In preparing for this testimony I wanted to address three areas: fairness of the process, improvements to our educational program, and costs to Franklin Borough Schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Give me that first one again, please?

MR. TURNER: Fairness of the process.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That's why we're here.

MR. TURNER: However, there is a fourth item that I would like to address as well, and that has to do with State aid, and State mandates, because I see both -- State aid and mandates -- linked to monitoring.

I can only respond in terms of what Franklin Borough Schools went through during the monitoring process. Initially we were not certified at Level I, and we, too, engaged in the appeal process. We were given the opportunity for that appeal, and the merits of our appeal enabled us to be certified at this time. We also were given -- or, we were cited as having three areas of deficiency, through acceptability with the deficiencies corrected. Those CAPs, or corrective action plans, have been completed.

Throughout the process I found the County Office to be instrumental in assisting us through the monitoring process. I have also found the State Department to be fair and equitable with our appeal and with the assistance we needed to find ourselves in Level I, where we are today.

And there have been improvements to Franklin Borough Schools as a result of the monitoring. Our facility has improved. We have increased child study team services. Our Board Policy Manual has been revised and made more current, and our curriculum has been reviewed as well. I am not suggesting that these improvements would not have occurred, however, had monitoring not taken place.

There is a public perception -- as Mr. Ripatrzone had alluded -- that we are all very much concerned about. And

there are costs of monitoring. The costs are in terms of real dollars. To improve our facility we spent close to \$28,000 in improved fire detection, and I stand before you saying that was needed. To improve our Board Policy Manual we engaged and contracted with a consultant which cost the district \$6500. There are other costs as well, and that is why I tie into our funding, or our cuts in entitlement, tremendous concerns.

Indeed, it's not just funding. We seem to be mandated both at the Federal level and at the State level, both through the Department of Education and other departments, various kinds of requirements that we, as educators, are accountable, and, yes, they are all beneficial to the students, and to the safety of our employees. We wish to comply. At the same time it is becoming more and more difficult to comply.

We have safety matters, fire safety, environmental matters. We have mandated curriculum such as AIDS and drug education. We have increased scope of negotiations to contend with. There are health costs and other fixed charges that are raised constantly; environmental matters such as underground storage tanks, asbestos, drinking water, and chemicals that must be identified in Workers Right to Know. There are testing matters such as the HSPT and the standardized tests in the third and sixth grade, the report card, mandated courses of study such as health and phys ed, core proficiency, and various policies, and I guess what I ask is, how do you spell relief? Is it spelled with State monitoring that is done sometimes in a perceived adversarial fashion? I am not speaking to adversarial personalities because I have a great deal of respect for the State and county people whom I have encountered. What I am speaking to is the adversarial relationship when we are in fear of perhaps being cited at Level II or worse, Level III, or worse. These concerns are very much real to me, and they are also very real in terms of what we, as educators, wish to impart to students. Lillian

Katz from the University of Chicago wrote a pamphlet a few years back about building bridges. You build bridges from positive to positive and work on the negatives through positives. Sometimes I feel perhaps this is not what we are dealing with.

I'd also like to state that I think the State Department is aware of many of the concerns you've probably heard and will be hearing. When I was in Atlantic City I was invited to attend a committee meeting from the County Superintendents -- two of whom are here today, Dr. Andrews and Dr. Mancuso -- regarding what we should address during Cycle III of monitoring. We talked about what we have today, and that's compliance monitoring, and perhaps what we should look toward in the future. Should we do something in terms of performance monitoring or diagnostic monitoring? I don't have the answers; I do look for relief.

I look for relief from all of the mandates, for some kind of coordination, because it seems that my particular office is getting deluged with tremendous amounts of paperwork. Monitoring adds to those papers, not subtracts.

I guess, also, I would like to conclude with two thoughts: One, I think there must be a better mousetrap. There must be one that exists, and if not, I think we can build a better one. I also think that we should be held accountable. I have no fear from being held accountable, but I think that accountability must take into consideration the educational needs of its students and the characteristics and the idiosyncrasies of the district. I guess, also, that when we focus on documenting history and procedure, those things that we have in place and how we're documenting it, when we concentrate and look toward history, then I think our sight is being misdirected from the future, and that is very important to all of us in education. We, as an institution, tend to turn slowly as it is. I think we shouldn't go slower but move forward at a much quicker pace, if possible.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Mr. Turner, in the course of your going through the monitoring process, would you say that the monitoring process itself helped you with your Board of Education, to achieve what might not have been achievable goals?

MR. TURNER: I would like to think not, but there certainly was some incentive on the part of the Board to spend some more money in areas that, perhaps, would have been addressed a little further down the road.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman? Dick? (no response)

Okay. I made a note, and I concluded with a question mark. I'm going to read it verbatim: "Intramonitoring problems, differences within districts. Board of Education and Superintendent." Intra, not interdistrict. Not between the county and the local district, or among the county, the local district, and the State, but intradistrict, and Skip hit it right on the head. Do you find that that occurs in your district?

MR. TURNER: Again, it's very difficult to separate the two.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: In an impactful way, not just in a cursory way.

MR. TURNER: I think that's best answered in this fashion: If the Board of Education is looking to hammer the superintendent, monitoring is certainly a vehicle that can be used. On the other hand, if it is a cooperative venture between Board and administration, monitoring could be the vehicle to bring the two together and address other adversarial groups.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say I agree with you but they have a charge -- Board members -- to exercise checks and balances. I do agree, but they should not hammer, in the name of checks and balances. I will conclude by asking you a question:

On the issue of facilities-- You haven't touched upon that yet. Yesterday we had a bill before the State Legislature -- I'm sorry, before the Committee. I won't go into all the ramifications of the bill. I supported the bill but I let it be known that I had problems with the way facilities were approached in the State time frame. We mentioned cycles in a different vein, time frame, but I'm talking about time frames with regard to getting things done which have to be done in schools à la facilities. You have the County Superintendent involved in facilities -- I forget who took Frank Johnson's place-- You have that aspect of the State Department of Education involved in facilities. We have a long, drawn-out process which becomes more expensive in two ways -- money, per se, and time lost -- and I intend to take a good look at the role of facilities. Do we have too much facilitating in facilities to make for a proper facilities policy? What's your reaction to that question, however rhetorical I stated it?

MR. TURNER: I think there's a mechanism in place locally for facility review as we speak. The counties have their engineers as do the local municipalities. I think we are, perhaps, doing twice the work and taking more than twice the time. I think there must be a way to save taxpayers' money, because delay is money. Anyone in private industry knows that, and I think we must move much quicker than we are, with regard to facility review and approval, and perhaps now is the time to take a look at whether or not what we have in place at the county and local levels is sufficient, with, perhaps, if we're interested in another check, a sign-off by the State Department that would require very little--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good point.

MR. TURNER: --digging into the "nth" detail.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, we agree. That's an area -- if you don't know by now, anybody in State government -- I intend to personally be digging into very, very strongly. Thank you very much. Any further questions, Dick, Skip?

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: Yes, a fast question. Maybe this is a collective question for all those who are involved in putting together budgets. Is it the facilities, the planned maintenance, that gets cut more readily under -- when you are into situations that we end up being penny wise and pound foolish, that school boards make that approach as the quick fix, the delay of capital improvement or the delay of a new roof or whatever the proper maintenance should be?

MR. TURNER: I won't speak for the group, but as for my experience at both Franklin Borough and in Atlantic County before coming to Sussex County, I find that that's an area, that if it's-- If the roof is leaking, and it's drops coming through, we put a bucket under it. If we have no roof, then we fix it. I think that's typical in most school districts.

I think before we talk to facility concerns, I think we really impact the children's programs first. We do not touch fixed costs. We do not touch those things that have been negotiated in the contract either in terms of salary or in terms of language which equate to dollars. We touch things that can be easily attacked, and that's student materials -- teaching materials. The things that I think make our school special are the things that are touched first.

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: Thank you. I would like to collectively ask those who address this later during the day -- I won't be able to stay but I will read the testimony--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good point.

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: --if folks would address that issue as well as the use and/or abuse of lease purchase.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Excellent Dick, excellent. I hadn't put that down.

I'm going to let you go, but I'm going to say something: Last year we had a public hearing on Assemblyman Palaia's bill in Paterson -- I'm sorry, Speaker Hardwick's bill -- Eastside High School in Paterson. Assemblyman Pascrell

wanted to bet me I wouldn't have the nerve to walk in with a baseball bat. I didn't, but it was mind-boggling. I don't want to go into the dollar amounts, but it was mind-boggling, and even then I think we were conservative in our approach.

Thank you very much.

Next, Joseph Stracco, Superintendent of Schools, Lenape Valley High School.

J O S E P H M . S T R A C C O: Good morning, gentlemen, and thank--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I pronounced it right. The Sons of Italy were about to come down on me on number seven.

MR. STRACCO: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, sir.

MR. STRACCO: I think it was Mark Twain who said, "There is no greater death than being talked to death," so I'll try to be brief.

In all due respect to my two younger colleagues from the same county, Mr. Ripatrazzone and Mr. Turner, you'll get a little divergent view of monitoring from me. I think you talked about negatives. If you approach monitoring in a negative fashion, it could end up being a negative experience for you. If you approach it in a positive fashion, my experience tends to be very positive.

Having gone through -- or as my colleagues might say, having survived -- both Cycle I, and Cycle II, or Level I and Level II monitoring, I personally feel it should be continued with some modifications which I will testify to.

I think, quite frankly, it's one of the few programs which has given some credibility to the State Department. God knows, the State Department needs credibility these days. You are no doubt aware--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Wait a couple of weeks.

MR. STRACCO: You are no doubt aware that many of the programs initiated at the State level are flawed with political overtones and undertones -- you can take your choice -- the most recent of which is the present method of financing, which as everyone has indicated -- and I won't beat a dead horse -- is creating chaos in almost every community in the State of New Jersey. Again, that's another issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good issue.

MR. STRACCO: From my perspective, the monitoring process treats all districts alike. The standards are the same for every district. You know up front what's expected from you. You're not subject to the whims or fancies of the politicians, and believe it or not, it does work, and it does help the children. As I indicated, I think the initiative should continue, but with some modifications to the present form.

Number one, I don't feel that you should fail because you don't meet every element. That's ludicrous. There should be some flexibility.

Secondly -- and I feel very strongly about this -- that the future elements of monitoring should focus more on pupil performance with some accommodations for different levels of performance. We're all educators and we know that different students perform at different levels, so obviously you can't expect the same standard of performance from every student in a school district.

There should be some built-in incentives, or degrees of incentives for passing. As one of my colleagues had previously indicated, maybe if you pass both levels, it should be extended to seven years or eight years. As you probably are aware, the Middle States has a 10-year accreditation process.

I feel in future monitorings that local districts should be made to do some sort of self-appraisal prior to the monitoring. A lot of good can come out of a self-appraisal.

If you take an introspective look at your own district, you can see some of the things you're doing well, some of the things you're doing poorly, and quite frankly, I think it's a myth that's being perpetuated out there that monitoring is placing an imposition on the staff. The only imposition that we placed on our staff was we asked them to do a job that is on-going -- review curriculum and courses of study. All other elements of monitoring were done at the administrative level.

I think that we should do some sort of self-evaluation prior to monitoring which would allow us a greater staff input at all levels. We certainly don't have staff input on building, on financing, on staff attendance -- those elements -- but if there were some effort to induce some self-evaluation I think it would help.

I don't believe the business function should be monitored at all. I think it's ludicrous to come into a school district and monitor the business function after five years. We all know that every major audit is done on an annual basis. If a school district has a financial problem, it should be audited annually and it should be taken care of immediately. If you wait five years and say to a school district, "Hey, you've got all kinds of problems. You're underfunding, you're charging items inappropriately, you're misusing Federal and State funds--" Well, you're "locking the barn after the horse is stolen." In many cases the business administrator or superintendent may be out of town by the time you find the error, so that should be done annually.

The building element: I think the State Department should have the power to put more teeth into enforcing the building element; and I don't think that school districts should fail monitoring because they haven't complied with the building element. Typically, you can get a situation -- and I'm not speaking from personal experience, because, like the principal in this building, I'm blessed with a high school

that's attractive and well kept -- but how about the district that has three referendums fail, six budgets in a row fail? They put money in for capital improvements, but the voters just won't bring themselves to come around to voting for a building improvement, and now they get monitored and they fail. It's not as if they haven't tried. At some point in time the State Department of Education has to come in and say, "Hey, look. This building is deteriorating. The roof leaks, the floors are buckled, the ventilation is poor, it's got to be fixed."

I think if the district has indicated that they've tried and they have been unable to get community support, then that is a level of strength that the State Department can exercise.

Students cannot function: As you know, a student can't function in a dirty school, in bathrooms that are broken, or where there's insufficient lighting. The environment has-- You've read all the reports, all the studies. The environment has a tremendous impact on the ability of the student to perform.

I think the monitoring process should be more academic and vocational oriented. There should be a way that when the monitoring team sees a successful or innovative academic or vocational program in a school, that that program could be shared with the rest of the school districts in the State. There's nothing wrong with plagiarizing someone's program. You probably remember that song--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: It's called 'research in education, Doctor.

MR. STRACCO: Yeah, well, I know. Tom Lehrer had a song, you know, "Plagiarize, let no one's work evade your eyes."

So, I think that if there is a good program and it can be shared statewide or countywide, the monitoring team could serve that purpose.

One of the outcomes of our first round of monitoring was that we felt so confident in the State's ability to monitor the school district, we were faced with a Middle States visitation. We chose to write to the major universities in the country and the State and indicate to them that we were contemplating dropping out of the Middle States Association, and would that adversely impact on the ability of our students to be accepted at their universities? Surprisingly, every letter that we received back was positive.

We substituted the moneys that we used for the Middle States for innovative seed programs for our gifted and talented and for our faculty, and over the last five-year period, our students have been accepted at the major universities in this country without any problems. In fact, in graduating a class -- now we're talking a high school of 700 students -- we had three of our students at the Naval Academy in the same class. We are a very rural district without the resources of some other school districts, so monitoring can serve a purpose if it's used correctly.

Finally, we found the monitoring team to be helpful. We were not threatened. The premonitoring visits set down all the guidelines. If we had any questions, the people at our county were readily available; they were helpful. There were no hidden agendas; they came into our school district. We welcomed them. They visited the classrooms, and none of our teachers felt threatened. Believe it or not, the taxpayers in the State of New Jersey -- and in any state -- they like to know that their school districts are being monitored or reviewed by some outside organization. Obviously we toot our own horn. We tell them how well we're doing and that they should support the school district, but they like to hear from someone else that the school district is doing well.

For all of those reasons, I would support monitoring, and if you have some loose change in your pocket, we'd like to have a little more money. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Assemblyman Kamin, I know you have to leave shortly, Dick?

ASSEMBLYMAN KAMIN: No, nothing. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say this: What you want to do is comply but at the same time, educate.

MR. STRACCO: True.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Now, wait. That's the easy part. You also mentioned pupil performance. I've said, and it's very difficult for me-- Don't forget, I'm a professional educator. I've been in this game for 30 years, the last 18 in school administration, and it's very difficult for me when I nod my head this way or that way, when you see that, to not show my prejudices. But I'm being objective, and it is a physical strain to be objective, to act here as an Assemblyman rather than an educator, which I am supposed to be here. But I have my own points of view, and it's difficult to separate the principal from the Assemblyman.

In terms of pupil performance, in a conference with a teacher yesterday, the issue of teaching the test, vis-a-vis teaching to the test, came up, and it tied in with a statement that I had made -- a question I had made: Is the State Department of Education involved in the "hows," the "how tos," as much as the "what's"? In other words, are they setting broad parameters and letting the professionals within the district operate, or are they telling you how to do it? That could translate into, in order to upgrade pupil performance, doing what the State wants you to do, a la the "hows." Would you care to comment on that?

MR. STRACCO: Well, again, I never felt that we were being mandated by the State Department as to "how to." I think that they asked that we achieve certain results and allowed the individual districts to work through their own process. Of

course, they gave it some support, but for the most part we had to rely on our own ingenuity and our own innovativeness, and quite frankly, it forced us to look at what we were doing for different levels of students. I think as a result, some of the programs, or our program, became stronger.

I think the hue and cry at most of the-- One of the things that we try to do at our school district -- and this is what you hear, and you've heard today, and you're going to hear it later -- is that you have to try to release the on-line faculty member from the minutia and from all the paperwork.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You just said, you just--

MR. STRACCO: So, what happens is, we have to try to institute programs in an innovative way allowing programs to develop through faculty input, but not get them involved in the administrative paperwork which is needed to produce the educational product. We've worked very hard on doing that, and I think we've been successful.

I would like to comment: The question was asked about when you have to reduce your budget because of financing, do you look at the building or do you look at programs? I would have to say, quite frankly, you look at the building first, but when you're looking at the huge sums that we've been cut, you have to take-- You have to institute a system of fairness. People look at you and there are certain things that need to be done, and so what happens is you begin to make cuts across-the-board. It not only affects the building, it affects the students, it affects the staff, and more frankly, it affects the morale of everyone who works in the building. It has a terrible effect.

I mean, I have to meet with my faculty tomorrow and indicate to them that we had previously felt that we were not going to make any staff cuts and now we're going to have to make four. That's not one of the more pleasant jobs that I have to do.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: No, it's not.

MR. STRACCO: So, whatever you do impacts on students. If you were planning to resurface a track or put in some new furniture in a segment of a building, students come back and they see the old torn up carpet and the furniture is dilapidated, well you wait a year. Now, next year you have less funding than you had the previous year so you wait another year. Then, you know, just as we have our own homes, if you don't routinely do maintenance, keep the building in nice shape, it costs you more three years down the line just by inflationary costs -- and then the extensive damage is done -- than it would be if you fixed it immediately, so it impacts on everything.

It's unfortunate. One of the things that we have to do, and it's sad, and I don't know how I could ever explain that, being an old social studies teacher-- The law in New Jersey is funding. We have to explain to our constituents that while this is the law, the Legislature and the Department of Education can abrogate the law even though it's on the books. Take it off the books if you're not going to enforce it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good point.

MR. STRACCO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say this for your information, and then I'm going to go on. Of the 65- or 70-odd people who have testified so far, they are split as to terms of whether the State is involved in the hows or the whats, so it's a neck and neck race there.

MR. STRACCO: Well, I think as an educator you have to--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Some people agree with you. Half agree, half disagree.

MR. STRACCO: Well, you have to rely on your own innovativeness.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Of course, of course, Doctor, and I agree with you personally.

MR. STRACCO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much.

Dr. Francis X. Heelan, Superintendent, Manville Borough School District. Doctor?

Excuse me, Doctor. I made a note, and forgot to do something. My good friend, Assemblyman Bill Schluter, the running mate and counterpart of Assemblyman Kamin, has just come in, and Bill, you're welcome to come up and sit and participate, certainly. (no audible response) You want to listen and cop out, okay. Stick Dick with it, all right.

Welcome, Doctor.

FRANCIS X. HEELAN, Ed. D. Thank you for being with us and listening to us. We certainly need to speak to members of the Legislature. The purpose of State monitoring of school districts is to insure compliance with State law and code. Monitoring gives the school district an opportunity to review the total scope of educational programs for students and to make appropriate changes in preparation for monitoring. In the case of the Manville School District, monitoring has encouraged us to focus on and improve curriculum and facilities. I'd like to select just those two.

Curriculum coordination was intensified in the previous two years and Dr. Allan Glatthorn of East Carolina University spearheaded staff development activities in aligning the scope and sequence of subject areas through the different grade levels. The most recent contract with teachers dealt with compensation of curriculum work, and in the previous six months 20% of staff wrote curriculum guides. Perhaps monitoring served as a prod for such strenuous curriculum activity.

I'd like to just point out that we have just gone through the monitoring process in February of this year, and for some reason, though you try to--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Are we being bugged or is that the bell? They're short periods if-- (referring to bell tone signaling changing of classes)

DR. HEELAN: Though we have tried to bring about a substantial number of curriculum guides earlier, it just so happened that it all came together in January of this year; just in time for monitoring.

School facilities was a second major area that was upgraded as a result of the monitoring process. The facilities, maintenance plans, and the annual inspection checklists have goaded the school district to invest heavily in the long-term needs of the buildings.

This was written before last night when we got together and had to cut the budget. We took \$300,000 out of facilities, but--

The Manville High School building--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What's your total budget, Doctor?

DR. HEELAN: In the area of \$8 million for next year, and I'll get into-- I'll touch on State aid--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

DR. HEELAN: --and what I think about the Jersey system of State aid in a minute.

But the Manville High School building is now 34 years old and requires major overhauling in terms of brickwork, roof, doors, and windows, and monitoring has facilitated our addressing these problems head-on and taking appropriate action. With monitoring impending, school boards of education are more willing to expend the dollars necessary to handle these facilities' needs, especially in a town like Manville with limited incomes.

I might say we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars even in the last year. We have the boilers, the asbestos removal; we've gone over the whole fire control system, water-- We've done, even now-- We're putting in a

track for the high school, so that there has been a tremendous amount. It's just how are we going to-- Where else can we cut for next year, mostly in terms of maintenance needs?

There are disadvantages to the monitoring process that have been mentioned: A bookshelf of materials must be produced to document progress towards monitoring; many administrators experience stress and fear of failure in preparing for the sometimes minuscule and cryptic demands of monitoring; and the State Education Department could conceivably manipulate the monitoring process to serve its own political purposes.

Nevertheless, our experience in Manville has been a positive one. Monitoring has been an experience like Outward Bound; the obstacles and problems encountered weld the staff team together for a common goal. In Somerset County, we have a competent, willing-to-help monitoring team led by County Superintendent Jim Loper and Monitoring Chairperson Sal Abitanta, who commended the school district for its lesson plans linked to district objectives and school goals, the professional attitude of the staff, and the planned curriculum. It wasn't in the official report but they made sure, particularly at the exit conference, to use it as a type of Middle States in terms of telling us also some of the quality programs and some of the outstanding things that should have been commended, and they did.

I just mention, unfortunately our success in passing the strict monitoring regulations has been rewarded with a 37% cut in State aid from full funding so that, in the income-poor district of Manville, State aid will pay only 14% of children's education and the inequitable, regressive system of property taxation must support the rest.

I just might mention: I've worked in two other school districts as an administrator. One was in New York State, the Tuxedo School District, one of the wealthiest in the nation, tops in achievement scores and it was-- We got about the same

amount in Tuxedo that you get in a poor income place like the Manville District in the State of New Jersey. Something's a little screwy.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How long ago was that?

DR. HEELAN: Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How long ago in Tuxedo?

DR. HEELAN: In the period 1977 to 1985.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Big difference.

DR. HEELAN: And I also worked in Bristol Borough, in Pennsylvania, and they had an opposite-- It was a similar type school district to Manville, and they supported about 80% of it, so they gave solid funding. We didn't have to run around and spend a great deal of our time going to court with the Borough Council and then having them not pay us anyway, instead of on education, but rather trying to get the revenue to do the job that we're supposed to be doing.

Also, I'd say that monitoring does have a salubrious effect of benefiting the education of our youth. We're not trying to get away from that. I think everybody has supported some type of a monitoring review by the State Education Department. But if monitoring does focus on 100% of the educational programs, why, then, does the State of New Jersey only fund a disgraceful 14% of the school budget in an income-poor town like Manville?

We are now-- The Borough Council is \$2 million in the hole and is also -- as I know Skip is very well aware of through Joe Patero, the Assemblyman there -- the Borough Council has applied for Distressed Cities aid. I understand that might take two years. I don't know where we'll be going from here, but to put it--

We kind of met last night and decided what could they possibly take in addition to what they have to pay for, because everything has come at once in the town. Everything from streets and sewers-- And granted, some of the things should

have been taken care of earlier, but we are in that predicament. Johns Manville has moved out. The effect of not having that as a tax base is hitting us more heavily now. They also have taken away trash removal, which was one of those company fringe benefits that would be handled, so we also have to put in tens of thousands of dollars for trash removal, which we've always had taken care of. So, it's just that in a State where you had the Robinson decision 15 years ago, it's just incredible to me that a town -- a poor-income town like Manville -- would only get 14% from the State.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No. I just wanted to recognize Dr. Heelan and to say hello. I know that you are absolutely correct. My counterpart who helps represent the 14th District-- We're very much aware of the problems in Manville, not only endemic to the school funding formula, but as well through the whole problem of it being a distressed area with regard to the loss of Johns Manville, and virtually a tax ratable base that has shrunk substantially. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, I just want to say this: You were into something very philosophical and correctly so, talking about funding and percentages. That's going to be addressed presently, when Abbott v. Burke-- Of course, everybody who knows everything has been telling you when it's going to be coming down the pike and seven people who know have all been wrong. It was supposed to have been out a week ago.

I don't know when the decision will be handed up, but at that point we will take a look at it, and of course, the lynchpin of the decision will be, as the Assemblyman said, the foundation method, whether the court will scrap the Chapter 212 formula totally, in part, and the percentage to what extent will it be reduced in terms of disparities. Then we're really going to have our hands full in trying to figure out what's

going, but it will be a happy problem because we can do something at that particular point.

Thank you for your testimony.

DR. HEELAN: Thank you very much, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dennis Sabo, Principal, Manville High School? Skip, have you been lining these people up?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No.

D E N N I S S A B O: Hi, good morning.

I usually base decisions in education on the best interests of the students. So, what I have here is a prepared testimony on an article that I wrote for the Manville News. I write an article on a regular basis in the Manville News as a means of communicating with parents; not just the parents, but also the entire community, because not everyone reads newsletters from the school but they will, sometimes, read the newspaper. The column is entitled, "A Note From The Principal," and it appears every other week.

The Friday before the designated monitoring team visit and before I had my next article written, which was due the following Thursday, students throughout the day stopped me in the hall and asked me about monitoring. The students and their questions about monitoring provided me the motivation and conviction to write my next article on the process of monitoring.

This is the article: "Last Friday, several students throughout the day asked me with expressions of sincerity on their faces and concern in their voices, 'Did we pass?' These students were not asking about their HSPT scores. They were asking about monitoring, the process that helps us to insure that our facilities are safe for teaching and learning.

"Our programs are coordinated and articulated K through 12; our teachers are certified and teaching in those areas in which they are certified; our teachers are teaching the curriculum; our curriculum addresses those areas mandated by the State; our

finances are in order; we communicate with the community; our Board of Education has approved of what we do; and, we are planning for the future.

"I don't think the students who asked me really know what the process is, but they certainly have the sense of monitoring and its importance to me and the school. Monitoring has permeated the lives and thoughts of not just the staff, but also the students.

"Why wouldn't we expect that? After all, the students are at the heart of the process. They are the focus of all the effort, energy, and paperwork behind the process. The students have the most to gain from the close scrutiny the schools will undergo during the monitoring visits.

"Passing will mean that we have met the tough standards and our district can proceed on our path using the tools, facilities, curriculum, and staff we have. Not passing will come with recommendations to improve those areas that did not meet the high standards of the elements and close scrutiny of the monitors. We are expecting to pass." As you heard from Dr. Heelan, we did pass.

"The students who asked me, 'Did we pass?' sensed the importance of the monitoring process because they heard staff talking about the monitoring process; saw the room inspections by our own staff; noticed the near constant use of the copier machine; and the physical changes in the building.

"For me, the monitoring process has been a lesson in accountability at its best. The process forces you to fine-tune the entire educational process. The process reminds you of what schools are all about."

That was the article that I had written.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Assemblyman, do you have questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I have no questions.

MR. SABO: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: A good presentation, thank you.

We have a teacher present; Pat McGrath, a teacher at Wallkill Valley High School, Sussex County.

P A T M c G R A T H: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good morning. It's still morning, you're right.

MR. McGRATH: The teacher part of me has a question at the outset. I have prepared testimony--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Sure, hand it up. Let me say this to you: If you hand us a statement, your statement will go into the record verbatim. If you paraphrase it, we're happy.

MR. McGRATH: Ordinarily I don't experience difficulty being heard. Being understood is another matter, of course, at times. So if I'm not speaking loudly enough, please inform me.

My name is Pat McGrath. I'm a reading specialist at Wallkill Valley Regional High School in northern New Jersey.

I am also a coordinator of the Basic Skills Improvement Program, as well as the district's Remedial Skills teacher; and I have instructed in the program for 12 years.

I am a veteran of five monitoring sessions. The last session pertained to the Basic Skills Program, Indicator, I believe, 7, of the State monitoring process. I have also served as a T&E Coordinator, so I am familiar with both sides of the monitoring question.

The monitoring process is dictated from the top down. Implementation begins at the State Department. It is then filtered down to the school administrators, department supervisors, and finally to the teacher. This is not unlike building a church by starting with construction of the steeple and working downward to the foundation.

Teachers should be offered a genuine opportunity to provide input. They are the ones who, of all school personnel, are the most instrumental in the education of the children.

Currently, the process is reversed; teachers and other school personnel have to do what the State wants them to do; and they have to do it exactly in the way the State wants it done.

The main thrust of monitoring, in my experience, has been on regulation and not education. Every "t" has to be crossed; every form has to be filled out to the satisfaction of a particular monitor.

I would like to just add a note of my own, not from the prepared statement, to reiterate, or to duplicate something said before: Our monitors in Sussex County are people from the County Office Division of the State Department, have been tremendously helpful to me personally over five years. My quarrel has been, in regards to monitors, is when someone comes from without of the confines of the county, as they do in the basic skills monitoring, they don't seem to understand our problems and it makes the situation very difficult in that respect. Our County Monitors are fine. Those who come from without the county, I think it's an entirely different matter.

Most monitors -- again speaking for the most part of those who are from out of the county -- have a preoccupation with correctness and voluminous documentation to the exclusion of quantitative teacher performance and program evaluation. This suggests to me a very myopic view of the nature of true educational assessment.

This is understandable when one realizes that those who have built the system, and in many cases those who implement it, usually have had little, if any, recent experience in the actual day-by-day instruction of children.

Again, I must take -- not issue -- but I must indicate that my experience is a little different in regards to what some superintendents have said today. Many administrators, constrained by long regulation-- Let me paraphrase this: The teachers in my particular case are labored with much paperwork,

and are required to do many extra tasks to comply with monitoring. Now, that has been the case up until the present. We are dealing with a new superintendent, and perhaps the process will be different. Heretofore, it has not, in our situation.

Many administrators, constrained by law and regulation under the current monitoring process, require their staffs to expend an immense amount of time and energy on the completion of tasks in which they have had no input. Almost unanimously, the teachers look on these tasks as needless, repetitive, and most of all, time-consuming -- time being a commodity of which there is precious little.

I would like to say a few words about the basic skills component of State monitoring.

Monitoring in the Basic Skills Program is done by an individual assigned by the central office in Trenton and not by local county representatives of the State Department.

This creates a problem because the individual usually has little or no understanding of local county problems and monitoring is usually conducted by a strict adherence to the rules and regulations as imposed by Trenton, and increasingly compounded by those added on by Washington, D.C. This occurs because of the federally funded portion of the Basic Skills Program known as "Chapter One."

The Federal government insists on performance objectives as well as assessment data of cognitive needs, thus duplicating what the State Department of Education requires. The Federal government, in addition, requires a totally different test and assessment method. This results in more paperwork, which essentially supplies the same information as required by the State.

I have been witness to a monitor who insisted on a prodigious amount of paperwork that far exceeded the legal requirements imposed by statute and code.

Specifically, I am referring to the ISIP, or Individual Student Improvement Program that must be included in the folder of each Basic Skills student and shared with his parents. This is in accordance with Title 18A:7C-1 and Public Law 241, 1979.

The law specifically states that the ISIP must include only the name of the person responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program; a process for notifying the parents, guardians, and pupils of the content of the ISIP; and an exit criteria.

I have seen these simple criteria parlayed by a monitor into a huge amount of paperwork required from the teacher responsible for the ISIP. This was in the form of consistent lesson planning, replanning, evaluation, and updating. The net result was that vital resources, energy, and time that would have been used in instruction were dissipated in the manufacturing of useless repetitive data. Teachers in the program were not evaluated and test data were all but discounted.

This, as well as other experiences, convinced me that the monitors review voluminous documentation and all but ignore program results.

The State Department of Education is reputed to be concerned about the concept of individual differences. This should hold true for individual school systems as well as for individual students. If a school system is very successful in a particular area of the monitoring process, why must it again submit to a total monitoring of all areas? The Department is operating under a tight budget. It seems logical to use decreasing resources in the most economical fashion. Monitor only those areas that are assessed in need of improvement.

The issuing of the State Report Card should provide the State Department of Education with sufficient information, at least in some areas, so that the State monitoring could be

more selective and directed at those program segments and school districts where the greatest need for monitoring is apparent. Previous monitoring reports could be of value here as well.

I would like to go over some suggestions that I know would be of value at least to the teachers of Sussex County:

- 1) Streamline the monitoring process by reducing the documentation involved for compliance with elements and indicators. Revise the process wherever applicable.

- 2) Require that documentation be sent to the State Department offices. This would eliminate the need for the monitors to spend unnecessary time in the districts. Monitoring, with the exception of some areas involving the physical plant, could be accomplished by receiving documentation and statements of assurances from the monitored districts. Except for the results of the HSPT and the absentee rate of students and faculty, there is very little quantitative evaluation done in the entire process. The physical presence of the monitors is not absolutely necessary.

- 3) The teaching staff should be provided with opportunities for input into the process. Teachers will be more amenable to complying with mandates they have had a part in developing.

- 4) Improve coordination of efforts between the Federal and the State governments where applicable, so that the process will become more effective.

- 5) Monitor only those areas in those districts that were deemed in need of improvement.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank the Assembly for providing me with this opportunity to speak. If this opportunity had existed for school personnel earlier, perhaps the monitoring process would not have become so unwieldy. I thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say, in all fairness to my predecessor Joe Palaia, even had I been Chairman two years ago, I think we needed a period of time to see what happened, to assess and monitor the monitoring, one might say, and then go forward. So I think we're right on target. I think it would have been premature to do it a couple of years ago.

I just want to say something to you, and then I'll turn it over to the Assemblyman. A lot of administrators, superintendents, administrative principals, and principals per se, concur in what you have just said.

MR. McGRATH: Assemblyman, this is one of a few areas -- and I regret to say this -- where there is complete agreement, for the most part; I can't say complete, but much agreement between administration and teachers. We're in this together.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I didn't say everybody, but a goodly number.

MR. McGRATH: No, but, as we said, much, many. And it's comfortable to be on the same side. We're on the same side, of course, but when you get into negotiations, and this and that, you have different points of view. We're totally in agreement on this. Scratch that, erase that; not totally, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Damn near.

MR. McGRATH: --largely.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Pat. We appreciate it.

Next, Dr. John A. Mulhern, Superintendent, Warren Hills Regional School District. Doctor? Doctor Mulhern, are you here? (no response) All right, we will go on.

Dr. Peter Merluzzi, Superintendent, Phillipsburg School District. Dr. Merluzzi? Welcome, sir.

P E T E R M E R L U Z Z I: Thank you. My comments will be very brief. I've been reading the reports of the hearings that have gone on before this event and I'd like you to just step back for a second and try and weigh the evidence in front of you. What I hear is a consistent barrage of negatives. I don't see much evaluation of the positives, and I would hope that you are going to do that as you go through the process.

I've probably been monitored as much as anyone else has in two districts. Over the course of the last four years, I've been monitored three times, successfully passing in one situation and not receiving approval in two others, so I know what both sides of the coin are like. I'm as familiar with the process as anyone else is. I know what it's like to be successful, and I also know what it's like to not receive certification. Does it make me afraid? No. I'm not afraid to fail monitoring, if that's what we want to call it. I don't look at it as a failure. I look at it as an opportunity to find problems, identify what they are, and set up a process whereby we correct those situations. That is certainly in the best interests of the students.

The same situation occurs in the classroom. We go into a classroom and we evaluate a teacher. The process is the same; we look at what's going on in that classroom. We try and provide suggestions for improvement; we go back later and we see if that classroom does, in fact, improve, and the situation is better for the students. That's the same process we go through with monitoring. I don't look at it as a negative. I think it's a positive for our State and, I think, for our students.

In terms of the paperwork that's involved, I've not found that to be the case. I think if you are preparing and you look at this as an ongoing process, the things that are done commonly in a district will prepare you in terms of what you're going to need for documentation in any of the monitoring

situations. What I have found is that probably the biggest difficulty that I have perceived is with the facility area, and I think that's an area that has been addressed previously.

I think the process is good. I think it's a process that is goal oriented and it is something that we should be supporting. I think we're looking at compliance. One of the other gentlemen addressed the fact that we're being barraged with other issues: asbestos, right to know, so on and so forth. I think enough said about that, but that in itself is more problematic to me than the whole monitoring process.

I think the biggest issue we should look at is some changes that might be made in the future to make the process better. I believe the process should continue to be goal oriented with measurable objectives. I think the County Office needs to be given more flexibility. It's my understanding, in talking to County Office staffs in both counties, that they are given very little flexibility in terms of giving the district some commendations for a job well done. If we evaluate a classroom teacher we don't only look at the negatives, the things that are done wrong or the things that are not up to snuff. We also look at the positives and try and balance those. I think if this were a permissible area for the County Office, I think what you would see is people wouldn't be as afraid of the monitoring process as they are now. It would not be seen as a total negative. There would be a balance in the process, so I think that's something that should occur.

I have to say that in dealing with both of the County Offices I found them to be extremely supportive. I think you've heard that before. The premonitoring process is excellent. The cooperation I've received throughout the process has been fantastic. Even after not receiving certification, the ongoing assistance that I got from the County Office and from the State was quite helpful. So, I think, you know, as far as what we're getting from the County Office and the State level, I can find no fault with it.

As far as what we might do to improve, I'd like to see us address the situation when the district is successful in monitoring for a period of two times, and we go through Cycle II, perhaps there should be a change in Cycle III. Maybe Cycle III should not occur for 10 years, such as a Middle States evaluation, with the objective being for the district to set up a series of goals that it would want to accomplish, that would benefit its students and allow them to go and work on those particular goals over the course of the next 10 years, and then receive the monitoring at that period.

I think the Cycle III needs some changes, and I think we have to work toward that right now. I think we can work with the monitoring. I think we can accomplish it, but as I said previously, I can't accomplish what is best for my students with the reductions in State aid. I think you've heard that time and time again today. I lost \$1,068,000 yesterday. That's a 50 cent per hundred increase in a very poor community. I can't substantiate running a good program for my kids with those kinds of reductions, and I think it's high time that if you expect quality, then it's time that we pay for that quality. We can't expect the burden to fall all on the shoulders of the local taxpayers.

I think we have to look at the regulations. The law requires that the districts be funded at a certain level, yet the law is not followed. The same thing occurs in other areas, but if it's us and we seem to fall and get the negative ax for it, I think you're going to have to balance that out. I would urge you to do whatever you can to do something to redistribute or to improve the funding aspect for the upcoming school year.

In summation, I think the monitoring process for the districts that I've been involved with has been positive, and I would support it wholeheartedly. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: A question, Doctor: Did you involve your educational staff in terms of input in going through this three times in the last four years.

MR. MERLUZZI: In both situations, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, thank you very much. I'm sorry I had to leave for a second, but I had--

Mr. Donald T. Falato, Magnolia Borough. Mr. Falato? (no response) Okay, we'll put a circle around his name and he's welcome to testify later.

Jerry Clymer, Superintendent, Pohatcong Township School District?

J E R R Y A. C L Y M E R: Good morning. I think it's still morning. I would like to reflect a little bit on what Mr. Merluzzi has stated, that I, too, personally, do not have a problem with the monitoring process. I think it should be known -- and I'll be very brief -- that monitoring has provided me personally with accountability in the school district. It gives the community something to look forward to. Also, it's provided me with clout. There are things that had to be done within the district and it's provided me the tools to do such. I'd also like to say possibly, if you are looking for any reform in regards to monitoring in the area of purgatory-- In other words, if you do not need an element, there should be time involved in order to rectify such. Also, I think there should be more flexibility given to the County Superintendents. I think they know how your school district is run, and I think they should be given an opportunity. Also, I feel possibly we look at monitoring more in a negative aspect because commendations are missing on the final reports. I think that's something that should be instilled.

I've been through monitoring twice. We've done well twice, but I think that's because of the monitoring process itself. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me ask you a quick question. Skip, go ahead. You have to leave.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: A question to you, as well, Doctor: What do you mean by, "It provided me with more clout"? With whom did it provide with--

MR. CLYMER: All right, with regards to facilities, for example, I'll take one area. There were things that had to be -- I would say rectified -- in regards to the building, in regards to the money aspect. It was very simple to go to the Board of Education and state the fact that we need a new roof, we need doors, etc. It will cost "X" amount. It was a given.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: So you do see it as a panacea to help you in the dialogue between the administrative branch of educational government and the policy-making arm of it.

MR. CLYMER: Absolutely, absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I just have a couple of quick questions: Would you have done the things you had to do without the intensity of monitoring? Would you have dogged it, in other words?

MR. CLYMER: I don't think you dog it--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I don't mean it that way, but would you have not done so good a job? Did you have to be prodded?

MR. CLYMER: No, what happens is-- As we all well know, as we've been cut State aid, you have to look at other areas. Therefore, those areas would have been cut from the budget. Period.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Got you. Let me ask-- You mention the role of the County Superintendent. Why do you say that? There are some people who are asking questions -- including one Assemblyman -- whether we need 21 County Superintendents or should the State divide it into 10 or 11 districts? Why do you say the role of the County Superintendent should be enhanced or expanded?

MR. CLYMER: I think so, because the County Superintendent is the leader of your area in regards to the school district as a whole. They know the districts within their county, and I think when there are some areas of questionability as far as, "Do you have a good school system?" or, "Where are we with this element?" I think they should have the ability to say, "Okay, go on from here." and not have to worry about, "Okay, you either fail this element or you pass it." I think they should have the final say.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I will say this in conclusion and let you go, and thank you. I think the days are gone when County Superintendents-- You'll never return to those days -- if anybody has any wild notions -- when County Superintendents handled only certification. For those of you who have been assistant principals -- I know I was Assistant Principal of Trenton High -- who received a form stating that a student had been suspended for more than five days -- and that was about what County Superintendents did until Brendan Byrne flagged them in 1973 -- but in terms of going beyond what they do now, I don't know. I think the jury is still out on that, Doctor, but thank you for your suggestion.

MR. CLYMER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: We're moving along. Dr. William Adams, Salem County Vocational and Technical Schools. Dr. Adams? (no response) Okay, we'll come back to him if he shows up.

Albert Purdy, Chief School Administrator, Lopatcong Township Schools.

A L B E R T P U R D Y: First of all, I'd like to preface my remarks by thanking you very much for providing an administrator from a small school district in Warren County, on the end of I-78 before it goes into Pennsylvania, with an opportunity to present some concerns or facts and figures or whatever.

Too often legislation is passed, and my question is: Do we really look at the small school, at the administrator who is down in the trenches on a daily basis? I'm just a chief school administrator; I'm not a doctor. I have a school of 43 teachers and another 10 supportive staff. We have 535 students. On a daily basis I'm evaluating teachers in the classroom, observing. When the hot water booster goes bad in the cafeteria, I take care of making the arrangements to have someone come in. Air handling units on the roof, when there is a problem, I take care of that. I'm fortunate to have an Assistant Principal who helps with the transportation, the discipline, the BSI programs, and so forth.

Looking at the monitoring process as far as my perspective, I see it as a very positive force. Basically I have been through two monitoring sessions, or two levels of monitoring back in '85 and also with this present one, just February of 1990. The past monitoring cycle we had a curriculum guide about this thick. (displays thickness) It was very sketchy, but it met requirements for monitoring. This time around we have this document, and contrary to a lot of--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What are you holding up there?

MR. PURDY: Our curriculum guide.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, God.

MR. PURDY: I don't think it is unusual for the area. It's just the fact that this time around I feel more comfortable with what we have in this guide. Every teacher had input into it. The Board of Education made it a priority to have staff involved -- which should be, and which we had involved all along -- and we spent a couple of days during the summertime doing a thorough job -- after school was out. Nothing was taken away from the educational process. Students still got a very good education, but we have the paper--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Nothing at all? Was there any overtime? Was any of this preparation done after--

MR. PURDY: Yes, it was done two to three days in the summer.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

MR. PURDY: I have things on a five-year cycle, which is a positive that came out of the monitoring.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Some districts can't afford that, I want to point out.

MR. PURDY: True. For a small district our size, it cost us about \$9000, in the amount of time that it took and so forth, mostly secretarial time during the summertime and throughout the school year. But I see that as a plus in light of the fact that I'm heavily involved in curriculum areas, and I think that's what we're all about -- the educational process.

Prior to the monitoring cycle, textbooks were reviewed and evaluated, but there was no clout. Or, it wasn't that something required us to do that, unless it was the administrator's prerogative to keep books current and to update curriculum. It hasn't been-- Many schools of our size-- About ten years ago, astronauts in the science books still hadn't set foot on the moon, so it was time we have to start looking at books, and we've been doing that. We pride ourselves in that, and we've come a long way.

So, with the ideas in the curriculum guide, I see that as a plus -- the teachers brought into the program. They're very supportive of it, and do not take valuable time away from our students. Our students still do very well on the MBS test, the CTBS, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills that they take, and education goes on. We have no problem with that.

Another element -- I think 6.3 -- helped us in certain respects during negotiations where the annual rate of occasional absenteeism for the professional staff should not exceed 5%. Just going through negotiations for the last year-and-a-half, and also fact-finding, our staff was 2.7% absenteeism in '88-'89, and '89-'90 up to the time of

monitoring was 2%, and the Board used that as the basis for not allowing additional personal days, additional sick days, or family illness days. The fact that it was required in monitoring-- Hopefully, the Board didn't want it to get to the point where if it was abused-- We'd have to start providing additional incentive moneys to not use your days, so we saw this as a definite plus.

Mandated programs: 150 minutes of health, safety, and phys ed. I have two full-time phys ed teachers and a full-time nurse. Everybody in the school gets three 45-minute periods of this part of the requirement, but we're still 15 minutes short, which requires the regular classroom teacher to, once a week, sometime during the day, provide at least a minimum of a 15-minute class to get into the health aspect or family life or to provide phys ed, according to our phys ed curriculum. We're not counting recess; recess doesn't count. It has to be structured.

In the back of my mind, and also some of my colleagues', we're looking at something, 150 minutes of health, safety, and phys ed but, nowhere is there a mandate for how much math, or how much reading, or anything else. I would wish that would be looked at closely. I also participated in and attended a couple of meetings by Dr. Cooperman regarding the requirement on the high school level. Hopefully maybe that would come down into the high school level, and prioritize our time to put it where we're always tested and compared throughout the country, and throughout the world, how well our students do in math and reading. We're usually on the bottom of the pile, but I haven't read any statistics lately where our students are more physically fit than anyone else, so it makes it a kind of a paradox in my estimation. I would hope there would be some movement somewhere along the line about requiring other things.

I think a step in the right direction is the Prism program, trying to copy some of the curriculums of other countries as far as math is concerned to improve our students in math performance, where an hour a day must be allocated toward math, five days a week with intensive in-service. Basically, like anything else, if somebody else is doing something better, let's copy and see what they are doing and try to modify and adapt it to our own needs.

As far as additional mandates, the gifted and talented program: I spend \$17,560 a year for a teacher working three days a week.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Give me that figure again, please?

MR. PURDY: Seventeen-thousand-five-hundred-and-sixty dollars: salary, \$16,560, supplies \$1000.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How many students are in that program?

MR. PURDY: We have 48 students, and we get no State funding at all for our mandated program, our gifted and talented.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I didn't veto the bill.

MR. PURDY: Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I wasn't the one who vetoed the bill.

MR. PURDY: No, I'm not-- I'm looking at mandates and where we're getting aid and where we're not getting aid. As you can see, I'm leading up to something. Our BSI program-- We're fortunate to have two teachers in that program. We do a great job with the kids. State aid is \$50,885 out of a total of \$86,048 that we're spending on the program, and \$35,000 is supported by the Board. The Board puts in their own moneys of \$35,000 to keep the program going with two full-time teachers, so the Board does subsidize that because they see it as a viable thing to help these children along who need the help. We'd rather do it now at the elementary end than wait until they have problems with the HSPT on the high school end.

I know a lot of schools provide service. If they get "X" number of dollars then they only provide that amount of service, so our Board has made a commitment to the educational process.

Getting into facilities mandates: A colleague of mine in a neighboring district whose building was built in 1927-- OSHA came through, and the State Department of Education also during the monitoring process, and recommended unit ventilators in the classrooms. Prior to this it was steam radiators, and during the summertime or the warmer months, the windows were opened a little bit. The kids got a beautiful education. They did well since 1927. Now this chief school administrator has to come up with 60,000 additional dollars to put unit ventilators in the building, with no State support, with no State funding. He broke it over a two-year plan of \$30,000 each year and with the recent cuts -- the additional cuts we received last Friday -- he's looking at another \$30,000, which is about a two-and-a-half cent increase in his taxes. They might just have to cut that installation and move it off a year, due to the fact that it doesn't directly affect students.

Our building's a little bit newer. The addition that we put on in '75 has rooftop units, heating ventilation, and air controlled proper air exchanges, and I'm putting in \$8000 to \$10,000 a year just maintaining those on repair contracts, whereas probably with his system -- heat steam radiators -- the moisture is in the air during the winter months and it doesn't cause any dryness and probably didn't have any problem with that for years, or will he have it for many years to come. We're looking at when facilities are mandated, or when improvements come along that are mandated by OSHA or by the State Department of Education, you know, moneys aren't allocated, or moneys aren't coming from the State to help defray some of that cost. Consequently it goes onto the taxpayer.

In closing, just briefly, no one is satisfied with the budget cuts and our funding figures and so forth, but basically my concern has always been, based over the last couple of years. Our budget routinely gets defeated for one reason or another. Even one year, our budget-- We reduced the budget by 11 cents, and 33% of the voters who came out to vote, in fact, voted against the budget, which was odd. When only 3% of the voters came out to vote, one-third of those voters who came out to vote voted against the budget. There was a reduction and they still voted against it.

In '88-'89, we had a 13% increase in our budget. Obviously we should never have cut it the year before, but we felt that if we raised it and we didn't need it, we gave it back to the taxpayers, so going into '88-'89, 7%, close to 8% of the taxpayers -- the eligible voters -- voted, and voted the budget down. Last year in '89-'90 our budget was again defeated and only 7% of the eligible voters came out to vote, which leads me to the conclusion that the school elections -- and the budgets are going up routinely, a penny, two pennies, 10 cents, 20 cents on a hundred -- in our area usually get defeated. It's about the last chance anyone has to vote negative against increasing costs, but do they really understand the problems and programs of running a school? We send out extensive brochures explaining the process, where the moneys are being allocated, and how much we're spending on tuition to the high school area that we're in a sending and receiving relationship with.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Mr. Purdy, I think you're straying a little bit from the subject of monitoring. Could you--

MR. PURDY: Okay. Well, basically to draw to a conclusion--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you.

MR. PURDY: --in some areas, just basing the process with another \$150,000 cut we just received last week, it looks like our budget will be going down again. Other than \$50,000 that we have in for extensive roof repairs that we're looking at, it looks like we'll be cutting facilities without jeopardizing programs. Hopefully, how I see one tying in with another, monitoring mandates certain things occur. I think the process-- We've been doing our job all along for the last two cycles. Possibly those of us who passed two times could be lessened the third time around and be more intense if, like, on a school basis, setting a schoolwide goal, spreading it out over the year, rather than an intense one week. Maybe the financial end could be done, and desk monitoring in the County Office. We send our budgets up there every year for adequacy and accuracy. We're audited every summer. Things like that are looked at very closely.

Also, curriculum. I think that could be done during the year rather than all during one week, with somebody coming in and taking a look at that. I think facilities, someone coming in and checking the facilities sometime during the year, but not everything based during that one week of intensive-- Everyone on edge worrying about did we dot our i's? Did we cross our t's?

Basically, in summation, yes, I support the monitoring system. I'd like to see some kind of modifications. It does provide us with an opportunity to provide services for our students in a manner in which we can afford.

I thank you very much for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor. Skip?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor.

MR. PURDY: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Next, Art Smith, Superintendent, High Point School District in Sussex County.

A R T H U R R . S M I T H : Good morning, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Are you anything to an H. Arthur Smith III, a columnist at The Trenton Times?

MR. SMITH: I wish I were, but I'm not.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I wish you were, too. He was always good to me.

MR. SMITH: Thank you for the opportunity, gentlemen, to discuss monitoring. I've been in the business about 35 years. I've served on all levels: as a teacher, a department supervisor, principal in a couple of districts. I've been a Superintendent 19 years, and as I'm in a beautiful school today that I'm sure does a very fine job, I consider my school district in that same category. Although we're not wealthy -- we're a "C" factor statewide, so our funding source is not what many other districts have -- we have successfully passed 18 of 19 budgets, and we're in the middle of building a \$10 million referendum to our schools, so I've been through the process and I know what it takes to be successful.

I must say I subscribe to a monitoring system, to an evaluation system. I've been involved in Middle States evaluations. I've served on Middle States committees. I've been through our process. We've been successful. I think it works. I think if you look at it as an evaluation and as an opportunity to improve your district and you do the things that you are supposed to do to seek improvement, then it can be a successful operation.

Certainly every system can be improved. I think that when you talk about an approach of compliance or you're talking diagnostic, or you're talking of an approach for a performance improvement, you probably have to use an eclectic approach. You've got to use components of all those systems. I think, however, that if the school district views the monitoring process to be one of improvement and uses it as you do Middle States to achieve some goals for yourself and seek improvement, you are being successful.

We have gotten a great deal of assistance from our County Staff, and through the leadership of our County Superintendent, Bernie Andrews. I could say that I have always tremendously respected the system of operation that has existed in Sussex County and it has provided -- as you have heard today -- a lot of support to our districts, and I hope that would continue. I think that monitoring helps to improve or foster the improvement of quality educational services for the kids of our State, and that's important. I think it serves as a bond between the school district and the Department of Education and achieves some goals in the delivery of these services. I think it serves to communicate how a school is doing and it holds school districts accountable in certain areas.

However, I think there are areas we can improve upon, being through the process, getting ready for the process again, comparing it to Middle States evaluations. I think we have to make it more diagnostic. It has to be an evaluative approach if it's going to facilitate improvement. I think we should be concerned about negative elements involved. You've heard people talk about being branded. It is always difficult to be branded, particularly if you don't prioritize your elements. I think it's important to prioritize those elements. Simply because you don't hand a form in on time and that form is late for whatever reason, it should not have the same weight as the school curriculum program, or one of the other stronger elements in the monitoring process.

I think the districts that do well, like Middle States, you should award a longer certification period. It's not necessary to get back in a five-year period. That's my personal opinion. You certainly can extend that to seven or ten years. I think you will facilitate the process better for many other schools that probably need more help.

I think you can address, obviously, the impact of State funding. I think probably the thing that I have seen

over the years in the State of New Jersey, serving those 35 years in New Jersey-- It seems to be that every year becomes more of a crisis year for education, and we shortchange kids, because I can honestly say, if we are in a leadership role -- and obviously we must look to our Governor and our legislators as the leaders-- If education is the priority that we say it is, then at least let's fund it, and let's put that issue behind us. I certainly think if you stack up New Jersey with the other 49 states, we don't fair well in the percentage of funding from our State level. Most states are up close to the 50% level. We're talking this year -- and you heard it this morning -- in the areas of 70, low 80s.

I think also when you talk about impacting taxes-- We did an analysis recently. If we had full funding -- we've only had it once in the last--.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Twice.

MR. SMITH: Well, I'm talking about the last 10 years.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh.

MR. SMITH: Through Governor Kean's second term, or going into it, we had full funding. We showed a tax decrease that year. If our legislators want to do a job in reducing property taxes -- and I think you've heard this before so it's repetitious, I'm sure -- the simplest thing is: fund education. Establish it as a priority, and you automatically reduce taxes. Our district, if we had received full funding, we would have shown basically a 1.2% tax increase with about an 8% increase in the budget. We're now going to have to go out to our populace with tax increases of 18% to 24%, just on the basis of the last reduction.

People can't have confidence in their schools. They can't have confidence in their legislators. They can't have confidence in their educational leaders when we don't fund at the level that we should be funding, or that our neighboring states fund, or that basically, the majority of the states fund.

When there are reports that come out in The Star-Ledger that there are only four states that have a higher tax situation than New Jersey, and those states don't have an income tax or a sales tax, we should really be hanging our heads high, but in a negative fashion. I think it's just a disgrace from the standpoint of the priorities that we place on education. I'd rather see all of our legislation set aside all of the decrees and the proliferation of regulations until they can address the funding issue, and when that becomes a reality, then everybody will be agreeable to be more accountable for the whole thing.

I thank you very much for the opportunity, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Skip, questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I just want to say this. It will be a priority, but there is something I want to point out to everybody here: When the court ruled in 1973, Robinson v. Cahill, the mandamus, the abiding aspect, was placed upon the shoulders of the legislative branch. It was not binding upon the executive branch because of the balanced budget amendment in the Constitution. Therefore, you had one branch of the government with a charge from the court, and the other branch legally did not have to follow it, and the Governor, by law, must submit a balanced budget. It was in the dictum in the Robinson case, and I predicted that we would have another Robinson v. Cahill case shortly, and Senator Stockman, who at the time was preparing to run for the Assembly, made the same statement. A lot is going to depend on how the Abbott v. Burke decision is worded, and right now it's a wait and see attitude. Luckily within a few weeks-- And then we'll have to take it from there, but I certainly share your frustrations.

There are a lot of states less wealthy than we are, and they do a hell of a lot more with education than we do, and it's really unfortunate. I sit here as a New Jerseyan, as an

educator, and as a member of this Committee and say that, and if I don't say that, there's something wrong. Thank you very much.

Next, we're going to break at-- Skip? Assemblyman Cimino has to leave.

Skip, do you want to say a few words before you go?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Just simply, I want to thank everyone for coming out today. As we have gone through the course of the State, the comments are not dissimilar from other areas that we're hearing from. Needless to say, it's nice to have that reinforced as a broad statewide perspective.

I can also tell you that we all share your concerns about the funding crisis. My home municipality lost \$9 million in State funding just the other day, and we look at a tax rate increment of about 50 cents per hundred, just to do schools in a rollover budget. That's not to talk about any advancement of program, and they are facing the monitoring situation with which they have to deal in the coming year, so we certainly understand that.

I think that the Governor understands it. I think this particular Governor understands the necessity to fund, but I also think he has to deal with some very real problems all of which deal with the unfortunate set of circumstances that put in place a budget that was short revenue to begin with, and in the situation that we find ourselves today in New Jersey-- We've never been in this situation before where the State effectively could run out of money before the fiscal year is over. It's an unfortunate set of circumstances. I think we will be moving to resolve that issue, but regardless of Abbott v. Burke, I think the Governor has attempted to set down some kind of redistribution formula, and I certainly hope that in the course of things as this unfolds, that we can have your positive comments as to how we can eradicate that problem, and

that you will, in fact, be in touch with your legislators to insure that they understand the necessity of doing what needs to be done to correct the problems for educational funding.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Assemblyman. We appreciate your coming all the way up from Hamilton Township.

Well, we're a one-man show. Unless somebody else comes in and takes a handoff once in awhile, I'm going to have to do a lot of bootlegging here. Tony DeCanzio, Superintendent, West Amwell School District. Dr. Tony DeCanzio? Thank you.

A N T H O N Y D e C A N Z I O: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you.

MR. DeCANZIO: Which it still is. I represent a typical small district in Hunterdon County, a K-6 school. I am a one administrator school district with no assistants, which is also very typical of most of the school districts in Hunterdon County except for the regionals. I have successfully completed monitoring twice, and both times the preparation process was extremely time-consuming and it did take a lot away from what a one-school administrator normally does in the course of his day, or her day, which has also been discussed this morning. You do become a jack-of-all-trades, obviously.

For small schools, when you have a staff of 20 or 25, what the chief school administrator is doing is "actually monitoring everyday." Just by simply walking into the building and being there, you are monitoring in essence, but there can be a plus through the monitoring process from an outside group such as a County Office, which in our case-- As has been said in other counties, we are very fortunate to have the kind of people that we do have in our county, to work with us.

The process can be very beneficial to a small school district if the process was actually devised to improve

instruction, the key words being "instruction, curriculum, staff development, or programs which directly affect children." Then the time and the effort and the money being spent would be well worth it. As far as those of us who represent small districts are concerned, we are-- Because we are one-school chief administrators, and need daily assistance of one kind or another, because we simply don't have anyone else to turn to but the people in our County Office, which is the one point I'd like to make today in terms of my major concern over monitoring which might be somewhat different than some of the things you may have heard-- Also, the effect it is having on the County Office, especially in Hunterdon County--

We are a county which operates very closely with our County Office because we are made up of so many small school districts. We have worked together -- school districts in Hunterdon County -- in terms of shared services, transportation, and joint purchasing. Most of the things that we do together are orchestrated through our County Office. At one time we did have a full-time person in charge of finance. We also had a full-time person in charge of special education issues, the County Superintendent, and two full-time County Helping Teachers. Those were the good old days. Now we share our County Business Administrator and our person in charge of special education with Somerset County. The position of Helping Teacher, of course, doesn't exist anymore at all.

It now becomes an overwhelming to almost impossible task for these people to serve our small districts as they once were able to. It has nothing to do with their capabilities; they're quite capable of serving us. It is simply a matter of time. If they are out monitoring 29 districts in Hunterdon County and 20 districts in Somerset County, it virtually becomes impossible to have contact with these people on issues that are very critical to us as they are to any other school

district in New Jersey in terms of special education issues, hearings, problems with placement of classified students, etc., etc.

At this time of the year, budget issues with the budget cuts -- which everyone has addressed this morning -- in terms of formulating budgets, cutting them, reformulating them, submitting forms, etc.-- If you have your County School Business Administrator monitoring, it's almost impossible to make contact with that individual, so it becomes a very difficult thing.

With a fully staffed County Office and a system devised for actually assisting districts, then I would say that monitoring would have a point or a place. You could call it monitoring. You could call it technical assistance. You could call it a resource program; give it any title that you would like, but I think the concept itself certainly has a place in public education. The point is, we need help to improve our educational system. We don't need help in walking through buildings looking for dead bolts and cracks in sidewalks and how many footcandles are on a room, etc., etc.

I think we need to get back to education. We need to reestablish our priorities through the monitoring system, and we need to get back the personnel in our County Offices that we once had, fully staffed, that can begin to service -- especially those of us in Hunterdon County where there are so many small districts, and one chief school administrator in each.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. Let me just ask you something. I'm going to try to give some direction to this meeting, and I hope some of you will address this. No one has mentioned the issue of student attendance.

Let me give you an example: Let's go back 12 years to when I was a principal at Trenton High. I suspend Johnny Jones

for five days. Johnny Jones makes the work up. It doesn't count against Johnny Jones under the students' rights decision, the Goss v. Lopez decision of 1975, yet it kills people in education.

A case in point: There was a school in Mercer County in which three kids wound up in the hoosegow for six days each. In a special needs facility, there were 70-some kids in the school, and they were running about 89%. That dropped them to about 69%, and the school could have batted 100% for the rest of the month and couldn't have made the 80%. A lot of people say that students have more rights there than professional educators. A student will be excused for doing what a professional educator would be creamed for, in effect. How do you feel about that?

MR. DeCANZIO: Student attendance, per se, I don't think is really a problem as far as the rural counties, or this particular county, but I think what you're saying is true in terms of staff attendance versus student attendance in the whole issue of monitoring. Assuming that adults have problems which are very real and which would require them not to be attending school, yes, a district can be penalized.

A district such as mine -- the first time we went through -- had a real problem with staff attendance only because at that time there were only 17 of us in the whole building, or in the whole district, four of whom had some very serious medical problems, and it caused problems for us. They were very real. You know, nobody was out in the Caribbean on vacation or anything. We were able to address that, of course, but as you said, had it been students who were having the same kinds of problems, we wouldn't have been affected quite as badly.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thanks very much. We're going to break right now and we'll reconvene here around-- It's 12:00

noon now. We're going to break and we'll return here about 1:00. I'd like to have everything concluded by 3:00. One of the reasons is I have a meeting in Newark with Assemblyman Kelly, and also Assemblyman Willie Brown, who is the Deputy Speaker, whom I don't like to keep waiting. But I think we've been zeroing in on essence, not substance. We've been saying a lot in a few words. I'm very pleased with the way things have been going, so let's take a break, and I'll see you back here at 1:00.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: If I could smoke in here, I would, to warm things up. Where are we here? All right, Jim Swalm, who-- Damn it, I wanted to hear him testify because Jim, along with Paul Muller, was very instrumental with Ralph Petio, (phonetic spelling) in writing the T&E law. I wanted to hear him talk about Chapter 212. I'm going to call him and talk to him. Jim couldn't stick around; he had a 1:00 meeting. If I had known, if he had told me, I would have moved him out of order, but I definitely wanted to hear him.

Let's go back here. All right, I'm going to call out some names here. Wayne-- Call that off, will you? I can't even-- (addressing Committee Aide)

MR. ROSEN (Committee aide): Threlkeld.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Is he here? (negative response from audience) He left, all right, let's cross it off. Jim Clark? Is Jim here, from Hopatcong?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER IN AUDIENCE: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I'll tell my cousin to straighten him out. Down to John Mulhern. These are guys I wanted to hear testify, too. I hope they come to Glassboro.

John? (no response) I'm only going to call you once. If you don't answer, forget it.

Donald Falato -- Faleto -- whatever it is. It all depends on what part of Italy he's from, or his parents. Don? (no response)

Dr. Adams?

All right, we spoke to-- Next is okay. That's about it then.

Suzane Krewson, teacher? It's good to have a teacher here. Suzane, come on up.

S U Z A N E K R E W S O N: Yes. I apologize. I've never done this before, so I don't mean to be the mystery lady.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You'll probably do a better job than everybody else.

MS. KREWSON: I'm a second grade teacher at Holland Township School in Hunterdon.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That means you haven't built up a lot of bad habits.

MS. KREWSON: I don't know about that, but I am a second grade teacher in Holland Township in Hunterdon County.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What grade?

MS. KREWSON: Second, so I'm much more comfortable with seven-year-olds than adults. When I walked in this morning and saw everyone looking--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I deal with a lot of people with second grade mentalities, but they're older than seven.

MS. KREWSON: There is a little bit of difference. I'm going to give a different perspective, if I may.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Love it.

MS. KREWSON: I spoke to teachers around Hunterdon County. I spoke to teachers from 14 different school districts, either on the phone, in person, or in writing and asked them for their thoughts and comments concerning monitoring, how it affected them, and how they felt about it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Excuse me, Suzane. Give me your school district again?

MS. KREWSON: Holland, as in Dutch people. Holland Township.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: This would be in Hunterdon?

MS. KREWSON: Hunterdon. So I spoke to--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You're in Kamin, Zimmer, and Schluter country.

MS. KREWSON: Schluter, yeah.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: The big three. Okay.

MS. KREWSON: I spoke to them on the phone, in person, and asked them how monitoring affected them, how they felt about it. I got a lot of negative, kind of curses over the phone, but I said, "Rather than condemning, you must give me a solution to the problem." So, I have a variety of different ideas that I would like to put forth, also, along with some criticisms of the system itself.

The general feeling was that because we're a very rural county -- we have a district that has three-and-a-half teachers, to a large one like North Hunterdon here with over 300 -- we have a wide variety. The sizes of the school, the amounts of pupils are very different, and their needs are different.

Overall, they felt that monitoring was worthwhile. It forced districts to have up-to-date curriculums, which didn't always happen. It forced districts to have a five-year plan, which didn't always happen. It forced -- I'll use the term "difficult" -- boards to do the building and grounds and maintenance that had to happen, so there are a lot of positive things with monitoring from a teacher perspective.

Their biggest complaints were paperwork and the amount of money that's wasted. I've heard many people before me say the paperwork wasn't bad, teachers weren't involved, people

didn't care, but I beg to differ. When you're in a very small district with one chief school administrator and 20 teachers, they still need the three-foot high--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How many students?

MS. KREWSON: I don't know. I'm using an example, maybe 200. They still need the three-foot high pile of paper that someone from Paterson needs, I mean, if we're talking in terms of distance and how things are measured. That's what I was told in my district, that the pile has got to be high enough, because that's what they look at first.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me interrupt you, Suzane. How many classified students in that district, do you have any idea? There's a reason I'm asking this.

MS. KREWSON: No, I don't. I mean, I'm just using it as a general example.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right, there's a reason I'm posing the question.

MS. KREWSON: But they still need the same forms, the same paperwork that has to be done whether it's a large urban district or a small district. The same kinds of things have to be filled out, and in an instance, they hired substitutes for the regular teacher. So there were substitutes in the classroom, and the regular teachers were off in a room going through, making sure everything was up-to-date. I mean, if it's supposed to help education, get a Kelly Girl rather than having the regular classroom teacher do that kind of stuff.

But small districts are penalized in some ways because of the excess, and the teachers-- It's a wonder that-- I mean, I'm an environmentalist, and when you look at the trees that are killed for the sake of monitoring, it's a wonder there's not a brownout in the areas. At least in our district, the copy machine runs endlessly to get everything ready. There's got to be a better way.

Many teachers who are, or who tend to be, suggestible or have to help with the curriculum and those kinds of things-- One of the main complaints I got was the petty stuff: That there weren't a lot of problems in Hunterdon, that we're moving along fairly well, and they seemed to come in looking for something. We need a negative, we need something bad. Whether that's true or not, I don't know, but the things with-- Yes, the extension cords are a problem; yes, the planters have to be moved; yes, everything off the table tops. I don't know about other districts but we tend to put them in the trunk of the car and when monitoring is over and the team has left, you open up the car trunks, and you bring the stuff back in, and you put it where it has to be. We have old buildings with not a lot of closets, but on the surface, and that I think is one of the problems, a lot of stuff is surface; the petty stuff that probably could be either cut back or changed.

The coded lesson plans that drive you crazy, when I'd much rather be planning materials for my children in my classroom than looking up in the curriculum guide every single little skill and what its code number is and whether it's a PRDA-6M or a PRDA-6Q. We've gotten away from that but some districts are still coding their lesson plans for everything.

They seem to be checking with a fine-tooth comb, and I don't think that's a bad idea, but I think that the way-- The committees that are just on paper, because in a small district you have limited resources -- you don't have a-- You can't have people on Students at Risk Committees, and these kinds of committees, so you're put on committees but whether they meet or not is something else.

The area of absenteeism that we don't-- I don't think we have the problem with students, and we really don't have it with teachers so much, although if it's just before monitoring, we've had teachers who have been told, "Are you really sick? I

can't get a sub. You know we've got a percentage to keep up." Those kinds of-- Not that it's a pressure situation, but comments are made.

Whatever the reasons for some things, many times you're given, "We need it for monitoring." Whether it is or not, as a teacher, you don't know.

"Why do we have to have this committee?" or, "Why are we doing this report?" "We need it for monitoring; have to have it." And it's that pressure. Well, if you have to have it for monitoring, because the only time as a regular classroom teacher I see the documents is just before the team comes in, or we're told what they'll ask us, what we should know, how we should-- Not how we should answer, but what the typical answers are. Those kinds of things are done.

My concern is that the paperwork that needs to be done for-- Is it for a good front, a good look? And the amount of time that's spent doing it just seems to be so wasteful. If there was a specific time period when they came in that we need documents for the last two years, or the last three years so you don't reinvent the wheel--

I had comments made to me that we have old buildings. It's real hard-- That you can't have extension cords. Well, fine. Well, then, do you plug in the computer? Do you plug in the fish tank? Do you plug in the record player? Do you let the fish die, because they're there and, you know, you have old buildings with two plugs in the wall, that's the way it is, and you don't have the money to rewire the old buildings? So those kinds of things go on, and as soon as they leave-- The money is spent for the gum and toothpicks to put the facade up of a nice sparkling new building when it's going to fall apart because it's not done well, but it's done for monitoring.

The money to produce just the stacks of paper that have to be done or the new plastic binders so that all of the

math curriculums are in the new blue plastic binder and all of the reading curriculums are in the new red plastic binder, that could be used for other things--

The money is spent, when some of it's necessary for an aging building, but I think the bottom line is, and the feeling of many of the teachers who I spoke to, the name of the game is power. The power of the State over the superintendent. You've got to go in and monitor and find things wrong. The superintendent who is the County Office that is over the districts, if you're not good, that threatening rather than the positive approach. The power of the school superintendent over the staff--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I've gotten copies, I've read them.

MS. KREWSON: You know, and it goes down and down and down and down. I think that -- and it's a sample of what could happen, or a suggestion might be that -- perhaps the team of practitioners that comes in could be teachers rather than the County Office. People who are in the classroom, have been in the classroom; kind of a Middle States approach, and that because sometimes when the observers come into a classroom, lessons have to be interrupted or they look in the plans, or they're trying to find the part in the curriculum, where if you had a present practitioner they would know what to look for and be in and out and make that process quicker. I'm not saying that we do away with the County Office; I think that they have a valuable service. Maybe I think they're not allowed to do what they really would like to do, which would be helping districts.

The County Superintendent is the ultimate boss. We are responsible to him, and he is responsible for what happens to education in his county, but I think that there are better ways of doing it. If perhaps the County Office could check on things on a regular basis, things submitted yearly so that at

that five-year monitoring you don't have to pull in the wheelbarrows with everything-- It will have been submitted on a regular basis.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Do you favor the five years?

MS. KREWSON: I think-- I would like to see probably longer. One of the suggestions I got was pick the 10 elements you like best. You've got 43, pick 10. We're told that we can't have everything that we want. Pick 10 areas that you want to check. Each year designate-- The first year is curriculum. All of the schools in the county know it's curriculum and--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Hell of an idea, good idea.

MS. KREWSON: --you've run in, and it's not planned. You're told that sometime during that year they're coming in to check curriculum. So you don't need the big dog and pony show, because you know what three days they are coming and the curtains are cleaned and the plants are watered and there's no dead leaves around and stuff, but sometime throughout that year and the next year it's going to be facilities. It's not planned -- you're not given a date, sometime during that year -- but it's only one element you have to be ready for. So that it's not everything on target for once every five years, but a smaller kind of piece of the pie might work a little bit better.

I think the bottom line is we all know where the weak schools are. I could probably name them in my county. You could probably name them in your areas, the ones that have some problems. Rather than going after everyone with a big stick and saying, "If you're not good, we're going to be back in two years," and threatening them, give those people -- give those schools the help and assistance they need through the County Office. Use their talents and their expertise much wiser than having them traipse throughout schools throughout their county that are in pretty good shape, and we all know it, looking for a few negative things to write up to show that they're doing

their job. Help those districts that really have the problems, because one of the problems is, if a school's marked down on one element, the public doesn't remember that it was the city clerk that didn't get the records in on time and they failed, and it had nothing to do with the school district--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I remember a city councilman--

MS. KREWSON: --okay, but that school failed monitoring. The pressure that's on there is horrible for the County Superintendent and also for local superintendents, and it's just not fair. They only remember that they failed and not what for. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just comment: First, I want to say a goodly number of teachers have testified today and I'm very, very pleased. We've gotten a good instructional/classroom perspective which I definitely want, but let me say something which you and a lot of administrators have said. You talked about cycles. I inherently rule out, and I will fight, any 10-year cycle for the simple reason that it's just too long. Second, if you make it comport with Middle States, Middle States deals with states other than New Jersey, and the mechanics would be almost impossible--

MS. KREWSON: No. I meant just the teams themselves.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: No. I'm just talking about some other people. I just forgot to say it to some other people.

MS. KREWSON: Oh.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: It's impossible. I'd be willing to talk about some of the-- The idea you had about phasing in over seven or eight years, that was great. That's a good suggestion, Suzane.

By the way, I'm a Committee of one here, and I recognize the value of staff, and if Larry, Jim, or Dave would like to ask some questions, go right ahead. Just pretend you're legislators. (addressing members of staff on the dais)

In fact, a lot of legislators pretend they are legislators. Go right ahead if you have any questions, anybody. You're free to--

Okay. Thank you very much, Suzane.

Dale Briggs, Chief School Administrator, Bloomsbury School District. Dale?

D A L E B R I G G S: Thank you for the opportunity, and I applaud your stamina, your attention span.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dale, speak into the microphone, please. (referring to the public address microphone)

MR. BRIGGS: I am the Chief School Administrator of a K through 8 district in Hunterdon County with less than 200 students, and it is a single administrator school district. In that regard I attend to all the responsibilities and wear many hats of not only the day-to-day operations, but also the long-range planning process and everything that has to go on in the school district including monitoring.

We've been through monitoring, and I think the concept is good. It has helped improve our school district in a number of ways. We have grown as educators and the Board of Education has grown through monitoring. However, I must say that the process, while the concept is good, the process itself is badly in need of revamping.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Give me an example.

MR. BRIGGS: I will, as I go on.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me. My apologies.

MR. BRIGGS: The monitoring process has indeed improved the Bloomsbury School District, but I often wonder at what expense, and I wonder if we came out of it with a net gain, or a net loss? The current system has become overbearing, it's become unwieldy, and it almost feeds upon itself, going back to Ms. Krewson's statements. With the monitoring objectives of the monitors -- the persons monitoring

in the district -- I sense that the monitors, the County Superintendents, and the State Department of Education also innately feel that it is overbearing for them also, although I'm not sure that they're free to speak out and say that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I agree with you. I agree.

MR. BRIGGS: Some of the problems that are inherent in the current system: You've heard enough about the time-consuming process. I can only attest to that through our involvement with monitoring. Not only time-consuming on my part, but time-consuming for our teachers and, indeed, I won't make any qualms about it, time was taken away from the education of the children to prepare for monitoring, and that is not as it should be.

In fact, the time consumption by the County Office has also adversely affected education in the counties throughout the State. I can speak specifically for Hunterdon County. The county's staff in the Superintendent of School's Office is a talented staff. They have a lot to offer. They are not being allowed the time to do that. Someone mentioned earlier about the former availability, accessibility, of these people as resources to local districts. That absolutely is no longer true and has not been true for a number of years, since monitoring got into full swing.

Some of the administrators in the district have kept statistics on calling the County Office for legitimate questions and finding that no one is home 90% of the time. Yes, the phone calls are returned in that regard, but it is still not the same as having them there to act as resources.

One concept that has not been mentioned today is the impact on local boards of education through the monitoring process. I would imagine that in most districts, as in mine, the Superintendent has been the intermediary between the State and the Board of Education. There has been no direct involvement by the Board--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: The State or the County?

MR. BRIGGS: The State, or the County as an arm of the State.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Well, what I'm going to say-- I'm going to make a statement: Quite often I think that County and regional services, in my opinion, and the County Superintendents don't communicate as well as they should. That's why I asked the question.

MR. BRIGGS: But it has occurred to me, and in questioning my Board regarding monitoring, that it oftentimes evolves into an adversarial situation between the local Board of Education and the State Department of Education, and that is not the way it should be. Contacting New Jersey School Boards, they will admit that there is a problem in getting qualified, competent people to run for Boards of Education, and it's my feeling that once they're on that board, the decisions, the bulk of them, should be made locally. That's what they're there for; not to be puppets, not to be fronts. Oftentimes the monitoring process makes them feel as though their local decision-making powers are taken away, that they are indeed puppets of the State, that what comes down through monitoring must be done, or the penalty will be paid. There gets to be a negative feeling on the Board of Education membership.

This has been mentioned earlier: The scope of monitoring is too expansive. The 10 elements and the 40-some sub-criteria are just too much to handle in a three-day visit by the County Office personnel. There are various alternatives to this that could make the system more efficient. In fact, in instructional and leadership training courses that I and my teachers have attended, it's ironic to note that the central theme coming out of these is that you need to focus and target limited objectives to do quality work. I would submit that the expansiveness and the scope of monitoring does not allow that to occur either on the part of the local district nor on the part of the County Office that is monitoring.

Being a rural school and a small school in a good county -- Hunterdon County has quality education, no qualms about that -- I wonder if we are being held to the same standards as other schools in other geographic locations of the State? Again referring to Ms. Krewson's theory of coming in to look for things to write up on a monitoring report, I wonder about that. I wonder if the schools in Hunterdon were transplanted geographically, if they wouldn't perhaps be looked upon as model schools, but because they are in Hunterdon County, they are written up as less than model schools.

The last thing I would like to address is the mentality of administrators and teachers during the monitoring process. I may hedge on that and say at all times. Monitoring is always in the back of your mind, regardless of what activity is going on. Regardless of when your time is up, you're always thinking, do I need this for monitoring? Have the criteria changed? What will qualify me as a plus for monitoring in that regard?

I think the scramble that goes on just prior to monitoring -- and it does go on; I don't care how much in advance you begin your planning-- As monitoring draws near, there are always loose ends, always final details to attend to. It reminds me of cramming for final exams during college. I think it really tends to portray a lack-- It makes us be less than professional as administrators and as teachers because we're scrambling to pass this exam, and we're running around doing this and that. We're not doing it in a quality manner; we're doing it so that we meet the test when the time comes. That to me is embarrassing. I think it is embarrassing to our teachers -- my teachers -- and it more or less waters down, modifies, makes less effective, the concept of monitoring as it could be.

Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: If I don't hear any comments from the staff or an indication to ask a question, I'm going to pick it up. (no response) Hearing none, I had several questions to ask. I'm going to ask one. What gives you the idea that if Hunterdon were transplanted-- I've always regarded Hunterdon as having among the best school districts in the State of New Jersey. What is your basis for making that statement, Dale?

MR. BRIGGS: Likewise, I agree with you. I'm thinking--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: No, no, no. Why do you think the perception is otherwise?

MR. BRIGGS: No. My point was that if we could transplant a Bloomsbury School District into an urban center, into an urban geographic location, and it were monitored objectively, I'm wondering if the same recommendations would be made at that point as they would be with Bloomsbury being where it is in Hunterdon?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You might get an answer to that in New Brunswick on the third, if you want to stop up. If you want to testify again and ask the same question, you might spark some discussion.

MR. BRIGGS: But that was my point. My point was being held up to the same standards statewide.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. All right. I have no further questions, thank you. It was a good point of view and a good perspective.

MR. BRIGGS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I appreciate it very much, Dale.

Next, Mr. William Farquer, a principal of-- It doesn't say what school. A school principal in Burlington Township. Mr. Farquer? Mr. Farquer? (no response) Put a circle around it Dave, if we have a little time to come back, all right?

Dr. Gary Friedland, Superintendent, Springfield School District? Dr. Friedland? Doctor? Circle him.

Dr. Anthony D'Ovidio, Superintendent, Somerset County Vocational Technical Schools. If I pronounced your name wrong, don't say it. Welcome.

A N T H O N Y A . D ' O V I D I O : Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to be here. As I tell students, it's easy to pronounce my name. Just think of video, and put a D in front of it, and it's D'Ovidio.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, thank you.

MR. D'OVIDIO: This January was my first opportunity to be involved in the monitoring of the Somerset County Vocational High School. Prior to that I was involved in post secondary monitoring of a vocational technical school, and that was on two occasions. This was a voluntary experience, and basically it follows the Middle States process, and so in looking at the present monitoring system I'm going to compare it to the experience I had on two other occasions I had on the post secondary level, and I might say that a year from now, I will be involved in the Middle States process.

I believe, and I'm supportive of any evaluation process, and I think it's healthy for a school district to do so on a periodic basis. I think the evaluation process does facilitate improvement. I know at times it's time-consuming, but the experiences that I've had both in this present monitoring of our high school and my past experience has always been that I believe it's been a net positive experience for both the staff and the school district.

Some of the changes that I would make is, remove the pass/fail concept.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Would you repeat that, please? I missed it.

MR. D'OVIDIO: Remove the pass/fail and let each program and department and area of study be evaluated on its merit. I would suggest that the process include an identification of strengths. I think that every school

district has many, many strengths, and it's nice to identify those. I believe the process should identify areas of improvement because every school district--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I'm sorry, excuse me. There was a call for me. (referring to an interruption by an aide)

MR. D'OVIDIO: In addition to the identifying of strengths, I'd like the process and the instrument to emphasize areas of improvement because I believe every district has areas in which they can improve and excel.

I believe that the process should involve an annual progress report. The Middle States has a 10-year approval plan. My prior experiences have been 5 years. So somewhere between 5 and 10: I'm not sure what the magic number is, but I believe as long as you can identify your strengths and identify your areas of improvement, develop an annual progress report, and report it to either the County Office or the State, I think that would be of value.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What about the report card?

MR. D'OVIDIO: The report card? Well, that's a moot question now. I understand that's going to be discontinued.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I can think of a better word, but I won't. I voted for the damned thing.

MR. D'OVIDIO: Basically, I support a periodic evaluation process. I believe the present monitoring system needs improvement and change, but I think in the long run it benefits all of us and also facilitates improvements. It gets the Board to concentrate in areas that they might delay. It gets administrators on the right track every so often. It gets teachers on the right track, and all in all, I'd say that the experience we had in this last process -- although I would recommend some changes -- was a very eventful experience, and I think it's going to improve our district.

I'd also like to mention that the Somerset County Staff, both in premonitoring and during the on-site visit were very professional and very helpful in assisting the district.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Thank you, Doctor. Let me-- Are you finished?

MR. D'OVIDIO: Yes, I'm finished, if you have any questions--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Would any staff members like to say anything? Any questions? (no response)

Let me say this to you: I agree with 95% of what you said, and the one area of concern -- I don't even know if it's disagreement -- is the issue of the "hows" versus the "whats." They keep you on the ball, but could you do a better job if there were more latitude within parameters of the two "whats."

That's the question: Should they be involved that deeply in the operations of the county and the State? Having said that about umpteen million times, I want to touch upon something which is kind of sensitive, and I'm going to want your point of view and the point of view of some others: that's the qualifications of the monitors and namely what we pay them.

When the school intervention issue was raging -- it started at the conference in Governor Tom Kean's office -- it was June 11, 1986, and there were six or seven of us present. We went over and over the law, and you know what happened? The Senate did this and that, and the Assembly did most of the work. Don't tell Matty Feldman that I said that, but you had some good firepower there, some qualified people. You had Joe Doria, you had Jack Ewing, Sandy McCarroll, myself, Dave, Deena Schorr, and Jim. You had some real fine people, but nobody raised the issue of how much we are going to pay monitors. Was there an appropriation to pay monitors? To come to the bottom line -- and I really hate that word, that phrase, but I'll use it and make a point: Can a person who is a monitor making \$38,000 or \$40,000 a year, who may have had limited experience in educational administration or in teaching or in both, supervise or monitor a principal or superintendent who makes a lot more and who may be looking for a job when he leaves State government? Can that person be objective?

MR. D'OVIDIO: I believe they can. I really don't think that money is a factor.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You don't?

MR. D'OVIDIO: No. At least with the people I have been associated with. I know many of our administrators make a good deal more than our county associates.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That's the point I was making.

MR. D'OVIDIO: But I really don't think that had a bearing on their participation. I might suggest that you consider the use of administrators and staff from other districts, to assist in that process--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good point.

MR. D'OVIDIO: --where the County Superintendent's Office would have oversight. I found as an evaluator in some of Middle States' evaluations that I learned a good deal more than I probably gave the district, and I also hope that I did make a few suggestions while I was involved in the monitoring process. But I think you have a lot of talent right around in neighboring districts, and if you feel uncomfortable about having teachers from your own county evaluate a district within that county, go outside the county. I think they probably can give a good deal of insight, particularly in programs.

I would say that with the cutbacks that are happening in our County Offices, that you look to the teachers and administrators within the surrounding districts to assist in that process.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I'm going to let you go, but I'm going to say something here: Dr. McCarroll has indicated to me he is having difficulty getting monitors because of the amount of money paid. If I could turn the clock back to three years ago, one of the things -- probably other people, too -- I would have insisted on, would have been an appropriation to pay people more money to attract more monitors, and I think some better monitors. I'm being very blunt, and I think we have to

be if we are going to try to improve this process. I think that could be the linchpin-- Well, there's more than one linchpin or central focus to these hearings, but I think that that's crucial.

Thank you very much, Tony. We appreciate it.

MR. D'OVIDIO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, we're going to skip over Irene Pines and Philip Kinney who have written and submitted testimony already, which will appear in the record verbatim, incidentally. We've come down to number 26, Theodore Arnold, Principal, Pine Brook Elementary School, Lincoln Park. Which county is that?

T H E O D O R E A R N O L D: That's Morris County.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Morris County.

MR. ARNOLD: Mr. Chairman, in addition to being the principal of Pinebrook Elementary School in Morris County, I'm also the President-Elect of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and I'm here to speak on both's behalfs.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Congratulations.

MR. ARNOLD: I would like to thank the Committee for sponsoring these hearings. It is our hope that the Legislature, in concert with those of us in the educational community, can reach some resolve as to how to provide and assure that each New Jersey child has every opportunity to receive the best possible education in a safe, healthy, and highly motivated environment.

I also must preface my remarks from a personal standpoint by saying that throughout the monitoring process in our district, the Morris County team was professional to the highest degree, and the faults of the system should in no way be attributed to the personnel within the system.

It should also be clearly understood that our Association, as well as all of those educators with whom I have

daily contact, understand that a monitoring of some sort should take place; and that the State of New Jersey has every right, yeah, every responsibility to implement the Thorough and Efficient Law. The problem, however, lies with the interpretation of the monitoring system itself.

There are numerous professional committees that meet regularly at the Principals and Supervisors Association and the topic of monitoring consistently comes up. What concerns our membership is that while there are unquestioned positives within the system, particularly in the area of curriculum implementation, facility safety, and assurances of student achievement and professional staff accountability, however, the implementation of the monitoring indicators is so structured that it tends to be negative, untrusting, and dictatorial in application, and I shall explain.

Monitors who have solid educational backgrounds and unquestioned talent and creativity have been reduced, in many cases, to merely filling in checklist after checklist. Surely, these talents could best be utilized in providing networks made up of administrators, supervisors, teachers, and State Department personnel which could provide technical assistance to districts in need.

Unless you have experienced firsthand the process as it now exists, you cannot imagine the amount of hours spent in preparation; you cannot imagine the cost of man-hours, compiling, printing, and processing reports, and in conducting trial monitoring run-throughs. You cannot imagine, be it real or imagined, the anxiety felt at local districts. And, you cannot imagine how far behind a district may fall in its daily work due to the preparation.

Particularly in our own case, we know firsthand. We were in early monitoring. We were in October. Therefore all of the resources used in our district in the summer and in the early fall were spent on monitoring preparation, and we fell behind on budget and things that we would normally be doing.

It is the position of our Association that careful scrutiny of the yearly mandated data at the county level would eliminate much duplication. Districts which receive documented approval of Affirmative Action plans and goals should not have to be second checked. Districts which consistently demonstrate and report successful test scores need not repeat the analysis. Districts with acceptable yearly action plans which receive approval and commendation and which require teacher, parent, and administrative input, should not have to repeat the curriculum, goal, and community involvement process.

Districts which provide yearly data regarding Basic Skills, English as a Second Language, and Bilingual Programs, and have that data accepted, should not have to justify the information with a second reading. Districts which have acceptable Annual Plans for Special Education and Three-Year Comprehensive Plans for Professional Development should not have to produce reams of background. And, districts which have had county-approved budgets, turned in yearly accurate teacher and student attendance analyses, shown fiscal responsibility, and demonstrated that they are prepared and motivated to provide for their children within the goals and resources of their communities, should not have to maintain mounds of documentation to justify their existence.

While our schools should be gearing themselves toward planning for and meeting the challenges of the next century, all too often the emphasis in the monitoring process is on those things long since completed and approved.

The time has come -- and I look forward to your input with respect to this -- for us to streamline the indicators, for us to eliminate the duplication of reports, to tap the talents of our State people, and to channel those talents where they will do the most good. The time has come that those districts which have demonstrated success should be noticed as being successful, and the emphasis should be truly placed where it belongs, on providing technical assistance.

The function of monitoring should be to allow districts to self-study, to self-remedy, and to call for assistance. It is only then, when we can show that we have faith and trust in districts which have demonstrated themselves as being trustworthy, that we can begin to work together for the number one priority that we are here for, and that is the children.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good. A very good statement. Do you have a prepared text there?

MR. ARNOLD: Yes. I have copies for you, for your Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Hand them out, okay?

Let me just come back to what I said before. I'm going to disagree with you in one area. I'm going to do this inductively by giving you an example: There was a school district north of the Raritan -- I'm not talking about Hudson or Essex -- where two County Superintendents were not making-- I'm sorry, two monitors were not making the money that a principal or even a vice principal would make, who were very, very qualified people, the other extreme, left. The County Superintendent called me and he was bitching and moaning -- excuse me -- and I said, "Hey, you should have paid them more money." He said, "You should have put money in the bill." I said, "Okay, you're right." That's a problem.

MR. ARNOLD: I daresay that there is probably not a monitor in the State that makes as much as most principals, in this State, at least.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, certainly not.

MR. ARNOLD: That's why we, as one aspect of our testimony here, really feel that the system at the county should be used to network administrators, supervisors, and principals in the district, to use that as a resource, to get into districts in need and to help them out, rather than it tends to be a system -- if you want to believe it or not --

where 90% of the time people who are professionally trained people are spent checking off checklists and are not available to us.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right. Then they had to replace-- They replaced one of these individuals with somebody else, and I took a look at one of the reports that the replacement did. I showed it to a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who was gracious and called what he wrote "sloppy bureaucratic writing at best." Then I took it upon myself to run a background check on the newly hired monitor, and I certainly would not have hired him myself. This is a very nettlesome problem which deals with dollars, which has to be addressed because any program comes down to people. People administer programs, and they've got to be paid salaries.

MR. ARNOLD: And I think in light of recent events, those salaries will not be forthcoming.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Unfortunately, you're probably right.

MR. ARNOLD: Therefore, I think we really should look into reestablishing this system so that it will tap into the resources that we have within our own districts to support each other.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. That's a good point.

MR. ARNOLD: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Any questions from the staff members for the speaker? (no response) Okay. Hearing none, Frank McLaughlin, Principal, Point Pleasant Borough High School. Frank, welcome.

F R A N K M c L A U G H L I N: Thank you. I want to thank you for the opportunity, Assemblyman Naples. I know you've been going around the State and Point Pleasant is that way--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I know.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: --and I missed you in Toms River, and I kicked myself all day long, but I did want to make a few

points, and I wanted to just take the opportunity to cover a few things.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you for coming up.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: It was nice to see a number of principals here today, and some teachers. In the main, I'm sure superintendents have been the main voice.

I've posed a few questions here because I don't want to cover the different remarks that I have here, because I don't think it is necessary at this point. I have posed a few questions, though.

Have the procedures and regulations of this process improved educational quality in local school districts? My answer would be, marginally yes, based upon my own experience and those that I have talked to in the county. Will a second cycle bring marginal results? Unfortunately no, or too few. Should the T&E process be eliminated? No, for it's still in the definition stage of Abbott v. Burke. Can there be definite improvements in the monitoring model? Absolutely. I would just say that the planning has fizzled and I'll explain, because I don't want it to be misinterpreted. What has been the major failing of the current T&E process and attended initiatives? Without being too critical, and I'm going to excuse myself before I go any further-- I have a tendency to be very outspoken, and this is one man's opinion, okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Go ahead, please. Be open, you're not being monitored.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Well, you're always being monitored.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Not by me.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Without being too critical, the airwaves of fluff overshadowed the more sober, weighty issues. Accountability should be more localized. I happen to feel that it was only Thursday of last week that the real seeds of T&E were germinated. That's a personal opinion, too. I think we'll see that the future holds a lot of questions, and at the same time it holds a lot of promise.

The work of this Committee is to gain input on how T&E regulations and procedures affect educational quality in the school districts. You've heard the horror stories, and naturally, the glowing tales.

The drawbacks: Excessive paperwork. I won't even go into that. You've heard that time and time again, I'm sure. Fear, yes. I wouldn't say that fear is-- At least I hope fear is not the right word. I would say apprehension, very strong apprehension. Naturally the fear of failing, or being embarrassed, more than anything else.

Level III monitoring, the prospect of a State takeover of a district: I feel that shattered the underpinnings so valued in local autonomy. I think, obviously, the intent was to help the district we're talking about. I think takeover-- We're talking about Jersey City. I think the idea, naturally, is to help--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Did you oppose the School Intervention Law?

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Yes, I did.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. I gathered that, okay. That's your privilege.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Intervention is one way of doing it. I think involving, and moving in, and helping is something else. I think you can reach the same goals. A case in point is my own district. I became involved in the hands on monitoring process, and quite frankly, I went through it A to Z. I did it in the main myself, not because I wanted to, but because I felt that I wasn't going to encumber the teachers on a day-to-day basis while we had classroom teaching, and the most important aspect of education, going on.

As far as Level III is concerned, while to deny existing problems would be retreat, we shouldn't reject an approach which raises as many questions as have been answered.

Recommendations: One recommendation that I would ask the Committee and those involved in the process to listen to very carefully, would be the 10-year and 5-year cycle. I would suggest that we do not alter into a 10-year cycle, but to keep the 5-year cycle, and curtail the presentation to a paper presentation of districts who have already gone through Cycle I. The reasons why I say this here is, once you have been through Cycle I, there is going to be much repetition, and it is just going to be a cumbersome process. So if you could cut down that to more of a paper process and have the county move in and help the districts that are having the major problems-- Use all the resources and manpower to help these districts. You certainly have expertise to do that, and to do it not in an intervention manner but in a manner that is going to lead and help and provide every avenue of expertise to districts that have some major problems, not just money.

I would suggest in this manner that the Level III-- Well, this has to be ongoing until, naturally, the problems are alleviated, in which case, slowly move toward where you're back into a Level I, and then go into a five-year monitoring. I would give as much help until those districts feel-- And this has to be a mutual thing. This would not be the State; it would not be the county; it would not be the local school; but it would be a mutual understanding of all parties that, "Hey, we're finally getting there." And if you need more help, then I think there should be more help.

I think probably, in the main, superintendents have felt -- and rightfully so -- that monitoring is a good thing, and I think it was in the first process, because it committed to paper, things that were going on. I wonder about the total student learning process in that equation, but it did, I think, add to the community in terms of what this is we're doing with kids -- okay?-- and let's go from there.

Attendance was mentioned, student input, attendance. I have some notes on that which-- Frankly, these are individual things that I feel might be looked at very, very carefully and I'd rather not take the time of the Committee right now. You have copies so you might take a look at that. I would consider that in the next monitoring process, though, that the discussion of values be brought into the process under curriculum. Not beyond-- We're not talking about values that I may have and somebody else doesn't. I'm talking about the very basic values that could be brought into the curriculum, K through 12. This doesn't mean that you need a course in values. A course in values might be another cumbersome unnecessary thing, but K through 12-- I don't have to tell you there are many, many good teachers who have been doing this for years, but maybe we should make it more standardized so one group is not getting it where another is and that is, once again, a consideration.

One thing that I-- There are two things, not one: The industrial arts, music, business, and home economics areas-- I would like to submit that they be part of a comprehensive offering. Why do I mention that? Because, as you know, right now you're saying, "Well, they are." I would say to the Committee that in lieu of cutbacks, what goes first? It's not going to be math; it's not going to be science; it's not going to be English; it's not going to be your academic subjects. It's going to be the special areas, and if we are going to give every student in the State a shake at the program, I think we have to make sure that we don't siphon these away. How do we prevent that, because it is on a local initiative? I would say that if the foundation ratio is built in somehow that the formula would encompass that type of thing. Once again, just something for thought.

Finally, the one thing I would like to mention is there is a redundancy problem in monitoring reports at the

fiscal level. That's Element 10. Many of those reports, obviously, come in during the course of the year, and it's just resubmitting and showing that, yes, we have it. This is what we do. It doesn't say anything really about the accountability for the physical process. One of the reasons, and this is not going to be popular--

Once again, I think that if you go to it, you'll find out that it's true, that throughout the State -- and we're part of the Northeast -- the Northeast that has had some wonderful years-- I think that because of the wonderful years, we have gone down the highway really too fast, getting too much, and I don't think we've pulled in fast enough. Because of that, each district now that is coming before you and screaming about dollars, it is possibly because they-- I hate to use the little word, the word "careless," because that would be unfair, because we're talking about educators who are doing their very best. But I think what happens is sometimes you just don't keep your mind on the road and now we're probably all going to have to pay the price on that.

Thank you. I just wanted to cover a few things, and I thank the Committee again.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You covered a lot. Very good. Let me just ask, or let me just say something first: Everybody, and everybody who has been here, when I lean over and whisper something to David or Larry, or to Jim, it's not that we're ignoring you. We're commenting on what you have to say. I want everybody to understand that. You might get the impression that we weren't-- To me, that means a great deal, because I hated like hell when a student would do that to me when I was teaching.

Frank, overall, has monitoring in your opinion galvanized you into doing a better job in your school?

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Once again, we're talking about monitoring first round, assuming that there's going to be

another monitoring. I think it helped educators in general to focus--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: No. In your particular situation, has it helped you, and two, do you think the monitoring, the "hows," are too structured?

MR. McLAUGHLIN: It helped me in this sense: I, as a matter of fact, am leaving my school system pretty soon and it's not because I'm unhappy. I just feel that I need a new challenge because I have become a cheerleader. We have a good system; we have good kids; we've got good teachers. We've got some problems with buildings, facilities, which I didn't even want to go into. The thing with monitoring is, we knew what was there and we put it down, so I don't think it was a big learning thing. It's just that if I said to you five years down the road, "Come over, I think we're doing a good job," you would say, "Well, how do you know you're doing a good job?" Well, now I can show you how we're doing a good job.

That's the reason why second round I say, put it on paper. Don't waste people's time.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. It narrows it. Okay, good answer.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Any staff person like to ask any questions? (no response) Okay, Dr. Joseph Sabo, Superintendent, Watchung Hills Regional High School. I've got to make a phone call. Let's take a five-minute break, okay? It's very important. Do you mind, Doc?

J O S E P H P. S A B O, Ph.D.: Not at all.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, go ahead. Thank you very much for your indulgence.

DR. SABO: My name is Joe Sabo. I'm Superintendent of Watchung Hills Regional District in Somerset County. About 28 years ago, my then Superintendent, Frank Oldham, said to me when I first began my administrative career--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I remember him.

DR. SABO: --"If you're interested in improving the quality of education in this school, get involved with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools."

I became active with my own school's accreditation process as well as serving on evaluation teams in the five Middle Atlantic States. I chaired some 15 such evaluations in the five Middle Atlantic States, and I chaired about eight evaluations in schools overseas in Europe, the Near East, and Africa. In 1979 I served as President of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and just recently my own school has gone through monitoring for the second time. Because of all of this I really can't help but make comparisons between the two procedures.

Monitoring is a compliance procedure. It is a check to see if certain things have been done. It really doesn't say much about how well a school is doing or how well kids learn.

A few of our newspaper articles have mentioned monitoring in terms of missing ceiling tiles, doors not closing properly, and no toilet paper. I have some concerns about these things, and concerns about that kind of protocol.

In my own school I have 77 classrooms in one building, and 40 classrooms in a second building. I feel reasonably sure that since one of those buildings is over 30 years old, that we probably have a few loose ceiling tiles, and some of them may have been loosened since the last monitoring visit. Compliance protocol also causes me some concern. They did not check on, for example, 18A:36-6, which calls for appropriate exercises on Flag Day. They did not check on the Arbor Day exercises that are supposed to be conducted. They did not check on Commodore

John Barry Day, and they didn't say anything about the appropriate exercises that were supposed to be held on Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans' Day, and Thanksgiving Day. It seems to me, at best, that this compliance protocol is uneven. I wonder why these things were left out?

In a recent report of the Advisory Council on Developing Character and Values, which came out of the State Department, four major areas were covered: Civic responsibility, environment, respect for self, respect for others. Those things are in the statutes, and they're covered by this report. They're not covered in the monitoring protocol.

Unfortunately, the monitoring protocol has established the kind of thinking that says a district has either passed or failed. It has a negative connotation. Rather, the process should be aimed at an effort for an improvement of program. My own County Superintendent and his staff have extended themselves, in my judgment, in an effort to make the monitoring protocol professional.

I think the monitoring process needs to be changed. I have no problem with compliance. We have an obligation to comply with the Law and the Code. I believe, however, we need to take a look at what is being done in some neighboring states, Pennsylvania, for example. Donald Carroll, who I think is the Commissioner, has a long-range plan for school improvement. They call it the LRPSI plan.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What do you call the plan?

DR. SABO: LRPSI.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, I see. I have it. Thank you.

DR. SABO: It has a crosswalk over to the Middle States protocol. The Middle States plan is offered as an alternative to the Pennsylvania requirements. In New York State, officials have begun to talk with Middle State people

about doing the same kind of thing. They have already indicated that the Middle States' protocol would be an acceptable alternative.

I think it's time that something like that be done in New Jersey. I think it's time that something be done about extending the visits and probably offering some kind of an alternative -- something similar to the Middle States.

Thank you very much for allowing me to make these remarks.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Would any staff members like to question? (no response) Okay. Dr. Sabo, let me say this to you: I thought a lot about-- I didn't think about Pennsylvania, but I thought about New York, because I've been doing some research on New York State's -- and New York City's, in particular -- school system. If we reconcile monitoring with Middle States' evaluation, you have to bear in mind several thoughts. Let me just go back a few years to 1978. PSA had workshops on reconciling -- some of you remember that, perhaps -- on Middle States monitoring with T&E. It was a very, very difficult problem. It was a hell of a lot more difficult after we got back to our schools to do it. I remember I was Chairman of the Physical Facilities Committee at Trenton High School, and you want to talk about a job, whew. I think my Superintendent blessed me in two ways when he named me Principal about a week later. It was a real job.

But, when you talk about doing this, you have six Regional Commissions of Education around the nation: Middle States, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Atlanta-- You can go around the country. You've got to line them up and make them consistent. It's got to be done in other states, otherwise it won't work. It looks great on paper, but in order to bring this to fruition, the amount of work would be unbelievable. It should have been -- let's put it this way -- begun 10 or 12 years ago, I agree. But to try to bring this to

some kind of efficacious workable plan would require so much work, because you're dealing-- When you're talking about Middle States alone, you're dealing with six states right there, including several bigger than New Jersey. When you get down to the southern states, you're dealing with Georgia and some other poor states which have problems. When you get out to the Midwest, you're dealing with Illinois. It's got to be done as a unit, and it should have been done before. Maybe 10 years from now somebody will say to some other Chairman -- I won't be here in this chair, even in the Legislature probably -- but somebody will say, "We should have begun in 1990." It's a great idea, but I think it may be too late, because it would be one hell of a lot of work. You have to do it right. See what I mean?

DR. SABO: I hear what you're saying. You know, the Middle States protocol uses a number of different instruments, and some of those instruments have been adopted to certain circumstances. You know the Middle States Association does not just deal with public schools. It also deals with private schools, and parochial, and so forth.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Right. Oh, yeah.

DR. SABO: Some of those schools of certain religious persuasions like to have certain things brought into the protocol. Those kinds of adjustments have been made, and I think that kind of a thing still could be made. There are elements of duplicity in the protocol of monitoring and the Middle States procedure. We find ourselves doing the same thing. The unfortunate part about monitoring is that it does not involve all of the staff. It involves a limited number of people. So, people on the staff, teachers particularly, don't feel involved. You know, they feel left out. One of the healthy things about the Middle States protocol is that it causes your people to be working together in terms of looking at what you are and where you have been and where you intend to

go. It's a healthy, constructive process which calls for school improvement and not say, "Gee, I missed something, like I've--"

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: But, you see my point of view, though?

DR. SABO: I hear you, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say this: When you mentioned parochial schools, I'm thinking back about maybe 18 or 20 years ago, when I tried to help out. I got caught between the Chancery in Trenton and the Sisters of Mercy. I tried to help out one of the parochial schools in the Mercer County area, and boy, you talk about a row and getting an adverse editorials. Of course, the Chancery controlled the diocesan newspaper, and I really got creamed, I remember. Because of that fact, it compounds it more, I think.

Okay. Any other questions? (no response) Thanks a lot, Doctor.

DR. SABO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Well, look, I just want to say this: We got a tremendous, tremendous cross section of points of view, with a lot fewer words than constituted the two cases in Toms River and Teaneck. We had a lot of speakers here and-- (Assemblyman Naples is repeatedly interrupted by announcements being made on the school's public address system at this point, so he concludes hearing.)

I'll see you all, thank you.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

TO: Chairman Gerard S. Naples
Members of Assembly Education Committee

DATE: March 20, 1990

HEARING TOPIC: Current "T & E" regulations and procedures as they affect
overall educational quality in local school districts.

COMMENTS: Frank McLaughlin, High School Principal

Surely this committee has been privy to a voluminous array of suggestions and opinions - both pro and con - from superintendents, NJEA leaders, and members of the school community at large. My perspective, that of a high school principal, has been motivated by an in-depth, "hands on" experience over the years of "T & E" - Perhaps my view of the bridge is somewhat different - Whatever, enclosed are some thoughts and recommendations.

Have the procedures and regulations of this process improved educational quality in local school districts? Marginally, yes! Will a second cycle bring marginal results? Unfortunately, no or too few! Should the "T & E" process be eliminated? No, for it's still in the definition stage of Burke/Abbott. Can there be definite improvements in the monitoring model? Absolutely, its planning format fizzled! What has been the major failing of the current "T & E" process and attended initiatives? Without being too critical, the "airwaves of fluff" overshadowed the more sober/weighty issues! Accountability should be more localized.

Having offered the above brief responses, I'll attempt to offer some specifics - hopefully, not a complete group, but a sprinkling.

It was ironic that the Ides of March produced an uncommon brand of leadership, and the seeds of "T & E" were finally germinated amid the delivery of the budget message. Fourteen years of aged seeds, heretofore stored in the barn of the 1975 statute, were sown now in a field of reason.

A tough message - yes. Bold - no doubt about it - but fair, honest, and courageous. There is no popularity, nor buffer from pain of increased taxes for any of us!!

For those chief administrators overseeing districts with stifled funds, while the initial reaction might illicit measured gasping, the "T & E" tradeoff should be the genuine opportunity to provide home rule leadership, not "frills - "questionable stats" - or "public relations gimmickry" under the guise of creative initiative.

Perhaps they'll be more emphasis on teachers - teaching, supervisors - guiding, and administrators devoting increased time observing the outcomes of learning, not the headlights of learning. Hopefully, they will be concerned for higher success levels through mutual effort at every level - not isolated fear.

The work of this committee to gain input on how "T & E" regulations and procedures affect educational quality in school districts has surely heard.

| x

both horror stories and glowing tales. In my district, the educational gain was probably more of a confirmation of what the community and school staff felt was, in effect, taking place all along, but was never delineated in such a structured environment. The questions we have is did the monitoring measure district outcomes or student outcomes?

- Suburban districts, ours included, had the ingredients (seasoned raw materials and resources) to assemble monitoring elements into a winning collage. Our major focus was committing "from the world of having" to the "world of having on paper" - DOCUMENTATION.

The model for suburban districts was increased success in attaining administrative objectives, previously not easily achieved by administrators such as addressing staff attendance and student attendance via monitoring!

- Urban schools, obviously at a district disadvantage, had to sift through the same process, siphon out shortcomings, and crystallize even more so problems that were reputed to have existed long before the advent of "T & E." In effect, the results of monitoring only reinforced the truth - thorough and efficient was not operating in an equitable manner throughout the state.

Some glowing drawbacks:

1. Excessive paperwork - Stock market was buoyed by copy industry. The environment suffered from an extended down day! Costly, unnecessary, and time consuming - No one calling for stops!
2. Fear - The specter of failing - the intrinsic chance of embarrassment - man hours devoted to redundant documentation - misunderstandings - and, unfortunately, the eyes of the instructor were steered from the "road of learning" to the "highway of passing." Even the staunchest soldier who decried "teaching to the test" fell into marching columns!
3. Level III - The prospect of a state takeover of a district shattered a fundamental underpinning so valued in New Jersey - local autonomy. The emergence of the inspector general concept eroded local prerogative and responsibility. While to deny existing problems would be retreat - should we not reject the approach - which raises as many questions as have been answered? If we are to distribute pain; there should be equitable gain.

Recommendations for changes - New cycle of monitoring.

1. Problem: Those completing Level I and Level II successfully committed their case on paper. Possible alternative - The follow up cycle should narrow the focus to a demonstration of district objectives for improvement, accountability on elements, new initiatives, and realized learning outcomes. It should involve paper reporting in a modified/short form version. The only on-site monitoring would be for assistance by a district on a particular problem. This would satisfy the five year monitoring continuum without needless pomp.
2. Problem: Level III districts have initiated monitoring process with a district disadvantage - resources and problems of long duration.

2x

Possible Alternative - County/state monitoring should work in unison with such districts. All available resources should be mustered for working through problematic elements. County monitors would concentrate personnel to work out prescription for benchmarks leading to success in the district. During the five year cycle, participants would strive for mutually acceptable progress to achieve desired outcomes. Once acceptable - monitoring would resort to Level I - new cycle. There should be an unwavering commitment of building the structure for success within the school community!

By making the above mentioned adjustments, those districts ready to move more swiftly toward excellence would not be harnessed by monitoring excesses. County monitors would be freed to provide assistance to districts in need without creating a dual monitoring model. Like cars traveling through a tunnel, some reach the other side sooner - but the toll should be the same.

3. Problem: Curriculum, especially programs in special areas and student activities get axed first when dollars are scarce.

→ *omission - see pg. 4*

→ Possible Alternative - Salaries should be ratioed in funding formula. Other items outside pure instruction domain should be evaluated in funding mechanism. *see page 4-10*

4. Problem:: Monitoring process, elements of monitoring process in certain areas allowed for multitudinous layers of documentation, bordered on "show and tell."

Possible alternative - Orientation of specific person(s) in district responsible for monitoring, including county, state agents responsible for process. Responses specific, precise, avoid excesses or limitations. Greater latitude should be installed in county/local level team to implement initiatives viewed successful or work through obstacles. Ex: urban school attendance. The "fear," "embarrassment" aspect might be substantially reduced.

5. Problem: Middle States - every ten years - Takes two years or more in self evaluation. Monitoring is a five-year cycle with another year(s) of preparation.

Possible Alternative: Schedule monitoring either two years prior or two years after Middle States. Many components are similar in many respects and two years would allow for changes/modifications. This would free a district after completion to devote time toward learning process uninterrupted without depleting time, planning, finances to the degree that has been past practice.

6. Problem: Local involvement of school community is essential in communities experiencing monitoring difficulties!

Possible Alternative - The interaction must be drawn from the population being served and hopefully business and community groups - not vested groups.

7. Problem: Attendance - (a) Staff and (b) Student - dropouts.

Possible Alternative - (a) Set standard local procedure for an action plan to comply with 3.5% absence standard in evaluating staff member attendance. If a detailed procedure is designed that doesn't interfere with contract language,

it would avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary conferencing.

(b) Dropouts - Follow a student from day of dropout on stats regardless of grade level K-12. Alternatives to formal schooling must be addressed adequately, not as part of a number, but a social consequence.

8. Problem: Fiscal data - Curtail redundancy problem in monitoring reports already on file at county/state.

Possible Alternative - Instill greater responsibility for local accountability of funds/expenditures. Establish foundation base for each student and have limits, ratio bands in each major budget area, to assure expenditures are being utilized in a manner indigenous to the community welfare. Oversight of the public sector has the inherent responsibility to assure accountability without usurping local prerogatives.

9. Problem: Values instruction - K-12! Should be mandated in curriculum monitoring - element 3.

Possible Alternative - Honesty, loyalty, responsibility, discipline, education and choice among others. Naturally, there are strict limits on range of what should be taught, however, once agreed they should be reinforced throughout formative years and interfaced in appropriate instructional setting, not necessarily a course.

The aforementioned comments were an attempt to isolate some particular problems aside from the general nuisances of paperwork, redundancy, and overcycling! Hopefully, they may be useful.

Burke/Abbott will cauterize the current "T & E" process and in the main painful decisions surrounding budgets, programs, and personnel will be made exercising the expertise, resourcefulness, and commitment of school leaders and staffs.

If the ultimate mission - to provide a quality education for each and every youngster - "based upon his/her abilities" - is to be met, superintendents throughout New Jersey will have a stake in "genuine T & E: - improving quality of education for all. New guidelines, updated, should provide latitude for increased autonomy at the local level, where children will be challenged at all levels and in all circumstances to contribute as valuable members of the community of men. Everyone will be asked to "push at the edges" toward excellence.

I should like to thank the chairman and this committee for the opportunity to present these views.

3. Possible Alternative
Industrial arts, music, business, art, home economics areas should be part of comprehensive offering. Any foundation ratio supporting a student should guarantee fair access to these programs. Curriculum monitoring could address this element.

10. Special Education - Should greater care be devoted to funding mechanism? Compensatory Education - Allocations should target student population more directly year-to-year!!

3X(a)

Remarks of Joseph P. Sabo
Superintendent of Watchung Hills Regional
Assembly Education Committee
Tuesday, March 20, 1990
Assemblyman Gerald Naples, Chair

My Name is Joseph Sabo

I'm superintendent Watchung Hills Regional District. About 28 years ago, my then Supt. Frank Oldham said when I first began my administrative career:

"If you're interested in improving the quality of Education in this school, get involved with the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools.

I became active with my own schools' accreditation process as well as serving on Evaluation teams in the 5 Middle Atlantic States;
As CHAIR of 15 such evaluations here in the states

4x

Page -2-

As CHAIR of 8 overseas evaluations with schools in Europe,
Near East, and Africa.

In 1979, I served as President of the Middle States Association
of Colleges & Schools. Recently, my own district has gone through
monitoring for the second time.

Because of this, I can't help but make comparisons between
the two procedures:

Monitoring is a compliance procedure - It is a check to see if
certain things have been done. It really doesn't say much
about how well a school is doing and how well kids learn.

A few of our newspaper articles have mentioned monitoring in
terms of missing ceiling tiles, doors not closing properly,

5x

and no toilet paper. I have some concerns about these and such other things as:

Repair molding on locker

Recharge fire extinguisher

Parenthetically, We have 77 C.R.'s in 1 building and
40 C.R.'s in 2 building

We did have some loose ceiling tiles. We probably have loosened a few more since our visit.

This compliance protocol, however, did not check on:

- 1.) 18A:36-6 Flag Day (appropriate exercises)
- 2.) 18A:36-7 Arbor Day (appropriate exercises)
- 3.) 18A:36-10 Commodore John Bary Day (commissioner)
(exercises or instructions)

6x

4.) 18A:36-13 appropriate exercises on Last day of school preceding:

Lincoln's Birthday

Washington's Birthday

Declaration or Memorial Day

Columbus Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day

It seems to me that leaving these out makes this compliance procedure at best uneven.

I wonder why these would be left out.

In a recent report "Report of the Advisory Council on Developing Characters & Values in N.J. students" which suggests four major

values area:

- Civic Responsibilities
- Environment
- Self
- Others

7X

Page. -5-

This report covers those statutes.

Unfortunately, the monitoring protocol has established a thinking that a district has either passed or failed monitoring. It was a negative connotation. Rather, the process should suggest an effort aimed at improvement of program.

I think the monitoring process needs to be changed.

I have no problem with compliance. We have an obligation to comply with the Law and the Code.

My own County Superintendent and team extended themselves to make our monitoring visit a truly professional exercise.

I believe we need to look at what is being done in the neighboring states: (Two examples)

8X

1. Pennsylvania

Commissioner Dave Carol has a Long Range Plan School

Improvement (LRPSI)

It has crosswalk over to MSA protocol

The MSA plan is an alternative.

2. New York

State officials have been working with MSA people.

New York has already announced that MSA School evaluation

may be used as a substitute.

I think its time to do soemthing like that in New Jersey. i.e.

extend time between visits & offer MSA as alternates.

9x

The Courier-News

Karen A. Wittmer, Publisher

Charles W. Nutt Jr., Executive Editor

Carol A. Hunter, Managing Editor

Margaret A. McGurk, Acting Editorial Page Editor

Philip S. Showell, Chief Editorial Writer

EDITORIALS

July 20, 1989 A-9

School monitoring

State program blurs focus on what matters

The state's program for monitoring school districts has become a bureaucratic monster that blurs distinctions between serious educational problems and minor housekeeping lapses.

It is eating up time and energy most administrators might better devote to improving what happens in classrooms. And, in some cases, certification decisions based on the 43 categories the state Department of Education monitors every five years undermine the credibility of the entire process.

For example, it was reported this week that both the Plainfield and Somerville districts had failed to gain certification. Plainfield has an educational problem it has long recognized and is working hard to correct. But Somerville does not. In fact, state monitors made what one official called "glowing comments" on the borough's classroom programs.

PLAINFIELD'S PRINCIPAL DEFICIENCIES — WHICH it shares with many urban districts — are a continuing problem with high school dropouts and low scores on standardized tests.

Everyone recognizes that even though the performance of Plainfield students on tests has already improved markedly, it will take more time and effort to reduce the number who leave school before graduation. Since September this year, 300 students have left Plainfield schools. Superintendent Annette Kearney is giving the daunting problem top priority.

Somerville knew before the clipboard bearers from Trenton showed up that last year's sub-par group of third-graders posed a problem. As a group, only 63.7 percent passed the required basic skills test, rather than the 75 percent the state requires. However, more than 75 percent of this year's third-graders passed the test given in April. But those results came too late to be cranked into this year's monitoring results.

Now, Somerville administrators know that the class of pupils who fell below the third-grade norm on basic skills will need continuing attention as they move through the system. But the state — strangely — requires no assurances on that score.

What Superintendent James Dwyer and his staff must do by the end of next month is produce a report on how they plan to deal with such things as some missing ceiling tiles, the door on the first floor of the high school that doesn't close properly and the bathroom that was out of toilet paper.

Dwyer and his staff were confident a new computer system would better manage the district's finances. But the system doesn't print out the data on the same state forms that the monitors are used to seeing; so Somerville must file a corrective plan on that too.

Well, it's necessary to ensure that school buildings are properly maintained and that their educational facilities are safely used. It is necessary, too, to make certain that districts are fiscally responsible. But when missing ceiling tiles are made to seem as likely as 300 dropouts to cost a district its state certification, it's time to ask: who's monitoring the monitors?

Evaluation process bogs down in trivial details

In 1983, State Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman seemed to be answering the prayers of administrators who had been complaining about the time devoted to then-yearly monitoring. He set up the program to monitor each district once every five years. Among other things, the new system provided closer monitoring for districts that failed to meet state standards — with a state takeover as the last resort for incorrigibles.

But administrators now spend a full school year preparing for a monitoring and, often a full school year afterward filing corrective plans for things like keeping potted plants off filing cabinets. School superintendents once used a 27-page handbook to get ready for their annual checkups. To prepare for the supposedly less onerous monitoring every five years, they and their staffs now must master a 180-page manual, plus addendums and a steady stream of amendments.

THE MONITORING FOCUS SHOULD BE CONFINED TO academic, curricular and financial criteria that can give parents and taxpayers some indication of what is or isn't going on amid the clouds of chalkdust.

And easily correctible deficiencies in business management, building safety and housekeeping categories should not be grounds for withholding state certification. They should be cited by state monitors — with local boards of education made responsible for assuring their timely correction.

The monitoring system, in effect, asks us to believe that missing toilet paper in a school bathroom may mean that the students who occupy it also are being deprived of the "thorough and efficient" education the state Constitution guarantees.

That's absurd. Commissioner Cooperman needs to put this monitoring monster on a leash — and on a diet of strictly relevant certification criteria.

10x

FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOLS

James E. Swalm, Ed.D.
Superintendent
50 Court Street
Flemington, N. J. 08822

MONITORING

My name is Dr. James Swalm and I am currently Superintendent of the Flemington-Raritan School District in Hunterdon County.

Before I talk about monitoring, I would like to give you a brief synopsis of my experience with this area so you have a better understanding of how my perceptions have been developed. I have been associated with monitoring since its inception. I helped write the original T & E code when I was with the State Department of Education, and developed the original monitoring documents, particularly as they related to Basic Skills. I then left the Department and returned to school administration as an Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. When Dr. Cooperman became Commissioner, I was part of the original group that participated in the revision of both the monitoring process and documents. As a Superintendent, I have been monitored three times by two different county offices.

At the outset, I must tell you I see monitoring in a positive context. To me, monitoring is a process which allows the county superintendent to work with the local district to ensure the district is offering the best program possible and is meeting law and code in all aspects. While it is a great deal of work to prepare for monitoring, I felt it has helped my district grow each time I have gone through it. I always approached it from the perspective of how can we use the monitoring process to improve the district.

I tell you quite honestly I have used monitoring to get things for the children in my district that we were having difficulty obtaining because of either political issues within the community or within the school system itself. In one instance, we were able to pass a bond issue when absolutely no one gave us a chance of having it done because of monitoring and the threat of non-approval.

// X

As you can tell, I believe in the concept of monitoring. However, I also believe it is a two-way street where the district and the State work together to ensure an appropriate program is being provided.

Yet, I would be the first to admit there is a great deal of work associated with monitoring and it requires a tremendous commitment in time. Much of this commitment is in obtaining documentation and in dealing with a number of rules and regulations that may not relate directly to the instructional program. In fact, it is this part of the process; i.e., the very specific regulations that seem questionable in their impact on the instructional program that I feel cause most of the problems in the monitoring process.

I know that a lot of my colleagues complain about monitoring. But I really feel they are complaining about the myriad of rules and regulations under which we operate. For example, most major education, health or environmental efforts passed by the Legislature in recent years require staff inservice. If we laid all of those requirements together, we would have to dismiss school between 10 and 15 days. In another instance, another superintendent and I developed a list of all the specific rules we need to follow that require reports. This list was over two pages in length, in single typewritten spacing.

But, these rules and regulations will remain regardless of whether we have monitoring or not. They were passed by state or federal legislators and while well-meaning, have caused us a tremendous amount of work.

I think it's important we realize monitoring has changed since its inception in the late 70's. The process is moving toward more of an educational focus, rather than the checklist format used initially in the late 70's. I would recommend this movement continue and that the focus be on those rules and regulations which make a difference to the health and welfare of the students, the instructional program, and the development and maintenance of a quality staff.

My most recent experience in monitoring was this past October where the district in which I am Superintendent was monitored. In this instance, I sensed there was even more focus on educational issues than there was four years ago when I was monitored. However, please understand there are certain problems when

12x

you focus on what is occurring in the classroom. For one, determining whether there is quality education being provided in a district is a subjective matter and differences of opinion will arise, particularly between counties. I know that in the initial development of the monitoring instrument, the decision was made to stay with only those things that were in law and code to eliminate areas where differences of opinion or a potential law case could occur. Yet, having worked with the county offices over a number of years, I know there are people in those offices who are very knowledgeable about what should occur in the schools.

In conclusion, I want to state the concept of monitoring is good and I feel it should be continued, provided that:

1. We approach it from the perspective of the state and district working together to ensure that the program being offered is the best that district can provide.
2. Monitoring should continue its movement toward reviewing the quality of the educational program offered in a district.
3. Monitoring be done periodically, say once every five years, as it is done now.
4. Help be available to the district following monitoring to correct deficiencies.
5. The non-essential rules which interfere with providing the instructional program be either significantly reduced or eliminated from the monitoring checklist.

JES:jt

13X

Irene Pines, President

Philip Kinney, Vice President

Washington Township Education Association

Old Farmers Road

Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

201 - 876 - 3865

14 x

We wish to thank the members of the Assembly Education Committee for this opportunity to address them and to relay our concerns regarding current regulations and procedures for the State Department of Education's monitoring of local school districts under the Thorough and Efficient Law (P.L.1975, C.212).

We are here as representatives of our profession in general and more specifically as President and Vice President of our local teacher's Association. Furthermore, we represent common areas of concern as identified by our local administration and ourselves. Our areas of concern are threefold.

- (1) Inconsistencies in the monitoring process as implemented county by county.
- (2) A duplication of services that has the effect of siphoning off funds intended for the education of the children of our state.
- (3) Lack of incentives for successful completion of monitoring.

In the first instance, inconsistencies exist in the monitoring process due to the lack of uniformity in the training of county monitoring teams. Clarifications and interpretations of state codes and Special Education codes are often vague and sometimes contradictory. More support is needed at the county level prior to state monitoring to help local districts comply. State approvals on up-grading substandard facilities are now taking up to two years, forcing districts into a non-compliance posture. Certain requirements

for facilities in fact may be unreasonable, effectively making perfectly adequate instructional spaces 'substandard'.

Secondly, areas already monitored on a yearly, ongoing basis by State, County, and Federal agencies may not require on site additional monitoring every five years. Educational objectives, various audits, compliance issues, student and staff attendance, P2R, BSI, reporting of testing results, all seem to be interacting simultaneously. In the process, monetary and human resources are squandered and siphoned away from educational programs. Delivery of services are curtailed. Paper work is redundant and exhaustive.

There is double liability involved here. With reduction in state aid and money needed for state monitoring, tight budgets become even tighter, effectively reducing services to students.

And lastly, there are no incentives for successfully completing the monitoring process. Nowhere are commendations for excellence noted. Every district, whether they fail or pass must be re-monitored in the same time frame. Perhaps districts that pass, might have their re-monitoring date extended to every 7-10 years. This could result in a savings to individual districts, the state, and ultimately the taxpayers of New Jersey.

These three areas, (1) Inconsistencies in monitoring, (2) Duplication of services, and (3) Incentives for successful completion of monitoring, should be the top priorities in the state's re-evaluation of the monitoring process, especially

in times of financial constraints.

Again, we wish to thank the Committee for this opportunity to be heard.

17x

77361
192

