

P U B L I C H E A R I N G

before

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Current and Potential Role of the Public Schools
in the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

October 28, 1986
Auditorium
Garfield High School
Garfield, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Matthew Feldman, Chairman
Senator Daniel J. Dalton, Vice Chairman
Senator Raymond Lesniak
Senator Wayne Dumont, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT:

Deena R. Schorr
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Senate Education Committee

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Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
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October 17, 1986

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Senate Education Committee will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 28, 1986 at 7:30 P.M. in the Garfield High School Auditorium, Garfield, New Jersey.

The hearing will consider the

**CURRENT AND POTENTIAL ROLE
OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN
THE PREVENTION OF DRUG AND
ALCOHOL ABUSE**

Anyone wishing to testify should contact Deena R. Schorr, aide to the Senate Education Committee, at (609) 984-6843. Eight copies of the testimony should be submitted to the committee on the day of the hearing.

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SENATOR MATTHEW FELDMAN (Chairman): Good evening. This is the night after the night before, after the World Series, after the Mets, and I wish to welcome you here to this public hearing. At the outset I want to recognize and thank: the Superintendent of the Garfield Public Schools, Jerry Benigno -- thank you very much Jerry -- and the Principal -- who is a constituent of my dear friend Wayne Dumont -- Jimmy Cantillo, and Marilyn Skiba, a member of the Garfield Board of Education, for making this all possible. At least the dateline from this meeting will read, "Garfield." All right Joseph? (affirmative response) Okay good.

Allow me to introduce my colleagues. Even though Wayne Dumont is on my left, that doesn't mean he's on my left politically. He's an outstanding member of the Legislature. He is the dean and I'm the dean's successor. But I'll never catch up to Wayne. He's been around when we had one room schoolhouses in New Jersey, and has watched this great State of ours grow from strength to strength. And I'm pleased because he's come all the way from Phillipsburg to be here this evening because this is very important to Wayne Dumont. To my right is Senator Ray Lesniak from Union County. You'll be reading about his toxic waste bill. He's going to give us the cure for our insurance problems of our State. He's one of the brighter lights in the Senate. As you know, he's come from the Assembly to the New Jersey State Senate where he has established himself as a genuine leader. Both Senator Dumont and Senator Lesniak are members of the Senate Education Committee.

So once again, I am pleased to welcome you here tonight for this public hearing on this extremely critical issue, on the role of the schools in the prevention and the control of drug and alcohol abuse. Before we begin, let me introduce Dr. Deena Schorr, who is the Aide to our Senate Education Committee.

In many ways, I regret the necessity for this meeting. Substance abuse is a terrible tragedy, especially when it involves our young people. Study after study has documented the scope of this problem, and the advent of crack -- a highly addictive form of cocaine -- has heightened the urgency for action. According to the State Department of Law and Public Safety, 65% of New Jersey's high school pupils have used drugs. Ninety percent of them said that some drugs, especially marijuana, are easy to obtain. I do not wish to belabor the statistics. We know the growing magnitude of the problem. It's an epidemic. Our concern tonight is our search for a solution, and this will not be achieved by a mandate for change by any public official. Nor will it resolve itself by more rigorous law enforcement efforts, or more severe penalties for drug pushers and others who prey on our young, although these are essential components of our efforts. The ultimate answer is through prevention, and the front line is the public school system of our State, as well as of the nation.

However, in making this assessment, we must also recognize that the schools cannot succeed alone. We have a tendency in our society to let George do it. This seems particularly true in relation to our public schools. Whenever a problem is perceived, the solutions seem to be let the schools fix it; by introducing a course on drug abuse, alcohol abuse, parenting, and currently suicide prevention, inter generational relationships, and the dangers of child abuse and incest. The fact is that a new course, or a new curriculum, will not free our children from the dangers of substance abuse. Obviously the schools do have a legitimate role in the nurturing and in the caring for our young. Clearly they must play a vital role in our search for a solution to substance abuse among young people. However, the schools cannot play that role in isolation from the rest of the community. Education courses are essential, but equally critical are

programs in the schools which provide for the prevention of substance abuse, and procedures for early intervention when abuse is suspected. Unless we can develop a program that involves the parents and the entire community, the effort will fail. This is a failure we cannot afford.

That is why we are here this evening. We need your input. We need your advice, and beyond that we need your commitment to work with the local schools to insure that we do in fact reach the children, and remove drugs and alcohol from our schools, and our community.

Dr. Bob Noonan has just come in. I believe that you were at the Giants game last night. The traffic was so bad you finally made Garfield this evening. (laughter) Welcome. Dr. Noonan is part of our Senate Majority staff, and he's been assigned to the Education Committee.

With us this evening are representatives from the State Department of Education. We have Marc Gaswirth, who represents our Commissioner of Education. Marc will open up this meeting, and then we will hear from our State representatives as to what is being done in our school system right now. This is a cozy group. I could have opened it up and I could have said, "Dearly Beloved." In the auditorium we would have been lost. But Marc, let me call upon you for an opening remark.

I just want to recognize another individual. Is James Crone here? Jimmy Crone? Thank you for being here, Jimmy. I know you are in the midst of a campaign, but you took the time off to be here to listen. You're a father of two, right here in Garfield. What is being done here in the public school system as well as others can help all of us fight this terrible epidemic that we are now involved with. Yes Marc?

M A R C G A S W I R T H: Thank you very much, Senator Feldman. On behalf of the Commissioner of Education, Saul Cooperman, and the Department of Education, I would like to

thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight before the Senate Education Committee on this most important subject. We greatly appreciate your interest in this topic, as well as in so many other education issues, over the years that you have chaired the Education Committee.

Testifying this evening for the Department are: Dr. Joel Bloom, Assistant Commissioner for General Academic Education, and Mr. Philip Brown, who is the statewide coordinator for drug and alcohol education. At this time, I will call them to testify.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Good, thank you.

A S S T. C O M M I S S I O N E R J O E L B L O O M: Good evening. What I'd like to do is walk you through four or five pages of information that we've put together approximately eight months ago to share with our State Board of Education, and give them guidance in striking a plan -- which they had approved this past March -- and some administrative code -- that they also approved and would state some new rules and regulations, which you will see rather shortly.

The plan that I'm going to share with you -- or the statements on the newsprint -- is really in several parts. The first part, just briefly, states historically what's been going on in the State through the Department of Education, and its public schools, since about 1978. The second piece of the presentation will focus on what we're presently doing in the area of drug and alcohol abuse prevention and intervention. And the third part will focus on what needs to be done, at which time I will also refer to something that we are now calling the Blueprint for a Drug Free New Jersey, and that's something that the Governor released this past Wednesday at a conference that he attended. I'll make some closing comments about the Blueprint.

To begin, (uses charts in his demonstration) some of the history -- this may be a first use of a coat rack -- you'll see the presentation will talk about what we've done with regard to policy, products, training, and a little later on we get into some program issues. The first thing -- and Senator Feldman early on addressed the issue of a mandate. A mandate is only going to go so far. However, at minimum we now have in place ten hours required of instruction in the area of drug and alcohol abuse, for each student, for every year they're enrolled in secondary school. That again is based on some statute. So for every year of enrollment, students should be receiving ten hours of instruction, per year.

The second thing that we've done on a policy level, and you'll also see it as a need -- and as the Senator has already said -- the issue of drug and alcohol abuse and intervention and treatment involves at least four different parts of our service system. Education clearly owns a piece of it. Public Law and Safety certainly owns a piece of it as far as the law enforcement side. The Department of Health, whether it's here in the local community or at the statewide level, has a major role in the issue of prevention, intervention, and treatment. And last, the Human Services Department. So in all sincerity, you need to get four, sometimes very bureaucratic organizations -- whether they're at the community level or they're at the State level -- to agree to work together. Since 1978, we have had an agreement with the Department of Health to work jointly in the area of drug and alcohol abuse. That is significant, but I also see it significant because we get access to some of their money in doing it, and that's always significant.

The third thing that we have done is -- as I said a little earlier -- this past year the State Board went ahead and put a plan together which talks about what the Department of Education will be doing in working with school districts over

the next three years, in the area of intervention, again treatment, and prevention. The plan is a statutory requirement. And as I said, the plan was struck this past March.

Last, just this past October -- last month, or the month we're still finishing up -- some new code was established. Code is the means by which the State Board of Education strikes rules and regulations which govern what schools do. This particular code deals with, how do you go about identifying students who are abusing drugs and/or alcohol -- and sometimes it's both. What do you do as far as an examination? What do you do as far as intervention? What do you do as far as treatment? These are both legal, social, behavioral, psychological problems, that schools are confronted with on a day-to-day basis. Clearly we need some statewide policies helping schools deal with this rather complex problem. So that is the piece of code, or the rules, that the State Board recently adopted. They went into effect October 6th.

Some of the things the Department has been working on, or has completed and are already out there-- For years, by the way of products -- and some of the data that Senator Feldman spoke of in his early comments -- that survey that we do of schools we do every three years. We just finished the 1986 survey. We sample school districts. We ask students to self report, and we try to get some handle on the incidents, by their own self report of drug and alcohol abuse. And that's the survey, and we're expecting the results of the '86 one to be out rather soon. That guides much of the policy, many of the programs that not only the Department of Education goes ahead and puts into place, but also again the Attorney General's office--

Curriculum guidelines: In 1981, it was decided for school people to be involved on the prevention side of this very severe problem, we need to give them guidelines of what they do in the classroom in presenting the information to students on drug and alcohol abuse. So we've had some guidelines out there since 1981.

In training-- Before I get to that, a critical document-- In 1985 we realized that the problem of drug and alcohol abuse is, again, a several fold problem. The development of new drugs -- whether it's crack, or what we now hear about as some of the designer drugs -- it's an emerging business; it's an emerging industry. People involved in the drug business look at schools as markets, and they approach it as any sophisticated business would approach it. Therefore based on what we knew about: 1) It's a business for some people 2) It's a changing and emerging business 3) The pharmacology of it is different than it was two, three, four years ago, just as recently as a couple of months ago with -- as Senator Feldman said -- the addition of crack 4) We are learning new things about how we work with children in the area of drug and alcohol abuse.

At one time we would give them information and try to scare them into not using drugs and alcohol. We found to a very large extent -- and again, we are learning as we are more and more confronted with the problem -- that the scare tactics don't necessarily work; because you can tell a student that they will be forever addicted if they smoke a joint of marijuana then they go ahead and smoke it and find they have no addiction problem, three weeks, or three days, or three months later, they may decide, "Well, I'll have a second one, and a third one." Therefore, many of the stories -- horror stories and otherwise -- didn't work, and there has been a lot that has been ineffective about drug and alcohol education. And we're learning more about what is effective.

So we put together a desk reference manual, and if you're a principal of a school you've probably seen it. It's rather compendious, so we keep on sending out new chapters as we learn more things about how to prevent and deal with this problem.

In the area of training, part of what we try to do is make teachers, and building principals, and building superintendents, more knowledgeable. So on a voluntary basis, we typically invite them to participate in some kind of training. The first training program that you see up here -- which we pronounce "scope" even though it may be spelled "SCOP" -- and this is the Department of Health's program. It's a very very effective program, because it gets to the heart of the matter. As Senator Feldman has said, it brings the community in. And it asks the community to work with the various agencies in that community to sit down and try to come up with an approach to solve the problem of drug and alcohol abuse. So that is one that has worked well. We now have that program working in approximately 190 communities, with the schools in those communities. We've had statewide in-servicing since 1981. The in-servicing keeps on expanding, based on the increased knowledge and the information we've had.

We had for the first time this past year, in 1986, a joint conference involving the New Jersey Education Association, the School Boards Association, Superintendents Association, from employee assistance programs. We recognized that the only people in schools who may be using and abusing drugs are not only students; that it may very well involve, whether it's custodians, teachers, other people employed in the schools. So like industry, as I'm sure you've seen in much of the pop literature -- whether it's "Time Magazine" -- We are concerned about the use of that in schools by the professional employees.

The other thing is, if you know some things about schooling, the people who are most knowledgeable about the psychological and social issues of students' growth and development, are the child study team people. Therefore -- these are the psychologists and the sociologists -- we're trying to involve them, at least to give us guidance on how to identify symptoms of students who may be using drugs.

Since 1983 we've got a new monitoring system in place. Again, you may be somewhat familiar with it. We also did a survey and we find that based on those mandates -- the ten hours, the teacher training issues, the curriculum issues -- we're in pretty good shape. What we've mandated, schools have put into place. The question I think you'll hear the Senators asking, "Has that been enough?" And you're going to hear us respond in a little while I'm sure, "No, that's not been enough." We've got some things in place, but they are rudiments of the early pieces of what we need for an effective program.

So that's what we did. The question is, what are we doing now? And what direction are we going in? Again, I referred to earlier, the 1986 survey -- you'll see the data on that rather shortly-- In statute, at this point in time, there is a requirement for every incoming teacher to take an exam, part of which includes testing their knowledge in the areas of drug and alcohol. Like many statutes, there are always additional add ons -- whether it's by our administrative code, or by practice -- and as the statute now exists on the books, it really isn't being implemented. We have as many people being exempted from the exam-- If a student being prepared to be a teacher, walks into a biology classroom, he or she is exempted from the exam. If a teacher in a pre-service program walks into a science classroom for part of his or her instruction at college, that potential teacher is exempted from the exam. Also, by the way, the exam is about 40 years old,

and if you've been listening just a bit to what I've been saying about the emerging and changing issues about drug and alcohol abuse-- I think it's time for a new exam. We are looking to do two things here -- and I'll get into that in a little while -- one is to make every person who is going to come to work in our schools, pass the exam; and two is, clearly to update the exam, and make it a bit more rigorous, before a teacher is certified to teach in our public schools.

Programmatically, you heard me say a little while ago that we've had a lot of failures in the area of education, and how we deal with the problems of drug and alcohol abuse. So, for the past almost two years now we've been funding some 28 districts around the State, and giving them an opportunity, some advice, expertise, and in some cases some money, specific training, and some materials. And asking them how they can build a better mousetrap with regard to the curriculum for the prevention, the intervention programs as far as early identification of students who may be presently using or abusing drugs, and how they work with treatment centers -- and I'll get to that in a bit -- and how they work with the juvenile justice system if in fact a student of theirs has been involved in some criminal activity with regard to drug and alcohol abuse. So we've got these 28 pilots. The purpose of the pilots is -- some three years by the end of 1987 -- we have a better handle on more information about what works, what works well in different kinds of school settings.

The other thing we have realized, and part of the problem as it's emerging -- and Senator Feldman alluded to it in his opening comments -- the difference now with drug and alcohol abuse, as compared to possibly five years ago, is it's reaching younger populations. At one time it was a phenomenon or problem of high school kids. We have every reason to believe, and evidence to believe, that it's in elementary schools. That's a real scary part of that. So not only is the

scary part of it that there are these new drugs which appear to be early addicting drugs -- and there are more on the way -- but we are also seeing it show up in earlier populations of kids.

In the area of products, this December we'll be putting out guidelines that tell school districts how to use those new policies and procedures that we've put into place. We will have new curriculum guidelines out there. As you heard me say earlier, those are in place since 1981, and it's time to update them. A big problem is keeping the information current. And the last piece, as far as products go, we are focusing on, again, how does the school system put an employee assistance program into place for those professionals and support people working in schools who may have a drug and alcohol problem themselves?

The last couple of pieces before I get into what needs to be done: We continue to do the training. However, I need to tell you that the Department of Education agencies, school districts, are not the only people doing training. We've got Health out there doing training; the Division of Public Law and Safety, and you'll see on the next page, it's not coordinated. If I'm a drug counselor, or a guidance counselor, or a building principal, in the Garfield school district, I may be inundated with, "Come to my training next week." Then the Department of Health puts out their training the following week, and Public Law and Safety puts out their training the third week. We can have all the teachers running after training for the next three and four months and not have a real opportunity to go ahead and apply this. So we need a better handle, and better organization, and better coordination, to do all this training.

A real problem that we often have is there's little or no communication and coordination with the juvenile justice system and schools. Schools may not know that the students have been involved with some kind of criminal activity in the

juvenile justice system. They may not know that students may be getting some kind of treatment outside of the school system. We need to do a better job, not only at the statewide level, but particularly here at the community level, in coordinating what goes on in services for kids -- whether they are juvenile justice services, or community mental health services.

So monitoring things, we will look at how school districts are implementing the new code. We will start doing that at the end of the school year. And as another source of information that we've been collecting for two years now -- you'll have a report out on shortly -- school districts are required to report to the Commissioner and State Board of Education and we're obligated to report to the Legislature, on the incidents of violence and vandalism on an annual basis that occurs in schools. As part of that report, we also collect data on the incidents of drug and alcohol abuse as it's been reported in schools.

What needs to be done? There's a lot that needs to be done. You've heard the Senator say, it's not only a schooling problem -- and that's the first thing that needs to be done. You can't stop. You can't change attitudes and values whether students, families, or communities by saying we're going to put a program into place; we're going to put a mandate into place, and then we're finished. We'll see you in three years. It just doesn't work. We know that doesn't work. So we need some long-term institutional commitments. And we need those commitments not only at the State level, but we need them at the county and the local levels. And again I don't know -- there's not been a whole lot of literature out, the plan itself has not circulated that widely yet -- but you will see in the Governor's proposal, as you hear more about it over the next couple of weeks and months, that he talks about an alliance of community people. We are proposing to the Legislature, and

working with them, to go ahead and give grants to local communities who want to come together in some alliance, to work with schools, and mental health, and human service agencies, to begin to put programs into place; but not only to put programs into place, but to deal with the issue of values and attitudes with regard to drug and alcohol abuse.

So you need a plan. It's got to be long-term. This problem will not be solved overnight. It will not be solved with one statute, one training session, one new initiative, a new million dollars here, a new million dollars there. I don't mean to throw those figures around lightly, but it's a long-term issue. It took us probably 20 years to get into this rather complex problem of drug and alcohol abuse. It may take us three times as long to get out of it. We've probably been working at it rather intensively for about five or eight. I do think it's a long-term problem.

We need to better coordinate the issues of education, treatment, and court services. That's what's missing -- whether it's here in Garfield, or ten other towns further away -- a lack of coordination.

We need a better way of identifying what the needs are. We learned of crack, through some unfortunate deaths of some athletes. I am not so sure we would be that familiar today with crack if not for those couple of unfortunate deaths. It may have taken us another three, four, five, six months, possibly a couple more years, while the epidemic spreads. So we need to identify what the ongoing needs are, and the changing issues -- whether sociological issues, or pharmacological issues. As that information changes we need to get it into schools. We can't let schools only believe what they have read in a current piece of literature, whether it's "Time Magazine," or The New York Times -- whatever newspaper it is that they're reading. They need exact detailed information, accurate information.

You heard me say a little earlier that elementary education-- Students who are possibly using/abusing drugs-- It starts in many elementary schools for many kids. And again back to the Governor's Blueprint-- In the Blueprint it is called for drug and alcohol education to be taught at every grade level. That is not what is now required. So, to address a comment earlier from Senator Feldman, in that case it would be a new mandate. Right now it's at every secondary grade level. There's no requirement at every grade level in the elementary schools. There's a requirement that elementary schools should teach drug and alcohol abuse prevention, but they should decide where it's taught. We're proposing to make it at every grade level.

The whole issue of -- I spoke earlier -- of what we now know that didn't work. What we do know in part that works is kids who may be so predisposed to use the drugs very often have problems around low self-esteem, and what we know is that we need to work with these students very often in a counseling mode -- as compared to trying to scare them away from drugs -- and deal with their issues of self-esteem.

We know we need to intervene early, and what that means is early identification. Identify the problems in the school early on, and put in a long-term plan to work with the student. Don't think you're going to be able to call a student in once a week for 40 minutes, "How are you doing? Any problems this week? Okay, you look good, you can leave us now." That's not the kind of student, not the kind of treatment, for the kinds of problems we've been talking about.

We also need to teach kids how to make decisions, how to say "no." You've heard a lot about that. How to deal with peer pressure. So, therefore, we talk about life skills programs.

And last, a real lack in this State is effective treatment. If we go and tell the superintendent of Garfield to do a better job of identifying kids who are possibly abusing drugs, he says, "Okay, Joel Bloom, you tell me to do it, now I'm doing it. Now what do I do with the kids? Where do I send the kid?" The truth of the matter is there are very few places to send a kid in the entire State. Students that are really in trouble, many of them go out-of-state. So, again, something that's addressed in the Blueprint that the Governor proposed are not only new facilities and new services -- some of them are out of creative proposals -- But a real comprehensive system for treatment.

So that's, very briefly, some of where we've been historically, some of what we're doing now, and some of what needs to be done. I think we've taken a very large step. It's one of many large steps that needs to be taken. I think the Blueprint -- which for those of you again, I've been speaking about rather briefly-- What the Governor has now asked is for the four State Commissioners from Health and Human Services, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Education, come together and take his proposed Blueprint; work with legislators, work with people in the departments, work with communities, to come up with a final plan. I think we'll be hearing more about that final plan after the first of the year.

I will stop at this point, and take any questions.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. Bloom, is Phil Brown going to add anything to what you've said, before we open it up to questions?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Let me introduce Phil--

SENATOR FELDMAN: Before you introduce Phil, I just want to once again congratulate Garfield. I look around the room now and I see some more educational leaders have come in. Peter DeFranco, the principal of School #9, Tony Demarco, a member of the board, Carol Scudillo, a member of the board.

Now we have Joseph -- I did introduce him officially, a very dear friend of mine, the Assistant Commissioner for Education from Bergen County, Joseph DiMinno. Everybody's a VIP, but certain people, you know, we have to acknowledge officially the hosts, and Joe DiMinno.

Joel, you've been very informative. I know there's going to be some interesting questions because we have representatives here from the educational community of Bergen County. We have the quality here this evening, who will bring your message back to their respective school boards. So you can pick it up from here, before we get into the questions from the Senators, or from our audience, to bring on Mr. Brown.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Let me introduce Phil Brown, because Phil is someone who works with me and has responsibility for the Statewide coordination. He works with three people out in the field. We have three regional service units. There's an RCSU North, Central, and South. Each one of those has a full-time drug and alcohol person assigned to it, primarily to work in the area with those 28 pilots and do all of the training that you saw me address a couple of minutes ago, and Phil is really responsible to see that the policies of the Board, the policies of the Commissioner, the Governor, are carried out consistently statewide. He works with me in the Division of General Academic Education. Phil, anything we left out? Everything I know about this, by the way, Phil has taught me. He judges my presentation at the end of each evening.

PHILIP BROWN: Yes, I think after having heard this a couple of times now, I'm going to successfully work myself out of a job. You'll no longer need me. (laughter)

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Anything to add?

MR. BROWN: I think the only other comment I think is probably obvious to all of you who have been aware of any of the news over the last few weeks and months, which is that the response at the Federal level has also been significant, and

the need to coordinate those resources that will come into the State with the Governor's plan is going to -- at least for those of us who have been working in the field for some time -- create an opportunity to do things that we've thought for a long time needed to be done. So, it's a very exciting time. At the same time, the excitement is somewhat nullified by the fact that it's been brought about by further increases in the epidemic that we're all striving to do something about. So it's a time of hoping we can galvanize the energy that's been brought into focus on the problem.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I'm glad that Dr. Bloom mentioned the fact that we are going to begin now to intensify our education in the elementary schools, because when he first gave his presentation to the Senate Committee on Education that was a question we all asked. Yes, by the time a youngster gets into the secondary school he can be addicted. We have to get to that person in these early stages of his life -- especially with crack -- before he gets to the ninth grade. I'm very glad and happy that the Governor, as well as the Department of Education, have taken cognizance to our clarion call, "Let's begin earlier. Let's not wait until one is 13 or 14 years of age. Let's begin at the age of five or six."

The first witness will be Dr. David Rothberg of the Teaneck Board of Education. Did you sign in as a witness or to ask a question?

D R. D A V I D S. R O T H B E R G: No, to make a statement.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Oh, yes, fine. Go ahead then, please do. We can either make statements, and everything is recorded -- if further legislation is necessary, we are certainly going to read over these statements. If we feel we have to prod our Department of Education, you be the prodder, we'll be the intermediaries. If you have any statement that you want to say, please say it. If you wish to ask a question of my colleagues, please do so. If you want to direct your questions to Dr. Bloom, he's here for that purpose. Yes, David?

DR. ROTHBERG: Thank you, Senator Feldman. Good evening. My name is David Rothberg. I'm a resident of Teaneck. Professionally I'm a public school administrator. Currently I serve as a trustee on the Teaneck Township Board of Education. My comments this evening reflect 21 years of work as a teacher, supervisor, and administrator, and the years that I've spent so far as a school trustee. I'd like to make it clear they are my comments. In no way should you construe this as a policy statement of my Board of Education.

The public schools are at once the most visible and at the same time the most invisible when it comes to substance abuse. They are the most visible when arrests of students and dealers outside of the school building becomes front page news. They become invisible when substance abuse programs go on as a normal part of the instructional program.

Alas, this appears to be the current state of the public schools in the effort to combat substance abuse. It is a whipsaw approach. School districts are buffeted between what is going on, what is not going on, and what should be going on. Districts find themselves competing with each other, not because they want to but because they have to. This is largely due to the play that the media gives to this situation as well as to the comments made by the political infrastructure. The public at large reads, hears, and questions. I have somehow come to expect that we will see advertisements announcing the percentage that a district is drug free.

If I am a bit cynical about the current state of affairs, it is because I see a lack of better vision on the part of those in leadership positions. The competition that forces the districts to compete also forces the political structure to compete. The public schools are forced to pay the price resulting from this fallout. Each and every time a problem arises, it is the public schools that are asked to carry the ball. And yet, all too often the end result has been

punitive rather than educational. "Look at what we are doing to catch the drug users!" What are we doing to prevent young people from becoming substance abusers?

The New York Times on Monday, October 27, 1986 carried a story on page A18 entitled, "New Law to Combat Drugs: Words, Deeds, and Political Expediency." The President is quoted in that article as saying that the real answer to substance abuse lies in educating people to not use drugs. However, approximately 12% of the \$1.7 billion in financing the anti-drug bill will be earmarked for education. The reason? Drug education is not politically expedient. Drug education does not yield immediate results. Its impact is long-term. This, of course, does not help those who demand immediate and highly visible results.

If the public schools are to be a vital force in the effort to combat substance abuse, it must be done in a non politically expedient manner. It must be recognized that there might not be noticeable results for a generation. The efforts must be consistent. Fragmented approaches forced upon districts, which seems to be the current practice, offers only short-term results. It must be approached as one would approach the writing of a lesson plan and implemented according to the essential elements of instruction:

- 1) What learning is to occur and at what level of difficulty?
- 2) How shall we teach to that objective?
- 3) How shall we monitor the learning that is taking place? What adjustments must we make?
- 4) How shall we address retention?

The approach should not pit urban against suburban. It should recognize that substance abuse is a common problem requiring sharing or networking to achieve the commonalty of purpose needed to convince our young people of the hazards of substance abuse.

I'm a bit concerned that the Governor's proposal does not move in that direction. At the recent fall workshop of New Jersey School Boards, the Attorney General, W. Cary Edwards, outlined for the membership the new anti-drug thrust. Mr. Edwards noted the following:

- 1) The establishment of an alliance composed of municipalities and school districts.
- 2) Districts to have a K-12 State curriculum.
- 3) Tougher penalties for the sale, distribution, and the use of children to sell.
- 4) A rehabilitation component.
- 5) The need for local districts to establish their own programs with these programs including penalties for those who are substance abusers.

The proposal essentially follows the national proposal. The emphasis in the main is on high profile items. A State curriculum does offer the consistency that is needed. However, coupling that with the focus once again on local efforts introduces the fragmentation problem.

The potential of the public schools to play a vital role in the area of substance abuse can only occur if they are allowed to do what they are designed to do; provide education. This can only occur when there is a recognition and agreement among the powers that be that our goal is long-term results, not high visibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my comments, Senator.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Dr. Rothberg. Does anyone else wish to make a comment? Perhaps Dr. Bloom can -- in any comments that you make, you might want to refer to the very cogent observation made by Dr. Rothberg. Yes?

B E T T Y D i G R U T T I L A: My name is Betty DiGruttilla, I'm the President of the Bergen County School Boards Association. At the President's breakfast of the Bergen County

School Boards Association, a concern was identified. That is the need for an accurate listing of crisis intervention centers with current phone numbers. I took the concern to Ray Kelly, the County Superintendent of Schools, the other day. He has agreed to set up and maintain such a data bank for school use.

SENATOR FELDMAN: That's a good positive statement. Dr. Bloom, do you wish to comment on this? I mean Ray Kelly and Joseph DiMinno's office are cooperating. Why can't this be done in 21 counties?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Again, part of the issue is one of the fragmentation -- which I heard some comments referred to ones that I have made -- and what we've asked -- and that's how we do some of this, we ask other departments. We asked the Department of Health to begin to identify in all the 21 counties what programs work, as far as treatment goes, intervention. Our concern when we put lists together is, what is the sense of quality assurance? How do we know it's quality treatment, quality intervention, that students will get, before we ask parents, school superintendents, building principals, to send their kids to it? In that case, we would ask, and we've asked -- and we're working on that now -- to put such a list together. It'll take a short amount of time. Not a long amount of time. We are trying to do that across the 21 counties.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Joel. Yes Joseph?

J O S E P H D i M I N N O: Betty's right. We are going to take that endeavor. But your comment about other counties-- I'd like to say it is going on in other counties, particularly Sussex County has an excellent little booklet put out by Bernie Andrews, the County Superintendent.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You just made his day -- Senator Dumont over here.

MR. DiMINNO: But it has been going on in other counties. I just don't want to say that we're going to be doing it only in Bergen. I've seen Sussex's booklet, it's excellent.

SENATOR FELDMAN: So, we being the largest county in the State, should have a large book, right? They have a small booklet. Okay good. I'm glad that this turn of events where we know that the school systems is the front line. What we do as educators, what we do as legislators, will prevent perhaps a national disaster in the future. Yes Betty?

MS. DiGRUTTILA: I just wanted to mention that in another county each high school student is supplied with a card with the major crisis telephone numbers. We have not taken it on in Bergen County, but we have it under consideration. As part of the program, each student in every high school, would be supplied with a card that lists the major intervention centers -- suicide, drugs, etc.

SENATOR FELDMAN: I'm glad this has surfaced at this meeting because Dr. Bloom is going to bring this back to the Commissioner of Education, and what he's hearing here of substance will be put into some directive that will help everyone in our State. Thank you. Any other questions? Yes?

J E R O M E J. B E N I G N O: Senator, quite recently one of our neighboring districts -- Becton Regional School District -- decided they were going to have drug testing of students.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Oh.

MR. BENIGNO: That received a lot of controversial resistance. I'm just wondering, since then I think the public, and many of our legislators -- at least some that I have spoken to -- seem to think that maybe that wasn't such a bad idea. I'm just wondering if the Senate Committee is thinking of perhaps looking in that direction, and considering testing in schools?

SENATOR FELDMAN: Does anyone wish to comment?
Senator Lesniak?

SENATOR LESNIAK: Well, I'm not. I don't think we have to send our children to school with a urine bottle in their lunch pail. I don't think that makes any sense at all.

MR. BENIGNO: How about suspected drug users?

SENATOR LESNIAK: Well, there's always authority now, under current law, to have testing if there is reasonable suspicion. I think those safeguards have to be kept in place or else we're going to make all of our students feel guilty that they have to be tested for something most of them, we expect, aren't even involved in. I don't think we should paint all of our students with such a broad brush as being suspected of being involved in drug abuse.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Yes Joe? There was a court case on that, wasn't there?

MR. DiMINNO: I was going to say Senator Dumont maybe could elaborate on that. This might constitute an invasion of privacy. You've got a constitutional question, which I'm sure the Senator could articulate much better than I can. Senator Dumont, am I correct?

SENATOR DUMONT: Well, there is a court case, that's right. One of my colleagues, from our district, is about to put in legislation I think to ban random drug testing, at least of employees. I haven't made up my mind how I feel about that yet, because if you're not using drugs you really have nothing to fear whatsoever in being tested. But on the other hand, Peter Ueberroth made a pretty good comment today that was quoted widely on radio. He said why didn't the United States buy up the fields where this substance is grown? It will probably save a lot of money that we are going to spend trying to get rid of it through education, and some other things. Get rid of the drugs in the first place, the substances.

SENATOR LESNIAK: The other legitimate question, quite frankly, that I think the students would have, is if they're going to be tested then the teachers better be tested, the employees better be tested, the board of education members better be tested, the city council and the mayor better be tested, and the legislators better be tested. Where do you stop from there, and what are you going to gain by it? We do have basic freedoms that this country was founded upon, and I don't think that we have to turn those over and tear up the Bill of Rights. I think the approach that's being taken as looked at here is the way to achieve success, and certainly if there's reasonable suspicion then there should be intervention immediately.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. Bloom?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Yes. I referred earlier to that code that was passed effective October 6, by the State Board of Education. I'm sure you will find in there the authority that schools do drug testing where there is belief that a child is using drugs and/or alcohol in the school's presence. That gives the direction, as well as the authority, but that's again, as the Senator was saying, where there is belief that that is a problem for that child. I think it lays it out rather specifically and gives good guidance to the schools.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Joel, what are the criteria for the evaluation of pupils who are suspected of drug abuse? I mean, is it erratic behavior, glassy eyes, falling asleep, or too active, or what?

MR. BROWN: Two responses, Senator. First of all, the statute that the code is based on indicates that any teaching staff member professional in the school system, that believes they have (inaudible) suspicion, must report that kind of an incident to an administrator or authority in the school system. We are going to be putting forth guidelines by the

first of the next calendar year, which will give some specific parameters, and the kinds of things you're asking for, for school districts to use. What's difficult is that you have to know the kids you're dealing with, and have a system in place that's going to be responsive to the disciplinary needs of the districts, as well as the helping hand that's needed to deal with kids who want and need help. So, it's that dual approach of having clear policy guidelines that are going to make it clear to kids that the school environment is not one in which drug use will be tolerated. On the other hand, offer a helping hand to kids that really need a place to turn to.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Yes, Mr. Brunetto?

F R A N K B R U N E T T O: Senator Feldman, I would just like to comment as a professional here. I've been in Bergen County for 20 years as Director of Special Services. I think one component hasn't been really explored fully here. I just want to comment on some of the things that we've been doing at the River Dell Schools where I've been associated, that is a united front using parent involvement, a curriculum known as the Seattle plan -- which comes with a substance abuse counselor as a component of that plan, and a total community effort. I would rather look at it from this point of view, rather than get into urine testing and all of that. I think this is the way to go. You might recall that the President visited our school district two years ago looking for model programs in the area of substance abuse, including alcohol. So, I think this kind of approach is the approach that to me is a favorable one, and a positive one. I could explain our program in more detail if it's warranted.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Frank. Frank you might, when you get to it, let the Senate Education Committee review the plan that --

MR. BRUNETTO: Yes, it's been operational now for three years. Sure. I can submit that to the whole Committee.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Any other comments or questions?
Yes?

T E R R A N C E T. M c G R A T H: Yes, I'm Terry McGrath from the Leonia Board, and what you're saying is wonderful. We have the Seattle program in Leonia. I agree with education, but we still have to deal with the kid who has a problem in the school. We can't ignore that. We do not have the facilities. We have one facility in Bergen County. There are headlines in the papers that maybe the facility isn't working too well. We have to send our kids to Minnesota where they have decent facilities. What do we do with the kids who have the problem?

MR. BRUNETTO: I think you're talking about two kinds of facilities. You're talking about residential and day facilities.

MR. McGRATH: I'm talking about any facility.

MR. BRUNETTO: There are those available. I serve also on the Special Services School District, and we have started a program at Rockleigh. It's small, and it's residential, but we started one not too long ago.

MR. McGRATH: But it's so small. I've been through it. How many can we put there?

SENATOR FELDMAN: What responsibility, in your opinion Terry, has the State? I know these programs are very costly. Unless a parent has the type of catastrophic insurance for his child, this can bankrupt a family, to give a child the professional advice, and the counseling, and the in-house care that's necessary, for one to come back to the mainstream. I mean, how far do you think--

MR. McGRATH: I think you just answered the question.

SENATOR FELDMAN: All right, thank you. Dr. Bloom?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: I think, again, when you get an opportunity to go through the Governor's Blueprint -- and I'll read right from it. It's on page 22: "They are now looking at the desirability and cost of mandating that

health insurance coverage include benefits for the treatment of drug abuse." Right now you can get payment for alcohol abuse and alcohol treatment. Again, I maintain you're absolutely correct. The facilities are not there for the most part. But the first step is clearly to be able to afford them, and that would require getting the health insurance companies to be willing to go along with that. So, it's clearly a two part problem. It's an insurance issue, as well as one of facilities, and the lack of facilities.

SENATOR DUMONT: The problem with that -- when that business came up about alcohol abuse and covering it -- was that the question was whether it should be charged to everybody who has insurance, when only a certain percentage is involved in the problem.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, we had a bill before us on mental health. Some of the labor unions were against the broad coverage for mental health. They felt if you wanted coverage for mental health, you can tell your insurance broker to put it into your policy rather than have it mandated in all the policies of Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Here again, it's what's good for me, but I am not my brother's keeper. So, these are the things-- It's not easy being a legislator today. It's not easy being a parent. Yes Betty?

MS. DiGRUTTILA: I come from a K through eight district, so drugs have not been on the burner in our school-- (inaudible)

SENATOR FELDMAN: Does that mean Leonia is drug free?

MS. DiGRUTTILA: No, I'm from Allendale.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Oh, Allendale.

MS. DiGRUTTILA: No that's not true. What I'm trying to say is--

MR. BRUNETTO: Leonia is drug free. (laughter)

MS. DiGRUTTILA: I've seen textbooks for young children that relate to child abuse. But I have not seen textbooks-- I'm sure there are textbooks that relate to alcohol abuse and drug abuse, for very young children. Would it be possible to consider a book fair -- to stimulate the commercial interests to come in to make that type of thing available, so that the educators -- probably at the NJEA convention-- (inaudible)

MR. BRUNETTO: I must say that part of the Seattle program-- The Seattle program is K - 12.

MS. DiGRUTTILA: Right.

MR. BRUNETTO: There are materials that are focused in that program to--

MS. DiGRUTTILA: For young children? Okay. Thank you.

MR. BROWN: In addition, perhaps you'd like to know that one of the things that we already have planned -- as Dr. Bloom mentioned earlier -- are new curriculum guidelines. Those curriculum guidelines will give a much more detailed agenda in terms of student outcomes, teaching outcomes, that we are going to look for districts to be able to provide along with--

MS. DiGRUTTILA: K through--

MR. BROWN: Yes, K through 12. Along with identification of the kinds of resources that are available, and that we believe have the kind of quality that's been referred to in this Seattle program. So, we're going to do a lot of searching before we make those recommendations, but we're definitely going to work very hard at the elementary level as a place where more resources are needed.

MS. DiGRUTTILA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR FELDMAN: May I throw this out to Marc about policy, or to you Joseph, and if Dr. Bloom wishes to answer-- Right now the law is that the child is caught, and it is documented that he is caught and proved to be guilty of an

incidence of substance abuse. He is then automatically expelled from school -- or suspended I should say, suspended until a doctor certifies that he can come back. Now his education stops. Do we feel this should be modified? Should education stop once a child is excluded from school?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT A: Excluded from school could be two days, two hours, or two months. If it's two months the student is going to end up on some kind of home instruction.

SENATOR FELDMAN: So, all right, you have home instruction after a period of time passes by -- is that it? -- in Leonia? (several affirmative responses from audience)

MR. BRUNETTO: But home instruction is not a real viable alternative. It's a Band-Aid really.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT B: There is another option.

SENATOR FELDMAN: What is the other option?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT B: Many school districts -- as Joel and I were just saying -- have in-house suspension, so that the child still remains in school. He's suspended, but it's an in-house suspension in terms of them attending school regularly. In-house suspension.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: What you're doing is-- As you know, for some kids school is more of a social event than an education event. What you do in in-school suspension is: 1) The supervision is very intense. You may find one adult to two or three students, and they are isolated. They come to the door of the school. They're escorted off to a room or a part of the building that is not part of the larger social system in the school, and they do their work. In fact for most kids who go through in-school suspension they much more enjoy the out-of-school suspension as compared to the in-school suspension: 1) they're supervised and not home with their stereo and their television, 2) They all of a sudden find them getting instruction that they didn't previously, the intensity

of which they haven't had. Their behavior is very tightly controlled.

Our concern -- and I know the legislators' concern -- in that statute is to isolate the student who may be abusing drugs, from influencing others. And only when the student is reported free of drugs through a physical exam, will he or she be allowed to socialize again. There are other ways of isolating students. And I would maintain that the in-school suspension, or the alternative school suspension -- depending on how it's described, is a very positive way of dealing with it; not necessarily positive to the student, but at least isolating the student.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Terry, sort of disagrees?

MR. McGRATH: Well, I am a board member at Leonia, but I'm also a disciplinarian at Hackensack High School, and many schools in Bergen County are eliminating the in-school suspension because it tends to make a hero out of the kid, "Wow, you got in-school suspension." More of them are leaning toward Saturday school, where they have the kids come to school on Saturday and isolate them that way.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Shep, is that in Englewood too?

D R. S H E P H E R D B A R T N O F F: Englewood this year has initiated -- not for these reasons but for other aspects of behavior in students -- a Saturday school, which is a substitute for some of the things that have been talked about here.

SENATOR FELDMAN: So it's more of a home rule attitude, is that it? Should there be a statewide regulation, or should there be legislation? This is what I'm asking. (inaudible comment from audience) Good that's the answer-- David?

DR. ROTHBERG: The other problem with the in-house suspension is in terms of providing staff. Larger districts might be able to squeeze your programming to provide the staff,

to provide the continuity that's addressed. If you have a smaller district, with budgetary constraints and things, very often you wind up pulling teachers to cover that particular section during the course of the day. Of course, it doesn't provide the continuity for instruction that you want. So there are problems on both ends of it. It's a great idea if you have the body extra staff. If you don't, you have problems.

MR. McGRATH: I think this is getting off the topic we raised. We're talking about in-school suspension and out-of-school -- which is for kids cutting class, whatever. The kids with drug problems, we don't want them in school under any conditions, until the doctor says they can be there. If you let this kid in, this kid is going to deal in the school. You want to keep this kid away from the school until somebody says he's clean.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Any other comments? Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT C: What about the seller? Should you find someone, out-of-school, mixes with his peers, a 17-year-old. You go to court and he's put on probation; the seller. You've got possession, you've got use, and you've got distribution. I've been to court a number of times, and he's placed on probation. The kid is right back out on the street.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, we have mandated--

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT C: He's placed in community service, but he's still with his peer group. The penalty to the seller isn't strong enough.

SENATOR LESNIAK: Aren't most of the sellers, users, and addicted users? No?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT D: We have all these things that you're saying: The in-school (inaudible) What about the sellers?

SENATOR LESNIAK: Aren't most of the sellers addicted users? (negative responses heard from various participants) Well then the police reports are a fallacy, and have been

conjured up out of somebody's imagination as well, because most of the sellers -- whether they be 17-year-olds, 23-year-olds, 15-year-olds, it's gotten that bad -- are kids who have been addicted.

SENATOR FELDMAN: There's a bill sponsored by Senator Graves -- it hasn't been signed into law as yet I don't believe -- which mandates a stiffer sentence for those who are within 1000 feet of a school found guilty of distributing or possession.

SENATOR LESNIAK: That's for adults though.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, we're talking adults. We're talking 17-year-olds or--

SENATOR LESNIAK: The more serious problem though, is when the distributors, the dealers in drugs, use kids -- addict them and get them to sell their drugs for them. I don't think we want to throw those kids in jail. I mean you might as well give them the death penalty if you're going to do that.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, it's a thorny subject, and the only prevention as I see it right now is education. Mayor Graves has told us in Paterson they picked up about 50 drug pushers one evening. Six hours later there were 50 back out on the street. This is the revolving door, because the profit is so great in drugs in that they're willing to take the risk.

SENATOR LESNIAK: Even if those 50 were put in jail, there would still be 50 more--

SENATOR FELDMAN: Exactly. It's a revolving door. Our answer is, education.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT E: But if they know the penalty and the risk involved with selling, and it's clear, it may act as a deterrent.

SENATOR LESNIAK: It's been tried before, and although that's necessary -- as Senator Feldman keeps on stating is absolutely correct -- unless we also attack the demand side of that equation, and reduce the demand by educating the children, then we're never going to solve the problem.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You're the shock troops. You're the ones -- the educators -- that I'm very happy to know, really Joel, of the intensified effort by the Commissioner of Education, as well as the Governor, in using our teachers, our schools, as the first line of defense. Yes sir?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT F: Will some sort of packet, or something, be available to teachers; to use different approaches, to have different answers for these students. In the future, will something be made up? Something maybe could be distributed at the NJEA convention in Atlantic City. You get sometimes several thousand teachers down there. Not only are you dealing with the 900 that you have in service, you may hit 1500, 1600 teachers at one time with a packet of information that might be helpful.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, Bob Polakowski, can you--

R O B E R T P O L A K O W S K I: Excellent idea. The materials are available and-- (inaudible)

SENATOR FELDMAN: We have here the Governmental Representative of the NJEA.

SENATOR DUMONT: That convention is only two weeks away.

MR. POLOKOWSKI: (inaudible; speaks from audience)

SENATOR FELDMAN: Okay.

SENATOR LESNIAK: Are there any teachers here? Also board members though?

SENATOR FELDMAN: How many board members are here?

SENATOR LESNIAK: No, no, I mean, are there any teachers, who are non board members, here? (inaudible responses from audience)

MR. BROWN: Perhaps I could offer a helpful response. We have a good working relationship, first of all with NJEA in terms of training. One of the training programs that has the longevity behind it at this point is an annual one with NJEA, which we do regionally. All of the plans that are now being

contemplated in the Governor's Blueprint, and by the Department, involve increased attention to teacher training. For example, the potential of a grant program for curriculum materials would have tied to it increased teacher training. I think everyone here-- (inaudible)

SENATOR FELDMAN: Yes, Joel?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: Senator, seeing the large number of board members here-- Something that we've talked about now for a number of years. It's one thing to talk about, "Well, we'll train some teachers, and we'll counsel some kids." If you don't create a position in the school district -- a position that works K through 12, or positions based upon the size of the population, the intensity of the problem, the degree of the need -- that focuses on substance abuse. We've talked at the statewide level, and Phil alluded to grants that we'd be willing to give to school districts, but clearly that would be a temporary funding source. Schools based on the problem -- which is at their doorstep, in their classrooms, in their cafeterias -- need to look at creating a position to coordinate programs, training, counseling, on substance abuse; a person who works full-time in schools. I always know that when you talk to schools about creating new positions, that it's clearly always an issue for the taxpayer--

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well when we mandate, they want the money, which is--

SENATOR DUMONT: Which is right, too.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: The appeal I would make, to find over the next year's budget -- in doing the planning -- to create that position; so they have somebody who works full-time at identifying the community service, working with the juvenile justice system, find the treatment centers, training the teachers, counseling the students, working with the parents. When you create that kind of position, you find the effectiveness of your program overall will improve several hundred percent.

MR. BRUNETTO: Could the State not set up an incentive for that by saying, for example, funding half the salary for the first year, and put it on a diminishing base for about two or three years, and then the local community could pick up the full cost? I think a State incentive in funding that proposal would be very helpful, because many districts are very reluctant to establish new positions in view of caps and all kinds of other pressures. There's been precedent for that kind of funding base, you know. It's been done for other positions. So, if that's a viable way that the State's Department goes, why not have a funding base for that? (inaudible response from unidentified member of audience) I'm making that recommendation.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Yes Betty?

MS. DiGRUTTLA: I would like the State Department of Education to consider expanding that to the disaffected child. We have a very active disaffected child program in our school, and we give a test to all the children from the fifth grade on relative to self-esteem, and then a child study team comes in and we work with these children, because we feel these are the children that are at risk. These are the children who are going to possibly be involved, or get involved with drugs. Perhaps a pilot program could be expanded to include that. It would be very helpful.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Yes Terry?

MR. McGRATH: I would expand on what was just said. I know that I've done several middle school evaluations in New York. And in New York, the State provides alcohol counselors, through BOCES, to various school districts. But the problem becomes, where do we get qualified alcohol counselors? Somebody has to start a training program for these counselors.

MR. BRUNETTO: There are training programs.

SENATOR FELDMAN: There's a common thread here that schools must play a vital role in our search for a solution to substance abuse among young people. A most vital role should be played by the school system. It must. You must be right out there. I think tonight we've learned a few things. I just wanted to recognize Senator Lesniak.

SENATOR LESNIAK: I'd just like to say that I've learned an awful lot tonight. I think hearings like this are extremely important. I want to thank you for having this hearing, Senator Feldman. I would hope that it's only the first of many. There's one element that I think we've been missing, and I don't know how you bring that element in. We haven't heard too much talk about the parents, here tonight. I think we'd be totally missing the boat if we don't somehow bring the parents more forcefully into this.

SENATOR FELDMAN: You mean to develop a program that will involve parents?

SENATOR LESNIAK: I think that's essential.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Good.

SENATOR LESNIAK: And I think that we have to start looking at that as well, or else we're just not going to complete the cycle.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Here we are this evening, and I don't know who is here. Any PTAs here? (no response) Here again, we notified the PTA. We have the professionals, we have school board members. This is another night out for a meeting, but yet they feel it's important. You're right. The parents must play a vital role, not lip service, but a vital role. I alluded to the fact that the schools are baby-sitters to many parents today. We spend more time with their children than they do. We must somehow think -- conjure up something, Joel, how to get parents involved.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BLOOM: You're absolutely right.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Dr. Bloom, something must be done, through the Department, to involve parents as a group. Not because of a particular problem with their son or daughter. Wayne, do you wish to--

SENATOR DUMONT: Well, the subject came up about financial incentives, and that's fine. I'm not too keen on this phasing it back into the property tax, as a matter of fact. When we went to 18,500 as a minimum salary that was a good move, but I don't think it's going to be a good move the way the Governor proposed it in the beginning where you phase it back into the property tax over a five-year period. If the State is going to do mandating, then the State Treasury ought to pay for the mandates. Otherwise we shouldn't mandate. Because I have great faith in school board members, and their ability to regulate their school systems, and the 560 of the districts -- or about that many -- out of 611 are elected anyway. You only have 50 or 60 districts at the most where the mayor makes the appointments. Having lived in a town where we had an appointed school board -- not an elected one -- I much prefer the elected process to the appointed. But I don't think the incentive should be terminated after two or three years. That's the kind of thing Congress used to do, and we always resented it in New Jersey. They have a program, and if they think it's that good then fund it permanently. Not turn it back to the states to fund it. Some of them are half-baked anyway that they give to us. Sometimes that's the type of program that we give to you. (laughter) We better be sure that the funding is going to be there permanently.

SENATOR FELDMAN: Well, I'm going to sleep a little bit better this evening, Wayne, because I know what the State is doing. We've called this meeting just to inform leaders in Bergen County just how our State is doing educationwise to help solve this problem. If there are reporters here who wish to speak to Dr. Bloom, I know he can hold a press conference. I

noticed that The Record came in a little bit after Dr. Bloom gave his presentation. It would be very enlightening. It was to us, and will be, through you, to the public if you wish to interrogate, or ask some questions of Dr. Bloom.

So, let me in conclusion thank once again the Garfield Board of Education for making these facilities available. Why Garfield? That's a good question. I didn't want to have Ray Lesniak come up into the northern part of Bergen County, or Wayne Dumont, who is close to Route 80-- Here he is from Phillipsburg, and Ray Lesniak from Elizabeth coming here to Bergen County for the first public report on what the State is doing, educationally speaking, to combat this great epidemic today that's gnawing away at the vitals of our American society. I thank you for coming. At least we know that we're on the right path. We're not sweeping this under a rug. The State now is assuming its responsibility in education, and this is what concerns me. So thank you, Dr. Bloom and Phil Brown, and Marc -- through you to the Commissioner -- for making this possible. And, Joe, we have to stay on top of this--

MR. DiMINNO: Yes sir.

SENATOR FELDMAN: --because even packets that can go out to the teachers at the convention in Atlantic City. I don't think teachers know what we're doing.

Thank you very much.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)