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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 27, 1990  
Glassboro High School  
Auditorium  
Glassboro, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

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

\* \* \* \* \*

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New Jersey State Legislature  
ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0068  
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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.*

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ASSEMBLYMAN GERARD S. NAPLES (Chairman): Good morning. I am Assemblyman Gerard Naples from Trenton, Chairperson of the Assembly Education Committee. I want to thank you all for coming out. I can't welcome you here, because this is not the 15th District. If you were in the State House, I could perform my histrionic ritual, but Jack Collins can do that much better in this district than I can in Trenton, anywhere in fact, I am told.

We have embarked on a mission, I think. This is the fourth in a series of hearings on monitoring. I am a principal myself, and I made the statement several times last year: "We are spending so much time on compliance, that we have little time to work on education; i.e." -- and this came out spontaneously -- "spending so much time proving a la compliance that we are doing nothing wrong, to the point where we have no time left to do anything right." There is more to life than just not doing things wrong. You've got to do things right, and that certainly applies to school. I am writing a book, by the way, and I am paraphrasing from it.

We are going to get right into the show. Let me just give you a few ground rules: When you come up, if you have a long -- I don't want to use another adjective -- prepared statement, hand it in and paraphrase, if possible. I think you do a lot better if you are spontaneous. Your statement will go into the record verbatim, nevertheless. I promise -- for myself and the Committee members -- that we will not do any pontificating here with our questioning. Also, the hearing is being telecast. I don't know when it will be aired. We can let you know. If anyone would like to know, please contact my district office.

Let me introduce the Committee members: On my far right is Assemblyman John Rocco, from Cherry Hill; Dr. David Rosen, the Committee staff person from the Office of Legislative Services; on my left, Dr. Paul Muller, the

education advocate, or aide from the Democratic Party office; and on my far left is Anthony "Skip" Cimino, Assemblyman from Hamilton Township.

We are going to get right into the festivities. I took my last three courses down here at Glassboro State College, so I have a very warm feeling for the area, particularly since I got three "As." Let me start off by doing the proper thing, by calling the principal, or his representative. In this case, it is Orville Wilson. Mr. Wilson?

O R V I L L E W I L S O N: Good morning. I stand here for our principal, Mr. John Aveni, who can't be here this morning. He was called to a meeting of the City School of Excellence Committee. But on behalf of the administrative team, the faculty, staff, and students at Glassboro High School, we certainly welcome you here. We certainly hope the time you spend here will be memorable and enjoyable.

There are a couple of commercial kinds of things I would just like to mention to you. Today, the ladies' laboratories are out those doors--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That could be the most useful information we get today.

MR. WILSON: The men's laboratories are right out those doors and across the hall. If you need to use the telephone, there is a pay phone located near the gym entrance, near the ladies' laboratory. Also, for those of you who will be joining us for lunch-- You probably received, when you came in, one of these pink slips. What I would like you to do, if you will, because I need this information as quickly as possible, please circle the choices you would like for lunch. We have two young ladies who will collect those from you. We will prepare lunch for you, so you can resume the business at hand. If you need one of these, just raise your hand and these ladies will come around and get them for you. If there is

anyone who has his or her slip completed, the same thing; the ladies will collect them.

Again, I would like to say that we are certainly glad that you are here at Glassboro today. We hope the time you spend here will be well worth it.

At this time, I would like to introduce the Superintendent of Glassboro Public Schools, Mr. Nick Mitcho.

N I C H O L A S M I T C H O: Thank you, Orville. On behalf of the Glassboro Board of Education, welcome to Glassboro High School, the home of the "Bulldogs." We are pleased to host the Assembly Education Committee, and we personally welcome the Chair, the Honorable Jerry Naples, Anthony Cimino, and John Rocco, from South Jersey.

We accepted the invitation to host this hearing because we believe it is appropriate and symbolic to have public hearings on education in a public school. We know there are positive factors associated with the present monitoring of schools, but certain modifications of the process should be studied. We recognize the need for accountability to the public, and those of us who are testifying want to continue to improve the quality of education for our youngsters.

We recognize there are many strengths and positives in our schools, and that every healthy organization, including the schools, must continue to develop and improve. We appreciate your efforts to meet with us today, and we hope we will do some good work. Good luck, and thanks for coming to Glassboro High School.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: We appreciate your hospitality, Nick.

I would like to call now, Dr. Pete Contini. Dr. Contini, welcome again. Dr. Contini handed in some very fine testimony in Toms River.

D R. P E T E R B. C O N T I N I: It is just a pleasure to welcome you to Gloucester County and to South Jersey. As I

indicated at the hearing in Toms River, we really support and endorse the efforts of the Assembly Committee, and we believe that the openness and the fairness in the testimony today will add to the record, and certainly will assist you in your deliberations.

Again, welcome to Gloucester County. I know you will hear some interesting and lively discussion. Thank you very much.

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

Now, I have here three legislators from south of Crosswicks Creek here. Mr. Cimino and I are from, I guess, the central part of the State. I don't want any jurisdictional battles among the Sixth, the First, and the Third Districts, so I have to recognize the host Assemblyperson -- not that I have to, he is a fine individual -- to come forward and give greetings. All I can say is, if Assemblyman Dennis Riley were still here, I wouldn't be here, because I had forgotten my visa. If I had gotten stopped, that would have been it.

It is my pleasure to call forward a very fine Assemblyman, your Assemblyman from this District -- the Third District, he represents Glassboro -- the Honorable Jack Collins, who is also a professional educator at Glassboro State College, who says he has to get back to work. Boy, you are impressing us, Jack.

A S S E M B L Y M A N J A C K C O L L I N S: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of Assemblyman Stuhltrager, who couldn't be here this morning, and all the citizens of the Third District, we are very happy to have you here -- you, Assemblyman Cimino, Assemblyman Rocco, and Assemblyman Salmon. I am not the only one who is excited, Mr. Chairman. As I came down the hall, there was quite a hubbub. I haven't heard as much excitement here in Glassboro High since 1986, when then President Reagan was here. The excitement today about you being here, Mr. Chairman, even surpasses that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That's not hard to do. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN COLLINS: Assemblyman Rocco will speak later, I'm sure, to that particular point. One other thing, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your mentioning Glassboro State. As I did tell you, I will be returning there after my remarks, though my aide will be here monitoring your efforts today. But I am particularly going to rush back after your statement about your three "As." We definitely want to check our grading system as it relates to some of our graduate courses. (laughter)

But, on a more serious note, I know I speak for all the educators in this room when I thank you for coming to the southern part of the State, getting a perspective on monitoring that I am sure will corrolate very much so with some of the other comments you have heard, but from a different region, a different educational philosophy that we have here in the southern part of the State. It is not individually ours, but it is something that we take pride in. We deal with problems that are somewhat different than some of the other sectors of the State. Though monitoring is something that all of us support in its conceptual stage, I am sure you will hear many suggestions today on how to improve it, as you have heard at some of your other hearings.

So, on behalf of all of us in the Third District, we would like to welcome you here. I am sure it will be a profitable and fruitful experience. I thank you for the opportunity to speak, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman Collins. As always, a very, very eloquent presentation. Give my best to Assemblyman Stuhltrager and President Reagan.

Let's go on. We have another Assemblyman here who, like Assemblyman Collins, is a professional educator. He is from Millville. He represents the First Legislative District. It is my pleasure to call forth Ed Salmon, Assemblyman from the

First District, who will call his Superintendent. He's not crazy.

**A S S E M B L Y M A N   E D W A R D   H.   S A L M O N:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this Committee hearing this morning. Most of you on the panel have known me for the last three years as a legislator. I would like to share with you a little bit about my background as an educator. I really feel I am an educator first, and a legislator second.

I am completing my 26th year in the Millville public schools. I am completing my dissertation for my doctorate at the University of Delaware. As a former trustee of Glassboro State College, I was a member of the '79 Commission appointed by Governor Byrne to study the 19 county colleges in the State of New Jersey, and for a number of years I served as Chairman of the Education Committee for the New Jersey Association of Counties.

With that in mind, I want to commend you, Mr. Chairman, and members of this Committee, for looking into the present monitoring system for our public school districts. You, Mr. Chairman, have raised some very interesting and timely questions concerning the present system that is in our State; questions like this:

Are we forcing districts to spend too much time and money on the present system, instead of putting the attention on our students?

Is the system fair?

Does the process improve the quality of our education programs in the State of New Jersey?

Are the criteria too numerous, unclear, and left to various interpretations?

Are those doing the monitoring highly qualified, certified, and without vested interests?



And, most importantly, has the present system evolved into a bureaucratic exercise intended to promote the State Department of Education, instead of promoting a better delivery system of public education to all of the children in the State of New Jersey?

I would like, at this time, to introduce three educators from the Millville school system who have just gone through monitoring, and let you hear their personal testimony, which would be a reaction to a monitoring process that was just completed. The three speakers will be, in order: Dr. Gene E. Stanley, Superintendent of Schools in the City of Millville; Dr. Richard Shain, Director of Special Education for the city schools; and Dr. Ron Kuchinski, who is Director of Personnel.

At this time, I would first like to call on Dr. Gene Stanley.

D R. G E N E E. S T A N L E Y: Thank you, Assemblyman. Good morning. Thanks for the opportunity this morning. I am Gene Stanley, Superintendent of Schools in Millville for the past 14 years; prior to that, five years in Somerset County.

Millville is an urban system with 5400 pupils. We share urban problems with the other 55 urban systems in the State. Forty-one percent of the New Jersey school districts monitored during the period from July 1 to December 12, 1989 were not certified. There were 46 school systems monitored during that period. A 41% failure rate in any area of the public sector is questionable. In education, a 41% failure rate is unacceptable. Public education during the Kean years has been characterized by almost constant co-change in areas such as facilities, basic skills, bilingual education, certification of staff, and special education.

Change should strengthen educational governance and support for public education. Instead, monitoring has created the opposite -- a mine field of dangers. Forty-one percent of the districts did not successfully traverse this mine field during the first six months of this academic year.

The Millville school system passed monitoring five years ago with relatively little trouble. The process at that time focused on State-approved classrooms, test scores of pupils, and attendance of pupils and staff, among many other items. Millville met the 54 criteria satisfactorily in 1985. Last fall, we were notified by the county superintendent that the district would be monitored at the end of November, with a closing date of December 15, 1989. The exit conference was postponed until January 26, 1990 because, in the words of the county superintendent, "It is necessary for me to review the Millville findings with Dr. Walter McCarroll before having our exit conference." The exit conference, therefore, came one month after the monitoring was concluded in Millville.

The findings reported at the January exit conference by the county superintendent were focused on special education and certification of staff in the Millville system. The administration disputed the findings in writing at the exit conference, and asked for specific data upon which general statements by the county superintendent were based. There was no response. With board approval, we initiated the appeal process, again asking for the specific data to support the county superintendent's findings. Again, no response to our official request.

Sensing that we were facing a stone wall of indifference, I wrote a letter to Saul Cooperman, with copies to members of the State Board of Education. In the letter I stated my conviction that the county supervisor for special education, who retired the day after our monitoring visit, did not understand the procedures as outlined by the code, or monitoring manual; did not follow these procedures; and had personal feelings which biased her actions.

Dr. Cooperman directed the county superintendent to hear our concerns prior to March 23. We met last Thursday for two hours. During that period, the county superintendent

admitted to two facts: One, 46 students' folders were reviewed; and two, no statistically based random sample was used. Both admissions supported our statistics and our contentions.

The charges concerning certification of staff made at the exit conference were reduced to three in the written report received on February 20, 1990. The original 16 charges regarding teacher certification give evidence, at least to me, that the monitoring process has become an exercise in reviewing the trivial and the petty.

I would now like to give you three observations from my recent monitoring experience: One, the monitoring process is a closed process. By this I mean that the same people who developed the procedures for monitoring are also the same people who administer the code; the same people who monitor the code; and the same people who hear the appeals. It was for this reason that I short-circuited the process with a letter to the Commissioner and to the State Board.

Two, some areas of the code monitoring manual used in monitoring are much more complex than others because of Federal guidelines or criteria from other sources; for example, special education and review of buildings. County level supervisors may not have the background to handle technical terms or procedures. In Millville's case, neither the county supervisor nor the county superintendent understood that the term "random sample" is a technical term, with procedures defined in any basic statistics book. Instead, to our monitors it meant, "Look wherever there may be a problem."

And finally, the present monitoring system, with its highly critical methodology, the questionable level of competent monitors, its slow and closed appeal process, undermines community confidence in their schools, especially in urban centers such as Millville.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thanks very much, Gene.  
Question: Did you receive a response from the Commissioner or the State Board?

DR. STANLEY: Once again?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Did you receive a response from either the Commissioner or the State Board?

DR. STANLEY: Yes. He directed the county superintendent to meet with us prior to March 23 and, in fact, we had a meeting on March 22.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: If you said that, I missed it. I'm sorry, I was taking notes while you were talking. Okay. Any questions? Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: No. I would just mention to Dr. Stanley that certainly the members I have spoken with in the Legislature have many of the same concerns that you expressed. I do, personally. I have been an educator for 28 years, and I know a little bit about it.

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

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Your mike must be off, John.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Can you hear me now? (negative response) No? Testing--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Testing -- that's another hearing.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: That is another hearing, but testing is part of monitoring, as well.

I started by saying basically that many members of the Legislature have the same concerns expressed by Dr. Stanley. Those in education for any length of time have to look carefully at the process now. It seems the Governor has already taken some stands on monitoring -- the new Governor -- and we will have to wait to see what they ultimately are. Gerry, I don't know whether you plan a report to the Governor after this, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Yes, I do.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: --it seems he may have preempted this Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just clarify that. I had planned to say something. I spoke to Tom Corcoran, the Governor's education advisor, and I told him I would meet when all five hearings were concluded; namely after the hearing in New Brunswick last, or next -- time is running together -- next Tuesday, April 3. Then we would compare notes. I don't know exactly what he said, John. He didn't know exactly what had taken place here. From there, the process will take its course.

Let me say this, too: There will be at least 120 transcripts handed out to each member of both houses. What legislation will go into the hopper, I don't know. What recommendations this Committee will make, I don't know at this point. We have to sift through a lot of testimony. But I am going to try to reconcile things with Senator Feldman of the Senate Education Committee and with the Governor's Office, certainly. Thank you. Anything else, John?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: No, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, thank you very much.  
Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: The only question-- Doctor, if I may ask, I understand that you have just recently gone through this, and that, in point of fact, you have also-- What you have really done is, you have taken an administrative level of appeal to the highest levels within the State.

DR. STANLEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I understand what you have said here. What would you suggest as solutions to the problems? Any concepts, any ideas you feel would be solutions to the problems with regard to the closed process you spoke of?

DR. STANLEY: I really don't have any solutions at this point. I am still involved -- enmeshed, if you will -- in the process, and I am struggling to free my district and my own

hands from the problem. Possibly my assistants will bring some light, because they are going to speak very specifically to the problems that they ran into, in terms of these findings by the county superintendent. We might glean some solutions from them. But, at this point, I don't have any solutions.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Gene. Dr. Rick Shain. The only reason I am calling these gentlemen first, is because they have to get back. They traveled quite a distance. Then we are going to go into the list. I thank you for your indulgence. Doctor?

D R. R I C H A R D S H A I N: My remarks will follow Dr. Stanley's and provide some background to them.

I think an overall question that comes out is that monitoring as a concept, I think, is a very valid and important one. We do that with Middle States; we do it in a variety of ways, and schools can always improve. I think it becomes a travesty when districts are required to follow rules and State officials are not and are privy to use their own rules. I would like to make some mention to that.

By way of introduction, my name is Dr. Richard Shain. I am Director of Special Education for the Millville Public Schools. I have been employed as an administrator in the district for the past 14 years. By way of background, I have a Ph.D. from Temple University in Developmental and Quantitative Psychology. I have been President of the New Jersey Urban Special Ed Administrators Association. I have been on the faculty of both Temple University and the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, teaching, among other subjects, educational measurement and statistics. I am presently serving on the Special Education Committee of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and as Chairperson of the Cumberland County Youth Service Commission.

I am here today to speak to you regarding Element 7.3 of the monitoring process, which deals with special education, specifically with the review of records section, and what can be considered improprieties in the way the monitoring was implemented and administered by the county office in our district. I would like to address this in two ways: One is what I would consider violations in methods of record selection.

By way of introduction, when a monitoring manual is developed by the State, the intent is that it should be followed. In addition, if, for example, random, or something like that is in there, it is in there for a purpose. I would like to start off by saying the monitoring manual clearly states, on page 2, that the monitoring team: "Will evaluate pursuant to the elements and standards specified in this manual." And on page 49: "Records for review must be randomly selected."

Random selection, or sampling, is a term for a specific procedure to ensure that for any number of events or elements, each has an equal probability of selection. Its definition is as easy to find in "Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary" as in any standard elementary statistics book. It is used to ensure selection is fair and not biased. An analysis of the names of cases the monitor selects for review show that the probability of them being drawn at random from the district records is close to, or greater than one out of a thousand, and clearly not representative of the district's population.

An analysis of the names and cases the monitor selected for review shows that personal bias strongly entered into record selection. The analysis of cases at the elementary level is illustrated with this: 13 to 14, or 93%, of the records selected for review in one elementary school were of students in self-contained special classes, when this group only represents 44% of the students in that school, whose



records could have been reviewed; the remaining 56% being resourced through the supplemental special ed programs.

Seven of nine, or 78%, of records selected for review in another elementary school were also only of students in self-contained special classes, when this group, again, only represents a minority proportion, 30%, of the records that could have been reviewed; the remaining 70% being from students resourced through the supplemental special ed programs.

Overall, of 32 elementary cases reviewed, 21, or 66%, of them were of students who were in self-contained classes, while this group only represents 29% of the possible students who could have been reviewed at the elementary level; the remaining 71% of the students resourced through the supplemental special ed programs.

Perhaps the most glaring bias was in the fact that six of the pupils selected for review were students in the district preschool handicapped class. Considering only 46 records were selected for review, and there are only 12 preschool handicapped pupils in the district that could have been selected for review out of a potential 701 special education records, significant bias toward reviewing this classification of handicapped was evident. I might add that among the 46, there was also a set of twins that was selected. To have two children who are twins is highly improbable.

I would also like to report as a second thing, inaccuracies in the monitoring findings, and I will give one illustration of this. There are many, and we are trying to get a handle on that. The district's reviews of records selected by the monitor show clear evidence that the monitor's findings are inaccurate and suggestive of the fact that appropriate documents which could have demonstrated the district's records met monitoring criteria were overlooked, and that standards pursuant to code and monitoring manual were interpreted beyond the spirit and intent of the monitoring process, and I would like to give one illustration of this:

The monitor reports that pupil IEPs, or individual educational programs, were not always annually reviewed, when a review of those 46 records shows that 44 of the 46 cases reviewed, or 95%, did, in fact, have their most current annual reviews conducted on them within 12 months prior to the monitoring visit, and the other two were in the process of reevaluation, but still within the limits of code. Further, district review of the entire special education population enrolled at the time of the monitoring showed that 692 of 701 cases, or 99% of our students enrolled, had annual reviews on them noted to have taken place within the preceding 12 months.

The monitor's findings are clearly inconsistent with the record facts. We have tried to request information from the county office so we could substantiate these concerns since early January, and have done that in writing at least two times. The county office continues to fail to respond, and consequently denies the district fair opportunity to show cause for its monitoring concerns, as entitled by code and monitoring manual.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: The only question I have is: Do you think this was ineptness on the part of the committee?

DR. SHAIN: Yes, I do.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Or were there other factors involved?

DR. SHAIN: No. I think the special ed monitoring is a very complex procedure, but because of the details of Federal regulations, there is a fairness that is built into the system that creates an objectivity. There is so much in sampling, it is 20% of the requisites, and so on, and it is very easy to show that. And it is very easy for people to have an

opportunity-- For example, in the monitoring guide, there is a fairness in there that says there are examples of documentation that may be used. I know there were several areas of documentation that were overlooked. I think it was ineptness on the part, and a bias on the part--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Basically, the data was skewed because they didn't get a proportionate random number in relationship to the students.

DR. SHAIN: I would also go further than that, in that there were at least six youngsters who were -- who had moved or transferred quite frequently in the last three years. Those records, of course, are going to have problems. They were picked. There were at least eight cases of youngsters where parents had called the county office at various times in the last few years, so they were known to the county. My sense was that our record review did not occur beforehand; it occurred after classroom visits, which means that the monitor went into the classrooms, and wherever they thought a problem might exist among the 701--

I will just use this as an example: If a district is in perfect compliance in every area, except for 10% of the records, where there may be some moves or something, and someone goes in and picks those 10% of the records and uses that as a sample, it will demonstrate that the district is 100% out of compliance. I do believe that in this particular instance some of that bias was going on. It does create a travesty, an obstruction, to our opportunity to develop programs. I think it also becomes significant especially in an area such as special ed.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: But that is built into the code. It is the fact that they did not properly follow the random selections.

DR. SHAIN: That is correct; that is correct. Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Rocco asked the questions that I was going to ask, or one of them. A good line of questioning, and some good answers.

Let me just make a quick statement regarding special education: In terms of how every state implements P.L. 94-142, I really believe that the Federal government has to take a closer look at the law and reconcile the efforts of the states. I have been in contact with two people in Washington, one on each side of the aisle, who share my views on this. Just to sum it up, I attended a meeting of the Education Commission of the States in Annapolis about a year-and-a-half ago, and there were representatives there from 15 states. One representative from Vermont said to me, "It seems as though we have 50 different P.L. 94-142s in this nation." I think that pretty much sums it up. It is not only a question of linking Trenton to 611 school districts. It is a question of going from Washington down.

Despite a lot of criticism toward the Bush administration, I think the Bush administration really wants to do something in this particular area. So I am going to give it a try when these hearings are over. That is a separate animal entirely, special education.

DR. SHAIN: If I may make just one comment--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Sure..

DR. SHAIN: --in special ed: I started in the field when I was very young, when I was 17, so at this point -- without revealing my age, but I will-- I have been working with handicapped kids for 25 years. One of the things that I think becomes very sensitive-- Of course, we need a lot-- Some of the bureaucracy is necessary to protect children from labels, from the vulnerability of labels, and so on. But many districts are dealing with parents who have a lot of hurt and a lot of vulnerability and a lot of suspicion. They deny the handicaps. They need to be handled more delicately and more sensitively.

A system like this-- What it does is set parents up. It ripples into the fact that a parent you are finally settling into saying, "Okay, my child will not have everything, but at least I can look for what is best in him"-- It sets them up to thinking again that there is something that is inherently wrong in the system. Our job is really a specialty in special ed -- because these are our most vulnerable children -- to make parents partners, and to make a humane and benevolent growth system for these kids. This clearly tears it out of you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Rick. Let me just say this: Down the road, I don't know how-- It won't be immediately after these hearings, but we are going to have a hearing in Trenton on the subject of special education. The ACLD and the State PTA have already made that request. But your comments were very, very interesting. I appreciate it very much.

Dr. Ron Kuchinski?

D R. R O N A L D K U C H I N S K I: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Ron Kuchinski, and I am the Director of Personnel in the Millville Public Schools. I have been employed by the district for 17 years. Prior to coming to Millville, I was an administrative principal in Lawrence Township, and before that, a teacher. I am currently completing 30 years in education, 10 years as a teacher, and 20 years as a school administrator.

I would like to speak to you specifically regarding Element 6.1 of the monitoring guide, which deals with certification. At the Millville Public Schools exit conference on January 26, 1990, the county superintendent indicated via an internal memo that there were 16 certification problems in the Millville schools. The school administration disputed those charges, indicating errors and inaccuracies.

When the monitoring report was received on February 20, three certification problems were identified. Of the

three, the district contends that two of the three problems are the result of erroneous information collected by the monitoring team, while the third was a delay in the application process because of an incomplete application.

Documentation substantiating the district's contention of these problems was provided to the county superintendent after our meeting with him on March 22, 1990. Now, historically, minor certification problems, if they arose, were handled by mutual cooperation between the district and the county superintendent's office. For example, if an emergency certificate had expired, a call from the county office was made to our office, the teacher was notified, and a new application for emergency certification was submitted. This was an acceptable procedure. When it known that a teacher was eligible for an emergency certificate, the teacher was hired and the paperwork applying for the certificate followed. This was an acceptable procedure.

Now, in the monitoring year, this cooperative approach appears to have disappeared. Certificate applications, and even the recording of certificates must be done according to the strictest interpretation of the law, or they appear as deficiencies on monitoring reports. The cooperation that is afforded a district in the four years the district is not monitored ceases during monitoring. After four consecutive years of practice, one assumes a practice is acceptable.

These actions create an unevenness, and place a district at a disadvantage in dealing with the monitoring system. Furthermore, the laws of the State of New Jersey are in conflict and have placed school districts in the position of having to determine which law must be broken. On one hand, the law requires all teachers to have the proper certificate before entering a classroom. On the other hand, the law requires that children receive educational services. When the best person to be hired for a position is eligible for certification, but does not yet possess it, what is to be done?

Should the district refuse to provide services until the certificate is issued? This is a four- to six-week wait, according to the Office of Certification. Or, should the district provide the educational services while the application for certification is processed? Sound educational practice would dictate the latter choice. It would also seem that if monitoring is a process that was developed to ensure thorough and efficient practices in school districts, the choice to provide educational services to children should not result in a monitoring finding of "unacceptable."

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: A very, very fine statement, Ron. Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: No questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: In the course of the discussion with the county superintendent, a four years practice had been applicable, but not in the year you were doing the monitoring. What was the reason given by the county superintendent's office for the inflexibility?

DR. KUCHINSKI: There was no reason given for that, except that this was in the code, this was the law, and these were their findings.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Had the county superintendent's office indicated that it had received marching orders from the Department that there was to be no flexibility in the course of the monitoring?

DR. KUCHINSKI: Not that I am aware of; not that we are aware of.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Had the district itself raised the question with the county superintendent's office?

DR. KUCHINSKI: Yes, it had. A memo similar to this was sent to the county office. Of course, after the exit conference we also provided a written statement specifically



asking these questions; you know, why now the change? But we were never apprised of any specific -- or never given any response to that question.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman. Thank you, Ron.

Before we go on, let me indicate that I am going to meet with Dr. McCarroll also. I have been in contact with him two or three times -- Dr. Walter McCarroll of County and Regional Services -- to talk about this particular problem.

We are going to go right into the list before us now. Malcolm Dawson, Board Secretary, Gateway Regional School District. If you have been preempted, you have been invaded from the South, not the North.

M A L C O L M D A W S O N: Good morning. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share my perspectives with the distinguished members of this Committee regarding the State monitoring process.

My name is Malcolm Dawson, and I have the privilege of serving as the Superintendent now for the Gateway Regional High School District, which is located in Woodbury Heights. We are a 7 through 12 regional high school serving the citizens of the communities of National Park, Wenonah, Westville, and our host community, Woodbury Heights.

During the past 22 years, I have served as an educator in two Gloucester County districts. I can assure you that during these two decades the schools have steadily improved the opportunities available to our students. This steady improvement has been possible in spite of the changes in the social structure of the family, the focus of our students, and the economic problems inherent in funding the schools.

During this past fall, representatives of the State Department of Education staff visited our school during a 10-day period. They poked and prodded and generally examined

the school in a most thorough manner. Following a complete examination of our records, documentation, and curriculum, Gateway Regional was certified in recognition of its compliance with the 43 indicators in the State criteria.

It must be noted that our administration took every opportunity to seek advice and interpretation from the Department of Education staff at the Gloucester County Office of Education. There was a genuine effort made by the county office staff to assist the local district. So often we hear about a "gotcha" focus of a process that seeks the shortcomings and ignores the strengths of the districts. We recognize that the process has a negative orientation. However, the staff of our county office provided us with appropriate assistance in addressing the process. We never experienced the rumored "gotcha" approach to monitoring.

How does monitoring impact the schools? We believe it makes them better. We believe it holds them accountable to the State and, most importantly, to the community. We believe it requires the school staff to closely refocus its programs and operations to be continually on target in a changing world. We believe that it provides the staff with areas for refinement and for growth. We believe it provides a mechanism for change and for improvement. We believe that it facilitates the revising and updating of board policies to meet the needs of all students.

The monitoring process also, unfortunately: Focuses on what's wrong with the schools with little regard as to what is right. It attempts to motivate through the threat of failure and negative labeling. It makes no effort at providing a relative weighting to the 43 elements: Are they all equally important? It exacts a heavy toll on the time and resources of the schools -- energy that might be more productively used in other ways.

However, we hope the monitoring process will be continued because it forces schools to be introspective and accountable. We also hope that as the process is refined that it will: Result in a diagnostic evaluation with a plan for improvement and growth. Is passing really good enough? We hope it will provide a pre-monitoring experience for all of the elements, not just for facility planning. By allowing a one-year time frame for corrective action plans, we can bring the focus back into a positive perspective. We hope it will allow for the differences in communities and their schools. Perhaps the emphasis should be on growth trends, not just on minimal performance levels.

We do need to plug the gaps in the educational delivery system in New Jersey and throughout the nation. Perhaps by working together, we can monitor the minimums and also address the future needs of our society.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I assume you were in administration before the monitoring -- the existing monitoring process came into being. As you know, the State always had the power to come in and work with the district in terms of helping the district move along. You feel, however, obviously, that an organized, structured, analytical process such as the present monitoring system is more beneficial than letting the local districts move ahead on their own.

MR. DAWSON: I think I perhaps believe a bit of both. I think the districts certainly need to determine their future directions, and to be a reflection of the needs of the community. However, I think it is very important that the State provide us with guidance as to the State's expectations for the schools, and the monitoring process would certainly seem to address that.

I might note that our district had four new administrators appointed the first of July. We had a new superintendent, a new Board of Education secretary, a new supervisor of curriculum instruction, and a new instructional supervisor. July 1, all of those changes took place. Irrespective of that turmoil, we were able to successfully address this. That is not necessarily a credit to the new individuals, but perhaps a credit to the individuals who preceded us in those positions, where the groundwork was laid.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So, basically, you are looking to see the monitoring process streamlined, or upgraded, or provided a more positive approach to the structure?

MR. DAWSON: I would like to see a more positive approach. Perhaps with a little bit more redesign, it would be easier for school districts to make a decision as to whether they were going to continue with the Middle States evaluation process or not. At this point, we are seriously considering withdrawing from that process, because of the areas of redundancy.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, John. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Mr. Dawson, how many dollars, in the aggregate, did your district invest in the pre-monitoring process?

MR. DAWSON: It would be difficult to assess that in terms of dollars. I think if we talked about the amount of staff time, I would be hard-pressed to quantify it other than by saying "considerable." Despite significant rumors about major expenditures, I think our expenditures would have been limited to stationery supplies. You are hearing a lot of war stories about military plans of action to prepare for monitoring and, you know, incredible expenditures -- "Get 50 blue binders," and all those types of things. I would hold that if you are doing a reasonable job, that is what the county office is seeking to confirm for the Department of Education.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: How big is the enrollment in your district?

MR. DAWSON: We have approximately 1000 students.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How many?

MR. DAWSON: A thousand.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: When you talk about staff, did that filter all the way down to the teaching staff as well as the administrative staff within the structure?

MR. DAWSON: Most certainly. Without the cooperation of the teachers, it would be impossible to be successful with this, because they have to implement the curriculum that has been prescribed. Curriculum cannot merely exist in binders. It has to be delivered to the students.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: By the way, I just want to say that this is a very, very -- I'm proud to say -- nonpartisan Committee. It has been that way since I have been on it -- since 1981. John Rocco is a Republican, Skip is a Democrat, I am a Democrat. We work together on this Committee. On two occasions, Assemblyman Rocco has asked the questions I was going to ask, so I'll pass, but I will just make one statement about weighting. That's "weighting." (spells word out) I don't want you to weight any longer.

A principal told me that due to an answer he had given a monitor -- it wasn't in Gloucester County -- on 3.6 and 3.7, disaffected and disruptive, his district had failed. I said, "What did you tell them?" He told me the definition. He didn't memorize the definition from the book. He gave what I considered to be a good definition of disruptive disaffected, and the district failed. Aside from the qualifications, I think, of the particular monitor, it was just not fair, I don't think, to fail any district for one element or indicator. I try not to show any bias at these hearings, but every once in a

while, they will come through. I made a special note of weighting. Every time somebody mentions the word "weighting" of the indicators and elements, I make a note of it. That is going to play very, very heavily in our recommendations.

Thank you very much.

MR. DAWSON: Perhaps you may want to go back and confirm that that is the reason why the districts failed. There may be something beneath that initial layer.

Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, thank you very much. Next will be Ronald L. Capasso, Superintendent, Pennsville Township Schools.

D R. R O N A L D L. C A P A S S O: Good morning. I am Dr. Ronald Capasso, Superintendent of the Pennsville Township Public Schools in Salem County, and Chairperson of the New Jersey Association for School Administrator's Monitoring Committee.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I commend you for your efforts in investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring process.

My district was monitored in November of 1988. We spent 18 months preparing for the event. Everyone was involved to some extent during that time. To be sure, it took many hours to ready the district and there were times when individual frustration levels were tested to their breaking points.

However, I don't believe there were any situations that took place either before or during our experience, that I can share with you and refer to as "horror stories." In fact, as a result of our experience, Pennsville is a better school district. The Board of Education, administration, faculty, students, parents, and the community at large are now more aware of how the district must comply with State statutes and codes in order to produce and deliver thorough and efficient educational opportunities.

School districts are multimillion dollar publicly supported agencies, and they must be held accountable for their actions. I do not oppose the concept of monitoring. However, I endorse the idea that education needs a valid accountability process that can also be a reliable quality control mechanism. I do not believe that the current monitoring process enables a relationship between accountability and quality control to the point of positively influencing educational programming.

As NJASA does, I believe that to make a positive difference in the production and delivery of educational services for New Jersey's children, monitoring must:

- 1) Focus on the quality of those services. It must seek to improve education, not just determine if it is in compliance with the law.

- 2) Serve as a linking agent between local education agencies and the State Department of Education for the achievement of common goals in the delivery of those services. It must bond local and State agencies together into a cooperative work force, and not be a source of friction between them.

- 3) Serve as a communication conduit to New Jersey citizens about the positive achievements of school districts, as well as the need to improve them. Every taxpayer has the right to know how well districts are succeeding at their tasks, as well as what is needed in order to improve upon that success.

If the monitoring process is to be the catalyst for achieving these goals, then it must:

- 1) Be modified to be more diagnostic/remedial in its focus. That is to say, it must direct its attention to improving the quality of education.

- 2) Eliminate the use of negative labeling in describing the condition of a district. Such labeling is contrary to the outcomes of any improvement processes.

3) Provide pre-monitoring checklists for all elements and indicators. Such lists will provide districts with the opportunity to know exactly what areas will be monitored, as well as an opportunity to do a thorough self-study prior to being monitored.

4) Award longer periods of certification if a district is continually compliant or successful in meeting its goals.

5) Apply relative values to all elements and their respective indicators. In addition, it should have values assigned to accomplishments and progress.

6) Be designed to adjust to the unique characteristics of different types of school districts. Urban, suburban, and rural districts have their own unique identities and should be monitored with respect to those identities.

7) Provide for adjustment periods so districts are able to improve based on both pre- and post-monitoring data.

8) Address the role of district governance relative to the condition of school districts. The management decisions of boards of education must be given as much special attention, in the monitoring process, as are the instructional decisions of a teacher. Both have direct impact on the quality of education.

9) Address the impact of State funding on the condition and health of a district. State Legislature funding decisions have a direct effect on the success of our educational institutions. The impact of these funding decisions on individual districts must be given as much special attention, in the monitoring process, as are the instructional decisions of teachers and the management decisions of boards of education.

To date, members of my monitoring committee and NJASA leadership have met with members of the State Department's



monitoring committee to consider changes to the present code. We have found a great degree of receptivity to our suggestions. We have mutually agreed that change is in order and the direction of that change should be toward the improvement of educational quality. We look forward to continuing to work with the State Department committee. In addition, we stand ready to aid your Committee in whatever way we can, although we do feel that monitoring is better dealt with through code than through legislation.

Once again, I thank you for this opportunity, and I wish you well in your investigation.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor. Let me say this: I was whispering to one of the people up here a while ago. Some of the recommendations which will come from this Committee will come in the form of legislation; some will come in the form of recommendations in terms of how we feel regulations should be altered or abolished or added or what have you. Sometimes that is a rather vexing problem, to determine into which area they fall.

Let me lead off with a question: When you say a "thorough and efficient" education, are you speaking of thorough and efficient in the constitutional/generic sense of the term or in the Chapter 212 sense of the term?

DR. CAPASSO: In the constitutional sense.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Yes. Dr. Capasso, I agree with much of what you had to say, and the organization you represent. There is no question that these modifications are necessary. Do you find in the process, however, that as a superintendent, when the monitors come in and they point out certain factors -- facility factors, curriculum factors, whatever it may be -- in the initial part of your presentation -- that that enables you then as an administrator to do a better job and have a lot more weight behind your position when

you are approaching the board or the citizens for these requests that might improve that situation?

DR. CAPASSO: There is no doubt about that. In fact, we are doing that right now, since we are in a situation where we are getting ready to have our budget voted upon. So, much of the information that we obtain from our monitoring experience can be used to give the community and everyone else who is involved a better understanding of how we can maintain what we have and go on and be better than what we are.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So, in reference to pre-monitoring, this gives you a little bit more clout in terms of your position?

DR. CAPASSO: Absolutely. No doubt about it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I just want to piggyback on that: I made the statement when I first became a principal in 1979, before I was a member of the Legislature. I said, "One of the problems with monitoring back then was the fact that there was no identification performance criteria between monitors and principals of schools and superintendents, as would be the case between a teacher and, let's say, a vice principal who did the observations. That is a good point, John. Skip?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions, just an excellent and succinct statement. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Excellent.

DR. CAPASSO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Doctor.

Okay, next will be Aletha R. Wright, Vice President, New Jersey School Boards Association.

A L E T H A R. W R I G H T: Good morning. My name is Aletha Wright. I am here representing this morning, as Vice President, the New Jersey School Boards Association. My specific title is Vice President for Policy and Special Projects. I want to bid you welcome to South Jersey, and

particularly want to cite, because I have seen that others have done it and it is so appropriate, that I am also honored to be a school board member in Camden City, New Jersey, and have been so for seven years. I participated in the monitoring process up to and holding at Level III. I really want to bring greetings to Assemblyman Rocco, who taught in our district. We just have to say that when we get up here sometimes to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Besides that, we taught Mr. Webster everything he knows. (laughter)

MS. WRIGHT: I am going to share that.

I thank you for the opportunity to present our views, from the New Jersey School Boards Association, on a very important issue, one that touches every school district. You are to be congratulated for providing this forum for local boards and their staffs to assess the assessors and the State system for evaluating school districts.

I am going to try hard this morning, gentlemen, to paraphrase, but it is very difficult. Just bear with me, if you will. Let me begin by saying that the New Jersey School Boards Association recognizes the necessity for some form of accountability to the State of New Jersey and its children. After all, the Constitution places the responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education of free public schools squarely on the State Legislature. Education is, however, a complex business, and the State must devise some systematic way of determining whether all children are receiving the education that is their constitutional right.

The present monitoring system, however, needs improvement. Being an educator myself, I know that we always aspire to do things better than we did before, to leave them better than we found them. The present system is, however, unduly burdensome, unevenly administered, and too adversarial at times. In certain respects, it fails to measure the important things. At the same time, it gives more weight than is merited to certain aspects of a school system.

We have heard too often the complaint that a district fails monitoring for minor infractions of the rules, things that can scarcely be said to interfere with the ability of the district to provide a good education. The monitoring indicators need to be reexamined. Some of them seem to be more geared to enforcing Department regulations than to ensuring that students receive a thorough and efficient education.

Just a footnote again about my personal experience: When I talked about Camden City itself being at one indicator and holding, it is just that, so we hold for the math score and wait on our success. The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education seem at times to use the T&E monitoring process as a club to ensure that districts submit all reports that are required and conform with all the rules and regulations. In the years that followed the adoption of T&E, these rules and reports have grown by leaps and bounds. How convenient the monitoring process must have seemed to those at the State level charged with the responsibility for seeing that districts adhere to all requirements. So it was all packed in there together; all released succinctly together.

The result is a monitoring system that gives equal weight to submitting fiscal and statistical reports in an "accurate and timely fashion," and certainly this morning you have heard about the weighting process and the difficulty that some of us, even us in government, have with that process.

Closely allied to this need to discover that all monitoring elements may not deserve weight is the need to provide a corrective action period before citing the district publicly as a failure -- I need to underscore the significance of that -- to read in the media, right up-front, prior to examining thoroughly, where a district has, in fact, failed. There is a period in which everyone, including administrators and board members and the public need to examine and produce corrective action. Everyone, even our children in the

classroom, needs to know that if you fail, you dust yourself off, and you start all over again. And that period is very important.

If the problem is easily corrected, as for example a staff person teaching out of certification, the district should have the opportunity to correct the problem without suffering the embarrassment of public failure. We would suggest a waiting period of at least 30 days between the time the monitoring report is delivered to the district and the time it is made public. To do otherwise is to display a "gotcha" attitude. The one-minute manager that some of us use often says, "We must always catch people doing something right," and we in our Association espouse to that. To do otherwise is to display this "gotcha" attitude that, unfortunately, still exists among some monitors. The purpose of monitoring should be to help districts do what they are supposed to do, not to expose them as failures, unless that is the only recourse.

Monitoring consumes also a hefty amount of resources. Certainly this morning you have heard about that in terms of the time consumed by staff, sometimes -- often -- taking them off of wonderful educational plans that were in place even prior to monitoring. Is it important to provide the necessary resources? The answer is, "Yes." But sometimes we are moved off-center from what were wonderful plans, just to put our nose to the grindstone and take care of those things that often we might deem as not as important at the time.

To be more precise, districts that are already doing a good job should be allowed and encouraged to keep doing that good job. By going through this lengthy process, however, we often have those districts which are faring well working on a monitoring process, when we, some of us, yes, having gotten wonderful assistance from our county office, could use even more. So, we would suggest and encourage that the process be redefined to put the resources to and with the districts and

children that need them. In fact, some districts are pulled off their own self-improvement track, as I mentioned, in order to keep up with the monitoring process. Just doing the paperwork is a massive job and one that has few intrinsic values or rewards.

The current system is wasteful of precious resources. It makes people jump through the hoops when they have already demonstrated what they can do. What is the point of jumping over and over? Districts that have consistently fared well should again be encouraged and monitored on a much less frequent basis than those districts that have serious problems.

The double advantage of a system that recognizes consistent performance is that it would permit the State to target its efforts towards those districts that are most in need of monitoring and assistance. The State has an important role to play in those districts that, for whatever reason, are not providing their children with a sound education. Not only must the State examine and prod, but it should work hard with the district in a collaborative way to resolve the problems.

While we are talking about reasons why districts are not meeting the State's standards, I must point out that lack of funding -- which has already been mentioned this morning -- is certainly part of the reason in some districts. When facilities are not up to par and students are not achieving in the basic skills, or staff in-service training is insufficient, lack of money to do the job -- and I say "may," gentlemen -- may well be part of the problem.

If the State is going to hold districts' "feet to the fire" -- and for seven years I have appreciated that much -- then it must take more seriously its responsibility to provide for full funding of its State aid formulas. More than that, the State must revise those formulas so that they provide sufficient funding for even the poorest of districts.

Before closing, I would like to make several other points, very briefly: One is that somehow recognition should be given to districts that make significant gains, even if they don't manage to meet the State standard. In the basic skills area, for instance, a school that raises its percentage of students meeting the State standard from 50% to 60%, deserves as much recognition as the school that raises its percentage from 69% to 71%, and thereby achieves certification.

My final point may, indeed, come as a surprise to you, especially because you have talked about testing this morning. I, too, believe that testing has a direct correlation to the monitoring process. It has to do with the impact of monitoring on very young children, those in the first four years of schooling. You've heard a great deal about teaching to the test and some will defend it as productive. Others say that it distorts the teaching process, narrows and deadens it, and kills the love of learning at a very young age.

Think for a moment about the impact on third graders of the need to pass the State standard on a basic skills test so that their school district doesn't fail monitoring. Should young children be carrying that kind of burden? Should their teachers, and the teachers in kindergarten and first and second grade be under pressure to produce test takers in the third grade who can carry the district through to victory? Is primary education that is geared to performance on a standardized test consistent with what we know about developmentally appropriate early childhood education?

Much is said and written these days by experts in the field of early childhood education, like David Elkind of Tufts University, about the "miseducation" of young children. This "miseducation" has serious consequences. By focusing too early on drill in the academic skills, we ignore the research about how young children learn and develop. Test-driven and narrowly academic primary education does not enhance the cognitive

development of children; it interferes with their learning and with their desire to go on learning. Moreover, it takes time away from the rich curriculum and learning experiences that are the most suitable in the primary years.

Therefore, we are proposing that the performance of third graders -- while it might not seem appropriate at this hearing -- on standardized basic skills tests be eliminated from the monitoring process. Other means can be found to ensure that districts are providing appropriate instruction for their youngest students.

I thank you for your patience, most importantly, as I represent my colleagues in the New Jersey School Boards Association. I leave you with the statement that I once issued to NJEA at their forum: "Let's give our children wings and educate them, and let's use a monitoring process that makes them able to fly above all adversity."

I thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Aletha. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much, Ms. Wright. May I ask, does the School Boards believe all of its membership in this State understands the monitoring process and the levels of the monitoring process and the impact of the various levels on their own local communities?

MS. WRIGHT: I believe we have spent an exorbitant amount of time-- I should say this: The New Jersey School Boards Association has spent an exorbitant amount of time on clearly outlining the entire monitoring process. Our membership, as you are aware, the 611 school districts, do come together in a Delegate Assembly. We have been fostering the understanding of the monitoring process. I should say that our field staff -- our field services staff -- are sent out as well to help to explain the process.



You also might be aware that we, in conjunction with other education associations, mainly NJEA and the New Jersey Principals Association, meet with the Commissioner of Education on a fairly regular basis. So, as the process has changed, in terms of, like, facilities, he has brought us up to par.

I believe we do understand the issues related to monitoring and, as a governance entity responsible, as elected and appointed officials, I think I could go on record as saying that, "Most of us, yes, know it inside out." I have to say, because of the seven years and our experience in Camden, I think they could tell you that we kind of know every element, and could maybe even become monitors ourselves -- not a ploy for me, but I think I could.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: As a follow-up to that, do you think that the monitoring process helps school administrations in dealing with their school boards to ensure that the appropriate changes are done, particularly with facilities, when a district is about to undergo the monitoring process? Is it an aid to the administration juxtaposed to school boards?

MS. WRIGHT: Yes, and I would probably draw it closer in terms of a collaborative. I can wholly say -- and I think you have heard some of the presenters mention this this morning -- that the monitoring process taught us a lot about what we were doing well and what we needed to improve. So we support the concept of that kind of accountability -- clearly you should not do away with it -- but we also have to recognize, being touted in our own district particularly as one of those who is doing it and achieving, that we have to say, as well, that there are limitations to what can be done in view of the lack of resources and facilities, but that we definitely did profit from the experience. We learned lots more about governance; lots more about implementing the policies of the district; and I think we did improve greatly. I think that is

the experience of most districts, but I think there are things that if we don't do our own self-critique of who we are in education, we won't fare well overall.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: How many students is Camden responsible for educating?

MS. WRIGHT: About 18,500 now. We have gone down just a little bit. Camden is, however, almost 42% youth, so you can appreciate our interest in South Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thanks an awful lot.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I think that is probably one of the best presentations I have heard, mainly, I guess, because it agrees so much with my philosophy.

I think if I can summarize some points-- Basically, my feeling all along has been that there is too much power in Trenton in all processes, especially in what has occurred in education. I guess no one has had more arguments with the Commissioner and his assistants than I have as a legislator over the years. I disagree in testing; I disagree in certification; I disagree in some of the things that are occurring in monitoring.

If you just look at the aspect of testing-- If any of you in the audience had a chance to see "60 Minutes" this week, I think it personified, to a great degree, the teaching to the test that is occurring in this country and the pressures that are placed on teachers and students. Not only are we dealing with-- When you are talking about third graders -- I taught fourth and fifth and was a principal at the elementary level -- the concentration has really been on secondary education. All of the national programs focus on secondary education. Very little has focused on elementary education, in terms of what we are doing in education, where we are placing our money, and how we think students should progress.

In that process, in this State, we weren't happy enough to just take the nationally standardized tests that were already in existence -- Iowa's, California's, etc. -- so we had to go about re-documenting a testing process and getting the data necessary to come up with our own State test to add to the nationally standardized test, to add to other tests.

I am very close to the elementary schools. My wife is an elementary school guidance counselor and deals with a lot of the testing that goes on in the system. There is just so much time spent on testing, and so much fear, in terms of passing to meet the monitoring process at the elementary school level, and so much of the day is consumed by that, that the creative, the pleasurable, the growth aspects that you have so eloquently described, are lost in the process. And now we have the pressures of six-, seven-, eight-, nine-, ten-year-olds having to pass "the test," and the teacher who, in the "60 Minutes" episode, I would think, is rather common throughout this country, who almost gave the kids the answers.

In schools where they are not going to give the kids the exact question, but they have to give the kids a question like the question that is in the test, or the kid in first grade or third grade who has to find the little dot to correlate with the question -- which a lot of graduate students have difficulty in locating-- I mean, cut us a break. I think we have overdone it. We have looked at certification and said that you can take a guy out of Campbell Soup who is a great supervisor, put him into schools, and let him work with kids as though they are similar-- What a total lack of knowledge about what teaching and education is all about.

Those things bother the heck out of me, and I am not a real popular guy in Trenton with the administration, even when they are of my own party. Not that Burke was any better, but-- I think we are really overreaching now. We are really overreaching. We are really into the day of our students, and

taking away those things that make education what it is. We have to reconsider what we are doing. I agree with so much of what you have said.

Education, in my mind, is really the last bastion of sanity in our society. It is the one structure in our society that continues to be a place that has logic, where good things happen, and where good people are located. Teachers, on the whole, and educators and administrators, on the whole, are good people. I have never found another group to match them in all of my dealings throughout society. I think we have to give them more credit. I think we have to give boards more credit.

I think the Trenton power should be less obvious; the monitoring should be carefully structured so as not to intrude in the day to the degree that it has. Let's get back to teaching kids to be creative, to deal with some values, to talk about more than just those things that are measurable. Ninety percent of what we do in education is not measurable, and to put all of the emphasis on those things, those items that are measurable, because that is the only way we can quantify it, is the wrong way to go.

I didn't want to give a speech, but I think you are headed in the right direction.

MS. WRIGHT: I thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: A good speech. Thank you very much. Assemblyman Rocco and I are pretty much in agreement, but I just want to add something about teaching the test.

John, I will never forget the day, I was in office about a month -- about five or six months, rather -- and you and I conversed about teaching the test. It was a warm day in 1982, and I remember that I made the statement -- I made it to my superintendent and other people in the Trenton school system-- I said we could teach the test to the point where it becomes de facto cheating. And I am going to conclude with a little story which happened to me as a principal:

We were beaten out by another school which taught the test assiduously, as well as continuously, by about two-tenths of a point. Some of my kids came to me and complained. They said, "Why aren't we number one anymore?" So I called an assembly of the kids and I told the story, without denigrating the other principal, who was a fine educator. I likened teaching the test to telling a hitter where I was going to pitch the ball. I said, "What I have stressed in this school" -- and I told them what my philosophy was, that I never believed in teaching the test. I likened instructing the staff on teaching a broad spectrum to teaching a hitter to hit the ball wherever it was pitched. And I think that is the mission of education. I think that is where we have fallen down over the last -- I don't know how many years, in education in this State, and beyond.

Thank you very much for a fine presentation. We have had some very fine testimony so far.

Next will be William Morris, Superintendent, Upper Deerfield Township School District. Mr. Morris?

L. W I L L I A M M O R R I S: Gentlemen, before I start, I would just like to commend you. I have been sitting in the audience. It is very evident that you are sincerely interested in this, no question, and I certainly commend you for your involvement. Excellent.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you.

MR. MORRIS: My name is Bill Morris. I'm Superintendent of Schools in Upper Deerfield Township in Cumberland County. Thank you for allowing me to testify today regarding monitoring.

Our school district currently has approximately 900 pupils served by three schools in a K-8 grade level organization. In addition, we have 11 special education classes, as well as a very extensive community school program. We were the first district monitored in the county during the

first cycle held during the 1983-84 school year and repeated as the first district monitored in the second cycle during the fall of 1988. Fortunately, we passed on both occasions at Level I.

I support monitoring as a concept for school district evaluation. If used properly it can be a rewarding and positive experience. Our district has tried to approach monitoring in this positive manner. We have found that the experience our staff has had with the monitoring preparation, the relationship that we've experienced with our county Office of Education, and the overall cooperative efforts of all involved have been excellent. All of us in our school district, including all certified and support staffs, felt a distinct sense of accomplishment when our district passed all of the monitoring requirements successfully.

In my opinion, however, there are weaknesses or problems within the monitoring process which I feel need correction and improvement if the monitoring process is to be retained as an important evaluation method for school districts. I base my suggestions upon my experience as a chief school administrator and upon my experience as a speaker at several NJASA-sponsored monitoring workshops in the State. I have heard people from other parts of the State and some of their concerns. That is why I say that. These changes and improvements are as follows:

- 1) Reduce the rigidity of the requirements. The fact that if you fail a relatively minor requirement you will fail monitoring should be revised. I am reminded of the English teacher one time, who absolutely insisted you learn 44 prepositions. If someone had 43 of them and got an "F," a pass/fail-- I compare that with this. How in the world can you fail someone who gets 43 out of 44? But it happened. Needless to say, she was spoken to. That's ridiculous. Forty-four out of 44, you pass, and failing one you might fail the entire monitoring process, doesn't flush with me.

2) Allow time for corrective action in all areas of the process where possible. When a district fails monitoring it is very damaging, and many of the indicators can be corrected relatively simply if the personnel are allowed an opportunity to correct them. My district passed monitoring. About five weeks later, there was a little article this big (demonstrates) in the local newspaper on about the fifth page: "Upper Deerfield Schools Pass Monitoring." A neighboring district failed. God is my witness, in the middle of the front page, headlines: "District Failed Monitoring." That stinks. I can't say it any plainer. It is damaging.

3) Modify the basic skills testing requirement. Many times a school district has a legitimate reason for not scoring well on a particular test. This should be considered in the reporting procedure. You take a school district that might have 15 third graders. Three move out, three move in, and three who were not going to make it anyway. Before you know it, you have failed the test, and down goes your entire system. No way. It shouldn't be that way. There should be some way of refining that procedure.

4) Don't revise the monitoring guidelines after they are established. The idea of "What was all right last year isn't now," is very confusing. Building codes, for example, should be "grandfathered" during the entire five-year cycle, then changed for the next cycle with a certain amount of "lead" time. This would allow time for a board of education to budget and plan properly. I can't help but use as an illustration: We were pre-monitored in the building facilities, and found to have "exit" -- not enough of these exit lights. I don't want to put the Glassboro guy on the defense, but if they don't have battery backup for those exit signs, or a generator hooked up to them, they won't make it. And they better have emergency lighting in there, too, because that is part of it.

Now, that's fine. I have nothing against that. But grandfather it. Give us time to budget for it. What happened in our case was, we didn't budget for it, because we didn't know it had to be done at that time. We budgeted for a roof. Our roof did leak, but we got the exit signs fixed and the emergency lights. Now that, you have to consider. Something is wrong.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I am thinking of an Army -- a military term for that.

MR. MORRIS: Yeah, yeah.

5) Provide proper staffing to county offices to allow for their personnel to provide more planning and to assist districts to prepare properly. Place the accent on failure prevention. Remember that: Accent on failure prevention. I have nothing against that county office. They are tremendous to work with. Maybe being first on the list to be monitored, we were very well schooled. I felt very well prepared; our district was well prepared for the monitoring process. That is the key, I think. This should be done all the way through with everybody.

But if you don't replace the person -- the one who is assigned to your district, or you don't replace the child study team person, what are they going to do? It is very difficult for them. And for some reason there is a feeling that, "Well, once that person goes, we don't need anybody now for six months or eight months." That's ridiculous. The districts suffer because of that. We don't have the help we need.

6) Realizing there are individual differences in personnel and in county staffs, and realizing that currently there is a lot of emphasis stressed on striving for consistency between counties, and among counties, this emphasis should be continued in providing all of the county monitoring teams with the same information, techniques, expectations, and overall evaluation procedures to help to improve a better consistency



in all of the counties. I know that is being done, and it should be stressed even more.

7) Conduct monitoring every seven/eight years as opposed to every five years. The monitoring teams could possibly complete all of their school district monitoring assignments in five years, update the various elements, and allow for a couple of years for districts to prepare and budget for new requirements properly. And, don't change the guidelines. Leave them alone. Let us work on them. Let us adjust to them. Okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Consolidate them, in other words.

MR. MORRIS: Yeah. These suggested changes or improvements could, in my opinion, enhance the process. It could perhaps make monitoring better accepted and make an attempt to encourage, not discourage, certain districts which at the present time may face failure due to a situation or condition over which they really have little or no control.

Finally, I believe in accountability and in striving to make our schools the best they can be. Monitoring, if realistically planned and fairly implemented, could be a vehicle to help achieve a thorough and efficient education for all public school children through a positive and meaningful evaluation.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very, very much. I am going to lead off by saying first that that was a very fine "tell it like it is" presentation. I am thinking of a whole unit which got giggled because a quarter bounced off a bunk at the wrong angle.

Let me ask you this question -- Assemblyman Cimino posed it to a previous speaker: Approximately how much time -- if you can't give me a dollar figure, if you can give me both, fine -- do you spend on compliance/monitoring during a given day? Let's say the two months' period before the monitors are about to come in.

MR. MORRIS: Well, to be honest with you, we started a year in advance.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

MR. MORRIS: By having that year in advance lead time and preparation, I got my key people together -- my principals, my community school director, my child study team chairman, my business manager, this sort of thing-- We got them together and said, "This is what you have to do." They had their assignments given to them a year in advance. Then it was up to them. I served as coordinator, incidentally. I think that is very important. The one in charge better be a coordinator, or someone close to being in charge, because you have to carry -- not to make a pun -- a little weight for this. You have to, in order to make sure it works.

Now, once that is in place, we had maybe a half a dozen meetings. We had a couple of what you call "dry run" meetings. In all honesty, if you try to do it in the last two months, you won't make it. You will spend countless hours, and achieve nothing.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: No, what I meant was, do you accelerate in the last couple of months, really, as you get close to crunch time?

MR. MORRIS: I think, in reality, the acceleration takes place more in your mind, in my opinion.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

MR. MORRIS: I think you get a little worried and concerned, and when you dry run things, you say-- That's what I mean.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Yeah, like taking an exam, when you get close to it. Let me ask you this, and perhaps it is a bias of my own, and it can be true of any kind of monitoring -- Department of Health, Agriculture-- I will probably hear it tonight. I am going to a Grange meeting in Mercer County.

Do you believe that the county department and the State Department of Education involve themselves in the "hows," rather than the "whats," a little more than they should, in contradistinction to setting broad parameters and letting the people in the district address what should go in-between those broad parameters?

MR. MORRIS: I didn't sense this in my situation. They didn't tell me necessarily. They gave us advice, that sort of thing, but it was at my prodding, more or less. And, of course, they had us in for orientation meetings, which was very greatly appreciated.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Some people have said, "Yes," to that question; that they got too involved in the "hows." We have gotten a good cross section of points of view on how that question has been answered.

MR. MORRIS: Maybe I have been around too long.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Assemblyman Rocco -- John?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I just want to say that I think the specificity you have is important. It is going to be helpful when we evaluate everything we have available.

MR. MORRIS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No, nothing. I agree with Assemblyman Rocco. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. Moving along, next will be Charles McNally, Superintendent, West Deptford Township School District.

C H A R L E S B. M c N A L L Y: Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Charles McNally. I am the Superintendent of the West Deptford School District, which is a K-12 district in Gloucester County. I have held this position since July 1970.

During my initial years as a school administrator, the State had a school monitoring process which required

recertification through an on-site visit by State monitors every seven years. This process was very similar to the Middle States evaluation, but not quite as encompassing. At the time, many of us wondered why two similar evaluation processes were needed -- one which cycled through every 10 years and the other every seven. About 1970, this monitoring model was replaced with Dr. Burke's goal-setting model. Our district participated in two monitoring visits using this system. The only thing that remains from the hours of work -- summer curriculum projects, etc. -- associated with this process, are a number of boxes which are now gathering dust in our storerooms.

We have recently finished our second round of monitoring under the Cooperman model which is being studied by this distinguished Committee. I sincerely believe this is the least intrusive and the most efficient of the three systems I have been required to work with during my 25 years as a New Jersey school administrator. Like any system, it can be improved upon and I believe the State's chief school administrators have made an offer to assist the Department in this regard via its professional organization, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. In my opinion, the strong points of the Cooperman system are as follows:

Point 1: Most districts, I am sure, attempt to follow State rules and regulations whether they agree with them or not. Sometimes in our district during discussions on how to comply with the latest State mandates, we hear comments from our administrators or teaching staff members that other districts in our county, or in other counties, are not always in compliance; that they pick and choose the rules with which to comply, and that we are overly concerned with such tasks. With the Cooperman model, we need not waste time denying inequitable treatment. There is the assurance that those who do not comply with State law, the code, and the Department's

rules, will be cited when they receive their five-year monitoring evaluation. That seems only fair. If the State Department of Education is going to be a regulatory agency, then it must enforce its rules. Board of education members and school personnel are like everyone else; they do not pay a great deal of attention to laws and rules that have no bite.

Point 2: Sometimes those of us who believe we are abiding by the State's rules and regulations err. We do not truly understand what the State Department people had in mind when they wrote a particular regulation. Some of these misunderstandings are corrected when preparing for the monitoring visit; others are picked up by the monitors during the visitation. For example, we revised the format for our courses of study based on a State Department directive received during our monitoring preparations. An example of a post-monitoring change is that all of the child study team directors in our county are now working on the development of a common IEP form for speech and some other forms relative to the providing of special education services. Obviously, such corrective actions are valuable.

Point 3: In these times of higher budgets and tight money, many of us need all the help we can get in the management of facilities and the completion of capital needs projects. The current monitoring process addresses these areas. For example, it requires the establishment of preventive maintenance plans, mandates checks for compliance with health and safety regulations relative to facilities, etc. The existence of such requirements acts as a lever for school administrators and school board members to focus the community on such needs. And this helps us to acquire the necessary financial support.

Point 4: The Cooperman model is a known entity. Our district has experienced two five-year monitoring sessions using this process. We are familiar with the format, the

requirements, and the materials. The institution of a new system of monitoring undoubtedly would require another major commitment in time and resources at the local and State levels. There would be the need for the State to design the new system and to hold another round of familiarization meetings with local districts in order to explain its workings. And, of course, there would be a lot of spinning of wheels at the local level trying to make decisions on how to proceed with the implementation of any new system. In other words, better the devil we know--

In summation, this is the third State monitoring system that I have been required to comply with. It is the best of the three. The 10 elements with their 43 indicators provide for a thorough evaluation of a district's compliance with State rules and regulations. The limit in the types of required documentation also satisfies the requirement that the model exhibit the attribute of efficiency. There has been some talk by one of New Jersey's leading labor organizations of surprises during the monitoring process; that it is an "Alice in Wonderland" experience. That organization may not have studied all of the materials. The monitoring manual provides a statement of each indicator in clear terms, lists the examples of documentation needed to be in compliance, and provides additional clarification via the inclusion of procedural guidelines.

Additional clarification is also provided by numerous county-level preparatory meetings, pre-monitoring visits, self-evaluation instruments, and enough specifying and clarifying memoranda to make any reader's eyes weary. When all is said and done, you either have the required policies in place or you don't. You meet the testing requirements or you don't. You have properly certified people working in each job or you don't. You evaluate your staff and file State reports as per the code or you don't. Where's the surprise? These are

not tasks which must be accomplished in some mad rush before the five-year monitoring cycle comes to your district. The 10 elements speak to things which are supposed to already be in place if we are following the rules and State mandates under which we are required to work.

I believe it would be a mistake to try to discard the current monitoring process if the intent is to replace it with another new system. In my opinion, the current system accomplishes what I believe the State wants to accomplish and does this with the least amount of interruption to local school operations. As stated earlier, improvements can be made. I don't believe there is anything magical about a five-year cycle or 43 indicators. My suggestion then would be: Make the necessary repairs; don't rebuild the house.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Mr. McNally. Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I appreciate your presentation. Obviously, you pointed out some of the good aspects, the things that can help us, and I think they have to be taken into account, too, as we put this report together. I appreciate that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me ask you this question: Let's assume right now that the Governor and this Committee are working on an administration bill to revise monitoring, and we hire you as a consultant to rewrite the elements and indicators. Would you rewrite pretty much the same elements and indicators? Would you make changes -- delete, add, or what?

MR. McNALLY: I think the nine suggestions that my Association -- the recommendations they have developed for your Committee and the Commissioner to consider are all very good ones. I would like to see a kinder and gentler process, one with some forgiveness.

The comments that others have made about testing-- I truly believe that there shouldn't be a set reference point, but districts should be measured based on the growth they make with their particular student populations.

A longer cycle: I definitely think that is something that should get very serious consideration. In these times of very tight money, this would allow, in my judgment, the State to do more management by exception, rather than trying to manage all of us in the same fashion.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, Let me say this: A number of people -- not the majority -- have indicated that they believe in 10-year cycles to comport with Middle States' evaluation. How do you feel about a 10-year cycle?

MR. McNALLY: I think that would definitely be in order. Certainly it should get serious consideration, especially for those districts which have been successful in possibly the first two rounds of monitoring under this process. Maybe there should be a difference -- a gradation of 10-year cycles for that group, and five for others -- some system such as that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Doctor, do you think--

MR. McNALLY: It's just Mister.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. McNALLY: Thank you for the doctorate. I really appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Assemblyman Naples had said, "Doctor." Excuse me. Mr. McNally, do you think there ought to be a qualifier in terms of the monitoring process with regard to the size of a district and how often that district ought to go through the monitoring process?

MR. McNALLY: I'm sure it must be much more difficult for smaller districts. In my district, we have 230 teaching staff members and 13 professional administrators. So we had



the staff, I thought, to handle a process like this. I think it would be much more difficult for a smaller district, however, to handle the same process.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I just want to say something here, if I may just come back for a second. I think I have already said it, or Assemblyman Rocco said it. Let's go on. I don't want to be dilatory here. Thank you very much.

MR. McNALLY: Surely.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dr. Barry Galasso, Superintendent, Winslow Township School District. Doctor? By the way, if you don't have a title before your name on the witness list, I would rather call you doctor and have you be a mister, than the reverse.

D R. B A R R Y J. G A L A S S O: Good morning, Chairman Naples and members of the Assembly Education Committee. It is a pleasure to be here this morning to share with you a few thoughts I have on the monitoring process. My name is Barry Galasso. I am Superintendent of the Winslow Township Public Schools, which is a K-6 district. It has 3100 students and five schools. Prior to this, I was Superintendent of Schools in Berlin Borough, which was a one-school system and approximately 750 students at that time.

The difference between the process in 1983 and the process in 1989 is quite a bit. I found that the State's attempt to standardize the process actually limited the effectiveness of the county Office of Education. We have a very supportive county Office of Education, and I believe the State's process, by trying to standardize 21 counties and having the same process occur in Bergen and Camden Counties, or Gloucester County, or other counties in the State of New Jersey, is counterproductive to the improvement of education. Compliance is not synonymous with improvement in the educational process.

Chief school administrators take the monitoring process very seriously. We consider it our report card. Our communities view it as important. It was mentioned this morning that failing monitoring is devastating to a community. It is. Fortunately, in both processes in Berlin and Winslow Township, we were successful. But I think to have a monitoring process with 43 elements and to fail one element and to be considered a failure, would be inappropriate.

Let me give you an example of what occurred to us in Winslow Township prior to our monitoring in April 1989. In August of that school year, just before school was to open, we were notified by the Department of Human Services that they were changing the Ancora facility, which is located in Winslow Township, into a facility for the homeless. They renovated 30 houses, and in each house a parent and four children were assigned to that particular housing development. So that would increase my population, potentially, by 120 students. In addition to that, these people would be located in Winslow Township for a period of one to three months, and would then be moved on to permanent housing, as the program was supposed to work.

Well, this was in the midst of getting ready for a monitoring cycle in April. We have already heard testimony with regard to how difficult it is in 7.3. Seventy-five percent of the students we received needed some sort of special attention, whether it be special education or basic skills. This added 50 to 60 special education students to a district that was preparing for the monitoring cycle. In addition to that, we were building a new school -- \$8 million -- which opened this last September. Working with the Department of Environmental Protection and in the Pinelands complicated that factor.

So what I am trying to point out is, I think it is unfair that districts be judged on 43 elements, and that county

Offices of Education and the Department of Education are not able to utilize the discretion necessary to take the individuality of the district into consideration. Would it have been fair to the citizens of Winslow Township, if we were unsuccessful, to be deemed failures -- 3100 students, 400 staff -- because the State Department of Human Services built into the Ancora facility a process that could have made us unsuccessful in 7.3. The community has passed 21 budgets and bond referendums. It is pro education.

That, I think, is the unfairness. Someone mentioned a little earlier about being more gentle and more humanistic, and I think that is what we are asking for. Accountability is necessary. We do not want to see that go away. Speaking for myself and our district, I think it is essential. It is something we look forward to -- meeting the standard. But I think there also has to be some flexibility.

The county superintendent of schools -- that bond between the county office and the district-- That is what improves education. The county superintendent-- I think the period ought to be extended to a minimum of seven years, maybe to 10 years, as Chairman Naples indicated previously. He has the ability. He reviews our test scores. He works with us on annual objectives. There is a midyear review. There is an annual budget review. If line items are up 20% or reduced 20%, he is asking questions about expenditures in those areas. He reviews our substandard facilities. He looks at our master plans and our certification of staff through the fall reports. I think he and his staff can then key into districts that are having difficulty and attempt to improve those, while others which have been successful are left to get on with the business of improving education.

I thank you for your time this morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much, Doctor.  
Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I am familiar with what you have done in Berlin and Winslow, which is obviously probably one of the fastest growing communities in the State, I would imagine.

DR. GALASSO: Yes. We have 3100 students, as I mentioned, and about 5000 housing units that have been approved and are in construction.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: In terms of that growth, I would assume that if you had a quick monitoring process again, you would be dealing with new students -- the influx of the new students, as well as attempting to prepare for the monitoring.

DR. GALASSO: Yes. You make a good point. Last year when we were preparing for the monitoring, we had 3000 students in four elementary schools. Our fifth school did not open until this September. So we were overcrowded. We were using about 16 substandard facilities, which were approved. So, as I say, all of these factors come into play when you are preparing for the monitoring. I think all of us have problems; all of us are going to have problems due to the differences in our sizes and our locations, whether we are urban or suburban. I think the system has to provide for that. We are not dealing with tangible items. There are too many intangibles for it to be set in concrete and not to move off-center.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Let me just go on with the growth a little bit, because I remember in Cherry Hill when it was growing and I was a principal, and Gene Keyek, my good friend over there, was a principal in a school that used to-- On Monday morning, Gene used to have a total new class show up -- 20 or 30 new students every Monday morning. So, if he were to be responsible for how well those students did, I think it would probably be unfair in the process itself, and is probably something, Mr. Chairman, that may not have been too obvious, but should have been taken into question -- the growth of a community and the impact on that school district.

DR. GALASSO: Yeah, I think the growth factor-- Again, I hate to dwell on the county superintendent's role in this, but I think it has been a positive relationship for me in Camden County, in the two superintendencies I have had, and I think that is the key. We have talented people there who, I think, get bogged down in compliance, when they really ought to be helping us with the improvement of instruction, because they have the abilities to do that. I think we need to free them up and give them the time to do that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, I regret walking out. I went out to take some medicine. I made the mistake of taking my shower right before I came out today, rather than a couple of hours earlier, and I am coming down with a little bit of a cold.

I am going to go to Assemblyman Cimino, and then I am going to come back.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I have no questions, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say I agree with Assemblyman Rocco's remarks. I can appreciate your problems. What is the total budget in your school district?

DR. GALASSO: Seventeen million.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How many of your students are classified both mainstreamed and in a self-contained class?

DR. GALASSO: We have approximately 400 students who are classified.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Out of?

DR. GALASSO: Thirty-one hundred.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Thank you very much.

I am going to digress somewhat from the order of those who signed up, and call Larry Pointsett of Lawrence -- I'm sorry, of Hamilton Township in Mercer County. I represent Lawrence, and Skip represents Hamilton. I almost stole someone away from you, Skip. Larry?

L A W R E N C E   W .   P O I N T S E T T : Thank you very much, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before the Committee this morning.

I live in Medford, New Jersey, which is down in Burlington County, and I am employed by the Hamilton Township School District. However, I am not here representing any statewide organization or necessarily the Hamilton Township School District.

I am going to tell you that Hamilton Township is getting ready for monitoring in September and October of next year. We started approximately 12 months ago, in the spring of last year, to get ready for this monitoring. Assemblyman Cimino asked a question about costs. I can tell you that there has been a tremendous cost to the district in getting ready for this monitoring. Nothing is going on in the district except getting ready for monitoring. I question some of the things, or the indicators, that are looked at, as I understand them.

One of the programs that I have charge of is English As a Second Language. I have five-and-a-half teachers who go around the district working with these youngsters. It is my understanding -- the State people have told me -- the teacher has to carry a curriculum guide with him. It is not good enough that the curriculum guide is on file in the principal's office of the school; the teacher must carry the guide with him. You know, I just don't understand that.

Gentlemen, I have before me the law which is right out of Chapter 18A, education, and I quote it to you: 18A:30-2--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You carry that with you?

MR. POINTSETT: Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Do you carry that with you?

MR. POINTSETT: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Just a joke.

MR. POINTSETT: I will just read the last line to you. It says: "All certified personnel shall be entitled to a

minimum of 10 sick days in any school year." We have been informed by the Department of Education that if our district, in the aggregate, has less than 95% teacher attendance, we will flunk monitoring. Also, a part of the law says: "If you have less than 3.5, you must come up with a plan."

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Yes.

MR. POINTSETT: I can't understand how a State agency can abrogate a State law. I will give you a hypothetical example: Let's say a small district with one teacher who teaches K-6 in one building, and every month she has a migraine headache, a legitimate reason. She really suffers from migraine headaches. Once a month she has to be out. The district is going to fail monitoring under the current system.

Let me say this: We are running, in Hamilton Township, about 98% attendance, so we are probably going to sail through with no problem. But I have seen teachers drag themselves in with temperatures this year because they don't want to be pulling down the district. According to my calculations, with 180 school days, a teacher would be allowed to miss six days and be under the 3.5. If you missed nine days, which is 5% of 180, technically you would be failing. Yet, the law says 10 sick days per person -- or per certified employee.

I have seen administrators -- other administrators in the district -- who may deny this, but they are going to tell their staffs, "If a teacher is out six days in a row, it doesn't count against him." Okay? If you are out six days, one each month for six months, it does count against you. But if you legitimately get sick-- Say you catch the flu and you are out six days, it doesn't count against the district. What are administrators telling the teachers? "Listen, if you are out four or five days, I don't want to see you around here the sixth day."

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You're talking about incidental absence, right?

MR. POINTSETT: Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Incidental absence.

MR. POINTSETT: Right, right. This, I feel, is detrimental. As a principal -- a former principal, now a supervisor of a basic skills program, I naturally agree that it is important to have teacher attendance as high as you can get it. However, I do not understand how the State -- or the State Department of Education -- can make a regulation that, in my opinion, violates the law.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Larry. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Just, Mr. Chairman, to recognize Mr. Pointsett-- I know that Hamilton Township -- my home municipality -- is about to undergo this process. I have heard the concerns of the community, you can be well assured. Additionally, I know the fine caliber of the individuals who run that school system, having been president of that school system. It is the eighth largest in the State of New Jersey, Mr. Chairman, and they certainly deliver a very good quality education to the public school students in Hamilton. It is nice to see you, Larry.

MR. POINTSETT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Hi Larry.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say this: The whole issue of incidental absence has to be looked at. Besides the State law granting 10 days, you have negotiated contracts granting more. That is a thorny, meddlesome problem which is going to have to be grappled with. If you just look at what controversies and disputes go through every year over that question, you can readily see that. I wrote that in red ink.



That is a point that not too many people have made, Larry, and thank you very, very much.

MR. POINTSETT: Thank you for allowing me to speak this morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: We are going to break for lunch, by the way, around 12:15.

Dr. James Mundy, Superintendent of Schools, Pine Hill Borough School District, Camden County.

D R. J A M E S H. M U N D Y: Good morning, Chairman Naples, members of the Committee. I would like to thank you for having me here this morning also.

I would like to start out by saying that my district, too, has gone through the monitoring process, this being the second time, and on each occasion we were successful. I am glad to say that. My experiences with the process itself was once as a building principal, and this time as a superintendent. I would like to say the role that the two people play is totally different. As the building principal, you only have certain responsibilities that are delegated to you and which you have to oversee, and a limit on that makes it a lot easier to deal with that aspect.

With my successor as superintendent of the district, he did not leave a lot of those other things on me, so this time around when we were monitored it was quite an awakening to find out all the things that you really do have to address and be responsible for being sure that they are really put together, or brought together in the correct manner so you will be successful in the 43 indicators.

I would like to make some positive comments, if I may, about the services we receive from the county superintendent's office. From the initial outset of the monitoring list, we were given that list and we were well aware when we had to be monitored, well in advance. We started to prepare for monitoring, I'd say, between 12 and 18 months before the actual

visit. I would like to say that that time period is really needed in order to pull all of the things together.

But, during that time, we also had a number of visits with county office people, especially going over things like facilities and a lot of feedback on certification. We were notified of things we could do to at least find out where we might experience a problem in the area of certification. That is something that I took full advantage of. In fact, I had all of my certificated staff polled and sent the entire list of people up to the county office, and they told me, "This is where you have a problem." Then I started out immediately to address those concerns. So that is one of the things that I found to be very helpful.

I also found that the monitoring process made us need a lot of internal communication. I not only needed to know what was going on, but I had to relay that information to the rest of my administrative staff, to my teachers, to my non-certificated staff, and especially to custodians, whom I expected to have the facilities in proper standards. So that internal communication was very important to me.

I also found that I had to be willing to delegate responsibility. I had to have people I could hold accountable to do certain things, because being successful in monitoring is not something you can get through by yourself. You really have to have key people and put those people in roles and feel sure that those people will do it.

But in that area of delegation and accountability, you must also be willing to follow-up just to make sure that those things are done. One of the things that we did a lot of was in-house monitoring, especially on Element 7. That 7.3 is a tough element, and I think we pre-monitored three different times. Each time we went through, when I thought I had gotten everything on the first and second cycle, I found something else that we had overlooked. So I think that pre-monitoring is

very important. Again, it was a collective effort there that helped to make us really get through the monitoring process in good fashion.

The other thing I would like to comment on, too, though, is adherence to the monitoring guidelines. If we get the manual and it is there and it stipulates that you need to do certain things, it is imperative that you do them. If you are going to do what you feel is important and let the other things go, I think you are going to have a shortcoming at the end of the process itself. So, it was very important for me to try to convey to my subordinates, and to myself, that: "Okay, this is it. Like it or not, I have to live with it. I have to do it. This is what they tell me they want done, and this is what if I do it will make me successful," and I had to do that. I did not cut any corners on those monitoring guidelines.

I think we all started out by being conscious of the process being very time-consuming, very tedious, and very nerve-wracking. I will not say that in my district we went through the entire process and never did anyone have any negative feelings, or whatever, because the tension is there. The emotions really did get strained, and oftentimes you were looked upon as the person who had to be there to try to keep it all together, and to say, "Well, you know, we can make it."

I recall in one instance my secretarial staff-- Everything had started to seem like it was falling apart on us, and I started to say, "Well, if we don't make it, we will go to Level II." The first thing one of the secretaries said to me was, "But, Jim, now you are starting to feel like we won't make it." That comment from that person made me realize that, "Hey, I cannot sound, for one minute, like we are not going to make it because I think I feel the bottom starting to get a little weak."

Monitoring, as so many people have said this morning, is not an easy process. I did not welcome it, but I did play

the game. I think the process itself, in my district, has certainly made the areas of facilities much better. In the area of curriculum guides they are up-to-date in really super fashion. I think my policy manuals are in better shape than they have ever been. The recording of certificates-- We have a process now that was in place, but had not been adhered to by all people. My predecessors probably had something different to follow, and now we have a process we are using that, according to the current manuals, will get us through monitoring.

One of the things that I have not done is stop the things that we did in the monitoring process itself, because I am not willing to have to spend two years trying to get ready. So what I am trying to do are some of the things that we found out that we needed to do to continue the practice, hoping that if the monitoring process does come around again for me in the five-year cycle, that the things that we have experienced this time will be a little easier because we will have a number of those factions already in place.

I would like to say in closing that I think the monitoring cycle has made my district exhibit a sense of pride. I remember at that exit conference, when we were told that we had made it, the principals immediately called their secretaries who made an announcement over the intercom -- and that is supposed to be taboo in my district; you don't make an announcement over the intercom at inappropriate times and disrupt things -- but that was done, and you could hear the cheers from all of the classrooms. So, the teachers had been involved; the other non-certificated people had been involved; and they all felt it was a combined effort that made it successful. I shared that feeling because I felt it was a combined effort that made us successful -- the support of my staff members, the support of my Board of Education through the entire process, because it was time-consuming and tedious for

all of us. If the idea goes that there is a cycle where you will miss it, I would certainly welcome that.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: No. Of course, Pine Hill is in my district, and I am very familiar with it. You have such a quiet political atmosphere there, it should be very easy to operate the schools, right?

DR. MUNDY: We fake it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, very quickly-- Oh, I'm sorry, John. Excuse me for interrupting.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: The schools have come a long way. I think that in your case you are probably on the right track to try to stay ahead of the process for the next time around.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Assemblyman. Doctor, in Toms River, Assemblyman Moran and I pursued a line with several people. Let me ask you a direct question, along with the line which we pursued at that particular meeting: Do you think the monitoring -- the process of monitoring is okay -- excuse me -- that the monitors-- Do you think the elements and the indicators are okay, the process is okay, but some of the monitors themselves are negative and, in effect, skew the process?

DR. MUNDY: I have not had a negative relationship with any of the monitors during the process itself, so I could not answer that.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. Let me ask you one last question. I will ask you the same question I posed to one of the previous speakers: If you had to sit down and rewrite the elements and the indicators, would you make any additions, deletions, change a comma here and there, or what?

DR. MUNDY: I think there are some that make it a lot more difficult for us. There are some that are very difficult for us to control, one being the area of staff attendance.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What was that, Doctor?

DR. MUNDY: Staff attendance is an area that is somewhat difficult to control, because there are many variables that will enter and put you beyond that 3.5% attendance rate. That is something that I was very concerned about.

Also, in the area of standardized testing-- Now, I feel very comfortable in that area, because we try to do all of the kinds of things in our district that will enable our students to be successful in that area. However, with the continual influx of special needs students, it makes you wonder. I know those students can be eliminated from your testing results, but there are some things you may want to look at. Also in the area of special education itself, it is very difficult sometimes to hold to that 7.3 line.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: One other question: What about the issue of suspension of students? The Goss v. Lopez case in 1975 spelled out due process for students. I believe in due process, but I felt that what the justices said -- or the majority of the Court said -- back then was a little cumbersome. I was Assistant Principal at Trenton High at the time and I handled an average of 3000 cases a year. But I remember that if a kid was suspended, it was counted as an excused absence. He was given an opportunity to make the work up. It was not considered a truancy -- a suspension. That is, it was a mandate from the United States Supreme Court. Yet, in New Jersey, if you have a rash of suspensions, in order to keep peace and protect life and property in your school, or to protect the integrity of a teacher, it counts against you. Do you see a conflict there?

DR. MUNDY: Well, I hope I will answer your question correctly. I think, first of all, suspension is a punishment, and there are instances in which we have to suspend a student.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I agree.

DR. MUNDY: But I do not feel that the student's learning should stop because he or she has been suspended. So if there is a system in progress, or in place, where that student is given adequate work to make up, and that student passes that work successfully, then I could see some negotiations on that element, or in that area.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right. Then you don't feel that a suspension should count against the district?

DR. MUNDY: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. I agree with you wholeheartedly. Not too many people have said that.

DR. MUNDY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, I made a mistake. We have to break for lunch at 12:05, Dr. Rosen has informed me. I had forgotten. It is now 12:05. I just want to say I like the shape this hearing is taking, and we will see you back here, say, about five after one. Thank you very much.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: We are going to reconvene the hearing now, and call upon John Polomano, Superintendent, Audubon School District, Camden County. John? (no response) Let's go on. If he should come in, if anyone knows him, let him know that we have gone on, and will put him on next.

Dr. John Daspro, Superintendent, Pittsgrove School District, Salem County.

D R. J O H N J. D A S P R O: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to address you here this afternoon. My name is John Daspro, Superintendent of Schools in Pittsgrove Township in Salem County. Pittsgrove was first monitored in 1986 and most recently this past January,

and both times was recommended for State certification. Since I was a superintendent during both monitoring visits, it has been an interesting experience to view the modifications which have taken place during the two monitoring cycles.

Overall, the 10 elements in the monitoring guide cause a district to assess its own adequacies and review, all at one time, many disparate regulations. Conceptually, a review by an outside agency of educational services and compliance with existing regulations is certainly something all educators agree is a worthwhile and necessary activity. As the process is presently being administered, this review serves to point out levels of compliance in New Jersey schools. It demonstrates to the community and taxpayers what is not being done correctly. From my perspective, the present monitoring process does not spend enough time pointing out what activities are, in fact, being done in a positive vein and the achievements of various school districts. I believe it should be done to foster quality educational programs and services for children throughout the State.

New Jersey residents have made a significant financial commitment to the education of their children. They have a right to see this accounting in a clear, concise, and fair manner. This mode should be one that fosters improvement at all times.

Throughout the entire monitoring process, on both occasions, our local county office staff has worked very closely with the district to prepare it for monitoring. Close cooperation between local officials and the Department of Education is the avenue of communication that must always exist in each county for monitoring to succeed and accomplish its goal and, at the same time, benefit the local district. A free exchange of information and inquiries to aid in the district's preparation for the process is absolutely essential. Unfortunately, as we prepared for monitoring, we were often



given reports -- not from our county, but from other counties -- where individual inquiries were responded to, "I can't answer that question now," or, "You'll have to find that out on your own."

For the monitoring process to be successful, it should be one where all parties know the rules beforehand. The education of our students is too important of an activity for either party to be unnecessarily embarrassed, or in for surprises at the last moment. An open dialogue between parties is the key.

When Pittsgrove prepared for monitoring, almost a full year before, we decided to make adjustments from our first review. This included selecting a sample of materials, rather than reams to document particular compliance matters. The decision was made to limit the disruptive effect of the monitoring visit on the daily school district program.

The present monitoring model stresses compliance at the expense, I believe, of program improvement. Several of the elements, especially in the areas of facilities, finance, pupil attendance, and even some of the areas of mandated programs and basic skills testing, are items that are reported annually either to the county or to the State in various reports. If a district is judged to be successful in this annual review, it should not be required to document this fact later in the monitoring process.

Probably the most obvious example is the more comprehensive reviews district auditors perform in the fiscal area now. This certainly strikes of overkill. By modifying the review in these areas, the monitoring visit would focus more on other areas dealing primarily with program improvement and assessing the needs of the district, rather than reviewing in detail those matters which are already a matter of public record.

One of the most frustrating facts in preparing for the monitoring visit was the recurring updates in the monitoring manual. For several months in a row, changes occurred monthly. It made it almost impossible to update key staff. The most recent one in this area came out this February dealing with special education. The questions still need to be raised: Does this update apply to districts being monitored during the remainder of the 1989-90 school year, or only to districts next September? Will some of these clarifications impact on activities that have already taken place six, to even 18 months ago, that are not capable of being corrected now?

The Department of Education has often stated that it has little choice in developing regulations for legislative initiatives, in that it has to react after the fact. The monitoring process is one of those areas where the Department has almost all of the control. It is frustrating to see the process change in midstream and realize that a district is being held accountable to a different set of rules than one that might have been monitored only a few months before.

At the local level, it appears much easier for districts to admit that they have erred. The same type of open admission when a new procedure has to be added or a modification made would go a long way toward eliminating some of this needless confusion. Suspending the monitoring process sometimes when a major difficulty is encountered would be a much better step than lack of uniform implementation.

In the present facility review, a pre-monitoring visit was implemented during the cycle. This allowed districts to have a checklist, as well as a physical inspection of their site to ensure there was enough time available to correct noted deficiencies. This type of approach eliminated most surprises. A similar pre-monitoring system for many of the other elements would cut down on the failures, the paperwork of corrective action plans, and also eliminate unnecessary confusion.

During the last monitoring cycle, one of the major issues was substandard classrooms and facilities. The process has addressed these concerns but, unfortunately, the level of State commitment to this issue discovered over five years ago is still not forthcoming. If the monitoring process is to serve as a mutual give and take, there must be a commitment at the State level to ensure that matters pointed out throughout the State are addressed at the Department and vigorously pursued with the Legislature.

There are still no funds committed to dealing with the issue of deteriorating buildings and increased impact on local taxpayers to solve the problems themselves. In the same vein, during the second cycle of monitoring, an overwhelming number of districts are receiving corrective action plans in the area of special education. When such a large number of districts are having difficulties, it seems to administrators and teachers in the field that the problem also rests with the State. A greater commitment must come from above to recognize that a mutual problem exists. A commitment must be made for adequate funding levels, rather than State aid shortfalls. But the lack of changes in often onerous regulations will not allow districts to adequately address concerns.

In reviewing the monitoring manual in preparation for the visit, it was obvious that our district would be rated based on performance during one specific academic year. It was disheartening to realize that years of successful performance in the third, sixth, and ninth grades, as well as all of the other grades, would not suffice if one fell below the magic 75% cutoff. I would suggest that rather than one year being utilized, a pattern be analyzed and an average performance in all grades, rather than on one selected grade, be used as the guideline. This would eliminate relying on an aberration, rather than the norm in a district. This would also serve to eliminate unnecessary actions to avoid the unnecessary stigma of failure.

To a local administrator, concerned with implementing all of the new State mandates, does it really do service to the monitoring process that the required 150 minutes of physical education/health have to be documented over a two-week period? Why not allow local districts to have some more flexibility? Why not over a semester or full year? Some of the interpretive decisions seem to restrict program improvement and not serve the best needs of the local students.

I would also suggest that the review process take into account performance on past monitoring reviews. Therefore, the certification status of a district could have a longer review, possibly even seven years, if a district annually indicates compliance with State regulations. This process would provide an incentive for districts to do better. It would also reward those districts that had succeeded in the past.

Overall, I feel that the monitoring process is well-intentioned and needed for giving the residents of New Jersey an indication of the performance of their school districts, as well as an accounting for their tax dollars. It is a process that all members of the educational community, from legislators through staffs, students, and parents, should be working together to improve.

Probably at this stage, my greatest disappointment with the process is that although changes were made in several areas, and many are now at the discussion level, the commitment to compliance still overweighs the commitment towards educational improvement. This should always be our prime goal.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: The only question I have, Doctor-- You alluded to rewards for those districts that have done well, and what have you, in your statement. Having been through this, what would you consider to be a reward for a district which has done well in the past? What kind of a reward?

DR. DASPRO: Possibly a reward in terms of monitoring could be to be put into a longer period between visits. Another one could also be -- and this is one I think has been legislatively proposed to be eliminated-- In terms of performance on test scores, there was an income-- It increased State aid that was given back. I know, for example, our district, worked very hard with that -- I think it was two years ago -- accomplished the goals, and then we found out later that the money was no longer forthcoming because it had been cut out of the State aid.

Unfortunately, those are the types of things that, when you marshal your forces and you work toward it, and then if the carrot is not there, it is difficult to go back and say, "Let's work towards it again."

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Doctor.

Dr. Warren Benedetto, Superintendent, Hammonton School District. Dr. Benedetto?

D R.    W A R R E N    B E N E D E T T O: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Good afternoon.

DR. BENEDETTO: Good afternoon, that's right. It's after lunch.

I am Warren Benedetto, and I am Superintendent of Schools in Hammonton, New Jersey. I would like to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today and to share my views about the monitoring process. Due to my varied background, I believe I have a unique perspective concerning monitoring.

Prior to becoming superintendent of schools, I was employed in the Camden County Superintendent's office for 14 years, and was involved with the monitoring process from its inception. In addition to serving on the monitoring team, I was a member of a State audit team that evaluated the monitors as they monitored districts throughout the entire State.

During this time, I also served on the Hammonton Board of Education, and was President of the Board for six years. I have been Superintendent of Schools in Hammonton for the past three years and completed the second round of monitoring this past April -- April of 1989.

I would like to begin by sharing with you some of my experiences when I served on the monitoring team. One of the areas that I was responsible for was school facilities. Some of the schools I visited were in excellent condition. However, many schools were in deplorable shape. Let me share with you some of the conditions that I observed while monitoring facilities in the local school districts:

- \* Inadequate storage facilities with boxes, tables, desks, and chairs in corridors and blocking exits.
- \* Toilet facilities with inoperable spigots, flushing devices, and ventilation.
- \* Many fire extinguishers on discharge or missing entirely.
- \* Substandard facilities where students were being taught in hallways, stairwells, basements, and closets.
- \* Windowless schools with inoperable air conditioning systems.
- \* Flammable and combustible materials stored in boiler rooms.
- \* Leaking roofs with water seeping into the electrical system.
- \* Poor housekeeping, and on and on.

As a result of the monitoring visits, these conditions were improved or eliminated entirely, thereby providing a safer and more desirable learning environment.

Now, let's look at the other side of the coin: What were my experiences as a local district superintendent going through the monitoring process? I'm happy to say that the entire experience, from the pre-monitoring visit to the exit

conference, was very positive. Several months prior to the actual monitoring visit, the county staff came to our district and spent approximately one-and-a-half hours at an in-service meeting. This was very helpful in alleviating any fears that our teaching staff had concerning the monitoring. It provided an opportunity to introduce the county office staff and to focus on the critical areas that would be reviewed.

During the monitoring visit itself, the monitoring team spent six days in our district. The members of the team were very competent and conducted themselves in a professional manner at all times.

Although preparing for monitoring was time-consuming, it did not detract from our educational program in any way whatsoever. Rather, it forced us to take the time to evaluate our curriculum, programs, procedures, and facilities to ascertain that they were in compliance with law and code.

Let me take a few minutes now to share some general impressions concerning the monitoring process and offer suggestions for improvement.

I believe that monitoring should help schools improve the quality of education received by the students. However, in its present form, monitoring seems to be primarily a tool for determining compliance with statute and administrative code. Consequently, it is possible for a district to be certified and still not provide a high-quality educational program.

In order to be more effective, the monitoring team should be permitted to make evaluative judgments and to offer commendations and suggestions for improvement. In my opinion, not permitting the visiting team to offer suggestions is a serious flaw and reduces the procedure to a very sterile process.

I also think that the current approach to monitoring conveys a feeling of distrust between the State and the local districts. Although most county staff members attempt to alleviate this feeling, it seems to be inherent in the process.

Personally, I don't see much educational value to ascertaining that every "i" is dotted and every "t" is crossed. In some respects, it is a waste of the high caliber talent that exists in the county office. I believe that their talents and abilities would be put to much better use if they were permitted to evaluate educational programs and offer suggestions for making them better.

In my opinion, monitoring should not be a pass/fail system. There should be an opportunity for districts to correct the problems identified during the process. In fact, I feel that districts should be permitted to remedy minor problems during the course of the monitoring visit itself.

I think it is also important to build flexibility into the process. During this second round of monitoring, the State seems to be obsessed with consistency. I do not believe that consistency is synonymous with sameness. Let me give you an analogy to illustrate my point: If a school district has several elementary schools and the principal in each building is responsible for evaluating staff, it is possible -- and I would say most likely -- that their evaluations could be very different even though they are using the same evaluation instrument. In fact, several principals observing the same teacher, teaching the same lesson, using the same evaluation form, could arrive at very different evaluations.

It would be futile to attempt to get all of the principals to arrive at the same conclusions. Similarly, it is just as futile for the State to attempt to have 21 different monitoring teams do everything the same way in order to be consistent. I believe that consideration should be given to extending the monitoring cycle to seven or possibly ten years, with a progress report submitted after five years. The process could include a self-study component in which the district would evaluate itself and forward a report to the county office. The county staff would monitor the improvement activities identified by the district.



I would also suggest adding another element, or component, regarding board of education/administrative practices. I believe that this is necessary to assure that boards of education function as policy-making bodies and do not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the school district. In addition, the monitoring team could determine if the administration was providing the necessary leadership so that the students could receive a thorough and efficient education, to which they are entitled.

I would like to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to be here today. It is my hope that the testimony that you have heard will enable you to develop a monitoring process that will ensure a high quality education for all the students in the State of New Jersey. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor. Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, thank you, Assemblyman Naples. In your most recent statement there with regard to an additional element, I guess--

DR. BENEDETTO: Yes?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: --regarding the board of education, is it your feeling, as well as perhaps a number of those within your association, that boards of education, and particularly their memberships, involve themselves too much in the administrative implementation of a school district?

DR. BENEDETTO: Just let me say, sir, that in my present district in the position I now have, we do not have that difficulty. In my experience working in the county superintendent's office, as I observed many school districts in the counties throughout the State, I found that districts, particularly smaller districts (bad tape causes machine malfunction at this point; small portions missing on this and two following pages) chief school administrator and very little other administrative help, that board members often got

involved in day-to-day management decisions, and did not limit their decisions throughout the policy-making. My experience from the county level has been that this does occur frequently.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Let me just follow that up: When the board organizes, does the board not subscribe to the Code of Ethics of the New Jersey School Board Association?

DR. BENEDETTO: I believe that part of that code states that they will see that districts are well run, but will not run the districts. In some school districts, board members are involved in administrative decisions (indiscernible).

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: In what way do you think, as an element of the process, this will prevent that from occurring? Incidentally, I agree with you. Having served on a board of education, I know full well that some board members think that that is their-- I mean, they are excellent volunteers, but some, let's say, lose their way, so to speak, and think that that automatically gives them entree into running the schools.

In what way would an (indiscernible) like this be helpful?

DR. BENEDETTO: I think, first of all, if the certification of a district can possibly hinge on that element -- okay? -- I think that maybe it would be better to prevent some of that from occurring. I think if board members were asked if what they were doing was inappropriate, and not only that it was inappropriate, but that it could affect whether or not the district would be certified-- And should a district not be certified as a result of that, I think a message would be sent to the electorate, and perhaps people like this would not be reelected to the board of education.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you.

DR. BENEDETTO: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, do you have a prepared statement? If you do not have one, could you mail one to my office, or to the Committee aide?

DR. BENEDETTO: I have a prepared statement with me.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me say this to you: I made a note while you were talking-- Yours was a very excellent statement, by the way. Regarding the checks and balances element, I think it works both ways. For a government to work effectively in a federalist system, you have to have a legislative body, and while a board of education is not exactly the same as a legislative body in city government, in terms of its relationship to, let's say, the office of mayor, similar to the relationship of the Legislature to the Office of the Governor, Congress to the President, it is still an elected body. In order for it to work effectively, I think any educational system--

I remember speaking in New Brunswick about three years ago. I said, "If a lot of you out there had exercised checks and balances, some of these eight or ten districts, which are ripe for takeover, might not -- might not, okay? -- be in this position -- if some of you had done your jobs better." I think you have to have it both ways. I don't believe in interference, but I do believe that if the administration goes wrong, you have to have a legislator there to balance things out. That is the way our founding fathers wanted it.

DR. BENEDETTO: I would agree. That is why I would suggest that that additional component not only be a board of education -- not only monitor board of education practices, but also administrative practices, so that there is that check and balance in existence.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: A very good statement.

DR. BENEDETTO: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Doctor.

DR. BENEDETTO: Thank you for having me.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: R. Donald Wendorf, Chief School Administrator, Stone Harbor School District.

R. DONALD WENDORF: First, I would like to thank Mr. Naples and his Committee for allowing me the opportunity to express some comments I have in reference to monitoring. As a matter of fact, if I could get you to pass a piece of paper among yourselves and sign it, it would probably serve as an element, too, for community involvement for my monitoring. If you don't sign the paper then it won't count; my word will not suffice enough to count it. It must be documented in writing. I am not trying to be facetious; I am just trying to point out to what extent the same thing can be accomplished, but many times we have to put an additional amount of time in, in order to document it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: We're laughing because we agree with you.

MR. WENDORF: I also want to say at the beginning here that my comments really do not reflect on any individual personality or department. I am trying to be as completely objective about this as possible.

I am a chief school administrator of a small school district. You might say I represent the minute schools in New Jersey. I have a K-8 situation with presently 78 students enrolled. I have 10 full-time staff members, three part-time staff members, which totals what Mr. McNally said this morning in terms of the number of administrators he has in his district.

The monitoring process for Mr. McNally's district and my district is the same process. He has the same elements; he has the same requirements; and he also has the same amount of paperwork that has to be generated in order to accomplish this feat. You can see when I am looking at the furnace one minute, principal the next minute, disciplinarian, and when I have staff members doing multiple assignments, then you put in this monitoring process-- I am not saying accountability process; I have nothing against that. It is the matter of time it takes away from what I could be doing in the matter of productivity for kids.

Random, as they mentioned from Millville this morning, is not a problem with me, because everything gets covered when I am monitored. My product in my district is children. I fail to see how the monitoring process measures my product. It measures the process of my district, but not necessarily my product, with the exception of if you want to use minimum basic skills as some element of evaluation. I choose not to, because I don't want minimum; I want the maximum.

The report card came out and it did put some criteria in there in terms of test scores and whether kids were in school or not, and what your mobility factor was. Incidentally, mine was 28%. I kind of said in jest, in many cases, that I could get an "A" on my report card and an "F" in monitoring.

The other thing I have a problem with, in terms of many things that were said today, is, it seems that when you ask people, "What is the good thing about monitoring?" they say to you that it makes a district do things that they weren't doing, or hadn't done before. I say it is a sad commentary, because I think a good administrator and a good district should want to do the very best for their kids without the fact that you have somebody looking over you who is going to pass judgment on you, about whether you are good or bad.

I would like to say something about before monitoring, and then I will get into the monitoring elements themselves. My perception of the county office prior to monitoring was that of a place where you could go if you needed help, especially if you were a small school district and you felt comfortable that those people were there to help you. They used to call them "helping teachers," if you recall.

Today, the role of the county office is one of compliance. So many times you might feel hesitant to ask about certain kinds of areas which may lead to a red flag, so to speak, of things that may, when we go in -- "Well, maybe this

is a problem; they are having trouble," and so forth. I am not saying that is true in my county; I am saying that as a general statement. But nevertheless, it goes back to what several other people said about this idea of a trusting relationship.

We talk about monitoring districts to see if they are in compliance, but the bottom line is pass/fail. It is not a question of, "Okay, we have reached this point, and we don't think you are doing it, you know, exactly the way we think it should be done. Maybe you should move in this direction." You say, "Okay, I'll go ahead and do that." It's too late, because, see, you've already got that big "F" on you.

These are some of the activities that my district has enjoyed in the past: The Olympics of the Mind, Odyssey of the Mind, Think Days, Student Council activities, book fairs, the Books and Beyond Program, the Ceramic Program, the Clubs Program, the American Legion Essay Contest, Future Problem Solving, Kids Only Newsletter, MS Readathon, Stock Market Game, Young Astronauts. They are not in my district today, unfortunately, because, you see, we still only have so much time in the day. So I would say that about 80% of those activities we dropped because we have to make sure that our paperwork is in order for compliance.

Incidentally, I didn't have a teachers' union either until we finished the first round of monitoring. Now I have a teachers' union.

My standardized test scores were in the low to middle 90 percentiles on the average class. Today, they are in a low to middle 80 percentiles. I am not happy about that.

Add to the monitoring process AIDS education, family life education, drug free enforcement zone, drug community alliance act, child abuse codes, liaison with DYFS, a teachers' union, and values clarifications over the horizon. You say to yourself, "How do you accomplish all of these things when you are still dealing with a five-and-a-quarter-hour school day?" and then document all of these activities.

Incidentally, when we talk about monitoring, we talk about five-year monitoring, seven-year monitoring, ten-year monitoring. To me, monitoring is an annual event. If you are going into the first element, you have educational objectives. That is an annual event as far as monitoring goes. If you get out of Element 7 and get into the minimum basic skills, and so forth, those test scores are done when you fill out your application at the end of the year for Chapter I, and then compensatory education. So you still have scores being reported there, and so forth. If you get into facilities every five years, you have to put in a master facility plan.

So, consequently, I think throughout the year you would be in monitoring all the time, so it is not a question of whether it comes every five years. I think what comes every five years, seven years, or ten years -- whatever the situation may turn out to be -- really comes to, "Do you get the big "F" at that time?"

Thrown into a small school district, you also have asbestos management plans, Worker Right to Know, lead in the water, tests for radon, and so forth, so you have all of these other outside agencies coming in. They are also predicated on your time.

I look at the educational literature and I see that we provide for creativity. We should respect individual differences. We need to build self-esteem; praise students each day; catch them doing good. Somebody mentioned that today. I heard that from a Fitzwater conference I attended, in terms of evaluating teachers: Go in, try to catch them doing good. Time on pass-- We talk about how important that is, and then the age-old concept of "Innocent until proven guilty." These are all things I do not see in the monitoring process, unfortunately. I don't see anything to build self-esteem.

I don't see anything that really comes out and says, "The district is really doing an excellent, outstanding job."

I have not gone through the second round of monitoring, but I know for a fact that for the first round, they were not allowed to tell you anything you were doing good. So we are working in an adversarial atmosphere, when we should be working in an atmosphere of cooperation; everybody working together for the betterment of the kids. I tend to think that sometimes we lose sight of what we consider our product to be.

Just to call up one example, and I quote this: "If the monitoring team reviews documentation prior to entrance conference, that review becomes part of the official monitoring process. These results cannot be shared with the district prior to the exit conference." That is taken right out of the monitoring manual. That does not give me any air of confidence.

Let me go to the elements: In Element 1, we talk about 1.1, where we have to approve our educational plan every five years. These are going to be the goals of the district. It says in there very clearly that you can have any goals you want, as long as they are the State goals. They use the word "consistent," but when you look at the State goals, what else is left? So you go through the process of adopting these goals every five years. There is no creativity there, certainly.

Element 1.2: This is one of my pet peeves. My district has to write three educational objectives every single year. My teachers have minimally done two educational objectives so far, many of them three. Take 10 teachers, three educational objectives, and you know what you've got. Do you know that the City of Newark has to write three educational objectives? The City of Cherry Hill has to write three educational objectives? And Stone Harbor, with 78 kids, has to write three -- the same amount of paperwork. Every time you write one of those educational objectives, do you know what else? We can't put them into the effective domain, where you probably end up finding most of your needs assessment coming from. They have to be someplace where you can measure them.



I do not have a test analysis on board; therefore, I am not going to try to develop some type of test, and then try to come up with a sample that is going to validate and make that test reliable. So you go back to standardized test scores. And every year you go through, you say: "Oh, look, 33% of the kids didn't do well here." And I say: "Yeah, but that is only two kids." But we write an educational objective, which takes time out of my curriculum; time during which I could be doing things which I feel are more important. This goes back to the concept that we have to treat everybody equal.

Well, let's face it, folks, we are not equal. I don't want to be equal with other people. I want to be better than other people, and I don't want to be held back from being better than other people by doing things which I consider to be nonproductive.

We talk about Element 4.3. This one is an interesting one. You now have to have an improvement plan for those kids who are going to drop out after they complete eighth grade. You know, they graduate from my school in eighth grade, and I guess we are supposed to run after them in the summer and come up with some type of a plan for them. And they say: "Well, yeah. Then what you have to do is write a plan for potential dropout after eighth grade." Somehow I can't see common sense to a lot of this.

We have to have a five-year maintenance plan. Dr. Benedetto, a minute ago, talked about the deplorable conditions of some of the schools he had been in as a monitor. In my district, I have a building that was built in 1957, and I will put it up against buildings which were built five years ago, in terms of maintenance. My building is maintained to the highest level. If we need something, we do it, and I don't have to sit down and try to make up some type of five-year plan to do it. If it needs to be done, we try to get it done. But for the monitoring process, I have to go back and, you know, kind of

make up things, and say: "Okay, you know, we'll paint here," or, "We'll do this," or what have you. Evaluate me on my building. Walk in my building and take a look at it. If it is not up to what you think are good standards, then tell me about it and we will fix it. Why should I have to come up with all this paperwork?

Long-range facility plan: We have to do that. It is due again in July. What I think is interesting about that is, I have to go through and put in all of this information about my town and my community and demographics, and then I sit here and play with these cohorts of vital methods and percentages of survival methods and so forth, and I am dealing with 6/10 and 7/10 of an increase of a kid. When I get to the back pages -- which are really the meat of the whole report for most districts -- they only want me to report what is going to be put on capital outlay. All of mine is taken through my current expenses budget; therefore, I have nothing in those reports, but I still have to go through the process.

We talk about percentages; we talk about staff percentages. This was brought up today also, about the fact that a teacher could be absent six days. Do you know what happens when you have 10 teachers and you are dealing with them and you have to work with this percentage? If you have a teacher who, unfortunately, has a death in the family, and then maybe some illness with his or her children, or what have you-- One or two teachers going over that six days can throw you right out of the ball park. It doesn't even make sense. This was brought out to people before and they say: "Yes, it is a problem. We realize that." End of case!

One element that I did feel was good was Element 6.7, because I have never been one who has been bashful about telling my Board of Education what I thought was the right way to go. That comes to hiring as well. But I know that in many cases, there is nepotism in some school districts, and I think

by putting 6.7 in there requiring that the chief school administrator at least make the recommendation-- The Board does not have to accept it, but I think that at least it puts back the steering of the ship, so to speak, at least somewhat in the hands of the administrator. He has to have the intestinal fortitude not to give in to the political pressure in many cases, but at least the opportunity is there for him to have some selection. I think you should carry it one step further, and I think it should be for all employees, not just those who are certified.

The Basic Skills Improvement Plan: I operate a basic skills improvement plan for students in my district who are at the 60th percentile on the standardized test. I do that because I can get those kids in my program and we try to do something for them. That is 10% above the halfway point, or average of 50%. But for me to sit down and do the basic skills form that has to be filled out at the end of the school year to apply for Chapter I in comp ed-- I don't want the comp ed aid and I don't want the Chapter I aid. I just want you to leave me alone. It costs me at least twice as much as I get to do the paperwork, but I still have no problem with somebody walking into my building, and saying: "What are you doing for the kids in need of basic skills?" I say: "Here are the schedules. There they are. This is what they are doing," and so forth. I can save that time that I am spending with this paperwork, and put it into preparing lessons for kids.

We go into the Element 8, in terms of student scores. This year, I have four kids in third grade. Well, we only have to have one or two of those kids slip and, you know, that is going to throw me below that 75 percentile. If you get into the sixth grade it is interesting. In that case up there, I have nine kids. What is interesting there is that the MLPs for the tests I use is the 61 percentile in math. Some genius has come up with this cross-reference. I look at the tests I have

given, and I've got a 23 MLP in reading at one particular grade level, and I look over at another grade level, and in math I've got a 61 percentile. It just doesn't match out. But what really hurts, as I've said, is that if I have two kids mess up in that grade, then we are down the tubes in terms of monitoring.

In Element 10 we talk about accurate and timely submission of reports. My question is: I think when the State starts monitoring their accurate and timely submission of reports -- and let's take a look at the budget fiasco every year, and not just this particular year in terms of getting figures-- It is a joke with me. Okay, this is the first set of figures; we still have four more to go before we get there. Then we have to submit a budget on January 15, when we know the figure is going to change. So, what do we do? We go through that exercise, taking up more time, knowing that we are going to have to go back and do it all over again. And every year when it comes time to do the budget, they say to me that I have to justify my increases and decreases in terms of 20%. And every year, I say: "Hey, how about having a minimum, you know, like \$2000, \$3000?" Do you know I sit and write -- and, excuse it, but I don't know any other way to say it -- asinine paragraphs about why something went up \$100. It's ridiculous!

Now, this is true in my case because I am a small district. But we have to make some provisions for people in small districts, if they are doing the job with the kids. We should not tie their hands and say: "Okay, you can't do these kinds of programs which are good for kids, because you have to get this paperwork in order."

We get into Element 10.3 with the budget. It is an interesting concept to note that when we deal with the budget figure, everybody seems to talk about how much money wealthy districts have. Well, I am a very wealthy district. I have probably maybe close to \$30 million behind each kid, and I work

with a 6.2 cap on my budget. So it doesn't do me a bit of good having all that wealth. I send my kids to Middle Township, and their cap is over 20%. So, somewhere along the line, when you talk about budgeting in Element 10.3, we need to talk about at least an equalization factor in terms of the same, or at least a minimum percent increase in budgets, regardless of the wealth of the district.

I am what they call a "no aid district," incidentally. Somebody said to me today that they never heard of such a thing. I said, "Well, I have always been a no aid district." I get no aid in terms of equalization aid from the State, and I don't ever get what I am supposed to get for transportation aid.

I thank you very much for listening to me this afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No questions, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor--

MR. WENDORF: Mister.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Mister, excuse me.

MR. WENDORF: I haven't had time. I've been doing the monitoring. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay. If you had to rate monitoring in this State on a scale from zero to 100, in terms of the extent to which it claims it meets its mission -- and you have heard a lot of people say it has been very helpful -- how would you rate it in terms of how monitoring has helped your district?

MR. WENDORF: In my particular situation, I would say that monitoring on that scale-- I would give it a three.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Do you mean a .3 or a 3.0?

MR. WENDORF: I would give it a 3.0. I would say, you know, that in some cases it has been of benefit. I don't think there is anything that has not been beneficial, but it hasn't

been beneficial enough for my outcomes -- again, going back to what I said, that my product is my kids -- or are my kids.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right. Now, this is interesting, because when you say point three 100s, you are talking about practically zero monitoring at that point.

MR. WENDORF: No, no, I said three. You said zero -- one to ten. I said "three."

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, you said three. Oh, I was talking one to 100. Excuse me, okay. So it is about 30%, you are saying?

MR. WENDORF: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay, I misunderstood you. Pardon me.

Let me just say, I liked your testimony very much. I could sort of identify with something you said. I was principal of a special needs facility with about 79 kids in it, and we battled to make the 80% one month. We had an attendance improvement plan. Three kids wound up in the hoosegow for six days and, by the way, they didn't have any incidental absence to protect them, and, boom, we had about 100% for the last two weeks of the month in order to make it, and it was impossible. So when you work off that low base, I can identify with what you are talking about.

Thank you very much.

MR. WENDORF: Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let's come back up to Dr. John Polomano, if he has come in from Audubon. (no response) No, he has not. All right. Pam Garwood, NJEA. Pam?

P A M E L A G A R W O O D: Good afternoon. My name is Pamela Garwood. I am a teacher in Bridgeton, New Jersey, located in Cumberland County. I am President of the County Teachers Association, and am on the NJEA Executive Committee in Trenton.

I am here this afternoon to try to make you understand how the process affects the classroom, the teacher, and the student, and I am very nervous.

I am going to take you through the monitoring process and how it has affected my district, because the concerns we have in my local district are the same concerns I have discussed with teachers throughout the State, and throughout my county.

Our monitoring process started in 1988, in April, to prepare for being monitored this year, April 30 through May 14. It started with curriculum. Curriculum that had been written many times over the 15 years that I taught in the district, had to be rewritten. Teachers were told they were to volunteer. We later, through negotiations, got them released time or paid time.

There were two types of curriculum committees. There were grade level committees, where teachers attended because they had to attend. The work was done, and they had no input. Then there were the committees where the teachers were left on their own. They wrote the curriculum, and were reprimanded for not doing it the way the administrator or the advisor thought it should be done. Some teachers even received written reprimands if they did not attend meetings because of other activities or school functions. I have an attachment for you which shows just a few of those letters, which were even filed in teachers' individual folders.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Excuse me. Meetings after contract hours, or before contract hours?

MS. GARWOOD: After and during. For example, one is from a coach -- a wrestling coach -- and he could not attend a meeting because he had a team with a meet. He was reprimanded in writing, and it was placed in his file.

In-service days: The first in-service day we had in 1988 dealt with the horror stories of monitoring from other

districts which successfully got through the process. Then we had in-service days to rewrite curriculum. We had in-service days to memorize and study terms, for example, of how it should be. The abbreviated phrases or terms used, for example, G&T, gifted and talented; DCP, District Counseling Panel. We had administrators sit and read this to us on an in-service day.

Another in-service day was used to study a monitoring quiz, coached by an administrator or a supervisor, and that I have included in Attachment "C." Each element of monitoring is listed, and there are specific questions that you should know the answers to: Do you know your four district objectives? What was your involvement in the action plan? Can you name three ways in which our district shares information with the community? That piece is ended with: "Beware of airing your grievances, displeasures, personal hang-ups at this time. While we do not ask you to be untruthful, it is unwise to dredge up complaints that need to be addressed internally."

I, myself, and my colleagues, would rather spend our in-service days learning something that we can take back to the classroom, or I would rather spend the day in the classroom with my students.

Then we move into affirmative action. Well, this was mentioned in our district in the year 1978-79. Never heard it again until 1988. Never really heard it again until the fall of 1989, when we were told that: "All the libraries in the district, all the materials, have to be monitored. Everything you use in your classroom has to be monitored and filled out on the four-page form; every ditto book, every filmstrip, anything you have bought, collected, or made -- in my case over the last 15 years, any library book, any book you have brought from home, any record you use. The librarians have been given 22 release days this year to do this. This has caused problems, because the librarians feel so much pressure on them, that when their substitute has been taken away from them, administrators



have made the decision that they should fill out their forms instead of service children. We have taken care of that through the grievance procedure. The librarians have now been told that they have four years to complete this task. The classrooms have been told that they have two years to complete with no release time suggested.

What is happening now is that teachers are taking home their libraries, or are giving books away to their students, because they do not have the time to fill out the paperwork necessary to maintain a library in their classroom, and the supplemental materials they once used they are taking home. They are only keeping those that come with the curriculum, because that has been monitored through the district committee.

We have asked, why a four-page form? Can't we make up a one-page form, or even a half a page that can be attached to each piece of material? No one seems to have the exact answer for us, or can give us a true picture of what is required.

Next, test results, which has been addressed many times today. The pressure on the teachers is astronomical, especially in the third grade and sixth grade. Teaching the test: Our district frowns on it, but if we have a school that has failed math last year or the year before, the pressures is on the teacher to do the best he can, without teaching the test, but just teaching the best he can.

The morale: The teaching morale is down. No regard for the wonders you have done in that classroom all year with individual students and their personalities. Just, what are your test scores going to be like? What were your test scores last year? And, we want them higher this year.

They don't take into consideration what if you, this year, had the low class? What if you had the lowest reading groups? Your students may make growth, but it is not the amount of growth that the State wants. The pressure on students-- Pacing is a new word we heard two years ago.

Teaching specific areas of each subject at a certain time each year was introduced, with no regard as to whether the student has mastered the skill. Just make sure they are exposed to it; make sure you cover it before the test; if you have time, maybe you can go back and make sure they master it. What happens to the students who need three or four extra days on this skill? They need to be pulled out one by one -- one on one with the teacher.

We asked: "Are the test scores being used correctly? Are you taking into account the economic areas that these schools are situated in? How about comparing growth from year to year?" If I have a student and I have had him for 10 months, and he makes 10 months' growth, then that is what I expect from him. If he makes 12, 15, or 16 months' growth, that's wonderful, but you can't ask him to grow two years, if when he came into school he was below grade level.

Student behavior for the process has gotten much worse. Suspension-- That is not heard of, unless it is murder, rape, or violent assault. One school raves about the fact that last year at this time they had 70 suspensions and this year they only had four. There are more students in in-school suspension. Behavior problems remain in the classroom, disrupting the learning process.

Faculty meetings, once a time for give and take between administrators and supervisors, are now dedicated to the monitoring process; asking us to stay past the negotiated release time, asking us to do research and report back on monitoring at the next faculty meeting.

The overall effects of preparing for the monitoring process-- Teachers -- poor staff morale. You have teachers who are being cut because of financial -- or budget situations in the district. In our district, 3% of our \$19 million budget is paid for by taxpayers. The rest comes from the State. But we have the \$200 light bulbs we need to pass monitoring,

although we will not have the related arts teams we need next year to service all of the elementary students.

Increased paperwork: They ask us to write lesson plans weekly. That's fine; you need a guide to see where you're going. But now they want us to jot in our curriculum guides, to jot in our teachers' guides, to carry our curriculum guides with us. Attendance that was kept the same way by some teachers for 20 years, lesson plans that were written the same way for 20 years, grades that were kept the same way, have all asked to be changed.

Increased stress: We are asked to teach 150 minutes of physical education and health. We have teachers who worry about the rain. "How am I going to fulfill my requirement? When am I going to let my kids just go out and let off steam from reading for two hours in the morning? The students have increased stress. I have never had as many students as in the last five years who have had stomach problems from the pressure put on them from home, the community, the administration, and from their teachers to pass tests. The pacing that has been brought into our district does affect the learning process.

I have discussed the monitoring system with my administrators and my supervisors, and we all feel that monitoring should insist on building a better school district, not destroy one. The State asks for specifics, but does not give us the time period to correct, making a district feel defeated before it begins. For example, my district facilities-- If we had to open one more classroom, there is not a place in Bridgeton to do it. But yet, where are we going to get the money to build new facilities, or to even add on? Most staff feel that this year their goal is to pass monitoring, not to educate our students. We all felt that education was what I, as a teacher -- what I possessed inside of me, what knowledge I knew; passing that on to the students in my classroom by whatever means I had to use. This year it is not so. You must follow the rules, the guidelines.

We feel that too much time has been taken away from our students for monitoring. The newest thing that has happened in our district, is that our class trips have now been canceled because the monitors have asked that the teachers be on-site. We have a music trip, \$750 that will be lost. We have a law class. The requirement is to visit the Leesburg State Prison. They have canceled that. They may not be able to meet the requirement. We have one class that has studied a whole unit on the Pennsylvania Dutch all year. There is one affair that happens during this time, and they had to cancel their trip after a whole year of studying and waiting for the big finale at the end.

I say, aren't class trips part of the educational process? I thought that was what monitoring was doing -- monitoring the educational process.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Pamela, I want to ask you a question. You are a very courageous young lady. Let me ask you several questions: Were there teachers who shared your point of view -- your points of view, because you made a lot -- teachers who were fearful of coming here and saying the same things you have said?

MS. GARWOOD: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me ask you this: You are here today. Were you given time off to attend this hearing, or did you have to take a personal day?

MS. GARWOOD: No, I got a professional day. My superintendent-- I am very involved in better working conditions for teachers -- happier teachers make happier students -- and my superintendent of schools has been very supportive.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That is very nice of him, yes. Yours was a very fine presentation. We heard a fair number of teacher points of view. Next week in New Brunswick, when we

will be beginning the hearing a little later-- I will be starting a little later to accommodate teachers, and I expect to hear a lot more. Thanks a lot.

I almost said, "Is there any other member of the Committee?" I am a Committee of one now. Okay, thanks a lot, Pam. I appreciate it.

Donald T. Falato, Superintendent/Principal, Magnolia Public Schools in Camden County. Mr. Falato?

D O N A L D T. F A L A T O: Good afternoon, and thank you. I have to admit that the gentleman from Stone Harbor stole some of my thunder. I am an elementary school principal, in a one-school district, where I am superintendent, principal, athletic director, affirmative action officer, PR representative, building and project coordinator, drug free liaison person, in charge of discipline, curriculum coordinator, testing coordinator, co-coordinator of the Special Services Department, head of the Basic Skills Department, in charge of the Enrichment Program, and coordinate the English As a Second Language. In my spare time, I meet with myself on monitoring projects.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You've got a 14-month contract per year, right?

MR. FALATO: Yes. I found it interesting for larger districts to go back and delegate their responsibilities for different aspects of the monitoring process. I do have one administrative assistant who is in charge of our Special Services Department. She did Element 7 along with me, and our business administrator, of course, did Elements 5 and 10. I delegated the other seven to myself, and spent approximately 14 months getting prepared for the monitoring process.

During that period of time, there is no question but that what I was not able to do was work with the students and the staff in the building. I was employed approximately 18 months before the monitoring process began, so what I was able

to accomplish during that period of time was greatly limited because of the time spent on monitoring.

I speak for those elementary districts, or single-school districts, which have problems with local boards of education which come with their own agendas. Those agendas oftentimes are in no way similar to the needs of the educational districts that the administrative people are employed to service.

We presented a program, or had a program done by the New Jersey School Boards Association, and I thought it would be an excellent idea to give them an idea -- the Board members an idea of what their responsibilities were to be. The one thing I can tell you that they came out of the process with -- the New Jersey School Boards -- was that the business administrator and myself should be evaluated annually, and that that should be a written report presented to us. Any constructive criticisms that were offered to them by School Boards were basically ignored, because they told the School Boards' representative that he or she was not aware of what the local needs were.

I wanted to relate one specific incident that occurred to give you some idea of some of the frustration I encountered during monitoring. However, I would like to say that the county office was extremely supportive and extremely cooperative during that period of time. One of the things that they were not able to control and be of assistance with, was in the area of affirmative action.

The day I was due -- which was approximately a month before our monitoring visit -- to turn in the bulk of my monitoring information to the county office, I attended a meeting in the morning on affirmative action. My intent for being there was to make sure there wasn't any last minute thing that I might have overlooked. At that meeting, a list of districts' names was read out which had to have a desegregation

plan, and I go back to my opening statement that I am a one-school district. I was informed at that meeting at 10:00 in the morning that my district was under an obligation to have a desegregation plan.

When I raised the issue with the representatives who were from the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity that my district was a one-school district, and therefore it would be very difficult to have a desegregation plan, I was told they couldn't comment; that they had no knowledge, simply that I was required to have a desegregation plan. At the break that morning, I contacted the county superintendent who was hosting that particular meeting. He now knows me by name, because I grabbed him physically in the hallway, and said, "I need help with this. There is something radically wrong." Fortunately, he came to some assistance, and promised me that before the day was over I would get some kind of an answer as to whether we needed to proceed or not.

The people from the OEEO indicated that I had to have a desegregation plan, and therefore would have to remain for part two of the morning's meeting, which I did. I left there, returned to my district, and was told that a call would be forthcoming to me. I indicated that I would be at the county superintendent's office that afternoon, and would remain there until that phone call came so I would know exactly what my status was.

At approximately 2:00 that afternoon after I arrived at the county office, a phone call came into the county monitor for the affirmative action. The comment that was passed along was to tell Mr. Markowitz that their district is not under an obligation to have a desegregation plan. Both the county monitor and I asked who Mr. Markowitz was, and we still aren't sure. We have now found out that Mr. Markowitz works in another district in Camden County, whose district was obligated to have a desegregation plan, and that the fact that my

district's name appeared on this list dated back to when Carl Marburger was still Commissioner of Education in New Jersey.

Consequently, it doesn't leave me with a feeling of a great deal of trust on the part of the State. I do appreciate the work that my county office did in assisting me with that, which shows you in my county office and the level of competency that I believe exists there.

But that just gives you some small idea of the kind of problem that a single district such as mine would deal with. I believe I speak for many of the districts in Camden County which are also elementary, single-school districts such as mine.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this this afternoon. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. The reason I was smiling is because I have heard so many horror stories down here, but yet, told in such a graceful way, by comparison to the way they were told at the other hearings.

MR. FALATO: I'm sure that if you spoke to the other -- to my county superintendent, he would tell you that my blood pressure that day was up quite a bit.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I don't know how you didn't blow your stack.

MR. FALATO: I did. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thanks very much. Donald Lucas, Superintendent, Mount Holly.

By the way, let me just say this: When I meet with Dr. McCarroll, these things are going to be pointed out to him and, knowing Dr. McCarroll, who is a fair guy, I think these are the things that he would want to know. Some of these things he, himself, would want to stop.

It is going to be very interesting when everybody gets together and some recommendations come out of these things. I am ducking the reporters who are asking me what I am going to do with all of this testimony like all hell. Mr. Lucas?



D O N A L D   L U C A S: Good afternoon. I am Donald Lucas, Superintendent of the Mount Holly School System, and I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to express my feelings about our present monitoring process.

My involvement with monitoring began in October of 1984 in Delran Township for Cycle I, and again in March of 1989 for Cycle II. A change in positions in June of 1989 put me in line with monitoring again in October of '89 in another district. I must say that the last year has been a test of my internal fortitude, but as you can see I am alive and well.

My experiences with monitoring have been positive overall. The standards set in monitoring had an impact on district governance and the renewed interest in supporting curriculum planning and revision, as well as compliance to the maintenance and facilities code, which were not a priority in the past.

Programs were disaffected and disrupted. Gifted and talented, and special education need constant local effort, which monitoring supports. As each district is unique in its structure, so is its interpretation of mandated programs. The present monitoring process has helped to put some order into what needs attention and requires the initiative for local districts to develop and maintain their own internal monitoring process.

I am sure by now you have numerous accounts of monitoring horror stories and a plea to end this monstrous task which takes time, staff, and money, which none of us have enough of.

The fear of failure can generate great emotion. I contend that monitoring is what you make of it. It can be positive for staff and community and can be the impetus for communication and program improvement. It seems very obvious to me that there has been, and will continue to be, a commitment by the State to be heavily involved in the education

of New Jersey children. If this political posture remains the same, then accountability to the State, in some form, is required by T&E. Monitoring in its present format has evolved in its second cycle with revisions which reflect more defined standards and provisions for district and county office training. Pre-monitoring of facilities and the use of internal monitoring checklists have been helpful in the delivering of a more consistent and equitable process.

The burden a local district experiences centers around its effort to stay in compliance with the monitoring elements between cycles. The need for the county office to provide technical assistance and interpret changes in code are essential to reduce the fear and promote monitoring as a positive experience.

I must commend the Burlington County monitoring team for its consistently fair, and professional approach to a very difficult task over the past six years. Some thoughts I would like you to consider today:

Expand the pre-monitoring checklist to all elements.

Equitably address the unique characteristics of individual school districts.

Clearly define the role of local boards of education in relationship to the condition of schools and the support of mandated programs.

The monitoring manual should clearly state the documentation needed for each element, to save a tree or two.

Any changes in monitoring requirements during a cycle should be implemented on a yearly basis, giving districts time to comply.

In closing, I would like to focus on one theme, which is maintaining consistent leadership at the State level. A monitoring process is in place. Granted, it has its faults, but the core of its intent is sound. Give us the opportunity to experience consistency and an ongoing process of evaluation, not change for the sake of change. All too often, I hear the

terms, "Here we go again," or, "Don't get excited, this, too, shall pass," in reference to initiatives mandated by change in State leadership.

You have the opportunity to sort through a myriad of opinions about how the State should monitor local accountability. I hope you will see through the extreme opposition and let our present process evolve, through revision, to meet the needs of the more practical criticisms which it has evoked.

I thank you again for this opportunity, and I wish you well in your deliberations.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. I almost asked my colleagues if they had any questions. I forgot again. You covered it all. Thank you very, very much.

K. Kiki Konstantinos, Superintendent, Lenape Regional High School District. Did I pronounce your name correctly?

K. K I K I K O N S T A N T I N O S: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Oh, wow!

MR. KONSTANTINOS: It seems redundant, but I am K. Kiki Konstantinos, Superintendent of the Lenape Regional High School District, which is a 9-12 regional high school district in Burlington County, which includes the Lenape, Shawnee, and Cherokee High Schools. I am here speaking on behalf of myself.

I will attempt to speak in broad strokes about my feelings as to what may be done about monitoring. I support a monitoring system that evaluates the educational effort to ensure the public will be afforded an understandable accountability of educational outcomes.

Before we revise and/or design a particular monitoring system, the Department of Education, the educational community, and representative citizens' groups should develop a philosophy to determine the role of the State and the role of the local district.

Local control presently is a myth. It has virtually disappeared with the plethora of mandated procedures established by Title 18A N.J.A.C., Title 6 and Case Law; coupled with the bureaucratic development and interpretation of rules and regulations. The monitoring system flows from the Constitution. The common interpretation and concept of thorough and efficient should be reexamined and clearly defined.

Contrary to the thinking of most people, the Constitution does not guarantee to the school children of the State a "thorough and efficient" education. The Constitution states in Article VIII, Section IV. 1:

"The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all the children in the State between the ages of five and 18 years." The words "thorough and efficient" describe the word "system," which is all inclusive of the parts that make up a school system. It would be improbable to expect anyone to define a "thorough" education. It would be equally as difficult to define an "efficient" education.

The words were used in the Constitution to describe as simply as possible the system of public schools established to provide "institutions" for the education of the youth of the State.

After the establishment of a realistic State philosophy ascribing specific roles and functions to the State and local district, there should be an effort to develop the desired educational goals and outcomes. The State should focus upon developing expected outcomes for pupils and schools, not upon mandating more input processes.

The monitoring process should emphasize the assessment of qualitative outcomes, rather than quantitative compliance to the various mandates. The monitoring process should devolve upon criteria based upon present indicators coupled with indicators which measure qualitative performances.

A self-evaluation process should be developed permitting the school community to rate themselves against the criteria. The school's self-evaluation should be reviewed by an outside monitoring group as designed for the purpose.

The monitoring process should occur every 10 years with stipulated intermittent progress reports. Schools which do not comport at a designated level will be "assisted" and assessed more frequently.

The ultimate goal of any monitoring procedure should effectively assist schools to reach a designated level of performance within the parameters of a defined thorough and efficient system of education.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. I am going to listen, and not say much, for the rest of the afternoon, not because I don't have a lot of questions, but if I begin to ask a lot of questions, a lot of you might be here until beyond the supper hour. I want to make sure that everybody has a chance to come forward and testify.

I just said a moment ago, jokingly, that I was ducking reporters. Let me just say this: I see this thing coming at me, and the other Committee members, from so many directions, and it is beginning to take shape. What I meant was I wasn't seeking out reporters, because these hearings haven't really taken any definite shape yet. But I can see that they represent a tremendous challenge, and when they do take shape I think everybody, working in tandem, can bring about some reform in this State. I thank you and everyone else who has testified.

MR. KONSTANTINOS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Carl I. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Burlington City School District.

C A R L I. J O H N S O N: Those are my props. (pointing)  
I will get to them in a minute.

Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Carl Johnson. I am the Assistant Superintendent for the City of Burlington Public Schools. For those of you unfamiliar with Burlington, we are a small urban district on the banks of the Delaware River with a pupil enrollment of approximately 1500. These 1500 pupils are located in three small neighborhood elementary schools with enrollments ranging from about 120 to 280, which educate the children through grade four; a middle school, grades 5-8; and a comprehensive high school in which approximately half the enrollment comes from a neighboring district -- a K-8 district, Edgewater Park -- on a sending/receiving relationship.

For the sake of accuracy -- and it was too late to edit this statement -- last night my Board of Education restructured our district. We went to a 7-12 high school; a 4-6 intermediate school; and a K-3 elementary setup, in an effort to try to maintain our programs at the high school in the face of declining enrollment; to free up some classroom space in the elementaries; and to deal with the potential 50-cent increase in the tax rate. As a result, we have eliminated 14 positions and reduced our budget by about a half a million dollars.

As a mature, developed, urban community, we face many of the problems found in urban centers throughout the State, albeit on a smaller scale. Our enrollment, particularly at the high school, is dropping dramatically, while costs are increasing and revenues are declining. Despite this situation, we believe we are providing a quality educational program designed to meet the particular needs of our community. Although we are proud of our accomplishments and the quality of our program, we did not pass monitoring in October 1989, because we were not in compliance with Elements 8.2, basic skills, and 7.3, Part B, special education -- records. It is because of this recent monitoring experience that my Board of Education has asked me to testify before you today.

We do not object to the fact that we are monitored by the State. The concept of accountability for all public bodies, be they the Legislature, the town council, or the Board of Education, is fundamental if we are to retain the public's trust. Therefore, if the State believes monitoring will ensure accountability, then let us be monitored. Also, we have no problem with the people who have the responsibility for monitoring us. While I cannot speak for the other counties, I can state that the Department of Education's staff in Burlington County was sincere, helpful, and did all that was possible in assisting us to prepare for their three-day visit. Since our concern is not with the concept of monitoring or with the people who do it, then what is our concern? The answer to that is twofold: process and content.

The monitoring process is based upon organizing reams of paper, which in monitoring jargon is referred to as providing "documentation." During monitoring, 10 elements are evaluated. Each element consists of two or more indicators for a total of 43 indicators. Each of the 43 indicators require varying degrees of documentation, some of which must be maintained at the district's central office and each building, thus requiring replication to produce even more "documentation." These two binders (holding them up) that I have with me today represent only the supplemental documentation for just one of the 43 indicators. This does not deal with all of the backup.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Which one? I am just curious, which indicator?

MR. JOHNSON: Indicator 3.1. This doesn't even take into consideration-- Of course, we have about 12 three-inch binders that contain our comprehensive curriculum, which are in our central office, and of course, are in every principal's office and in each classroom. While some of the indicators require less documentation, it is still a time-consuming, paper-gathering process.

Is all of this paper gathering necessary for the county office to determine whether or not you are doing your job? I contend it is not. The staff in the Burlington County Office is highly visible and makes a conscientious effort to get into the schools and districts and work closely with the administrative staff. The county staff is extremely knowledgeable as to which schools and districts have problems, and the nature of those problems. It seem to me that a better use of their talents would be to use the county staff as a resource in helping the districts solve their problems.

In most cases, the districts spend the majority of their time collecting "documentation" for indicators for which they and the county staff know there are no problems. Because the monitoring process requires a review of documentation covering at least one full school year prior to the visit, this results in a lot of time and energy spent collecting the necessary paperwork. This is valuable time and energy which could be put to more constructive use, particularly in districts with limited resources.

Our Superintendent, Dr. C. Joseph Martin, and I meet with our Board of Education at least twice a month to keep them informed of our progress and concerns. Furthermore, we are a relatively small community and our Board is well aware of any problems that may arise. The Board holds us and the rest of the staff accountable for providing a quality education. The community, in turn, holds the Board of Education accountable. Two more props (pointing) just to show you that each year we produce for the Board and the public a 75-page document which we call, "The State of the District Report." This covers, in detail, how we did with all of our goals and objectives, whether we met them, didn't meet them, where we did well, where we need to work harder; all of our test scores, every grade, every class, every school, for that year and the preceding four years. This, we feel, is a form of accountability.



In addition to that, we have available for the public a newsletter that goes out every six weeks. Every resident -- not parent; we're talking every resident in our community -- and our neighboring sending/receiving district, Edgewater Park--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You mail them out?

MR. JOHNSON: This is mailed directly to every resident in both communities. It is six pages. It is ironic. My secretary pulled one out for me. The front page cover says: "Monitoring Update -- We Didn't Make It, Folks." So, we let them know. Maybe this is not the case in every district, but I am confident that it doesn't require two years of gathering documentation in order for the county office staff to determine in which local districts accountability isn't working.

Now, to the content: Because we failed Element 8.2, basic skills, one would easily be lead to believe that we are not providing our children with the necessary instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics. Before making that judgment, allow me to share with you our test results for 1988-89, the year on which we were monitored. In ninth grade, 98.4% of our pupils passed the HSPT reading test; 87.3% passed the mathematics test; and 92.8% passed the writing test. In fairness, however, Element 8.2 deals only with the results for grades three and six, so let's take a look at those.

The State requires that at least 75% of the children score above the established standard for the test administered in each district. In Burlington, we administer the California Achievement Test -- CAT. In grade three, 96.1% of the children were above the State standard in reading; 97.1% above in writing; and 85.7% above in mathematics. In grade six, the percents above standard were: 77.5% in reading, 87.5% in writing, and 78.8% in mathematics.

I believe the results listed above clearly indicate that we are providing our children with the necessary instruction in the basic skills. The next question should be:

How did you fail Element 8.2, when all of your scores are above 75%? We failed because Element 8.2 specifies that the passing rates must be calculated individually for each school and, as stated earlier, our third grade children attend small, neighborhood schools. In our smallest school, the third grade consisted of 26 students in one class. Of that 26, a total of 18 scored above the standard in mathematics. However, that represents only 69.2%, not the required 75%. Here was a class in which more than two-thirds of the children scored above the national average in math, where 92% of them were above the State's standard in reading, and all of them -- 100% -- were above in writing, yet our entire district failed monitoring and is now in Level II because only 18 out of 26 children scored above the 45th percentile, instead of the required 20, a difference of two children. I contend that we are doing a great job with our children, but monitoring says we are not.

As an aside to this, what is unfortunate about it, is that really the district wasn't monitored; a teacher was monitored, that third grade teacher, who personally was crushed when this happened. She was the one, and everyone knew it. This was an outstanding teacher, by the way. She just felt very badly about it, and we are trying to deal with that.

I'm sure you are thinking that the rules were known and they are the same for everyone, so I shouldn't complain. I will complain, however, because I don't believe it is fair to apply them to such small populations. This year, we will be monitored again for Level II. In that same school, we now have only 20 pupils in third grade, which means that each pupil represents 5% of the class and 15 out of 20 must score at least at the 45th percentile for us to pass.

Statistically, we are at a distinct disadvantage because we choose to have the younger children attend school closer to their homes. Small pupil populations display variations in performance from year to year. Every teacher has

said at one time, "Wow, that was a great class this year; much better than last year's," or conversely, "Boy, do I have a tough group this year." For us, that great class, or not so great class, is used to judge our school and our entire district. This is further compounded by the fact that in Level II monitoring, the same grades as last year will be evaluated -- grades three, six, and nine -- which will be composed of an entirely different population of pupils than were monitored last year.

Also, even though we met the standards in all but that one subject in one class, we must meet the standards again in all of the other grades and subjects, even though we passed them last year. It is conceivable that we could pass in the area we missed last year, but fail in another subject or class because of the small size. With the small enrollments and fluctuating abilities, we could be in Level II for the next five years.

Should we be granted relief from meeting this requirement because of small class populations? No. If test performance is part of the accountability system, then it should be applicable to all schools and districts. In the review of test results, however, I wish to recommend a different approach that I believe would be equitable for all schools, including those with very small enrollments.

Administrative Code 6:8-3.4a states that pupil needs must be assessed, and that this assessment must be comprehensive in nature. This code was established because it is an accepted fact that no child should be judged solely on the basis of a single test given on one particular day. The Department of Education reenforces this concept relative to the State test in its publication, "High School Proficiency Test -- School District Guidelines: How to Interpret and Use Student Rosters and Individual Student Reports, 1989." In this publication, on page 5, it states the following:

"To properly identify students in need of remediation and to plan remedial programs for individual students or groups of students, additional assessment of student needs must be done. Decisions should be based on as much information as possible. HSPT results for individual students serve only as an indicator of which students should be targeted for further diagnosis."

The code also states that district and school needs must be assessed in order to determine the status of attainment of long- and short-range objectives. The Department of Education has consistently stated that the third and sixth grade test results are collected and reported each year, not to determine how each child is progressing, but to determine the effectiveness of the programs.

In light of the Department's positions stated above, I must question how one can judge the effectiveness of the mathematics program in grades K-4 at our Elias Boudinot School based upon the performance of 26 children on a single test given on one day in April. Any test analyst will tell you that one year's test data by itself is meaningless; two years' data are useless because one of the years could be an aberration; three years' data could indicate a trend; but four or more years' worth of data would be a more significant measure. I propose that a district's test results be examined over a specified period, such as four to six years, to determine program effectiveness. Furthermore, for schools with small grade level enrollments, such as less than 100 per grade, the district-wide results for each grade should be used for evaluating the district. I have presented in my paper for you, and I will not run through them, a lot of statistics which represent our third grade test results in that building and also throughout the district. I think if you look at them you will get a feel for how effective our program has been over a period of time, not just that one day in April that one year.

How effective is the mathematics program in the City of Burlington's schools, and at the Elias Boudinot School, in particular?

Over the past four years, an average of almost 85% of the district's third grade children have scored above the State standard in mathematics, with 1989 being the highest. At the Boudinot School, the four-year average has been approximately 80% above. For the past four years, an average of 69% of the district's third graders has scored above the national average.

In this year's group -- on which we were monitored -- almost 31% of the children in that classroom that failed were at the 90th percentile or above. Data for one or two years can be misinterpreted, but four years' worth of data clearly indicate that the programs throughout the district and at each school have been effective. We believe we are effectively meeting our long- and short-range objectives.

In closing, I wish to reenforce that we are not opposed to accountability, nor do we have any problem with the people doing the monitoring. Our concerns are with the amount of time, and paper, which must be devoted to meeting the requirements set by the State, and the unrealistic standards set for certain areas. Each year we must submit our test scores to the State. It is quite easy for them to identify districts where there appears to be either a decline in scores or lack of improvement. When that happens, experts from the State should come to the districts, not to police them, but to offer them assistance in trying to solve their problems. This approach could apply to many of the areas currently being monitored. The level of reporting that now exists is more than adequate for informing the State and county offices of our progress in meeting the many State mandates. I believe the resources of the Department of Education could be of greater value to the schools and children of this State if they were used to provide services and assistance, rather than spent trying to catch us doing something wrong.

On behalf of my superintendent and Board of Education, I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and share with you some of our concerns. I wish you well in your deliberations.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much. I think my own words are coming back to me. I have used the words "how" and "what" so many times in the last five weeks -- four weeks, excuse me. This is the forth session. I think we are beginning to come together on what we want now. People are going to ask us -- the Office of the Governor, myself, Senator Feldman -- how we are going to do it. Now comes the tough part, but at least we are making some progress with the help of people like you. Thank you very much.

Charles F. Valentine, Assistant Superintendent, Vineland Public Schools.

D R. C H A R L E S F. V A L E N T I N E: I am Dr. Charles Valentine, Vineland Public Schools. It is my pleasure to say good afternoon, and my professional appreciation is certainly extended to Assembly Education Chairperson Gerard Naples and his Assembly colleagues here today who have demonstrated, in my opinion, great wisdom in convening these hearings relative to the monitoring of New Jersey school districts.

This is my 34th year as an educator in New Jersey, and I have been with the T&E process since its inception, having attended the orientations provided by Dr. Fred Burke in 1976 and having been appointed Director of T&E and Supplemental Programs for the Vineland Public Schools in 1977.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dr. Valentine, excuse me. Please pardon the interruption. This is a rather-- I'm sure it is a fine statement, but it is rather long. Are you going to read it verbatim, or paraphrase it, I hope.

DR. VALENTINE: I am going to paraphrase it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I would appreciate it, because if not we won't get finished by a reasonable hour here.

DR. VALENTINE: Fine. I have had an opportunity--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Incidentally, the entire statement will be in the record -- okay? -- whether you read it or not.

DR. VALENTINE: Thank you, Chairman Naples. I have had an opportunity to be part of the process throughout its evolution and to the present the 10 elements and 43 indicators at many workshops.

The comments which I make today are my own observations and conclusions, and are not intended to represent those of my district or any organization of which I am a member. However, I do believe the essence of what I convey would be echoed by many of my colleagues -- even those who have far less direct, firsthand experience with the nuts and bolts of the process.

First, let me echo the admonition of Chairman Naples. There is a fear, yes, an intense fear, of adverse monitoring reports. And districts are, and have been, spending the vast majority of their school days on compliance to the exclusion of education. It is not unusual for us in Vineland in our staff meetings to point out, with tongue in cheek, that a matter of education has actually made our agenda -- perhaps five or ten minutes given to an educational issue during a meeting of two or three hours devoted to policies, procedures, mandates, reports, edicts, rules, elements, indicators, and budgets. Students and program related matters are rarely the focus of the agenda, and, if mentioned at all, are usually relegated to last place if time remains. Truly, we are spending all of our time demonstrating that we are complying with the 10 elements.

This task is so enormous, that in a district such as mine in Cumberland County where, typically, resources are the least of the 21 counties, the few of us who, before monitoring,

did curriculum and instruction, are now almost totally involved in compliance activities on a seemingly perpetual basis. Checkup reports and applications with deadlines are endless. Look at the thickness of the monitoring manual. Imagine the compliance hours. Truly, we have reached the point where we have no time to do anything right.

A few facts shall serve to underscore the scope of the invasion which monitoring has had on the local district. In our particular case, in order to prepare for the monitoring visits in the first cycle, we delivered 11 cartons of backup data to the county office for a desk audit prior to the on-site visit. In a recent workshop, a district which had passed monitoring provided plans of one large room -- the monitoring room, if you will -- devoted to housing the backup information required to prove compliance. Now, where, without unlimited resources, might any district find sufficient personnel to maintain such overhead without an all-out intervention of direct services to students? In such an atmosphere, where would even the best educator find time to customize programs for students?

Has monitoring helped the students? This question really remains unanswered. While the opinions are as varied as those asked, my contention is that it has not. The criticisms of education, if anything, have become far more persistent in recent years than in 1977. We hear that our students do not compete well with those of other nations, and our business and industrial leaders repeatedly tell us that the graduates are not adequately prepared to read, write, do math, or even display the required work ethic for the employment environment.

The process simply hasn't worked, and I contend that it can't. Harry Houdini himself couldn't predict what any monitor might expect to support the requirements in this monitoring book. Then the process itself is flawed. Usually, there is a one-year build-up for the monitors, followed by a four-year "sigh of relief" after the inspection.



It seems to me that many of the items monitored should be ongoing. Logic would suggest that the moment the Department of Education detects a deficiency, that would be the time to get the district on track. Why wait until the whole train is derailed? Maintenance in life is perpetual. The monitoring system promulgates sporadic "fixing," instead of ongoing improvement.

I was going to briefly address each element and indicator. However, in deference to time and my written report, I am simply going to indicate that as we look at the 10 elements and indicators, the vast majority of those are annually monitored, if you will, and probably should be.

In summary, it is my candid opinion that the monitoring process, in its present form, should be terminated at once, with amnesty for those districts which may be in a Level II or Level III mode. If there is ever any valid reason to renew this policing type of action in the future, I believe it should:

- 1) Be ongoing, more like the original process instituted by Dr. Burke.

- 2) Eliminate any semblance of pass/fail as it now exists.

- 3) Accent, in a positive manner, all areas which the district is completing satisfactorily.

- 4) Assist the district with any areas found to be in need of improvement.

- 5) Place the obligation for providing workable, affordable suggestions upon the Department of Education, not upon the local district.

- 6) Eliminate the "Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts." This might be replaced with a checklist of practical requirements to be posted in each school so that monitoring by the board, by the local administration, staff, pupils, and public could really be daily and ongoing.

7) Base progress on improvement. A district which improves should be recognized. For example, under the present process one wealthy district may have needs in one indicator. A poor district may have needs in 10 or more indicators. The same credit should be awarded the latter district for improving in one indicator as is awarded the former. Why should the most in need have to wait for applause, while it is improving at the same rate as the wealthiest among us?

8) Abolish "takeover." This process has always been offensive and probably not necessary.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Did you say "abolish -- repeal the takeover law"?

DR. VALENTINE: I said, "Abolish takeover." That is my feeling, Gerry.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I am going to comment at the end on that one. All right, go ahead.

DR. VALENTINE: At most, the Department of Education should be authorized to prioritize which need a "district in great need" should address first.

9) Recognize, at the outset, that "consistency" is not a consideration because more than 600 districts exist in New Jersey. To be "consistent" builds in disparity. Currently, indicators -- examples: testing, special education, dropouts, substandard classrooms, grade nine HSPT, desegregation plan, etc. -- apply to some districts, but not to all districts.

Finally, abolish testing of students, or at least remove testing from any monitoring process.

At this time, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts based on my experience since the inauguration of this process. May I also offer to serve as a volunteer, in any capacity you wish, to assist in correcting this runaway, bureaucratic white elephant. We cannot afford, literally, even another month of manpower to this noneducational enterprise.

This Committee has done a wonderful service by conducting these hearings. I'm sure much valuable, useful information has been gathered. It is my hope that the vigor of this Committee and that of the new administration shall chart a new, enlightened course for education in New Jersey, in a timely fashion. As a fact, I am so impressed with what you've done already, I am certain that the future for the children of our State is already rising bright and full of hope -- as it should be.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Doctor, thank you. Let me just say this: This is not a hearing on the school takeover law. The very fine Vice Chairperson of this Committee, as well as Chairperson of the Higher Education Committee, Bill Pascrell, of Passaic County -- Assemblyman Pascrell of Passaic County -- will address the issue of school takeover. He might want to hear your views. So, if you don't have his number and you would like to talk to the Assemblyman, you can call my office tomorrow in Trenton. Any operator who doesn't know who I am should be fired, so just call Mercer County Directory Assistance, and we will give you the Assemblyman's number. I'm sure he would be happy to hear your views as to why.

DR. VALENTINE: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dr. Harold R. Kurtz, Superintendent, Clayton School District. Dr. Kurtz?

D R. H A R O L D R. K U R T Z: Good afternoon. I am a real optimist. When I wrote this, I wrote, "Good morning." I was also optimistic about the--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I was afraid you would be saying, "Good evening," there for a while, but--

DR. KURTZ: My name is Harold Kurtz. I am Superintendent of Schools for Clayton Borough. I am past President of the Gloucester County Administrators' Roundtable, and presently serve as the county representative to the NJASA State Committee on Monitoring.

Let me state at the outset that the concept of monitoring is one that is generally supported by most of my colleagues. We believe there must be a mechanism to create accountability for what we do as we carry out our special mission. Whereas the extraordinary amount of preparation required to get ready for monitoring is often viewed as a nuisance, the fact remains that some system of documentation is required, and I won't define documentation. I think that was done quite well before.

There are, however, some valid concerns with how monitoring is perceived by the general public, and what the impact of a school district being placed in Level II really means. It appears that many of the districts that are failing Level I monitoring do so for a variety of reasons. It becomes pretty evident that many of the indicators failed are often relatively minor and are easily correctable within a short period of time.

These failures are not usually systemic, but are of an oversight nature. Some examples are: misobservations of some staff members, failure to request a change of use for a classroom, etc. However, due to the present rules of monitoring, there is no built-in value system for major versus minor problems. Results are still the same. A district fails and goes on to Level II monitoring, and is publicly embarrassed.

The damage this causes within a community, and the morale factor on staff are serious consequences. Nowhere in the monitoring report are there commendations on the many positive things that are routinely occurring in all New Jersey schools. Imagine the frustration of working in a district that has performed consistently well on a day-to-day basis, having just failed monitoring due to minor infractions in the indicator process. It seems to me, and to many of my colleagues with whom I have spoken, that the process is flawed by its rigidity.

What I would propose for your consideration are the following:

As it is the underlying purpose of monitoring to ensure that our schools are providing a quality instructional program under a thorough and efficient philosophy, it should, therefore, be extolled that all districts meet the standards set. However, the concept of failing simply denotes a negative approach. Therefore, I believe a period of corrective action should be permitted before a district enters an official Level II status. In this way, districts could modify or adjust procedures to meet the requirements of an indicator which were not met, without the stigma of having been reported to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education as failing.

Furthermore, there should be more flexibility in the indicators developed. It is illogical to assume that the failure of a board office to submit reports in a timely fashion has as much impact on the educational process as the inability of a district to provide an effective basic skills program. Yet, under present guidelines, this is how we are rated. I believe all elements and their indicators should be reviewed and a value system developed.

As I stated in my opening remarks, the concept of monitoring is a good one. It forces us to take the time to review where we are and where we have to go. Unfortunately, the outrageous amount of time and effort expended, especially in the smaller districts, is not providing us with the kind of positive feedback we need. It often serves to give us a sense of relief when it is over, if we pass, and a sense of intense dejection if we fail.

In balance, I believe the process is needed and can prove invaluable in allowing us to address the deficiencies as noted. However, the negativity we reap is directly proportionate to the seeds of insecurity sown by an extremely rigid and somewhat dehumanized process. A system developed to

emphasize the positives and correct the negatives, sprinkled with a commitment to improvement, will greatly enhance the monitoring process, and will dispel the adversarial nature that has emerged. There is not one of us -- school administrators, board members, State Department officials, or legislators -- who does not want the same thing for all of our schools and the children we serve -- a quality education. Monitoring can help and should support this effort. We need, and must modify the process to help to achieve our common goal.

It is my basic observation today that the fact that we are having this opportunity to share our views with the Committee is most useful, and I feel very, very encouraged that some real positive things will emerge.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you for your contribution to the very fine ongoing dialogue. Thank you.

Next will be Barbara Shellenberger, Supervisor of Curriculum for the Pitman School District.

B A R B A R A R. S H E L L E N B E R G E R: Good afternoon. I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the members of the Committee on the important issue of monitoring. These meetings can be an important first step toward strengthening the monitoring process.

I am Barbara R. Shellenberger, Supervisor of Curriculum for the Pitman Public Schools. The monitoring process is most meaningful to me because our school district was just monitored. On the other hand, being a Board of Education member and a parent of a former special education student, has provided me another perspective in which to realistically view the strengths and weaknesses of monitoring. The comments I make today are based on my experiences in fulfilling the responsibilities that accompany these multiple roles.

The foundation underpinning monitoring is built on a philosophy about the benefits of evaluation. For any evaluation process to be accepted, it must first be viewed as necessary for improvement and growth, rather than an effort of deception, inspection, and an "I gotcha" mentality. The concept of monitoring is solid and it does provide an accountability system for evaluating the delivery of a thorough and efficient education. Having an outside unbiased opinion is important in any growth process.

Some anxiety is inherent in any evaluation. This anxiety needs to be recognized and rationally discussed. All districts have heard the war stories that accompany monitoring. These negative stories seem to grow as they are passed from school to school. These stories only heighten the anxiety and negativism of districts facing impending monitoring. The monitoring process experienced by Pitman does not support these stories. The district attempted to portray the monitoring process as, "Important, to be taken seriously, but not to be viewed as life threatening." Attempts were made to disseminate this message throughout our schools.

I coordinated Pitman's monitoring efforts, and I cannot cite an example from our district's experience where professionalism and the "spirit" of the process were questionable. Contrary to the war stories, Pitman's experience was not based on, "We are out to fail you," but one of correction and improvement. The district received as much technical assistance as requested. This is a key factor in preparing for monitoring. Not asking for fear of disclosure, is a crucial error. Clarification of pertinent documentation and answers to specific questions are available. Districts need to be encouraged to utilize this service. Not doing so, is really quite foolish.

The Pitman district did spend extra time preparing for monitoring. Educators are extremely busy reacting to the daily

demands of operating a school district and time for reflection is too often limited, in spite of all the good intentions. Preparing for monitoring does require time to plan, review, and revise.

These processes require detailed assessment, and when done well the district benefits. Due to multiple demands on time and money, a gradual slippage can easily occur and schools find themselves in a noncompliance state. Since district certification hinges on monitoring results, it becomes meaningful to pass. The importance of the outcome forces districts to "tune up" their educational system to code standards. Without the in-depth monitoring process, careful review can easily get lost in the daily operation of a school system. Periodically, a thorough "checkup" is valuable. Monitoring legitimizes the use of time for this critical task.

Speaking from the view of a Board member, the accountability issue is most important. The monitoring process provides a means for assessing the delivery of a thorough and efficient education. A secondary benefit may be that for some districts, monitoring may provide a degree of liability protection, because the review system targets weak areas, and if left to continue along unchanged, they could lead to possible litigation problems.

Boards are faced with making difficult decisions balancing cost-effectiveness and education efficiency. Board members often have personal agendas regarding budget expenditures. Monitoring can provide a strong rationale and support for boards to allocate funds to make the necessary changes. On a realistic note, the monitoring process can provide a means for educators to get what they need.

In contrast to the positive points noted above, there are several weaknesses to the system. Some of these weak points are inherent in most education systems involving people. Personality conflicts and established working



relationships have the potential to confuse the monitoring process. Built-in safeguards, such as the County Superintendents' Review Panel, are necessary to maintain consistency in the process. When a lack of trust exists between the monitors and local administrators, the necessary pre-monitoring dialogue is affected and the stage is set for potential failure. The spread of war stories and negative press coverage also promote anxiety. These events foster a negative image to the monitoring. Efforts to combat these negative influences are important if we are to improve the process.

Another area of concern is that all 43 indicators carry the same weight, even though some indicators such as program and curriculum appear to be more significant in the delivery of a thorough and efficient education. I am not going to go into the examples, because people have already stated them, such as with a small school having a small third grade, there would be difficulties. Just with a few children testing below the MLP, the whole school could fail monitoring. That was one area. Sub-categories of indicators also need review. Noncompliance of special education records due to dates and timelines, does not seem as crucial as compared to the delivery of services to children. A corrective action plan may be more appropriate than an unacceptable indicator leading to monitoring failure.

On a relevant note, perhaps a mechanism for acknowledging a district's strength areas also needs to be built into the monitoring procedures. The present system only accounts for acceptable levels or weaknesses. Perhaps strong points should be recognized, too.

The monitoring system has many more strengths than weaknesses. Granted, precious time is consumed in preparing the documentation needed for monitoring, but this varies depending on the state of affairs of each district. Districts

following code will expend less time than those falling short. Time expended in reflection and revision is not wasted time, but can be beneficial for revitalizing a school district. Addressing the concerns noted during these public meetings will strengthen the system.

In closing, the monitoring process provides constructive criticism that should lead to positive change. The final chapter should enhance our most important commodity -- the children. And after all, isn't this what education is all about?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Ms. Shellenberger. I appreciate it very much. You know, I wrote a note while you were talking, and it was Glassboro -- theme thereof corrective action. I think that theme has sort of permeated this particular session, with the component testifiers, if you will, stressing that more than at any of the other three sites. Thank you very, very much. I appreciate it.

I really wish I could comment and discourse with all of you, but because of the time constraints, I can't.

Ronald Bonner, Chief School Administrator, Avalon School District. Mr. Bonner?

R O N A L D B O N N E R: Thank you. I know you have had a long day and a long series of hearings--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You bet.

MR. BONNER: --so I will apply the principle of kiss--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thanks a lot.

MR. BONNER: --and I wish the monitoring process would apply the same principle.

I represent the Avalon School District. I am the Chief School Administrator. The community just north of us is Stone Harbor. I have 13 full-time professional staff members, two part-time, and I am the single administrator. I have 12 kindergarten students who attend the Stone Harbor School, only so he can have students to count. I have 95 students in a 1-8

school, and I send 40 students to Middle Township for their high school on a sending/receiving relationship.

I wholeheartedly agree with the comments of Mr. Wendorf about the impact of monitoring on the small school district. Historically, our students have achieved well. We prepare a fine product. As I take a look over the past five years I have been in the Avalon district, I say, "How did monitoring improve our product?" In our district, I cannot pinpoint the difference.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You cannot?

MR. BONNER: Cannot pinpoint the difference. I would like to think, and wholeheartedly believe, that with the professional staff we have, the same type of activities would be taking place without monitoring.

In my school district, the change I have seen is one that has taken the school from an informal climate to a formal climate. With one third grade teacher, prior monitoring-- An assessment might be sitting over a cup of coffee, saying, "How are the third grade students achieving in social studies?" She might respond, "I have 12 students this year. They are all getting As and Bs. They are doing fabulous, but I am a little short in some supplemental materials in this area." I would say, "Okay, go down to the library and see what they have. Then order what you need, and we will take care of it." Within 20 or 30 minutes, you have done an assessment; you have pinpointed a problem; you have addressed the problem.

My fear -- my perception now is that I better document that. So you call a staff meeting; you have an agenda; you have minutes that show that you have discussed the problem; and then you develop some type of documentation to show that you solved the problem.

Why? The problem has been addressed. I am just creating more paperwork. You have heard that theme over and over again.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: A couple of times.

MR. BONNER: A couple of times. I do not want to dwell on it.

I think when you take a look at the process of monitoring in a small school district you cannot look at it in isolation. As the Chief School Administrator, I have other responsibilities -- transportation coordinator, food service manager, grounds and maintenance. You know, the list can go on. Many times when you are short a person, you may wind up being the cook, or as my friend from Stone Harbor, who was short a custodian-- One day I called, and they said, "He is mopping the floor in the auditorium." That is what we do.

Now, that is not a case for consolidation or regionalization, because small schools provide a fine choice for people in the State of New Jersey. We put out an excellent product.

I would tend to believe that small schools are scrutinized in the monitoring process greater than your larger school systems. Every one of my teachers will be visited by a member of the monitoring team. Every one of my child study team records -- all three of them -- will be monitored. One may have sufficient deficiencies which would find us unacceptable in there. My child study team-- I purchase services from another district, so I don't have a hell of a lot of control over what they do. I don't have another district I can get services from, so I have to rely on their competencies, and maybe my child study team records should have been evaluated when that district was done. I think it is unfair in that regard. The level of scrutiny may be different.

We have already talked about educational objectives, the three per year that we have to do, and how on a small staff you can really burn them out quick, because every year some of them are working, or most of them are working on an objective.

The process may have been beneficial to some districts. I will not deny that. But I think we need a system that quickly identifies districts that are in need, where the resources of the State can be used to benefit that district, not to determine whether it would be in compliance. You know, the report card -- and we had a lot of discussion last year -- could possibly be a vehicle to do that. We have test scores; we have costs per student; we have attendance figures; we have indicators there that say a district may be in trouble. Let's go in and see if we can assist them.

Leave the districts that are doing a fine job alone, and do the job. I feel I could be a more effective administrator if I didn't have all of the regulations of monitoring and the other jobs I have to do in the district of Avalon.

I would like to thank you for listening to my comments. I said I would apply kiss, and I have. I just think we must keep in mind that 30% or 40% of the districts in New Jersey are under 500 students, and probably have one or two administrators. We should be taking a look at the system and how it impacts on them.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much, Mr. Bonner.

Ms. Nancy Park, President, New Jersey Association of School Business Officials.

N A N C Y P A R K: Good afternoon. My script says "Good morning," too, but we will adjust it. I am Nancy Park, President of the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary for the Eastern Camden County Regional School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Association pertaining to the monitoring process. Our membership has been directly impacted by monitoring and there are mixed feelings about the value of the process.

Monitoring by the New Jersey Department of Education staff was originally envisioned as developing an equation which read "Monitoring = Educational Improvement." Unfortunately, the outcome was far from that. Today, monitoring is viewed more as the equation "Monitoring = Compliance."

If there is a singular criticism of the entire process, it is that an inordinate amount of time is devoted to the compliance tasks required in the process and not enough attention is given to the needs of the district which requires outside assistance from county and State personnel. At one time, county staff members were available to provide assistance to solving a myriad of problems and answering a host of questions which arose at the local level. Today, the county staff is spread so thin with the "checklists" of monitoring, that they are unable to respond to the needs of the districts as well as they have in the past.

This problem could be alleviated by perhaps several ways; by the consideration of expanding the time span of the monitoring process to a 10-year cycle as proposed by the Governor, and developing a process of identification which would highlight those districts which are experiencing serious difficulties. This would then permit the county staff to work on an extended basis with the districts which require the most assistance and allow those districts performing at or above level to bypass the burdensome and sometimes trivial paper-producing process.

An alternative to consider would be the utilization of the Middle States evaluation process at year five of the period. Many high school districts currently undergo the Middle States evaluation and Middle States has an elementary component which could prove to be beneficial to districts. County staff could utilize the results of this evaluation as another indicator of district progress in the attainment of its educational goals.

We also question the need to identify districts as having failed the monitoring process. If we view evaluation as a process which should produce improvement, then it would seem justified to drop the checklist process and develop an anecdotal system which would not only identify areas of weakness, but provide some sense of direction for the districts to consider in their efforts to improve the educational process for the students. Coupled with this suggestion is the thought that there should be more of an attempt to highlight the positive aspects of a district operation. This again is an important aspect of the evaluation process.

Within the scope of the business function there are two areas of concern which I would like to bring to your attention: One is a subject which I am sure you have addressed before -- although I really haven't heard much today -- that of the need to improve the facilities plan review process. We support the legislation to allow for plan review by municipal code officials, and we hope that the Committee will use its influence in attempting to improve the process in the State Department of Education. The use of code officials will alleviate part of the problem, but the entire system needs an overhauling.

The second issue is the financial reporting process contained in the monitoring regulations. It is contrary to Title 18A in many aspects and attempts by our Association to seek review of the procedures have not met with success.

Finally, the monitoring process was developed with good intentions and in some part has accomplished its goals. We do not feel that the process should be abandoned, but reviewed with all of the parties involved and changes made which would eliminate the punitive nature and allow the positive in education to spill over to those districts which are not meeting the total needs of the students of New Jersey.

Thank you for your kind attention and the opportunity to express our concerns.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Nancy. Thanks very much.

Dr. James F. Black, Superintendent, Bordentown Regional School District. Jim, how are you? It has been a while since I have seen you.

D R. J A M E S F. B L A C K: How are you?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

DR. BLACK: This will be short. My script does say, "Good afternoon."

But before I get into the script, I would like to make another comment. I feel somewhat confused about being here this afternoon. I thought this was a hearing about State monitoring and its process. So far, I have heard little mention about the process from the State itself, but more the internal workings of school districts which are not necessarily State dependent. I also thought this was a hearing for the State Assembly Education Committee. I must admit I am rather disappointed that only one member of that Committee is here. I hope that this does not indicate the interest of the Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Let me just say right now, out of respect to my colleagues, that inasmuch as they all have other committee assignments and will be conducting hearings of their own in terms of their own committees, I evolved a de facto subcommittee system. For example, Assemblyman Pascrell from Paterson was not required to come down here. Assemblyman Rocco made it. On the other hand, at Teaneck-- Assemblyman Rocco couldn't go up there; Assemblyman Pascrell made that one.

Another reason, Jim, why I did it this way, was because of the fact that at the first hearings two people went-- Two Assemblymen -- I and Assemblyman Moran -- conducted the hearing, and we were there until about 4:15. So, with five people asking questions all day, we would be here for quite a while. So I did that for two reasons: One, to spare wear and tear on the Committee members; and two, to keep the hearings within a reasonable time frame.



DR. BLACK: Thank you. The third consideration that I would like to bring before you before I read my statement is, I have heard a lot of concerns relative to administrators in small districts, and I recognize those, formerly being an administrator in a small district. One of the things the Education Committee may want to take a look at is regionalization.

Now to my prepared statement: Good afternoon. I am James Black, Superintendent of Schools in the Bordentown Regional School District, in Burlington County. I have been a school superintendent in New Jersey since July 1974 and have participated in every form of monitoring that has existed. I have also just successfully completed the second cycle of monitoring with full certification and no corrective action plan required.

The current monitoring process will give the State and the local communities the best picture of compliance -- and that is what we are talking about, compliance monitoring; the things that are monitored are the things that we have to do -- of any of the preceding models. Education is a State responsibility, and monitoring serves the need for accountability, which is welcomed. Monitoring also provides feedback to the boards of education and respective communities relative to the status of their schools far better than any other vehicle -- especially something called a "report card."

At this time, I would also like to note how impressed I have been with the dedication and professionalism of the Burlington County Superintendent and his staff. I believe their willingness to assist and interest in improving the educational process are exemplary.

While I think the current monitoring system is the best yet, I do not think it is without fault. One of the current problems in implementation is still consistency from county to county. This will always be a problem with this type

of compliance monitoring because of its enormity and the number of individuals involved. I am pleased to note, however, that this problem is recognized and is continually worked on by the State Department under Dr. McCarroll.

The process of monitoring should be to:

1) Foster improvement in the educational process statewide.

2) Serve as a facilitating process between the State Department and local districts for the achievement of common goals.

3) Be a vehicle through which the local community is informed regarding the status of its school district, both strengths and weaknesses. The current model does not indicate enough strengths.

In order to accomplish these goals, a shift is necessary from the mandated compliance monitoring to more of a diagnostic, goal-driven process. This would set up the procedures in a customized fashion within each school district, providing for the individual district to set priorities which would be agreed upon by the State. This type of monitoring would work toward meeting the needs, thereby improving the educational process within each district.

If compliance monitoring is still necessary, it should be administered on an as-needed basis for districts in need, not the current shotgun method.

I urge that the vehicle for this change be the State Department of Education and code revision, not more legislation. The Legislature is not the appropriate vehicle for change. You must understand that legislation tends to complicate the process and lead to more bureaucracy and layers of compliance, not less. If the interest of the Committee and Assembly as a whole is the improvement of education, I strongly recommend that you spend your time in what is your responsibility, and that is funding. The Bordentown Regional

School District is currently scheduled to lose \$1.2 million from what the courts and the legislators themselves stated it should receive in order to provide a thorough and efficient education. The amount to be received is \$500,000 less in Fiscal Year 1991 than this year. This is from a budget of only \$12 million.

That's what really can make a difference in the education of our students, and that's what is truly the Legislature's responsibility.

In summary, the Legislature wanted compliance monitoring established, and you now have the best process to do just that since its inception. What the school districts are asked to do through monitoring is already mandated through laws you passed, or code, or just basic good education. I recommend changes to that process to make it more responsible to the needs of the local districts. The vehicle for this change must be the Department of Education and the State Board of Education, not the Legislature. Your job is to ensure adequate funding of education even as you, the Legislature, defined it. If you do as good a job in that responsibility as the Department of Education has done in monitoring, maybe we truly can provide a thorough and efficient education for the children of New Jersey.

Thank you for this opportunity to bring these thoughts and concerns to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Jimmy, let me just say this: You may not have been here at the beginning. I indicated that some of our recommendations would take the form of legislation, on the grounds that-- I don't necessarily agree that we shouldn't be involved, because sometimes better legislation is necessary to repeal or modify bad legislation. Secondly, through the elected representatives of the State making recommendations to the Commissioner in terms of what we perceive to be based upon what our district superintendents have told us, modifications

in regulations, those same modifications, if brought to fruition, could make for better education.

So, it is not going to be done in a vacuum. I will admit that you might have a few cockamamy bills dropped in the hopper; that is very possible. No one can control that. But in terms of anything that comes from this Committee, or Senator Feldman's Committee, I can assure you it will be responsible, based upon the testimony which the superintendents themselves asked for this past October in Atlantic City at the Legislative Update. Where did we meet -- the Tropicana? -- well, wherever we met -- Convention Hall.

But, that's it. Thank you very much.

DR. BLACK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Dr. Barbara Bole Williams, President, New Jersey Association of School Psychologists, Audubon Public Schools. Are you taking Dr. Smallwood's place?

D R. B A R B A R A B O L E W I L L I A M S: Yes, I am.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: How are you? How is she? (no response)

DR. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. As Assemblyman Naples stated, my name is Barbara Williams. I am the President of the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists. I represent the Executive Board here today in offering you some comments and our views, particularly and most specifically as monitoring impacts special education.

The New Jersey Association of School Psychologists -- NJASP -- represents over 700 school psychologists in New Jersey, many of whom play an integral role and feel the significant impact of the monitoring process within their local public school districts. The school psychologist, as a member of the Child Study Team and often as the administrator of special education services, is a significant contributor to the district's performance on monitoring Indicator 7.3 -- Special Education.

In general, the monitoring system, as it presently exists, has a negative impact on school psychologists. The emphasis of the criteria examined in Indicator 7.3 is on the administrative aspects of special education, e.g. boards of education policies, child study team records, and documentation of the implementation of individual educational plans, rather than on the quality of the educational program or instruction within the classroom. Monitoring in special education has become a "paper-chase" process which has increased the administrative burden and the costs of documenting special education regulations. Very little of the effort which goes into preparing a school district for monitoring translates into improved programs and services which benefit children.

Among the most significant impacts of monitoring on the school psychologists are the effects of preparation on working conditions and the increased level of stress on the job. Preparation for monitoring interrupts the school psychologist's delivery of direct services to children. Consultation and evaluative services are often curtailed because of the time-consuming process of reviewing child study team records and the documenting of the administrative process of service delivery. The impact on the educational system leaves the classroom teacher, the students, and the parents with a decreased level of psychological support services.

NJASP supports the attainment of standards of excellence in the delivery of special education services to our children. We also recognize that evaluative measures are necessary. However, the monitoring process in special education in New Jersey has become a time-consuming force which can monopolize the energies of school psychologists, other child study team personnel, and special education teachers. In addition, county office of education staff members have become evaluators and inspectors which naturally limits the time they are available to serve as facilitators and consultants to school psychologists to help improve the educational process.

NJASP recommends that the monitoring process in special education particularly be reexamined by the State Department of Education. This reexamination should strive to minimize the burden of excessive paperwork and documentation and focus instead on effective measures to evaluate the educational program and services offered to our special needs students.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you. I agree with you, but I just want to say out of fairness something I said before -- out of fairness to the State Department, and to Dr. Osowski in particular: Quite often, affairs, if you will, in special education in this State, and in the 49 others governed by Federal law-- I can give you an example of one legislator who met with the State Department of Education, who had to review a letter from another state, sent by the Department of Education in Washington to a district superintendent in another state, for guidance on a matter in New Jersey. So, we need an overhaul at the Federal level there, Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: I recognize that. We have talked to the State Department about that, and suggested that perhaps collectively, working together, we might also have some impact on the Federal--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I know that. I went to the school psychologists' convention about five years ago in Las Vegas, and there was a lot of talk about that. I remember everybody saying it would be easier said than done. It's a tough job.

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you very much.

DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Now, where are we? Charles A. Caramanna, Berlin Township School District? (no response) Okay. Dr. William H. Adams, Superintendent, Salem County Vocational Technical Schools?

D R. C H A R L E S F. L E E: Good afternoon, Chairman Naples, Assemblymen. I admire your stamina and your attentiveness.

My name is Dr. Charles Lee. I am the Central Office Supervisor at the Salem County Vocational Technical Schools. I am representing Bill Adams, the Superintendent, who has been Superintendent of the district for the past 18 years. Dr. Adams is representing not only the school district, but also the New Jersey Council of County Vocational School Administrators and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.

Dr. Adams begins by thanking you for the opportunity to provide input into your hearings regarding the monitoring process. He wanted very much to be here today, and he sends his best wishes.

Most of us who are involved in public education recognize our responsibility to the students and communities that we serve and accept that accountability as part of that responsibility. If monitoring is to be the vehicle to provide for accountability, then let's make that vehicle one that works to improve education for all of the children and young people of our State.

The present monitoring system is a paper process and is not designed to promote or ensure excellence. It is inflexible and has been termed by many, including Dr. Adams, as a "gotcha" process.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: What kind of process was that? I wasn't reading along. What kind of process was that?

DR. LEE: A "gotcha" process. The New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the Council for County Vocational Technical School Administrators, and Dr. Adams believe that the monitoring process should be based on three premises or goals which are as follows:

1) To encourage and foster quality educational opportunities and services for our children and to provide the support necessary for improvement when such is needed.

2) This process should also serve as a vehicle between local school districts and the New Jersey Department of Education for achievement of common goals and the delivery of educational programs and supporting services.

3) The accountability process should also serve as a vehicle to communicate those positive achievements, as well as those areas needing improvement, to our constituents in the communities that we serve.

The New Jersey Association of School Administrators has eight recommendations to improve the accountability process. Dr. Adams would like to paraphrase those eight recommendations which are as follows:

1) The process should be refocused so that it becomes more diagnostic. It should involve a self-evaluation process that includes the full board of education, district staff, and the community.

2) The labeling of districts as a failure due to one component or minor areas of noncompliance should cease immediately. This type of negative approach serves no value, erodes public confidence in all of our public education system and, more importantly, does not benefit the very children and young people that the process should serve.

3) A pre-accountability or monitoring checklist for all elements and/or indicators should be developed and an opportunity should be provided, especially with respect to policies for compliance within a prescribed period of time, both before and after monitoring.

4) An accountability model should be designed to cover a 10-year period that could possibly be interwoven into the Middle States model.



5) At the present, all elements and indicators have equal value, where in reality they do not have an equal impact on the quality of our educational program. The process should be altered to recognize this factor. One suggestion to do this is to let each indicator stand on its own merits.

6) The process needs to have flexibility designed into it. The unique needs and characteristics of districts and differences between the needs in urban, suburban, and rural districts and in the students who are served are not taken into account in the present process. While all students in New Jersey should have an opportunity for quality educational programs, we need a process that recognizes that students are individuals and that all individuals do not learn at the same rate or at the same time. The present process requires the assumption that all districts are the same and that all students are the same.

7) The role of governance in district performance should be considered with respect to the overall district assessment.

8) Resources available to the district must be considered in the assessment.

On behalf of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational School Administrators, Dr. Adams would like to share with you a few concerns we have, both for the way in which the monitoring process is administered in our full-time county vocational schools and in our shared-time schools. For example, shared-time vocational schools are held accountable for student attendance, for which we readily accept responsibility for those areas where we have control. However, when home school district calendars vary or students are kept back in the home schools to take HSPT tests, to attend assemblies, or to participate in extracurricular activities, the shared-time vocational schools are penalized. Worse yet, when home school calendars are out of phase with the county

vocational school calendar, the shared-time programs are penalized. There is no flexibility or understanding that some of these elements are out of our control.

Another example of this concern is the HSPT scores for full-time vocational students. In Camden County, the county vocational school district is facing decertification of its Pennsauken campus where a majority of its students come from the City of Camden. On the surface, it is reasonable to say that regardless of where the students come from, they should achieve passing scores. Despite expenditures of huge sums of money, commitment of human resources, and tremendous test score gains, no consideration is given to the basic skills deficiencies of these students when they extend the program. The bottom line is that whether students pick up 20, 30, or 40 points on test scores, it does not matter that they improved.

Unfortunately, what is also not considered is the fact that the school only begins working with these students in September and is supposed to correct years of deficiencies by April of the same year. The Department of Education's answer to this problem is, "You are no different than the 60-some regional districts." The uniqueness and characteristics of the student populations that we serve are different. Hold us accountable, but be flexible. Do all students have to achieve a certain cutoff score by a certain date, or should it not be acceptable, as long as they achieve that score before they graduate, assuming of course that the test is even valid? Despite tremendous gains in HSPT test scores throughout our State, it does not appear that the overall basic skills level of our students has significantly improved during the past eight years.

Dr. Adams would like to conclude by focusing on one final area of concern; that is the continually changing standards, guidelines, and hoops that we must jump through in order to complete the present monitoring process. Just last

week, Dr. Adams attended a roundtable at which another set of errata sheets were issued, further clarifying, modifying, and changing the monitoring process. As part of this current "gotcha" process, rules keep changing, are not interpreted the same in each county, and there is no flexibility. The pre-monitoring review suggested earlier, along with a post-monitoring process, for districts to address minor and certainly paper elements, should be provided.

Finally, if the resources committed to the current monitoring process could be put into technical assistance, then maybe the Department of Education could make a difference. Dr. Adams strongly encourages the Assembly Education Committee and the new administration to continue to require accountability and that the system be modified so that it fosters improvement and positive learning for the students of New Jersey who are served through our public education system.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Doctor. I appreciate it very much. Another theme I saw from this sort of validates what I heard about pre, post -- pre-identification of performance criteria -- my words, "post," like a post-op division conference, not unlike a teacher and a principal getting together, being observed, and subsequently being evaluated. Thank you very much.

DR. LEE: Thank you, Assemblyman Naples.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I am going to finish up with some concluding remarks by Dr. Contini, who spoke earlier. It is always a pleasure to hear from you, Pete.

DR. CONTINI: I will be very quick, because I know it has been a long afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you -- no offense.

DR. CONTINI: I just want to thank you again for the openness and the candid opportunities that our speakers had today. I just want to make mention of two things.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Sure, go ahead. Take your time; I am only kidding you.

DR. CONTINI: At the Toms River hearing, we shared with the Committee -- and I believe it has been shared with other members of the Committee -- a summary of the Cycle III Committee that is chaired by Dr. Bernard Andrews and Dr. Donald Beindeman, from the County Superintendents. They met with the NJSA committee, and I think that most of the reoccurring themes that you heard in many of the presentations today are areas that are being reviewed, and certainly are part of the evolution of the monitoring process.

I also just wanted to indicate again that periodic revisions in manual pages have occurred, but in no instance have they ever changed the standard. They have clarified questions that have come in from the field just by the illustration most recently given. That was to clarify the role of shared-time vocational schools and regional school districts -- regional day schools -- and effectively would in no way, shape, or form have an impact on the decision of a rating of unacceptable for an indicator. So I think that is important to know.

Third, I just want to bring greetings from Dr. McCarroll, who indicated that he will be with you at next week's hearing. He looks forward to the opportunity to exchange with the Committee.

Again, thank you for coming to South Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thanks, Pete, I appreciate it. I just want to indicate here that next week we begin in New Brunswick at 1:00.

DR. ROSEN: One-thirty.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: One-thirty, excuse me. Thank you, David.

I forgot to mention something, and I should have: Two people who have been of immeasurable help throughout this

entire thing, besides Paul on my left, and David on my right, are Hank Miller, PSA -- Principals and Supervisors Association -- and Jim Moran, of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. They sent out a lot of literature on this.

We have gone over the 100 mark in terms of people who have testified, so we have plenty of information. I have a hunch that we are going to see a lot more in New Brunswick next week, because, don't forget, the teachers will be coming up. We've gotten, oh, everybody to testify -- teachers, vice principals, principals, school psychologists, superintendents, county superintendents, vo-tech people -- you name it. We have had a real good cross section.

Well, thank you all very much. Perhaps I will see some of you next week in New Brunswick.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)



## APPENDIX





Testimony before the Assembly Education Committee  
by Dr. Peter B. Contini - March 6, 1990

Good Morning. Distinguished members of the committee - I am pleased to be here today to address this vital issue.

I am Dr. Peter B. Contini, Gloucester County Superintendent of Schools and Southern Region Coordinating County Superintendent of Schools.

Clearly, the second cycle of monitoring is different from Cycle I and is more rigorous. We believe it is also more consistent and equitable.

The rigor is related to more defined standards for each indicator, particularly those that are more qualitative, as well as the need for a district to meet all 43 indicators.

The consistent and equitable features are evident by:

- District training one year in advance
- Premonitoring of facilities
- Training of all county staff
- Internal monitoring procedures, and
- An error tolerance in certain indicators

The internal monitoring procedures include the regional analysis of each monitoring report as well as a joint review by all 21 county superintendents before any indicator is rated unacceptable and a district is not recommended for certification.

The standards for indicators dealing with safe facilities, compensatory education, bilingual education and special education provide for an error tolerance. The use of this flexible standard allows the district to achieve an acceptable rating while implementing corrective action to address the identified deficiencies.

We certainly agree that Cycle II monitoring has presented an additional preparation burden for districts. However, this burden is not as significant when districts have maintained local effort during the full five-year period of certification. Where this does not occur the district must generate documentation and information in less than one year. Clearly, this contributes to local burden.

Also, local interpretation of state minimums for an indicator has an impact on local burden. County superintendents have and will continue to minimize this by reviewing the criteria for an acceptable rating with local administrators in an effort to reduce local overreaction to the standard.

The Cycle II monitoring process is more rigorous and certainly not perfect. However, despite the rigor to date 145 districts of the 194 monitored, or 75 percent, have been certified. This compares favorably with the 79 percent certified at Level I during Cycle I.

The indicators most frequently failed by the forty-nine noncertified districts were:

- Special education - with nearly 40 percent
- Written curriculum and implementation of required programs - approximately 30 percent
- Financial reporting - 22 percent

Clearly, these are important indicators of a "T&E" school district.

This year, which is the second year of the second cycle of monitoring, is quickly coming to an end. However, the evaluation of the Cycle II system and the planned Cycle III system that will begin in September, 1993 has already started.

On June 28, 1989, Dr. Walter J. McCarroll, Assistant Commissioner for County and Regional Services, appointed a committee of county superintendents to review the monitoring process. In his charge to the committee Dr. McCarroll stated, "Given the fact that each district in the State will have been monitored twice, it may be appropriate to consider a different emphasis on the monitoring of local school districts."

The charge to the Committee included:

- Develop an action plan.
- Formalize assistance for input from field administrators and organizations.
- Review incentive-based (diagnostic) versus regulatory-based (compliance) monitoring including a review of available research.
- Address other key issues including future implications of Abbott versus Burke.

One key aspect of the Cycle III committee review was to obtain input from county office staff, school districts and organizations on proposed changes in the current monitoring process.

In order to gain input, questionnaires were sent to all county superintendents and to a state-wide sample of chief school administrators who had participated in the second cycle of monitoring. A subsequent meeting was held with these chief school administrators and all Cycle III committee members in November, 1989. Also, a meeting with the NJASA monitoring committee has been held and future meetings will be scheduled.

The committee has concluded the following:

- "T&E" law and regulation requires a system of accountability
- Current system is generally accepted and is viewed as being implemented consistently

The following are additional areas that will be reviewed by the Committee:

- Consideration of the impact of mobility on the testing indicators for urban districts
- Consideration of a two-tier monitoring - Compliance and Diagnostic
- Providing more assistance for monitoring (e.g. curriculum formats)
- Consideration of an indicator for management/board responsibilities
- Consideration that compliant districts be given the opportunity to focus on expanded instructional activities

The committee will report to Dr. McCarroll by July 1, 1990 and future public feedback will occur prior to State Board adoption in September, 1991.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Department of Education and specifically the county superintendents and their staff accept the responsibility for monitoring. We recognize the important of this responsibility and have as our primary goal to ensure that the children of this state receive the thorough and efficient education they are entitled to receive.

As indicated in Commissioner Cooperman's report to the State Board,

"The monitoring process initiated in 1984 and revised in January 1987 is an evolving process that needs to be reviewed and refined periodically to ensure that the state system of evaluation of local school districts is both fair and consistent."

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee, and I trust our testimony will assist you in your review of this most important educational issue.

PAMELA GARWOOD

BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY - CUMBERLAND COUNTY

TEACHER, LOCAL GRIEVANCE CHAIRMAN, COUNTY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, NJEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MONITORING TESTIMONY

1. PREPARATION OF MONITORING IN DISTRICT

A. CURRICULUM

1. STARTED 2 YEARS AGO - BEING TOLD WE WOULD REWRITE ALL THE DISTRICT'S CURRICULUM
2. TEACHERS WERE TO VOLUNTEER, LATER GIVEN RELEASE TIME OR PAID
3. TEACHERS ATTENDED GRADE LEVEL MEETINGS, WHEN WORK WAS ALREADY DONE AND LITTLE OR NO INPUT WAS TAKEN
4. TEACHERS MET ALONE AND WROTE CURRICULUM THEN MANY WERE REPRIMANDED FOR NOT DOING IT THE WAY ADMINISTRATORS WANTED IT DONE.
5. SOME TEACHER'S RECEIVED WRITTEN REPRIMANDS IF THEY DID NOT ATTEND MEETINGS (SEE ATTACHMENT A)
6. PACING - INTRODUCED TO MAKE SURE MATERIAL COVERED - DISREGARD TO CHILD AND TYPE OF LEARNER

B. IN-SERVICE DAYS

1. FIRST DEALT WITH "HORROR STORIES" FROM OTHER DISTRICTS
2. IN-SERVICE DAYS TO REWRITE CURRICULUM
3. A DAY TO STUDY TERMS AND THEIR ABBREVIATIONS (SEE ATTACHMENT B)
4. A DAY TO STUDY "MONITORING QUIZ" COACHED BY AN ADMINISTRATOR (SEE ATTACHMENT C)

C. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

1. TOLD LIBRARIES AND ALL CLASSROOM MATERIAL WERE TO BE DONE THIS YEAR

a. LIBRARIES

- (1) NOW GIVEN 4 YEARS TO COMPLETE
- (2) LIBRARIANS TO RECEIVE 22 DAYS RELEASE TIME

b. CLASSROOMS

- (1) NOW GIVEN 2 YEARS TO COMPLETE
- (2) NO RELEASE TIME SUGGESTED

2. FOUR PAGE FORM TO BE USED FOR EACH PIECE OF MATERIAL
3. NO ONE CAN GIVE ANYONE A TRUE PICTURE OF WHAT IS REQUIRED
4. THE DISTRICT WAS TO START WORKING ON THIS 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT HAPPENED? WHY NOW?

D. TEST RESULTS

1. PRESSURE ON TEACHERS

- a. TEACHING TEST
- b. MORALE

2. PRESSURE ON STUDENTS

- a. PACING - MOVING TOO FAST FOR STUDENT
- b. STUDENTS REACHING FRUSTRATION LEVEL FASTER

3. ARE TEST SCORES BEING UTILIZED CORRECTLY?

- a. NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ECONOMIC AREA
- b. WOULD COMPARING GROWTH FROM YEAR TO YEAR SHOW IF A STUDENT IS LEARNING

E. STUDENT BEHAVIOR

1. LESS SUSPENSIONS

2. MORE STUDENTS IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

3. MORE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN CLASSROOM DISRUPTING LEARNING PROCESS

F. FACULTY MEETINGS

1. SPEAKERS ASSIGNED TO SPEAK ABOUT MONITORING PROCESS - ASKING US TO STAY PAST NEGOTIATED RELEASE TIME
2. PRINCIPALS ASKING TEACHERS TO DO RESEARCH ON MONITORING AND REPORT BACK TO THEIR COLLEAGUES AT FACULTY MEETINGS

## II. EFFECTS OF PREPARING FOR THE MONITORING PROCESS

## A. TEACHERS

1. POOR STAFF MORALE
2. INCREASED PAPER WORK
3. INCREASED STRESS

## B. ADMINISTRATORS

1. INCREASED PAPER WORK
2. INCREASED STRESS

## C. STUDENTS

1. INCREASED STRESS
2. PACING AFFECTS LEARNING PROCESS

## D. MONITORING SHOULD ASSIST IN BUILDING A BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

## E. STATE ASKS FOR SPECIFICS BUT DOES NOT GIVE A TIME PERIOD TO CORRECT, MAKING A DISTRICT FEEL DEFEATED BEFORE IT BEGINS

## F. MOST STAFF FEEL THAT THEIR GOAL THIS YEAR IS TO PASS THE MONITORING PROCESS - NOT TO EDUCATE OUR STUDENTS

## G. TOO MUCH TIME IS TAKEN AWAY FROM OUR STUDENTS FOR MONITORING

H. Class Trips Cancelled (ATTACHMENT)  
E

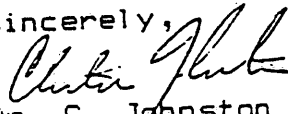
(Attachment A)

November 1, 1988

Dear Ms. Heroux:

The make-up date for your participation in the bi-weekly curriculum work session is this Wednesday, November 2nd, from 2:50 -3:10 pm in Room A-11. Please be prompt. There is much to be accomplished.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. C. Johnston

Mr. Walinsky  
Mr. Sharp  
file

8X 7-1



November 2, 1988

Dr. Johnston:

I was not informed of the meeting held on October 31, 1988; therefore, I did not attend.

Thus far, I have never missed one meeting and I will attend the makeup meeting being held on November 2, 1988.

I would appreciate being notified of any future meetings.

Sincerely,

*Laura Heroux*

Laura Heroux  
English Teacher

cc: *Mr. Sharp*  
*Mr. Walmsley*



# Bridgeton High School

WEST AVENUE

BRIDGETON, N. J. 08302

Telephone (609) 455-8030 Ext. 300 - 301

Robert L. Sharp  
Principal

November 2, 1988

Dr. C. Johnston;

Please be advised that no notice was posted regarding the curriculum meeting of October 31. I was available and would have been in attendance had I received a reminder.

Since my coaching responsibilities will most often put me in the gym area during my ninth period conference and immediately after school, I can always be contacted through Mr. Blandino's office during that time.

I have been working on the Academic Senior curriculum, as you know, having completed the first and second marking periods to date. You can expect the third and fourth marking periods shortly.

Though I have had to cancel and will re-schedule my wrestling meeting after school today. I will be in attendance at today's make-up meeting.

Thank You

Robert J. Crik

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert J. Crik".

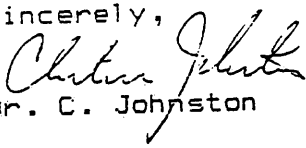
cc: Mr. Sharp  
Mr. Walinsky

November 1, 1988

Dear Mr. Cwik:

The make-up date for your participation in the bi-weekly curriculum work session is this Wednesday, November 2nd, from 2:50 -3:10 pm in Room A-11. Please be prompt. There is much to be accomplished.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. C. Johnston

Mr. Walinsky  
Mr. Sharp  
file



November 3, 1988

To Whom It May Concern:

On November 1, 1988, I received a letter from Dr. Christine Johnston telling me to be "prompt" for her "make-up" curriculum session. On the bottom of the letter was a notation that a copy of the letter had been sent to my department head and to Mr. Sharp, suggesting that this was an official reprimand. Why was a notice filed and a copy of it sent to my immediate supervisors without my prior notification? I was not even aware of the fact that I had committed any sort of infraction. In fact, I had received permission from my department head to be absent from this meeting in order to administer oral make-up tests to students who had been absent on the examination days. These are tests which are impossible to make-up during the school day as they involve the use of the tape recorder.

I had no intention of missing the meeting simply to irk the woman nor to show any sort of contempt toward the subject matter discussed. The marking period is ending soon and I was merely affording the students an opportunity to complete a missed assignment. I spoke to Dr. Johnston today and told her that permission had indeed been granted to me to miss this meeting. She said that she had not been informed of this and told me rather emphatically that it was she and no one else who could give permission for absence. I am confused. The department head had always been the one to whom I had gone in the past for permission. I honestly did not know that Dr. Johnston is in charge of my department's meetings and that I have to check with her if I have to miss a meeting.

I and several of my colleague in the Language Department attended this "make-up session" on Wednesday, November 2. Dr. Johnston began the meeting with what I believe to be a sarcastically-delivered remark. She said, "Oh, I see my letter got your attention." Her tone of voice was cruel and demeaning. Personally, I was offended. I did nothing wrong to warrant her verbal attack.

At this meeting, my colleagues and I were told that we must complete a matrix of the literary and library study skills needed in our particular English course. We were told that this assignment is due on November 14, giving us only three school days to complete it.

When I talked to Dr. Johnston today, I told her that I have every intention of doing what was expected of me. Unfortunately, I did not understand what exactly she wanted. She invited me to attend a workshop that she is giving Wednesday, November 9 on the subject of aligning curriculum. This is impossible as my workshops on this day have already been assigned to me. She said that our workshops during the week of November 14 will also be on this same topic. How can I get information to complete something that is due on November 14 if the workshops begin later in the week?

In all fairness to Dr. Johnston, she offered to meet with me and discuss what she wanted in this matrix. However, in order to meet with her, I must give up a lunch period, a preparation period or much needed after-school time. In doing so, time is being taken away from my teaching preparation and from the students who wish to complete missed assignments.

I pointed out to Dr. Johnston that part of the reason that I didn't understand what I was to do with this matrix is the fact that I was not part of the committee which originally drew up the alignment. Although I understand the need for an aligned curriculum, I chose not to be a part of the committee. Those who wanted to work on the project volunteered and were paid for their work. I understood then that all would have to abide by the curriculum designed by this committee. I was willing to accept whatever they decided. I chose not to work on the curriculum. This was acceptable in June of this year.

Now, it seems that I am being punished for my choice. Dr. Johnston agreed that having worked on the committee would definitely be an advantage in completing the matrix. She told me that I no longer have freedom of choice. I now must be a part of the alignment and I must simply "catch up" to the volunteer group. I had a choice in June, but not in November? How did she get the power to take away my freedom of choice?

I believe that Dr. Johnston intends to align our curriculum. I appreciate her steadfastness and determination. What I do not appreciate is the omnipresent atmosphere of doom and gloom which has existed in our school since her arrival.

Dr. Johnston has taken over our department's workroom. She has chosen our English textbooks without our prior knowledge. She is controlling our department's meetings. She tells us how to write our lesson plans. What's next? Must we be subjected to this ridiculous abuse of power in order to set up a satisfactory curriculum? Must we continue to be victims of her verbal lashings?

I fear for the well-being of our entire school system. How far will this woman's unprofessional conduct and dictator-like techniques be allowed to go? Must the low morale and discontent that we are experiencing at the high school be allowed to spread throughout the entire system?

Thank you for the opportunity to express my personal opinion.

Sincerely,



Judith Quinn  
Language Dept.  
BHS

cc: Pam Garwood, Grievance Chm.  
Robert Sharp, Principal  
George McLaughlin, Head A/R, BHS

12 X (a)

(Attachment B)

# BRIDGETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BRIDGETON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Administration Building, Bank Street  
Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302  
(609) 455-8030

THOMAS C. LANE, IV  
Superintendent of Schools

December 4, 1989

DOROTHY E. PETERSON  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

TO: All staff

FROM: Dorothy E. Peterson, Assistant Superintendent *DEL*

RE: Monitoring

One outcome of the monitoring workshops was the request that some of the local "alphabetese" be explained. I shall try to include all below.

G/T - Gifted and talented

B.E.S.T. - Better Education Support Team. A group of representatives from P.T.A.'s, sending districts, city council, etc. who meet monthly at Bank Street to discuss education issues in Bridgeton.

DCP - District Consulting Panel. A group of parents of Chapter I eligible students. These parents meet monthly, usually the third Wednesday night, at Bank Street. These are concerned parents who keep abreast of what is going on in our schools. This is sometimes referred to as PAC - Parents Advisory Committee.

PAL - Positive Attitudes to Learning. A self contained class in the high school for 8th graders who are potential drop-outs. Teachers of English, science, social studies, mathematics, and physical education come in to teach the class. Ms. Galex is in the classroom all day and teaches basic skills to the group.

IEP - Individual Educational Program. This must be prepared for every classified student and shall include a statement of the pupil's eligibility for special education, current educational status, annual goals for the pupil, objectives which describe specific measurable steps between the current status and the annual goals, and a description of the pupil's educational program.

ISIP - Individual Student Instructional Plan. The educational plan prepared for each Basic Skills student.

BSI - Basic Skills Improvement

BSIP - Basic Skills Improvement Program

CAT - California Achievement Test. Given annually to grades K-8; grades 10 and 11. *13X*

ESEA - Elementary and Secondary Education Act - 1965  
(foundation for current Chapter I)

ESSIA - Elementary and Secondary School Improvement  
Amendments 1988

LEA - Local Education Agency

HSPT - High School Proficiency Test

MLP - Minimum Level of Proficiency (New Jersey Dept. of Ed.)

DMLP - District Minimum Level of Proficiency

LEP - Limited English Proficient

SEA - State Educational Agency

REACH - Realizing Economic Achievement ( a program for  
people on welfare whereby they receive training/  
education to be self-sufficient)

LDTC - Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant

LEA - Local Education Agency

OEE0 - Office of Equal Education Opportunity

T&E - Thorough and Efficient. Education legislation of  
1976 mandating all schools to participate in a man-  
agement process of setting goals, developing pro-  
grams, etc. to meet needs of students.

Other questions asked by staff members have also been included below.

1. Are comp days of support staff counted as an absence?

Answer: No, because this is time they worked and for which  
they are being compensated. As far as monitoring  
is concerned, support staff (non-professional) does  
not count for or against our attendance rate.

2. What role does the secretary have in monitoring?

Answer: The secretary's principal role is to know where  
documents are and to be available to provide them.

3. Field trips. Are other than the approval forms needed?

Answer: These trips should also be listed in monthly  
reports. Follow-up lessons should be available/  
in plan book.

4. Professional days. Are other than approvals by Mr. Lane needed?

Answer: There should be a report submitted to Mr. Lane  
summarizing the professional experience/workshop  
etc.



5. Why don't we have a public relations officer?

Answer: In the past we have had a part time public relations officer. For this position to be effective, information has to be submitted to him/her. The same information can go directly to the newspaper. We at Bank Street and some of the schools try to disseminate pictures and write-ups to the newspaper. Mr. Lane has a weekly radio broadcast. Channel 2 is used to show the many things going on in the district.

6. If we fail monitoring, how soon do the monitors come back?

Answer: We must immediately prepare a corrective action plan for each element found deficient and put the plan into effect. The monitors will be in close contact, and we will be monitored next year.

7. Which courses are state mandated? How many hours/minutes must they be taught weekly?

Answer: Mandated state programs and services are as follows:

1. A 2-year course in U.S. history which must include the history of New Jersey and materials on Black History.
2. The study of community civics, the geography, history and civics of New Jersey for elementary grades.
3. A course in drug and alcohol education of at least 10 clock hours per school year at each secondary grade and in accordance with national guidelines at the elementary level.
4. A course in health, safety, and physical education of at least  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours (150 minutes) per week for all pupils, except kindergarten.
5. Regular courses of instruction in accident and fire prevention throughout the grades.
6. Instruction in the U.S. Constitution starting no later than seventh grade and continuing into high school.
7. Family life education implemented comprehensively through the coordinated sequential elementary/secondary curriculum.
8. Courses to meet high school graduation requirements (grades 9-12)
  - a. 1 credit year of English for every year enrolled up to 4 years.
  - b. 2 credit years of math (changes to 3 credit years for next year's ninth graders)

- c. 2 credit years of U.S. history
  - 1 credit year of world history/cultures
- d. 2 credit years of natural or physical science
- e. 1 credit year of physical education, health, and safety for each year of enrollment.
- f. 1 credit year of fine, practical, and/or performing arts.
- g. One half credit year of career education or a comparable infusion into existing courses. We use the latter.
- h. Bilingual education
- i. Compensatory education
- j. Special education

8. Will staff be informed when district goals are met?

Answer: Yes. A report must be submitted to the County Office by June 30. We then receive a statement from Dr. Kalapos indicating whether or not we met the goals. This is then shared with the Board. Last year we met our goals in high school math and grades 10, 11 and 12 reading. We did not meet our goal in grade 3 (Cherry Street) math or elementary social studies.

9. What is the district evaluation procedure?

Answer: The one currently on record is being reviewed and when it is approved by the Board, it will be shared with the staff.

10. Are there any state/district limits on the number of students which special education classes can have?

Answer: Yes. It depends upon the classification and presence or lack of an aide. They are as follows:

- Auditorially handicapped - 8
- Chronically ill - 15
- Emotionally disturbed - 8
- Mentally retarded, educable - 12
- Multiply handicapped - 8
- Neurologically impaired - 8
- Orthopedically handicapped - 10
- Perceptually impaired - 12
- Preschool handicapped - 8
- Socially maladjusted - 12
- Visually handicapped - 8

These maximum sizes may be increased up to one third with the addition of an aide.

11. How does the monitoring process affect nurses, aides, secretaries?  
Answer: Simply be prepared to answer questions as to what his/her job is and how he/she does it. Secretaries may be asked for documents and information relevant to their job.
12. What is Element 5? (It was not on Monitoring Quiz)  
Answer: Elements 5 and 10 were not on quiz because they were not relevant to teaching staff. Element 5 is facilities and Element 10 is financial.
13. How do teachers' absences affect the monitoring process?  
Answer: "The annual rate of occasional professional staff absenteeism, including teachers and administrators, shall not exceed five percent." Occasional absences are those up to five consecutive days. If the absence period goes beyond five days, it does not count. Sick days, funeral, and personal, anything other than professional would be counted. More than five percent occasional absence would cause us to fail monitoring.
14. Teachers ask about the referral procedure. The following is the procedure:
1. The referral is made by either the parent or teacher.
  2. The principal approves it.
  3. A physician and a nurse must fill out the appropriate forms.
  4. The principal sends a 15-day notice to the parent.
  5. The Special Services office sends a letter to the parent when they receive the referral.
  6. The Child Study Team does the evaluation.
15. Will field trips be approved on the dates we are being monitored?  
Answer: Only if it is an unusual trip available only on that day.
16. Was anything considered in relation to the new State Proficiencies coming into effect? Could these occur during monitoring?  
Answer: These are being developed on the state level and will take some time to implement. We will certainly be given ample time to prepare our curriculum.
17. Do teachers have access to a list of mainstreamed students?  
Answer: This information should be in the principal's office in elementary schools; in the special ed. office in the middle and high schools.

MONITORING QUIZ

Element I - Planning

1. Do you know what the four district objectives are for 1989-90?  
Answer: (Copy of district objectives and action plans included in this packet)  
Grade 3 - math  
Grade 9 - math  
Grades 10, 11, 12 - math  
High school attendance
2. Have you seen copies of these objectives?  
Answer: Yes.
3. Were these objectives ever shared with you by your principal?  
Answer: Yes.
4. Did you have input into their development?  
Answer: Surveys were sent out asking for suggestions; principals discussed at staff meetings
5. What is your involvement in the Action Plan objectives?  
Answer: We are asked each year for suggestions as to what the district should work on for the coming year.
6. Do you know what the district's long range schedule for program evaluation is?  
Answer: (Copy included in packet)

Element 2: School/Community Relations

1. Can you name 3 ways by which our district shares information with the community?  
Answer: class and school newsletters  
newspaper articles  
Board of Education agendas and meetings  
student report cards  
parent groups - PTA, DCP, bilingual parent group, B.E.S.T.  
Mr. Lane's weekly broadcast - WSNJ
2. Do you know the name of the district's public relations officer?  
Answer: We do not have one.
3. Does the district send out a monthly newsletter?  
Answer: Mr. Lane sends one to staff and shares it with community.
4. Do you or your students visit area community businesses, industries, government agencies, etc.  
Answer: Public library, municipal court, farms, restaurants, banks, state prison, food stores, city

Element 3:6. (cont.) to build self confidence.

7. Can you name the people responsible for curriculum and instruction?

Answer: Mrs. Peterson, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Sabino Iovino, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator  
Mrs. Marlene Kelly, Computation Supervisor  
Dr. Doris Loper, Communications Supervisor  
Department heads

8. Who is responsible for library skills program?

Answer: Mr. Iovino as supervisor of librarians

9. Where are effective study and work skills taught in your grade level?

Answer: Hopefully, you can say they are incorporated in all curricula. Be ready to be specific as to how you do it. Your lesson plans should prove it. Librarians teach study skills K-7.

10. Who is the disaffected student counselor?

Answer: No one with that title. See #5 (guidance and counseling)

11. Who handles disruptive students in your school? What process do you follow in reporting a student discipline problem?

Answer: Your own

12. What programs are in place in your school to deal with students who disrupt the instructional program?

Answer: Must be answered according to each school's organization

13. Do you write your weekly lesson plans using objectives listed in Board approved curricula developed for your grade level/subject area?

Answer: A personal response. Hopefully, it is "Yes!" Lesson plans should prove it.

14. How are you involved in district curriculum and program development?

Answer: The staff was asked to develop curriculum after school and during the summer. Some were given release time. In some cases, participation was voluntary and therefore done by a representative group.

15. How are district programs evaluated?

Answer: District evaluation procedure. Be prepared to tell how you evaluate the curriculum and programs.

16. What is done to provide for individual student differences?

Element 6: (cont.)

5. Have you had the opportunity to attend workshops or other training sessions based on your professional interests or connected with your carrying out the responsibilities of your position?

Answer: Hopefully, your answer is yes. You might be prepared to list some of those you attended and felt were most beneficial.

6. How is your Personal Improvement Plan (PIP) developed each year?

Answer: This should be a personal answer.

Element 7: Mandated Programs

1. What is an I.E.P.?

Answer: "Individualized Educational Program" means a plan written jointly by the school personnel and parent. This plan sets forth goals and measurable objectives and describes an integrated sequential program of individually designed educational activities and/or related services necessary to achieve the stated goals and objectives. This plan establishes the rationale for the pupil's educational placement, serves as mandate set forth in Special Education, New Jersey Administrative Code, Title VI, Education.

2. Who has an I.E.P.?

Answer: All classified students have an I.E.P. which is reviewed at least on a yearly basis.

3. What is a Case Manager?

Answer: A Case Manager is a member of your Child Study Team whose major responsibility is to see that all required activities are completed in order to provide specified special educational services. The Case Manager becomes the contact person for parents and teachers and facilitates the implementation of the evaluation plan and the special education program. The Case Manager checks all phases of the special education program and services for a particular child to see that the requirements of the I.E.P. are met, all necessary services are provided, and the child is benefiting from the program. In other words, Case Managers see that things get done, but do not necessarily do the things themselves.

4. How do you find out who the Case Manager is?

Answer: Contact the child's Special Education teacher, ask your principal, call Mr. Adamson at

Element 7:11 (cont.) Grades 10, 11 & 12 - HSPT

12. How can a student be exited from the basic skills program?

Answer: See page 14 of "Funded Programs Handbook for Teachers, Aides and Administrators". All elements must be followed.

- a. Review of Spring Multiple measures
- b. Review standardized test scores for areas of discrepancy between other sub tests and the Reading/Language/Math areas.
- c. Obtain background data from current teacher (How child is functioning at present time)

Process is to be applied by Supervisor of Funded Programs in consultation with curriculum supervisors, principals, classroom teachers and/or parents upon written request to "drop" student from BSI services and in compliance with Board of Education policy #1102.

13. How are students assessed and referred for the bilingual/ESL program?

- a. Upon registration for enrollment - parent is asked what language is spoken in the home
- b. The Maculaitis Test of English Proficiency is administered. If student falls below State established proficiency levels he is a candidate for Bilingual and/or ESL instruction.
  1. A Language Syntax test is then administered to determine dominate language (Native or English)
  2. Skill achievement is then assessed to determine instructional level

Element 8: Achievement in State Mandated Basic Skills

1. What type of special learning activities do you implement with your class in preparing for the HSPT or CAT?

Answer: Examples you might give: (Be sure your plan-book shows that you do what you say)  
reviewing key skills  
devoting special instructional times just for the review of specific skills

2. Have you identified specific deficient skills which need to be strengthened?

Answer: Yes. (Please be ready to identify them)

3. Basic Skills teachers: How were ISIP's developed for your students?

Answer: ISIP's were developed from deficiencies iden-

Element 9:4 (cont.)

being approved. Copies will be sent to staff upon approval. Copies will be sent to staff upon approval.

5. Are you aware of the District's Affirmative Action Plan?

Answer: Yes. What is it?

- a. Evaluation of all library and classroom instructional materials
- b. Attempt to seek out and hire more minority staff members
- c. Study of housing patterns in order to get a more representative racial mix in all schools
- d. Encouragement of minorities to qualify for G/T and Honors programs
- e. Attempt to cut down on minority suspensions, drop-outs, and special education referrals.

Miscellaneous

1. How do you counsel and provide guidance for your students?

Answer: Your individual response

2. Do you have sufficient books, supplies, materials, etc. in your classroom?

Answer: Hopefully, the answer is yes.

3. Are custodial services adequate?

Answer: Hopefully, the answer is yes.

4. Teachers may be asked if they have any comments to make. It would be wise to think ahead about this and be prepared to describe/mention programs and events of which they are especially proud. These could include activities in the classroom, building, or district.

Caution:

Beware of airing your grievances, displeasures, personal hang-ups at this time. While we do not ask you to be untruthful, it is unwise to dredge up complaints that need to be addressed internally.



# ANNUAL DISTRICT OBJECTIVE AND ACTION PLAN

DISTRICT: Bridgeton

SCHOOL YEAR: 1989-90

OBJECTIVE: By June, 1990, 75% of the third grade students at Cherry Street School will achieve a math score equal to or surpassing the state minimum level of proficiency using the CAT test. This will be the result of instruction and utilization of the district's math curriculum guide/alignment. (approximately 85 students)

Activities	Personnel	Timelines/ Completion Dates	Resources	Evaluation Criteria (Documentation)
Gather/compile all available materials for instruction of Grade 3 math program	Principal, Assistant Principal, Math Supervisor, Grade 3 Teachers	September, 1989	Alignment/pacing chart, textbooks, guides, games, supplemental materials	Compile a list of available material and give to each teacher for his/her use. Copy submitted to Assistant Superintendent.
Review Math pacing chart with teachers and set up a plan for implementation	Principal, Assistant Principal, Grade 3 Teachers	September, 1989	Grade 3 Level Meeting	Task completed and reported to Assistant Superintendent
Conduct Needs Assessment	Math Supervisor, Principal, Assistant Principal, Grade 3 Teachers	September, 1989	CAT Tests	List of skills needing reinforcement will be identified and presented to Assistant Supt.
Monitoring of Grade 3 Teaching of Skills	Principal, Assistant Principal, Grade 3 Teachers	Weekly September, 1989 to June, 1990	Planbooks	Skills listed in the planbook coincide with alignment chart. Report on monthly report to the board. Task completed as reported to Assistant Supt.
Testing of Math skills after each marking period	Math Supervisor	November, 1989 February, 1990 April, 1990 May, 1990	Unit tests (Holt)	Results reported to Asst. Supt.
Update on alignment and teaching of math skills	Principal, Assistant Principal, Grade 3 Teachers	Monthly September, 1989 to June, 1990	Monthly Grade level meeting, alignment chart	Planbooks
Observation of teaching skills in math	Math Supervisor, Principal, Assistant Principal	Weekly September, 1989 to June, 1990	Alignment charts, curriculum charts	Informal observations, feedback to teachers. Report submitted to Assistant Superintendent
Formal observations	Principal, Assistant Principal, Math Supervisor	Three (3) times per teacher during school year		

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# ANNUAL DISTRICT OBJECTIVE AND ACTION PLAN

DISTRICT: BRIDGETON

SCHOOL YEAR: 1989-90

OBJECTIVE: By June, 1990 through alignment and monitoring of curriculum and the revamping of the systematic instructional design, 80% of ninth grade students will meet or exceed the state minimum level of proficiency for the math section of the HSPT. (approximately 178 students)

Activities	Personnel	Timelines/ Completion Dates	Resources	Evaluation Criteria (Documentation)
Make adjustments to curriculum alignment and system of instruction.	Assistant Superintendent High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Supervisors Classroom Math Teachers and BSIP Teachers	July, 1989	Textbooks, CAT materials, HSPT test booklets and skills array	Completed curriculum/alignment guide as submitted to Asst. Superintendent
Continue to monitor and revamp alignment in Math classes: Grade 8 - general and academic, General Math I, General Math II, Algebra I, all BSI Math as well as Algebra II and Geometry where necessary.	High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Board of Ed. classroom teachers of math/BSI teachers of math	September, 1989 June, 1990	Alignment charts and guide	Planbooks and classroom observations
Continue to carefully monitor alignment of curriculum, instructional methods and systematic methods of teaching.	Principal High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	September, 1989 June, 1990	Alignment guide and Curriculum Guide	Planbooks, observations, postobservation conferences. Observations filed in Supt. office
Administer the sample HSPT to all Grade 9 students.	Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	October, 1989	Old HSPT booklets	Test results submitted to Assistant Superintendent
Determine weaknesses/strengths of students. Instruction adjusted to meet the needs of students.	Principal High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	December, 1990	Results of Spring, Fall HSPT	Report of progress submitted to Assistant Superintendent

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# ANNUAL DISTRICT OBJECTIVE AND ACTION PLAN

DISTRICT: BRIDGETON

SCHOOL YEAR: 1989-90

OBJECTIVE: By June, 1990 through alignment and monitoring of curriculum and the revamping of the systematic design, 80% of those students in Grade 10, 80% in Grade 11, and 80% in Grade 12, who had previously not met the state M.P. in math will have met the M.P. in either the October or April HSPT. (approximately 58 students)

Activities	Personnel	Timelines/ Completion Dates	Resources	Evaluation Criteria (Documentation)
Continue to monitor and revamp a paced/ aligned curriculum and system of instruction.	Assistant Superintendent High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Classroom and BSI Teachers of Math	July, 1989	Textbooks CAT and HSPT materials Alignments Charts Curriculum Guide	Completed curriculum, alignment guide
Continue to monitor and revamp pacing/ alignment in General Math I and II and BSI Math	High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Classroom and BSI Teachers of Math	September, 1989 June, 1990	Alignment charts, and Curriculum Guide	Planbooks, Classroom observations, Report of progress submitted to Assistant Superintendent.
Continue to carefully monitor alignment of curriculum, instructional methods and systematic method of teaching.	Principal High School Curr. Coord. Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	September, 1989 June, 1990	Curriculum guide, alignment charts, textbooks	Planbooks, curriculum observations, Evaluative observations
Have monthly articulation meetings among each group respectively: BSI teachers; General Math I teachers, General Math II teachers.	Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	September, 1989 June, 1990	Department Meetings	Report of progress sub- mitted to Assistant Superintendent.
General Math I, II and BSIP classes will receive HSPT skills instruction daily.	Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	September, 1989 June, 1990	Curriculum Guide, Alignment charts, HSPT skills array and supplementary materials.	Planbooks, Department meetings, Report of progress submitted to Assistant Superintendent.
BSIP and Board of Education teachers will meet monthly in paired mini-conferences to coordinate skill instruction.	Math Dept. Head Math Instructors	September, 1989 June, 1990	Planbooks, record books, skills sheet, department meetings	Report of progress sub- mitted to Assistant Superintendent.

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# ANNUAL DISTRICT OBJECTIVE AND ACTION PLAN

DISTRICT: Bridgeton

SCHOOL YEAR: 1989-90

OBJECTIVE: By June, 1990, Bridgeton High School will demonstrate a two-percent gain in attendance as a result of an action plan to improve attendance. This will be indicated by a comparison of the annual attendance report of 1990 to that of 1989. (approximately 1,071 students).

Activities	Personnel	Timelines/ Completion Dates	Resources	Evaluation Criteria (Documentation)
1. A staff committee will be organized and will meet to assess the attendance problem at Bridgeton High School	Principal and staff committee	Sept., 1989	Attendance records of students	Submission of committee report to Assistant Superintendent
2. An attendance motivation program will be developed by the staff committee and presented to the entire staff.	Staff committee and entire staff	Sept. 30, 1989	Material on motivational programs	Submission of the program to the Assistant Superintendent
3. Parents of students in grades 8 to 12 will continue to be called on the first day of a student's absence.	Office staff, counselors, teachers and assistant principals	Sept., 1989 through June, 1990	Tel Sol Telephone, U.S. mail, and parent conferences	Report of calls, letters, personal contacts submitted monthly to the Assistant Superintendent
4. Students who are absent frequently will be referred to the home/school liaison, a social worker, BSIP attendance coordinator, a guidance counselor or an assistant principal.	Principal, assistant principal, guidance counselors and teachers	Sept., 1989 through June, 1990	Time and office space available for counseling	Submission of monthly reports to the Assistant Superintendent
5. The parents of the students who are under the age of 16 and are habitually absent will be taken to court. The parents of those students over 16 years of age will appear before the Attendance Appeal Committee.	Principal, assistant principals and the Attendance Appeal Committee	Sept., 1989 through June, 1990	Court system, school policy, and N.J. Statutes/Administrative Code	Monthly reports of cases going to court and their outcome
6. A program of incentives and rewards will be developed and administered throughout the year for students with perfect attendance records. An intra-school public relations program will be developed and administered.	Principal and staff committee	Sept., 1989 through June, 1990	Community organizations, businesses, and Board of Education	List of students receiving awards

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FIVE-YEAR PLAN

K-12

1987-88

Revise:

social studies curriculum K-12  
language arts curriculum 8-12

Purchase:

new social studies texts K-12  
new edition of Houghton-Mifflin reading series K-7  
general English texts 9-12

1988-89

Complete language arts curriculum revision 8-12

Review science curriculum 8-12

Review and revise:

reading curriculum K-7  
language arts curriculum K-7  
physical education curriculum K-12  
music curriculum K-12  
library/study skills curriculum K-12  
home economics curriculum 7-12  
industrial arts curriculum 8-12  
special education curricula

Implement and evaluate social studies program K-12

Purchase:

new edition of math textbooks K, 1, 2  
language arts textbooks 8-12

Begin installation of computers in special education  
classrooms (to be completed over a five-year period)

Automate district libraries

Institute:

a Teen Services Center at the high school  
an in-school advisor/counselor K-12  
a support LDTC

1989-90

Review:

school policies related to health service areas  
health and family life curricula

Review and revise foreign language curricula (French, Latin, Spani

Begin a review of health services in each school

Purchase new literature series 8-12

Evaluate the implementation of new math series K-12

Integrate computers into home economics

**GLOSSARY [N.J.A.C. 6:8-1.1]**

**Action plan:** A written document describing how the district will organize and act to achieve its objectives.

**Affirmative action plan:** the school/classroom practice plan and the employment/contract practices plan submitted by each district for approval by the Department of Education, Office of Equal Educational Opportunity.

**Annual educational plan:** the plan submitted by each district by September 30 describing priority need areas, related objectives, action plans, and supporting information inclusive of plans and programs for professional improvement for review and approval of the county superintendent of schools by October 31.

**Annual special education plan:** the annual plan for education of all handicapped children submitted each year.

**Articulation:** continuity, consistency and interdependence in the curricular offerings of the successive divisions of the school system.

**Assessment:** a written analysis of the current status of an educational system in terms of achieving its goals and objectives.

**Basic Skills Improvement Plan:** a plan submitted by districts to the department which outlines the provision of services to all pupils in need of assistance in communications and computation skills.

**Bilingual/ESL education program plan:** a plan submitted by districts to the department which outlines the provisions of appropriate educational programs for pupils who are limited English proficient.

**Bilingual/ESL education program:** a full time program of instruction given in both the native language of a pupil of limited English proficiency and in English in all courses which a pupil is required by law or rule to receive.

**Certification:** an acceptable rating in all required indicators as prescribed for all 10 essential elements in the educational process of the district.

**Commissioner:** the Commissioner of the New Jersey State Department of Education.

**Community:** the community at large, including, but not limited to, the parents of students.

**Disaffected pupil:** a pupil who has instructional needs that are not being met by the regular instructional program and who is performing well below his or her social or academic capacity.

**Disruptive pupil:** a pupil who has difficulty establishing good relationships with peers and adult authority figures and who exhibits a pattern of conduct which is in defiance of school rules or regulations and which hinders academic success for other pupils as well as for himself or herself.

(Rev. 7/88)

Teaching staff members: all teachers, principals, assistant principals, vice principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents, school nurses and such other employees as are in positions which require them to hold appropriate certificates issued by the board of examiners and are serving in any school district or under any district board of education.

PC/lp:1/3654m

(Attachment D)

MATERIAL EVALUATION FORM

SUBJECT MOST APPLICABLE TO \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF MATERIAL \_\_\_\_\_

COPYRIGHT DATE \_\_\_\_\_ AUTHOR (DEVELOPER) \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHER \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MATERIAL (CHECK ONE) FILM \_\_\_\_\_ FILMSTRIP \_\_\_\_\_ TAPE \_\_\_\_\_ BOOK \_\_\_\_\_

FILMSTRIP/TAPE \_\_\_\_\_ SINGLE CONCEPT FILM \_\_\_\_\_ SLIDE/TAPE \_\_\_\_\_ TEXTBOOK \_\_\_\_\_

VIDEO/CASSETTE \_\_\_\_\_ TRANSPARENCY \_\_\_\_\_ SIMULATION/GAME \_\_\_\_\_

MULTI-MEDIA KIT \_\_\_\_\_ INDEPENDENT TEACHING/LEARNING UNIT \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATOR \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Read the following questions and examine the material.  
Check the appropriate column to the right, at the end of each section  
total YES, NO AND NA.

	YES	NO	NA
1. Does the title indicate the content?			
2. Are objectives clearly stated?			
3. Do the objectives complement the goals and objectives of your course?			
4. Is the subject matter/concept geared to the interests, abilities, and needs of the students who will be using the material?			
5. Is/are the concept(s) carefully developed?			
6. Does the material develop accurate concepts and generalizations?			
7. Are historical, social, scientific, or other events based on the latest evidence and on social data?			
8. Does the material tend to raise open questions and present issues?			
9. Does the material require students to use higher cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, etc.)?			



13. Is adequate, up-to-date attention given to social issues and problems affecting the following groups; These groups are not depicted as "the problem."

- a. minority groups?  
b. women?  
c. disabled?

14. Are reasons for poverty oppression explained?

In order for an item to be approved for use, it must score a total of 9 of YES and NA in the Materials section and a total of 26 in the Affirmative Action section.

TOTAL

YES	NO	NA

Check one: Eligible for use \_\_\_\_\_

Ineligible for use \_\_\_\_\_

9/89

**SUBMIT IN TRIPPLICATE & RETURN TO ASST. SUPT., ADM. BLDG.**  
 (Overnight trips-Return to Supt. of Schools, Bank St.)

Oct. 5, 1989

Date of Application

**PLEASE PROVIDE COMPLETE ITINERARY ON BACK OF THIS FORM. (Include rest stops, lunch, etc.)**

1. SCHOOL AND ORGANIZATION Indian Avenue School
2. DESTINATION Wheaton Village
3. PRECISE PURPOSE OF TRIP (EDUCATIONAL) To understand the process of glass making and the workings of early industry
4. DATE OF TRIP May 9, 1990 DEPARTURE 9:15 <sup>AM</sup> ~~PM~~ RETURN 1:30 <sup>AM</sup> ~~PM~~
5. NAME OF TEACHER/CHAPERONES Mrs. Merritt, Mrs. Mensh, Mrs. Loder  
Mrs. Rasmussen
6. NAMES OF PARENTS ON TRIP Mrs. Delp, Mrs. Rudish, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. McLaughlin
7. NUMBER OF PUPILS ON TRIP 88 GRADE LEVEL 4
- \* 8. TOTAL COST \$ 1.50 TRANSPORTATION COST \$ None MEALS \$ School Lunch  
OTHER COSTS (Itemize) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ SOURCE OF FUNDS Students

**NO PUPIL MAY BE DENIED PARTICIPATION IN A FIELD TRIP BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS.**

9. EXPLAIN HOW THIS TRIP WILL SUPPLEMENT THE EDUCATION OF THE PUPILS INVOLVED (Include pre-trip and post-trip lesson activities.)  
To supplement our N.J. Studies
10. PLANS YOU HAVE MADE TO INSURE GOOD CONDUCT ON THIS TRIP Discussion of good behavior

11. TRANSPORTATION: SCHOOL BUS(ES) 2 NON-SCHOOL BUS(ES) \_\_\_\_\_  
No. (Company)

If Board buses are being used, has the Business Office been notified? yes

If private buses, is insurance certificate filed in Business Office? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Has cafeteria been given adequate notice of trip? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Have arrangements been made for your pupils not going on trip? \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY: DEPT. HEAD \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 PRINCIPAL Catherine L. Angabe DATE 10.6.89  
 ASST. SUPT. Dorothy E. Peterson DATE 10-6-89  
 BOARD APPROVAL (Overnight trips) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- \* \* \* \* \*
1. Teacher in charge is responsible for securing signed parental permission slips from each pupil. Blanks are available in principal's office and must be filed there.
  2. List of all pupils on the trip must be turned in to the principal before the bus(es) leave on the trip. Pupils who have tendency to motion sickness or other illness should be noted. If necessary, a supply of bags, with a nurse-approved first-aid kit, must accompany each trip.
  3. Proper attire is expected of staff and students. Since it is a school activity, dress codes apply. The principal will determine appropriate attire.
  - \* 4. Teachers are not charged for Board buses for educational field trips.

(OVER)

*Deposit will be lost!*

**OCT 10 1989**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**  
**BRIDGETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

ATTACHMENT E  
 32X

Date March 20, 1990 Hour \_\_\_\_\_

To Anne

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M Dot Peterson

Of \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Telephoned	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Returned Call	Left Package	
Please Call	Was In	Please See Me	
Will Call Again	Will Return	Important	

Message: Field Trip on  
May 9 to 11 in  
Willow Lake will have  
to be rescheduled  
any time before  
April 30 or after  
May 14, 1990

Signed AB

AIGNER FORM NO. 55-056

PRINTED IN USA

FYI

4/30 - 5/14

Gladys: Canceled field trips

BMS.

1. Ortolf + Maser
2. Hanks + Devol

Cherry Street

1. Advanced Kdg.
2. Kinderdarten
3. Cecil Ortolf
4. Townsend + Vagnarella

Buckshutem

1. Doyle Webb + Cindy Buck
2. Fithian

Indian Ave

1. Vanella
2. Menden
3. All 4th Grade

West Ave

1. Kenelia

B.H.S

1. Law classes
  - a) Prison trip
  - b) Law Day Activities

**PERCENT OF STUDENTS ABOVE THE MLP - MATHEMATICS**

	1986		1987		1988		1989	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
	<u>Tested</u>	<u>Above</u>	<u>Tested</u>	<u>Above</u>	<u>Tested</u>	<u>Above</u>	<u>Tested</u>	<u>Above</u>
<b>Boudinot School</b>	26	88.5	18	77.8	23	82.6	26	69.2
<b>District-wide</b>	89	83.1	81	85.2	89	84.3	105	87.5

**SCORE DISTRIBUTIONS - BOUDINOT**

	<u>0-25%tile</u>		<u>26-50%tile</u>		<u>51-75%tile</u>		<u>76-100%tile</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1986	1	3.8	8	30.7	5	19.2	12	46.2
1987	1	5.5	3	16.7	6	33.3	8	44.4
1988	1	4.3	6	26.0	7	30.4	9	39.1
1989	2	7.6	7	26.9	6	23.0	11	42.3

**NUMBER AND PERCENT SCORING ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
1986	17	65.4
1987	14	77.8
1988	16	69.7
1989	17	65.4

**COMPARISON OF SCALE EXTREMES**

	<u>25th Percentile or Below</u>		<u>90th Percentile or Above</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1986	1	3.8	4	15.4
1987	1	5.5	2	11.0
1988	1	4.3	1	4.3
1989	2	7.6	8	30.7

PUBLIC MEETING FOR MONITORING  
BY  
THE ASSEMBLY OF NEW JERSEY  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MARCH 27, 1990  
GLASSBORO HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENTATION  
BY  
DR. CHARLES F. VALENTINE  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
VINELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GOOD MORNING! AND MY PROFESSIONAL APPRECIATION TO ASSEMBLY  
EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON GERARD NAPLES AND HIS ASSEMBLY COLLEAGUES WHO  
HAVE DEMONSTRATED GREAT WISDOM IN CONVENING THESE HEARINGS RELATIVE TO  
THE MONITORING OF NEW JERSEY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

THIS IS MY 34TH YEAR AS AN EDUCATOR IN NEW JERSEY AND I'VE BEEN  
WITH THE T AND E PROCESS SINCE ITS INCEPTION, HAVING ATTENDED THE  
ORIENTATIONS PROVIDED BY DR. FRED BURKE IN 1976 AND HAVING BEEN  
APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF T AND E AND SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR THE  
VINELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN 1977. I HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART  
OF THE PROCESS THROUGHOUT ITS EVOLUTION AND TO THE PRESENT 10 ELEMENTS  
AND 43 INDICATORS.

THE COMMENTS WHICH I MAKE TODAY ARE MY OWN OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO REPRESENT THOSE OF MY DISTRICT OR ANY ORGANIZATION OF WHICH I AM A MEMBER. HOWEVER, I DO BELIEVE THE ESSENCE OF WHAT I CONVEY WOULD BE ECHOED BY MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES - EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE FAR LESS DIRECT, FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE WITH THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF THE PROCESS.

FIRST, LET ME ECHO THE ADMONITION OF CHAIRMAN NAPLES. THERE IS A FEAR, AN INTENSE FEAR, OF ADVERSE MONITORING REPORTS. AND DISTRICTS ARE, AND HAVE BEEN, SPENDING THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEIR SCHOOL DAYS ON COMPLIANCE TO THE EXCLUSION OF EDUCATION. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR US IN VINELAND, IN OUR STAFF MEETINGS, TO POINT OUT, WITH TONGUE IN CHEEK, THAT A MATTER OF EDUCATION HAS ACTUALLY MADE OUR AGENDA - PERHAPS FIVE OR TEN MINUTES GIVEN TO AN EDUCATIONAL ISSUE DURING A MEETING OF TWO OR THREE HOURS DEVOTED TO POLICIES, PROCEDURES, MANDATES, REPORTS, EDICTS, RULES, ELEMENTS, INDICATORS, AND BUDGETS. STUDENTS AND PROGRAM RELATED MATTERS ARE RARELY THE FOCUS OF THE AGENDA - AND,

IF MENTIONED AT ALL, ARE USUALLY RELEGATED TO LAST PLACE IF TIME REMAINS. TRULY, WE ARE SPENDING ALL OF OUR TIME DEMONSTRATING THAT WE ARE COMPLYING WITH:

ANNUAL PLANNING

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

PUPIL ATTENDANCE

FACILITIES

STAFFING AND CERTIFICATION

MANDATED PROGRAMS

TESTING

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

AND FINANCING

THIS TASK IS SO ENORMOUS, THAT IN A DISTRICT SUCH AS MINE IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY WHERE, TYPICALLY, RESOURCES ARE THE LEAST OF THE TWENTY-ONE COUNTIES, THE FEW OF US WHO, BEFORE MONITORING, DID



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, ARE NOW ALMOST TOTALLY INVOLVED IN COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES ON A SEEMINGLY PERPETUAL BASIS. CHECK-UP REPORTS AND APPLICATIONS WITH DEADLINES ARE ENDLESS. LOOK AT THE THICKNESS OF THIS MONITORING MANUAL. IMAGINE THE COMPLIANCE HOURS. TRULY WE HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE WE HAVE NO TIME TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT.

A FEW FACTS SHALL SERVE TO UNDERSCORE THE SCOPE OF THE INVASION WHICH MONITORING HAS HAD ON THE LOCAL DISTRICT. IN OUR CASE, IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE MONITORING VISITS, WE DELIVERED ELEVEN CARTONS OF "BACK-UP" DATA TO THE COUNTY OFFICE FOR A DESK AUDIT PRIOR TO THE ON-SITE VISIT. IN A RECENT WORKSHOP, A DISTRICT WHICH HAD PASSED MONITORING PROVIDED PLANS OF ONE LARGE ROOM (THE MONITOIRNG ROOM, IF YOU WILL) DEVOTED TO HOUSING THE BACK-UP INFORMATION REQUIRED TO PROVE COMPLIANCE. NOW, WHERE, WITHOUT UNLIMITED RESOURCES, MIGHT ANY DISTRICT FIND SUFFICIENT PERSONNEL TO MAINTAIN SUCH OVERHEAD WITHOUT AN ALL OUT INTERVENTION OF DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS. IN SUCH AN

ATMOSPHERE, WHERE WOULD EVEN THE BEST EDUCATOR FIND TIME TO CUSTOMIZE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS.

HAS MONITORING HELPED THE STUDENTS? THIS QUESTION REALLY REMAINS UNANSWERED. WHILE THE OPINIONS ARE AS VARIED AS THOSE ASKED, MY CONTENTION IS THAT IT HAS NOT. THE CRITICISMS OF EDUCATION, IF ANYTHING, HAVE BECOME FAR MORE PERSISTENT IN RECENT YEARS THAN IN 1977. WE HEAR THAT OUR STUDENTS DO NOT COMPETE WELL WITH THOSE OF OTHER NATIONS, AND OUR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL LEADERS REPEATEDLY TELL US THAT THE GRADUATES ARE NOT ADEQUATELY PREPARED TO READ, WRITE, DO MATH, OR EVEN DISPLAY THE REQUIRED WORK ETHIC FOR THE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT.

THE PROCESS SIMPLY HASN'T WORKED AND CAN'T. HARRY HOUDINI HIMSELF COULDN'T PREDICT WHAT ANY MONITOR MIGHT EXPECT TO SUPPORT THE REQUIREMENTS IN THIS BOOK. THEN THE PROCESS ITSELF IS FLAWED. USUALLY, THERE IS A ONE YEAR BUILD-UP FOR THE MONITORS, FOLLOWED BY A

FOUR YEAR "SIGH OF RELIEF" AFTER THE INSPECTION.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MANY OF THE ITEMS MONITORED SHOULD BE ONGOING. LOGIC WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE MOMENT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DETECTS A DEFICIENCY, THAT WOULD BE THE TIME TO GET THE DISTRICT ON TRACK. WHY WAIT UNTIL THE WHOLE TRAIN IS DERAILED? MAINTENANCE IN LIFE IS PERPETUAL. THE MONITORING SYSTEM PROMULGATES SPORADIC "FIXING" INSTEAD OF ONGOING IMPROVEMENT.

I SHALL BRIEFLY ADDRESS EACH ELEMENT AND INDICATOR JUST TO COMMUNICATE TO THE PANEL WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING, AND WHAT I BELIEVE WOULD BE MORE PRACTICAL.

<u>ELEMENT</u>	<u>INDICATOR</u>
----------------	------------------

- |     |                                          |
|-----|------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <u>ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING</u>       |
| 1.1 | EDUCATIONAL GOALS                        |
| 1.2 | ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES            |
| 1.3 | LONG-RANGE PLAN, CURRICULUM AND SERVICES |

2     SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PLANNING

2.1   SHARING INFORMATION WITH COMMUNITY

2.2   BOARD MEETINGS FOR PARENTS/RESIDENTS/TEACHING STAFF-  
       OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCUSSION

2.3   OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT AT REGULAR MEETINGS

2.4   USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

2.5   INVOLVING COMMUNITY AS ADVISORS IN DECISION MAKING

3.     COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

3.1   ANNUAL APPROVAL OF CURRICULUM, IMPLEMENTATION,  
       ARTICULATION

3.2   EXCEPTIONAL PUPILS; IDENTIFICATION, PROGRAM, SERVICES

3.3   GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

3.4   LIBRARY SKILLS PROGRAM

3.5   STUDY AND WORK SKILLS

3.6   DISRUPTIVE PUPILS; IDENTIFICATION, PROGRAM, SERVICES

3.7   DISAFFECTED PUPILS; IDENTIFICATION, PROGRAM, SERVICES

4. PUPIL ATTENDANCE

4.1 DISTRICT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE (90%); IMPROVEMENT  
PLAN (85-89.9%)

4.2 SCHOOL AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE (85%); IMPROVEMENT  
PLAN (80-84.9%)

4.3 PLAN TO REDUCE DROPOUTS

5. FACILITIES

5.1 FIVE YEAR MAINTENANCE PLAN

5.2 ANNUAL INSPECTIONS - HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.3 SUBSTANDARD CLASSROOMS

5.4 LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLAN

6. STAFF

6.1 CERTIFICATION

6.2 SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS & AIDES

6.3 PROFESSIONAL STAFF ABSENTEEISM (5%)

6.4 ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (3.5)

6.5 OBSERVATIONS & EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING & ADMINISTRATIVE  
STAFF

6.6 STAFF DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR -  
APPOINTMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

7. MANDATED PROGRAMS

7.1 BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

7.2 BILINGUAL E.S.L.

7.3 SPECIAL EDUCATION

8. MANDATED BASIC SKILLS TEST

8.1 GRADE NINE H.S.P.T. - 75% PASSING

8.2 GRADES THREE AND SIX - 75% PASSING ACHIEVEMENT TEST

9. EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

9.1 DESEGREGATION PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION

9.2 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN - ANNUAL REVIEW

9.3 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION

10. FINANCIAL

10.1 ACCURATE AND TIMELY REPORTS TO BOARD

10.2 ACCURATE AND TIMELY REPORTS TO COUNTY, STATE, FEDERAL

10.3 ANNUAL SCHOOL BUDGET

10.4 ANNUAL AUDIT

10.5 DEFICITS

10.6 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

IN SUMMARY, IT IS MY CANDID OPINION THAT THE MONITORING PROCESS, IN ITS PRESENT FORM SHOULD BE TERMINATED AT ONCE, WITH AMNESTY FOR DISTRICTS WHO MAY BE IN A LEVEL 2 OR LEVEL 3 MODE. IF THERE IS EVER ANY VALID REASON TO RENEW A POLICING TYPE OF ACTION IN THE FUTURE, IT SHOULD:

1. BY ONGOING, MORE LIKE THE ORIGINAL PROCESS INSTITUTED BY DR. FRED BURKE.
2. ELIMINATE ANY SEMBLANCE OF PASS/FAIL AS IT NOW EXISTS.

3. ACCENT, IN A POSITIVE MANNER, ALL AREAS WHICH THE DISTRICT IS COMPLETING SATISFACTORILY.
4. ASSIST THE DISTRICT WITH ANY AREAS FOUND TO BE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT.
5. PLACE THE OBLIGATION FOR PROVIDING WORKABLE, AFFORDABLE SUGGESTIONS UPON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-NOT UPON THE LOCAL DISTRICT.
6. ELIMINATE THIS MANUAL FOR THE EVALUATION OF LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THIS MIGHT BE REPLACED WITH A CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE POSTED IN EACH SCHOOL SO THAT "MONITORING" BY THE BOARD, ADMINISTRATION, STAFF, PUPILS AND PUBLIC COULD BE DAILY AND ONGOING.
7. BASE PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENT. A DISTRICT WHICH IMPROVES SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED. FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER THE PRESENT PROCESS ONE WEALTHY DISTRICT MAY HAVE NEEDS IN ONE



INDICATOR. A POOR DISTRICT MAY HAVE NEEDS IN TEN OR MORE INDICATORS. THE SAME CREDIT SHOULD BE AWARDED THE LATTER DISTRICT FOR IMPROVING IN ONE INDICATOR AS IS AWARDED THE FORMER. WHY SHOULD THE MOST IN NEED HAVE TO WAIT FOR APPLAUSE WHILE IT IS IMPROVING AT THE SAME RATE AS THE WEALTHIEST AMONG US?

8. ABOLISH "TAKEOVER." THIS PROCESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN OFFENSIVE AND PROBABLY NOT NECESSARY. AT MOST, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO PRIORITIZE WHICH NEED A "DISTRICT-IN-GREAT-NEED" SHOULD ADDRESS FIRST.

9. RECOGNIZE, AT THE OUTSET, THAT "CONSISTENCY" IS NOT A CONSIDERATION BECAUSE MORE THAN 600 DISTRICTS EXIST IN NEW JERSEY. TO BE "CONSISTENT" BUILDS IN DISPARITY. CURRENTLY, INDICATORS (EXAMPLES: TESTING, SPECIAL EDUCATION, DROPOUTS, SUBSTANDARD CLASSROOMS, GRADE NINE

H.S.P.T., DESEGREGATION PLAN, ETC) APPLY TO SOME  
DISTRICTS, BUT NOT ALL DISTRICTS.

10. ABOLISH TESTING OF STUDENTS, OR AT LEAST, REMOVE TESTING  
FROM ANY MONITORING PROCESS.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS BASED ON MY  
EXPERIENCE SINCE THE INAUGURATION OF THE T AND E PROCESS. MAY I ALSO  
OFFER TO SERVE AS A VOLUNTEER, IN ANY CAPACITY, TO ASSIST IN  
CORRECTING THIS RUNAWAY BUREAUCRATIC WHITE ELEPHANT. WE CANNOT  
AFFORD, LITERALLY, EVEN ANOTHER MONTH OF MANPOWER TO THIS  
NON-EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE. THIS COMMITTEE HAS DONE A WONDERFUL  
SERVICE BY CONDUCTING THESE HEARINGS. I'M SURE MUCH VALUABLE, USEFUL  
INFORMATION HAS BEEN GATHERED. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE VIGOR OF THIS  
COMMITTEE AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHALL CHART A NEW, ENLIGHTENED  
COURSE FOR EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY, IN A TIMELY FASHION. AS A FACT,  
I'M SO IMPRESSED WITH

WHAT YOU'VE DONE ALREADY, I'M CERTAIN THAT THE FUTURE FOR THE CHILDREN  
OF OUR STATE IS ALREADY RISING BRIGHT AND FULL OF HOPE - AS IT SHOULD  
BE.

RESPECTFULLY,

DR. CHARLES F. VALENTINE





# NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Executive Board 1989-1990

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Testimony given on March 27, 1990 to New Jersey State

Assembly's Education Committee by Barbara Bole Williams, Ph.D.

President of New Jersey Association of School Psychologists

New Jersey Association of School Psychologists (NJASP) represents over 700 school psychologists in New Jersey many of whom play an integral role and feel the significant impact of the monitoring process within their local public school districts. The school psychologist, as a member of the Child Study Team and often as the administrator of special education services, is a significant contributor to the district's performance on monitoring Indicator 7.3 - Special Education.

In general, monitoring has had a negative impact on school psychologists. The emphasis of the criteria examined in Indicator 7.3 is on the administrative aspects of special education (e.g., Board of Education policies, Child Study Team records, and documentation of the implementation of classified students' Individual Educational Plans) rather than on the quality of the educational program or instruction within the classroom. Monitoring in special education has become a "paper chase" process which has increased the administrative burden and cost of documenting special education regulations. Very little of the effort which goes into preparing a school district for monitoring translates into improved programs and services to benefit children.

A major concern observed by our Association is the inconsistencies which exist from county to county in the interpretation of the monitoring criteria in special education. A lack of uniformity in the information given to school psychologists through their County Offices has become apparent when school psychologists across New Jersey compare their experiences.

Among the most significant impacts of monitoring on the school psychologist is the effects of preparation on working conditions and the increased level of stress on the job. Preparation for monitoring interrupts the school psychologist's delivery of direct services to children. Consultative and evaluative services are often curtailed because of the time-consuming process of reviewing Child Study Team records and the documenting of the administrative process of service delivery. The impact on the educational system leaves the classroom teacher and students with a decreased level of psychological support services.

NJASP supports the attainment of standards of excellence in the delivery of special education services to our children. We also recognize that evaluative measures are necessary. However, the monitoring process in special education in New Jersey has become a time-consuming force which can monopolize the energies of school psychologists, other Child Study Team personnel, and special education teachers. In addition, County Office of Education staff members have become evaluators and inspectors which limits the time they are available to serve as facilitators and consultants to school psychologists to help improve the educational process.

NJASP recommends that the monitoring process in special education be reexamined by the State Department of Education. This reexamination should strive to minimize the burden of excessive paperwork and documentation and focus instead on methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program and services offered our special needs students.



# PENNSAUKEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Administration Offices • Hylton Road • Pennsauken, New Jersey 08110 • (609) 662-8500  
William Markiewicz, *Administrative Assistant*

March 27, 1990

Office of Legislative Services  
CN068

Education Section  
Trenton, New Jersey

Attention: David Rosen

RE: The Monitoring Process: Pros & Cons

Most educators would agree that the monitoring of local school districts by the State is basically a necessary and justifiable concept. Monitoring provides the vehicle to ensure that the children in New Jersey's public schools receive a "thorough and efficient" education consistent with the law. In light of the hundreds of thousands of dollars in state aid distributed each year, monitoring provides some measure of accountability by requiring local districts to justify as to how and where this money is used, the ultimate measure being the effectiveness of the education the students receive. Educationally, the concept of monitoring is a sound one. It is the process that needs to be re-evaluated.

Generally speaking, the most frequently criticized aspect of monitoring seems to focus on the amount and different kinds of documentation required throughout the process.

1) Documentation has become too cumbersome. The amount of documentation a district must maintain on file has greatly taxed the record keeping process. The time, effort and money involved to maintain records is not justified based on the actual amount of time these records are used for documentation purposes.

2) A number of monitoring indicators require as documentation, various applications, letters of approval and other reports already submitted and on file at the local and state level. This is a duplication of effort. Why not coordinate the effort at these two levels and generate a master list to show just what kinds of documentation are not on file. The county office can then notify the district so the discrepancy can be rectified prior to monitoring. Examples of documentation duplication can be found in the following indicators:

- 1.2 Educational Objectives & Attainment of Objectives  
acknowledgement letters from the county office
- 3.6 Violence & Vandalism, Fall Dropout Report
- 4.1 Attendance Summary Report
- 4.3 Fall Dropout Report
- 7.1 BSIP Application & approval letter
- 7.2 ESL Application & approval letter
- 7.3 Special Education Application & approval letter
- 8.1 Ninth Grade HSPT results
- 8.2 Test Results Grades 3 & 6

3) There was a time when local districts used to complete and sign a "Statement of Assurances" to verify compliance in the different categories. Why not resurrect this practice? The county offices have been at this long enough to know which districts are in compliance and which districts are not.

4) There are a number of inequities in the computation of occasional staff absenteeism (6.3) that need to be addressed. Absences in excess of five consecutive work days do not count in terms of computing occasional absenteeism, however this can have a reverse effect in that teachers who miss five consecutive days may opt to stay out that sixth day. The process also does not take into account the use of bereavement days and exemptions for jury duty. The reality is, that as the median age of teachers increases across the state, so does the reality of increased sickness and death by members of their families. As for jury duty, teachers are no longer as easily exempt as they were in the past.

5) Documentation required in Element 5: Facilities and Element 9: Equal Educational Opportunity/Affirmative Action, are two other examples of just how cumbersome the process has become. Take a few minutes to read through and respond to the checklists required in Element 5 and the the "Annual Review of Progress" as it applies to Element 9.



6) Staying with Element 9, there are other built in inequities, especially for districts with Desegregation Plans. Desegregation districts are required to complete section III of the Annual Review of Progress and in a number of instances submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) based on some response given in this report. For example, on page 10, any NO answer requires a "CAP" but only districts with a desegregation plan need complete this page. It is quite possible that there are some districts out there without desegregation plans who would have some NO answers if they had to complete this section.

7) In Element #10: Financial Compliance, a number of fiscal reports called for as documentation are completed and submitted periodically as mandated by Statute and /or Code. If there are any problems with these reports, they should be brought to the district's attention at the time of submission or shortly thereafter.

On the plus side, monitoring has had its positive effect on local school districts.

1) Monitoring reports along with subsequent documentation can provide the necessary support or impetus a district needs in order to initiate improvements, especially in the areas of facilities, health and safety.

2) Monitoring does provide some measure of consistency throughout the state as to what constitutes a "thorough and efficient" education and this is particularly important if the New Jersey high school diploma is to maintain its credibility. The state has made a concerted effort to be consistent in its approach to monitoring in all 21 counties. It didn't always appear to be this way.

3) The prospect of being monitored encourages districts to do some self-evaluation. The monitoring process provides the mechanism and incentive for districts to reflect on those educational programs and services which are successful and those which need to be revised and/or improved.

4) One final note worth mentioning in this whole process is the effect monitoring has had in solidifying, an already positive relationship, we have experienced with the county office. While some districts may feel that this has been a "gotcha" process, we do not share these sentiments. Throughout the process we have called on the county staff for technical assistance on numerous occasions, and in every instance, they have responded in a most positive and supportive manner. We have developed a better understanding of their role in this process and in return feel they have shown a sincere interest in the needs of our district.

Again, allow me to reaffirm our position that in concept, we recognize monitoring as an essential element in the "thorough and efficient" process. Our major objection herein lies in the process itself, the repetitiveness of the documentation, checklists, etc., required to ensure compliance.

Thank you for allowing our district to express it's concerns as they apply to the monitoring process.

Respectfully submitted,

*William A. Markiewicz*  
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