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PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY BILL 2928

(Establishes an eleventh grade high school graduation test)

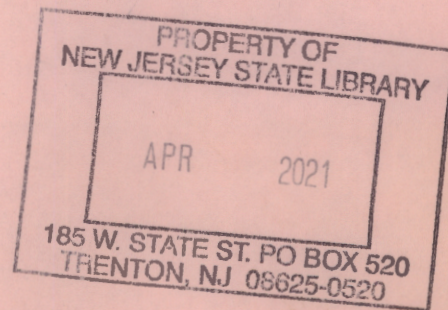
April 7, 1988
Room 341
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Joseph A. Palaia, Chairman
Assemblywoman Elizabeth E. Randall, Vice Chairwoman
Assemblyman Joseph M. Kyrillos, Jr.
Assemblyman Gerard S. Naples
Assemblyman William J. Pascrell, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT:

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



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

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OFFICE

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY BILL 2028

(Testimony given on November 14, 1968, at the hearing on Assembly Bill 2028)

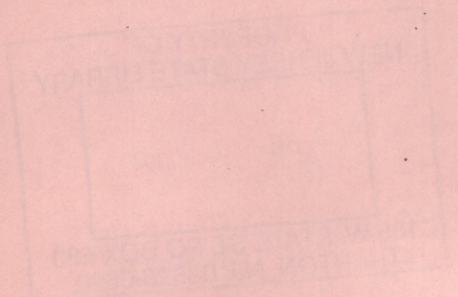
April 17, 1968
Room 341
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Joseph A. Belsky, Chairman
Assemblyman Clifford E. Randall, Vice Chairman
Assemblyman Joseph M. Kyrillos, Jr.
Assemblyman Gerald S. Waples
Assemblyman William C. Farnell, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT:

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



Heard and recorded by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey 08602



JOHN A. PALAIA

Speaker

Elizabeth E. Randall

Deputy Chairman

Joseph M. Kyrillos, Jr.

Richard S. Naples

Liam J. Pascrell, Jr.

New Jersey State Legislature

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

TELEPHONE: (609) 984-6843

March 25, 1988

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

on

Assembly Bill No. 2928

(sponsored by Assemblymen Kyrillos and Villane)

Establishes an eleventh grade high school graduation test.

The Assembly Education Committee will hold two public hearings as follows:

Thursday, April 7, 1988 at 10:00 A.M. in Room 341 of the State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey.

Thursday, April 14, 1988 at 1:30 P.M. in the Library, Cedar Ridge High School, Route 516, Old Bridge, New Jersey.

Anyone wishing to testify should contact David J. Rosen, aide to the committee at (609) 984-6843 and should submit copies of their testimony to the committee on the day of the hearing.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 18, 1988

By Assemblymen KYRILLOS, VILLANE, Assemblywoman Smith,
Assemblyman Bennett, Assemblywoman Farragher,
Assemblymen Palaia, Doria and Pascrell

1 **AN ACT** establishing an eleventh grade test for high school
graduation, amending and supplementing P.L. 1979, c. 241.

3

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
5 *State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 3 of P.L. 1979, c. 241 (C. 18A:7C-3) is amended to
7 read as follows:

3. For any student who does not meet the State and district
9 examination standards for graduation by the end of [tenth]
eleventh grade, the local board of education when appropriate
11 shall provide additional remedial instruction specifically directed
toward mastery of those proficiencies identified as necessary for
13 the awarding of a diploma which may include but need not be
limited to an extended school year, extended school day, or
15 additional school years.

Any twelfth grade student who does not meet said
17 requirements but who has met all the credit, curriculum and
attendance requirements shall be eligible for a comprehensive
19 assessment of said proficiencies utilizing techniques and
instruments other than standardized tests, which techniques and
21 instruments shall have been approved by the Commissioner of
Education as fulfilling State and local graduation requirements.

23 (cf: P.L. 1979, c. 241, s. 3)

2. Section 4 of P.L. 1979, c. 241 (C. 18A:7C-4) is amended to
25 read as follows:

4. All students who meet State and local graduation
27 requirements shall receive a State endorsed diploma; provided,
however, that the Commissioner of Education shall approve any
29 State endorsed diploma which utilizes the comprehensive
assessment techniques as provided in section 3 of [this act] P.L.
31 1979, c. 241 (C. 18A:7C-3).

EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the
above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 Local districts may not provide a high school diploma to
 3 students not meeting these standards. Any out-of-school youth
 or adult age 18 or over who has otherwise met the district
 graduation requirements but has failed to earn a State endorsed
 5 diploma may take [a basic skills] the graduation proficiencies test
 which has been developed and administered under the auspices of
 7 the Commissioner of Education. Upon passing this test, a State
 endorsed diploma will be granted.

9 Each board of education shall provide, in a format approved by
 the Commissioner of Education, a performance transcript for
 11 each student leaving secondary school.

(cf: P.L. 1979, c. 241, s. 4)

13 3. Section 6 of P.L. 1979, c. 241 (C. 18A:7C-6) is amended to
 read as follows:

15 6. In the school year which begins in September [1981] 1993,
 and annually thereafter, the State graduation proficiency test
 17 shall be administered to all [ninth] eleventh grade pupils and to
 [all other high school pupils who have] any eleventh or twelfth
 19 grade pupil who has previously failed to demonstrate mastery of
 State graduation proficiency standards on said test. The mastery
 21 of proficiencies required to fulfill local graduation standards shall
 be determined as appropriate under local board of education
 23 assessment plans.

(cf: P.L. 1979, c. 241, s. 6)

25 4. (New section) The Commissioner of Education shall develop
 and administer to all eighth grade pupils in the school year which
 27 begins in September 1990, and annually thereafter, a test to
 assess progress toward mastery of State graduation proficiency
 29 standards. For any student not meeting established examination
 standards, the local board of education shall provide for
 31 appropriate remediation in areas of demonstrated deficiency.

5. This act shall take effect immediately for the purposes of
 33 planning and development; however, sections 1 and 3 shall not
 take effect until July 1, 1993 and the graduation standards
 35 provided for herein shall only apply to pupils who are enrolled in
 the eighth grade during the 1990-91 school year and scheduled to
 37 graduate from secondary school at the completion of the
 1994-1995 school year.

1

STATEMENT

3 This bill establishes an eleventh grade test as a requirement for
high school graduation. The new graduation test would be given
5 to eleventh graders beginning in the 1993-1994 school year.
Pupils who fail to meet the standards could retake the
7 examination in the eleventh grade and again in the twelfth
grade. The test would, therefore, first apply to students who are
9 scheduled to graduate in the Spring of 1995. The ninth grade
proficiency test will continue to apply to students scheduled to
11 graduate prior to th spring of 1995.

Under the bill, beginning in the 1990-91 school year, students
13 would be tested in the eighth grade to assess their progress
toward mastery of State graduation proficiency standards.
15 Remediation would be provided for students who fail to meet the
examination standards.

17

19

EDUCATION

Students

21

Establishes an eleventh grade high school graduation test.

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ASSEMBLYMAN JOSEPH A. PALAIA (Chairman): Ladies and gentlemen, can I convene the meeting of the Assembly Education Committee. I would ask our Aide, David Rosen, to call the roll please, so we know who's present.

MR. ROSEN (Committee Aide): Assemblyman Kyrillos?

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Here.

MR. ROSEN: Assemblywoman Randall?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RANDALL: Here.

MR. ROSEN: Assemblyman Naples?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Yes.

MR. ROSEN: Assemblyman Pascrell?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Here.

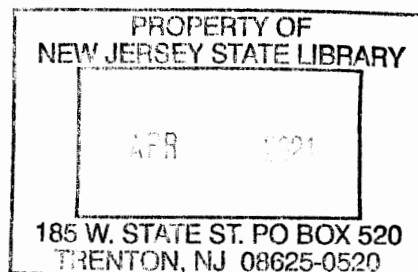
MR. ROSEN: Assemblyman Palaia?

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Here. Can we have the bill read, please -- the synopsis?

MR. ROSEN: Assembly Bill 2928 establishes an eleventh grade test as a requirement for high school graduation. The new graduation test would be given to eleventh grade students beginning in the 1993-1994 school year. Pupils who fail to meet the standards could retake the examination in the eleventh grade and again in the twelfth grade. The test would first apply to students who are scheduled to graduate in the spring of 1995. The ninth grade proficiency test will continue to apply to students scheduled to graduate prior to that date.

Under the bill, beginning in the 1990-1991 school year, students will be tested in the eighth grade to assess their progress toward mastery of State graduation proficiency standards. Remediation would be provided for students who fail to meet the examination standards.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: At this time I'd like to hear from the sponsor of the bill -- one of the sponsors -- Assemblyman Joe Kyrillos. It's co-sponsored by Assemblyman Anthony Villane. And then I will get to our first presenter.



ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a statement that I'll go through as quickly as I can. I know we have a lot of testimony today.

The Committee today is considering Assembly Bill 2928, legislation which, in my judgment, is among the most important the Legislature will debate during the current session.

In his January State of the State message, Governor Tom Kean called for the Legislature to "raise the bar" on our students, the bar that they must hurdle in order graduate from a New Jersey public school. A-2928 embodies the Governor's proposal.

It is a relatively simple bill. It makes only two changes to the current law. However, those changes are very far-reaching.

The bill amends the existing high school graduation standards by moving the ninth grade test to the eleventh grade test. It also establishes an eighth grade early warning test.

The eleventh grade exam will test a higher level of basic skills, a higher level than the current exam. The eighth grade test will alert school officials to potential problems a student may face in passing the eleventh grade exam.

It is not an understatement to say that the new basic skills test is crucial to the future of our children, the future of our State, and of our society.

This point is underscored by an article -- and I have it here it with me today. It was in yesterday's Trenton Times. The newspaper reported the remarks of Nancy Perry, who is an Associate Editor with "Fortune Magazine" in New York. Ms. Perry pointed out that there is a crisis facing America, facing America's business community. She noted that as many as 30% of the nation's working age people will be unemployable by the turn of the century, because they won't have enough education to perform competently in the workplace.

She also noted that the American business executive community is alarmed by the fact that there will soon not be enough competent workers to support American industry. She pointed out that there were 23,000 applicants for entry level jobs at a New York telephone company, and out of that, recently 84% flunked a basic skills test.

Ms. Perry's remarks are echoed by those of David Kearns, Chairman of the Xerox Corporation, who noted that the cost to industry to re-educate their workers in basic skills was recently estimated, according to his people, to be about \$2 billion a year.

As legislators, we have a responsibility to the children of New Jersey to ensure that, at a minimum, they have the basic skills necessary to perform competently in the workplace and in our society.

Unfortunately, empirical indicators point to basic school deficiencies in the graduates of New Jersey high schools. The State Board of Higher Education recently issued a report which showed that the level of basic skills for freshmen entering New Jersey colleges has not increased in 10 years. And those statistics are very alarming.

Over the last 10 years, New Jersey's economy has changed from an industrial based economy to an information and communications based one. If our children are not provided with basic skills, they will be unable to compete politically, compete economically, and socially, in this more complicated society. This bill represents an effort to ensure that our children have those basic skills.

I look forward to hearing the Commissioner. I commend him, commend our Governor, from educators, parents, and business and community leaders alike. Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Assemblyman. Our first presenter today will be our Commissioner of Education, Dr. Saul Cooperman. He will be followed by our Chancellor, T. Edward Hollander. Dr. Cooperman, nice to have you. I haven't seen you in a while.

COMMISSIONER SAUL COOPERMAN: Right, Joe. Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: School intervention is all over with. I didn't see you for a long time. (laughter)

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: No, it's not all over with.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: No, it's not over yet.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Oh no.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: It's just beginning.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: For you it's beginning.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: It's the end of the beginning.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: It was a commencement.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss Assembly Bill 2928, which would require students to pass an eleventh grade reading, math, and writing test as a requirement for graduation.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Assemblyman Joe Kyrillos for sponsoring this -- I really appreciate it; as well as the co-sponsors, Assemblyman Palaia, Pascrell, Doria, and Villane. I appreciate your work, as always, in turning your attention to this legislation. I think it's so necessary.

Our first step in raising academic standards was moving from the MBS to the HSPT. The MBS test was, I felt, a first step -- a necessary first step -- but the bar was so low. Ninety-five percent of the students passed this on the first attempt. And we kept telling ourselves that we were good because 95% passed the test. And of course, the numbers went up from that point.

This test assessed minimums. It didn't say anything else, and didn't purport to be anything else but minimums. And yet, in 1982 when I assumed this office, there was no pressure on me at all--- no one was putting pressure on -- to change from the MBS. In fact, I was told to keep this in place because everything is good, and everything is fine.

With your support, we developed the High School Proficiency Test, still a ninth grade test, but a significant step up from the MBS. An obvious difference between the MBS and HSPT was the writing sample. We said that all children had to know how to write. And we knew through our monitoring that in many schools writing was de-emphasized. We saw that class size was moving down, and yet there was not writing in our schools, and we were able to prove this. And since we thought that it was necessary for literate people to be able to write at least a well organized essay, we pushed for a writing sample. We were one of the first states to do so.

The difference between the two tests that we're talking about is not simply the degree of difficulty within the same set of skills. The HSPT added skills of critical thinking, problem solving, and writing. All one would have to do is look at those two tests to see the difference. It became obvious. Most of the people in this room would get 100% on the MBS. I don't think everyone in this room would get 100% on the HSPT. It was a major shift.

In fact, many school districts had to realign their curriculum from grades one through eight so that the children could pass the HSPT. And we've worked with the teachers of this State and the administrators of this State for years, through institutes that we've held, through publications. Other people throughout the United States have asked us for these materials, in order, not just to set a standard-- You set a standard and that's artificial. What backs up that standard? And what backed up that standard were comp-ed

programs, teacher involvement, administrator involvement, in order that the kids would have a good chance to pass the HSPT.

Specific skills that were identified by people representing public education, higher education, business and industry, and parents. Each year when a new test is developed, the items are included to assess the skills that must be mastered at the end of the ninth grade.

These skills are still important for all students. But I ask the question: If we have a graduation test, shouldn't those skills be at the end rather than the beginning of high school?

The proposed eleventh grade test would assess most of the same skills as the HSPT, but at two grade levels higher. It would not be a major shift, as it were, from MBS to HSPT, but it would be advancing those skills. The best way I can explain it is to say that we would still have a high jump, but the bar would be up. We'd still have a broad jump, but one would have to jump more.

The group of parents and educators and business people would decide what skills must be measured at eleventh grade. Therefore I believe that this eleventh grade test is absolutely necessary in raising basic skills performance in New Jersey. It would assess skills closer to the end of high school. It would allow students to retake up to three times the test if they failed it in eleventh grade.

In preparing for retesting, the students would receive remedial assistance as they have for years. Our State ranks third in the United States of the number of children receiving compensatory ed, and right now -- I don't have my figures -- we either rank third or fourth in the dollars per pupil on compensatory education, for those given State compensatory ed. So to say that New Jersey is failing the children who don't pass at even the second, third, or fourth level -- because I think all of you are aware, we equate. If a child does not

pass a commercial test at a certain level in third grade, they get State compensatory ed, in fourth and fifth and sixth grade. The early warning systems are there.

A graduation test administered near graduation is necessary. The question is, why now? The HSPT has only been in three years. What are you rushing for? Well, as through questioning it will come out, this test would not count until the class of 1995. It takes that long to develop a test and implement it. But why now?

As Assemblyman Kyrillos mentioned, we can't afford to wait. There have been studies released, one that I read by the Federal government says 23 million Americans lack reading, math, and writing skills. We have a major initiative in this State. We're told by the Literacy Volunteers of America it's the biggest in the United States. We figure we have almost 700,000 people in the State of New Jersey who can't read beyond the fifth grade. Now, with the jobs moving up like that, and people who are functionally illiterate, we're just creating more work for the welfare system, and not employing people who should be employed. And we know the jobs are there.

The study also found out 75% of the available workers in the year 2000 are already out of school. Many of these marginally employable, are functionally unemployed. In other words, business and industry is going to be forced to absorb the cost of remedial education for millions of workers that pass through our schools. That cost, including lost productivity, is anticipated to reach 25 billion a year. Kearns -- who Assemblyman Kyrillos just quoted, apply describes his remedial teaching business as, "doing the schools' product recall work." And he said, "I resent that."

The Federal study defined lack of basic skills in terms of today's job market. But the jobs themselves are changing too. We know this. Service industries are outstripping manufacturing. Jobs requiring little or no basic

skills are disappearing. People are going to have to learn and write and think and compute.

A young adult with a solid foundation of such skills can pick up the classified section of almost any newspaper and find a variety of entry level jobs. The jobs are there. Pick up any paper on any day. In a recent edition of a New Jersey daily newspaper, I counted 16 ads for administrative assistants. Only five stipulated that job candidates possess any specific occupational skills. The other 11 were looking for basics: Organizational skills, assertiveness, and aptitude for figures, good written and oral communication skills. In other words, employers already are requiring, at a minimum, that workers be able to think, to think straight, and think for themselves; to organize their work, as well as read and write and compute. These employers included a packaging company, a law firm, a real estate office. The salaries advertised ranged from the mid teens to the low 20s.

A review of the same day's classified section illustrates a similar demand for bank tellers, bookkeeping assistants, clerical workers, customer service reps, data entry clerks, printing assistants, and sales reps. Any one of these jobs might be a pretty good start for some high school graduate. The jobs are there.

The problem, however, is that most of these employers will be hard pressed to find job candidates straight out of high school with the basic qualities and skills stressed in those ads.

In a recent meeting I had with corporate leaders in this State -- it was about a month and a half ago; 30 of the largest employers in the State of New Jersey -- nearly all of them told me it's necessary to administer basic skills tests in the hiring process. Although we're very hopeful that when they get the kids that come out of the HSPT, they were not particularly pleased with the children who came out of the MBS system.

To further exacerbate the problem, demographic projections indicate that in the next ten years the number of available workers is most likely going to shrink. The available jobs will require more than ninth grade skills. And yet we've seen something funny happen in many of our school districts. Whatever the State sets as a minimum, certain school districts set as a maximum. They take our minimums and set that as their maximums. That again I can prove.

Public education can begin now to prepare students for these future demands, or we can just look away, and let industry, the colleges, and the military, pick up on what we don't do.

The lack of an educational foundation is a problem not limited to students entering the work force. Higher education officials report that large proportions of college freshmen -- more than half -- require remedial instruction before doing undergraduate work. When colleges must devote most of the student's first semesters to teaching what should have been learned in the high school, there is less time for courses to prepare them for professional and technical occupations; or even the liberal arts, which are so necessary for a well-rounded individual.

The legislation before you would ensure that our high school graduates are taught the necessary basic skills in high school, not in college, not at work, not in the military. It's a viable effective plan for implementing an eleventh grade test.

As you probably know, the Department of Education, at the direction of Governor Kean, studied this issue for over a year before we made recommendations to you.

In addition to the eleventh grade test, we include an eighth grade test that would be linked to the eleventh grade test; an early warning system, if you will. The first student scheduled to take the eighth grade test would be in 1990-'91. These would be the same young boys and girls that would be

required to take the eleventh grade test prior to graduation. Thus, the first official administration of the new graduation test will be in December, 1993 for the graduating class of 1995. The proposal also includes practice testing of eleventh graders for three years preceding the first official test. This is the so-called, "due noticing," so that every school, and the teachers and the administrators, can get the curriculum in line. But again, it only has to be in line for two grades, because it's already in sync from grades kindergarten through grade nine.

During those three years of preparation, we would continue to provide assistance to local educators. This would include some of the things we've done and been reasonably successful at. These would be our HSPT institutes, they would be our summer programs where we link work and learning together. We had these in 17 of our poorest performing school districts.

I just might mention, Assemblyman Palaia, as a digression, that in the 17 worst performing school districts on the HSPT, the dropout rate in those school districts averaged 10% per year. And since we've put in this program -- this is in our second year, so I'm cautiously optimistic -- the dropout rate of those kids was down to 2.5% per year. That's pretty amazing. Just by working with the kids, giving them a job, linking with them, saying you care, and following through, only 2.5% have dropped out in their tenth and eleventh grade. So the results have been encouraging.

In the four years the HSPT is administered, the last two of which counted for graduation, the percentage of students passing has increased every year. It's increased more in the urban areas -- and I can discuss these specifically -- than it has in other areas. Of course, the urban were more behind, but they made a tremendous jump in keeping up, and we're very encouraged by that.

During the five-year time line proposed for developing and implementing the new testing program, the goal will be to continue making gains on the HSPT, particularly in our urban districts. These gains will help educators and students make a smoother transition to the new testing program.

Again, I'd like to thank Assemblyman Kyrillos for sponsoring this crucial legislation. And I appreciate the opportunity to discuss it with you now.

An eleventh grade test makes good sense, and what gets measured, gets done. If we don't measure it, it won't get done. We have the opportunity with this legislation to prepare now, and our children, for the year 2000. I think as everyone knows, the kids who came into school this year, are the children who are going to graduate in the year 2000. So I urge you, for New Jersey's future, to support the bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Commissioner. I think while you're up here, Commissioner, there might be some questions from the members. Let's start with Assemblyman Naples.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you, Dr. Cooperman for your statement. I'll get right to the point.

Relative to the eighth grade early warning system, in the event that a student should fail that test, could that be used as a factor in retaining him or her in the eighth grade?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Sure. But I've tried to read the research on that very very carefully. There have been some cities, and some states even, that use what they call, "promotional gates." The literature is fuzzy, as it often is, but it tends to lean towards the side that keeping a child back, having a promotional gate by a test such as this, may not be in the best interest of the child. It depends on the student, depends on the school and what they're going to do. Frequently it's done with all good intentions. "You don't have the skills. You're not ready to move on. Let's keep you here

until you have the skills." Sometimes the other side of it -- the ego, the self worth type of thing -- becomes a greater negative than the desire to teach skills. It can be used by a local school district, and nothing is in this proposed legislation that would stop a local decision. But we are not recommending promotional gates.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: In tandem with that, and the possibility ostensibly is that -- the possibility, it's not mandated -- young man "X" or young woman "X" could pass every course, have enough credits at the conclusion of eighth grade to go on to ninth grade, and then owing to a failing grade on the test, might possibly be prevented from going on to ninth grade, despite the fact that the kid's achievement in the teacher's grade book reflected his or her having passed standards. Wouldn't that possibly reflect on the validity of the test? If the kids failed the test, but passed every subject -- indicating that he's ready to go to high school from the standpoint of credits or Carnegie units, or whatever you want to call it, wouldn't that pose a problem? If some districts say, "Well, we're going to count this against you," and other districts say, "Well, we think that your record over a period of --" let's take the middle school years, sixth, seventh, and eighth "-- when we're dealing with this particular subject matter which pertains to the test, would obtain more than the test itself," how do you reconcile that?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: I think I can reconcile it fairly easily. The test would be a test -- the eighth grade and the eleventh grade test -- of the skills necessary, as the law says, to "function politically, economically, and socially in our society." You take the best people you can and say, "What are the skills necessary?" And from the skills you go into the process of creating a test. If these are the skills necessary, then these should be the test items, and you test market them and so forth.

If there were a school district were -- let me use an outlandish example -- 70% of the kids failed the eighth grade test in math, but 70% of the kids passed the teacher grading, I think that would raise serious questions in that district as to what is the grading system. Are we diminishing the rigor and inflating the grades? That sometimes happens.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That occurred to me.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: So that is what the school district would have to say. What we're saying here is this is a minimum. We would want districts to go beyond this. I'll give you just one example. This comes from the Federal government. When American kids have been tested in the last couple of years in international comparisons, our best children -- say the AP courses and the honors courses -- with the brightest kids from Italy and Germany and France and England and China and whatnot, our children didn't finish first once. They finished last four times. When we compare at fourth grade and seventh grade our children, all our children and all their children, we don't finish first once, and we finish in the bottom quarter more often than not.

So, we're going to have face situations now. Do we want to get by the moment? Do we want to look away? Do we want to take the easy path and say, "Let's not be rigorous"? I think that time has passed, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I'm not saying that at all. I want to be rigorous. Don't forget, I was with you, very much in the vanguard, of replacing the minimum basic skills test with the HSPT. And you know I went through a whole lot from my own colleagues because of that. I believe in rigorous standards. The question is, what will be the paramount standard in determining whether a kid goes on to the ninth grade? Could this well turn into an admission test of sorts to go into ninth grade for a lot of school districts? This is my concern here.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: We're saying that is an absolutely local decision. If I'm asked the question, unless I would get more information, I would answer it the way I'm answering it now; that the evidence seems to be on the side of don't use it as a promotional gate. Don't keep the kids back because they fail this test. However, there is some indication, and some people can show you success, with a promotional gate in keeping a kid back.

The important thing is, do they have the skills? And they should know about this early on. The eighth grade will give an accountability back to the second and third grade. Every school district in this State uses standardized testing, and most of them use one of four basic tests, nationally validated. So we know in second grade, third grade, fourth grade. This State makes a tremendous investment in terms of dollars. I think, if we don't count Alaska, we're second on per pupil in the United States. I think the money has got to keep flowing, the programs have to keep flowing, but we've got a right to keep those standards up there too.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Having placed a lot of kids being a junior high school principal, I remember the first school at which I was principal, testing weighed very very heavily. But I remember my instructions were to place the kid in the grade based upon recommendations by the guidance counselor -- in the section rather, a kid went from seventh to eighth, eighth to ninth -- and on the kids' grades per se. And then take a look at the testing to either move the kid up or down, or if a parent complained and wanted their kid in a higher class, we would take a look at testing -- you might say -- as a super adjunct to move a kid up or down within the gradations after the kid has passed from one grade to the other. When it goes beyond that I think it can defeat its own purpose. My great fear is that some districts will weigh this much too heavily despite your recommendations.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: They might, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: And to me that would be unfair to their own teachers.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Well, you know you have pros in the district. You have guidance people. You have principals.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Right.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: You have teachers to sit down to individually look at a child and make that best decision. There's got to be, in my opinion, an end point. If the diploma must count, we've got to certify that children have learned something. What is that something? We argue that out. We hack it down. But if we're going to have a graduation standard, and to say that children who get this State diploma have met this standard, then reasonable people can debate what that standard is. My position is that we've got to have an end point. Now, whether a child should be promoted in third or fourth grade, or fifth or sixth grade, there's a lot of information out there and a lot of research to guide us. But I think the locals can make that decision.

If someone is, let's say, two standards deviations on the fourth grade test below what we say is a minimal level of proficiency -- that's technical stuff, and Gerry I know that you understand it of course -- but if they're below that and the kid is getting an A or a B that's got to have someone jump out of their skivvies and say, "What the hell is going on here?" That may mean a looking at the grading system locally, and so forth. But what you do is put all the things together and you decide on whether to promote or not. But we've got to have an end point.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: One more quick question and then I'll pass. One more quick question on the eighth grade aspect. I've always felt that unless a test, after a student has taken it, was reviewed by the teacher in front of the kids

or in concert with the kids, as quickly as possible, it would not be so valuable inasmuch as reviewing a test is in itself a learning experience. How quickly will this eighth grade test be graded, and what are the chances that it could be reviewed by the teacher in front of, let's say, class 8C at Grice or what have you, so that 8C which took the test, could review the test as 8C, rather than when they're in ninth grade next year and spread all over the place?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Right now, from the time the test are collected until the results go back to the school are six weeks. That means, taking the tests, sending them out to the people who scored the tests, and getting it all back and tabulated in the administrator's and teacher's hands.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: So it could be done then?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Oh, it is done now in six weeks, and the reason it takes us six weeks is mainly because of the writing sample, because teachers correct that sample. They read them. We have two teachers read each writing sample. If they disagree by a certain range, then a third person reads it.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That's where the hitch is, all right.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: But I think it's so important to have the results back, so that those kids could review that with, "I got this wrong." "Here's what you should have done right." Again, that's a learning experience. It's a learning experience as well as a result of an evaluation heretofore given.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: I don't want to let pass -- this is a technical point -- but we've been giving a type of test that you mentioned here for three straight years. This is called an open test. What we do is we give the test. We make a new test each year. After it's given, the test can be used

by the teachers and the administrators as a diagnostic tool. So, those who argue that way, and we argued that way, it's pro kid. And you can take the test and you can see whether you're teaching the skills. Not to teach the answers, because we constantly change the test, but to teach the skills which will lead you to a well-rounded young man or young woman.

We're going to change that. We've had recommendations, both from our technical advisory committee and the best testing people in the field in the United States, and they said three years of an open test is adequate. People know what this test is now. You have lots of material. You've been having these institutes for years, and whatnot. Now is the time to go to what's called the closed test. Therefore, starting next year we will start a closed test. That will mean the test will be given, but the teachers and the administrators cannot keep that test. They are going to have to return every test to us. So we're going to be going from an open test to a closed test. There are a lot of technical arguments of how you embed this and so on.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: That's important. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Gerard. Let me just ask-- You know, Commissioner, you mentioned -- correctly so -- you even went down as low as second, third, and fourth grade with this. You know, it really behooves us to pursue the bill that's being prepared right now for preschool. You know, you might say, "eleventh grade, preschool?" But you know, it's all the same package. It's all the same package. And the quicker we get to these students -- I know you're a great advocate of this, anyway -- but I think the quicker we get to these students down in those primary grades, the better off we're going to be; whether it's a ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade test or what have you.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Yes. How you should diagnose, how you should assess, is always really arguable. It's almost like the porridge: Is it too hot-or-too cold? A lot of people say, "Too much testing and Too much State intrusion." You know, we can argue at each different level. The school may give its own proficiency test. Some teachers test every two to three days, and they have research to back it up. You know, they give two or three questions. Some give tests every month, and they say, "I just want to let you learn for a month and then I'll give you a test." I think there should be diagnosis at early years, preschool and elementary school, but I don't know that we should give tests in the term of--

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: I'm not looking for tests.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Right. You're talking diagnosis.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: I'm looking for diagnosis. That's what I'm looking for. I don't want to test them down at that level. That doesn't tell you anything really. All I want to do is get them into in a school where they can get the social and the academics down, you know, starting at five years of age. Oh, I don't want to test them. That's way too early for them.

We had some other questions? Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Commissioner. Through the Chair? I have some questions and a couple of comments to make.

The subject of testing has always been fascinating to me. It's almost like going to three doctors to get three different opinions. I've changed my mind about it, I guess, several times, as I'm sure you have over the past 10 years. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Somewhat. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: When did you stop beating your wife?

The subject is an interesting one. I'm looking at the statement of the bill, in the last sentence of the statement, "Remediation would be provided for students who fail to meet the examination standards." Now, the term, "remediation" is a fascinating term too, similar to the term "testing." If I were to ask Chancellor Hollander about remediation, Chancellor Hollander would talk to me about how many students, in particularly the community colleges, are into remediation -- and State colleges as well. Besides the community colleges, the four year colleges.

I'm going back to what our Chairman said. I don't see or perceive a continuum of education in this State, nor do I perceive a continuum of testing. If we were to look at this proposal, which I think has tremendous merit, and I think should be placed on the table and should be discussed, but you can't help in discussing this particular bill, in discussing 2928, you are automatically drawn into the area of testing in general, and evaluation. Because what we're talking about is not only evaluating students, we're evaluating how we evaluate students, how we test students. I don't believe that there is a proper continuum of testing in the State of New Jersey. I think that this bill may be a good bill -- I think it is to a large degree -- but I don't believe that this is the answer, and I don't think you're saying that either, to evaluation of our students in the State of New Jersey.

In your statement you talk about the HSPT as being an assessment of the added skills of critical thinking, problem solving, and writing. But doesn't this have more to do with what happens in your home, and you've addressed that in talking about parents involvement, pre K -- as the Chairman has talked about -- and K, and elementary grades? Because, Commissioner, what you said about colleges having to spend a lot of time concerning what should have been taught in high school, can more dramatically be applied, I think, to high schools having

to teach what should have been taught or learned in elementary schools. I think that's where the emphasis should go.

I think we're missing the point, and I've said that a number of times. I think we're missing the point because we're losing the battle, not in the high schools, because by then we have the potentials for dropouts and we have people who are technically dropping out in terms of their attendance even though they're still on the rolls. Wouldn't you say that the major problem of revolutionizing education in the State of New Jersey is in the elementary schools? Would you agree with that?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Say it again, please?
Revolutionizing education--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Revolutionizing education in New Jersey has more to do with what goes on in the elementary schools than in the high schools.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: You said so much. Let me try and give a reaction to some of what I think are the main points.

The first thing was home versus school influence: There is undeniable evidence-- When we look at dropouts, one can have almost irrefutable evidence that in second or third grade you can predict dropouts. You can predict dropouts by poverty, by mobility, by race. The best standard is -- it might sound a little crazy, but it's the best predictor -- is mother's education. So you take the correlates of mother's education and mobility and poverty, and you mix in doses of racism that goes with that, and you see that you're forming that dropout before that child gets to school. Part of Coleman's report, way back, was saying that the home is the thing that counts. The schools really can't do that much.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Up to a point.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: That's what he said. But then, you've got another body of evidence by supposedly effective schools people -- Edmonds, Lezotte, Brookover -- and they said, "Wait a second. Yes we can. If we do certain

things, we can make a difference." I've been to schools, and I've been to urban schools, that make a difference.

So, yes the home counts very very much. And when you have factors in the home that are disruptive-- Ernie Boyer said it. He said if the parents watch television all the time, the kids watch cartoons on Saturday and Sunday, but there's nothing on the book shelves but knick knacks, that kid is going to have trouble in school. So, the home does count. The more the home helps, the better schools can do their job.

The second thing is, we're given a lot of money -- and I'm not reluctant to ask for money-- But I think ask for money to do the job, but also be accountable for results to say that that money has gone somewhere.

One of the things, in coming down to the elementary school, it is very very important. That's why we have two things. The first is this bill, to have an eighth grade early warning system that would say to the elementary schools, "Here is the reflection of what you've done." Because one of the criticisms-- When you said, have I changed in the last 10 years? Sure, in some things I've changed 180 degrees, and in some things I've changed very little. One of the things that I learned from the HSPT, by giving it only in ninth grade, and although we have equated right down to second grade, the schools don't make that public. So, if they don't do well, they don't say anything. So by giving an eighth grade test we are now saying, "Here's the reflection of kindergarten through eighth grade." That's one big thing that agrees entirely with your premise, elementary schools.

The second thing that we're trying to do, and we're just in the development stages -- and the Governor mentioned this in his State of the State -- a report card for every New Jersey school, not school district, school. And one of the key things in there would be how the kids are doing in basic skills.

I'll conclude with this statement. It's not going to be in this term as Commissioner, and maybe it won't be until the year 2000 -- I would sure hope that I could have been Commissioner, and we never would have talked about basic skills -- that the schools could have convinced the military, the higher ed, the industrial, and all the public, that our kids are achieving so well, so we wouldn't have to have a basic skills test, so we wouldn't have to justify a graduation standard. So there'd be trust that we're not lowering standards and inflating grades. So the very sensitive statement, "I'm taking the child where he is and moving him ahead," is not somehow distorted to, "He can't really do much so I won't ask much." Therefore it becomes very insidious. So we put kids in low tracks. They don't achieve. We give them a C or a D and pass them on.

I think we need this test now. I think that the eighth grade moves down to the elementary schools. And I think the report card initiative will ring that clarion bell and say to elementary schools, "You're doing well, let's pat you on the back," or, "What's going on here? Let's take a look."

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Well, you know we've had some real good things come out of T & E. We've heard a lot of criticisms of it. I disagreed with your abandoning of some of the implementation factors a few years ago. I think that you became impatient on some things, but that's for another day.

When you go back and look at the 10 years -- 12 years, 10 years? -- of the evaluation of thorough and efficient -- we talked about this with the Chairman a couple of times. When you talk about testing for minimum basic skills, regardless of what ingredients you add to it, that's not good enough for me, and I don't think it's good enough for you. I'm wondering what we're going to eventually do in terms of the content matter, the subject matter, of testing; and maybe we're going through a whole reevaluation of when we should test, and how important is

testing? Are there other ways to evaluate besides testing? Are there other ways to assess what's going on in the school? When we talk about accountability, maybe we should talk about accountability of the school rather than the teacher, the individual school; so that you have an umbrella concept of what's working and what is not working.

I'm not so sure that we're not putting the cart before the horse in talking about moving this test to the eleventh grade -- a bill which I can find tremendous merit with -- without concentrating our efforts in those early grades; because by the time the eighth grade comes, and we have an analysis of everything that wasn't done, it's too late. I mean, what are we doing to face up-- I mean, the kids are there now, and you said yourself that the seed is sown for destruction early in those elementary grades. What are we doing? What are you recommending and suggesting as part of this continuum? Otherwise, we're building another test on a very weak foundation. What are we doing for the foundation? What are you recommending?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Okay. First of all, the foundation is getting stronger. There is evidence over the last four years, hard data, that by giving a difficult test -- more so than the MBS -- scores are going up. We're one of, I think, two or three states where the SAT scores have either stayed the same or gone up in the last five years. And we are number three in the United States in the number of our kids that take the test. So that whereas the national average has gone up eight points in math, New Jersey has gone up fourteen points. Where the national average I think has gone up five points in reading, we've gone up ten or eleven points. So New Jersey has outdistanced the nation in SATs. Just for an example, our urban 56 districts: In 1984 68% of the kids passed the reading test, now 83; 52% passed math, now 65. So we have seen improvement.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Can I have those figures again very quickly? Could you repeat those percentages?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Okay. The urban 56 in 1984, 68% passed reading, now 83% pass reading; 52% passed math first shot, now 65% pass math.

What are we doing in elementary schools? Let me mention two things. One is these HSPT institutes. We run institutes for teachers from first, second, and third grade. Most could argue, is this the role of the State? You always get that centralization versus decentralization. I tend to be eclectic in it. If the State can help and do something that can help, the State ought to be in. If the State can't help, and we're just making jobs for people, the State ought to stay the heck out. I think in our HSPT institutes, on feedback from teachers, they're oversubscribed, they say it's absolutely tremendous. We get good feedback on that. We will continue to run these institutes in the elementary schools for our teachers.

We started this year -- and the recommendation was to the Governor, and he accepted it -- for a preschool program in five urban districts. Frankly, I would have liked to have had it in more than five districts. We had to compromise down I think because of the money. I think it's \$11 million or \$12 million. But these are just two of the things we're doing. We're also having publications. We're having training for teachers. We're trying to recruit teachers. Right this spring we're going to have a fair, because some the urban districts do not recruit teachers. Those who should recruit teachers more, who should be out there trying to get teachers, don't. And so we're going to work with urban administrators to say how to run a recruiting fair. So we're trying to bring in good teachers. We're trying to work with our good teachers that we have. We're trying to have publications and institutes in a preschool program.

Focus clearly has got to be on K-8, because if this comes into implementation -- as I think it must -- if kids start to fail that eighth grade test, that is an absolute reflection on what happens in kindergarten through seventh grade. But optimistically, the arrow is pointing up. It's getting better. We have evidence to prove that all through our school system.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: What do you think the impact on the curriculum will be, of changing to the test to the eleventh grade?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: People will have to buckle down; the kids will have to; I think the administrators especially, and certain districts will have to. It's not going to be as drastic as when we went from MBS to HSPT. That was from a test which asked kids to add numbers and multiply two digit numbers, which asked people to solve multi-step problems. As I said, and I would be glad to bring this before you, to give you the math test or the reading test in MBS and HSPT, there is a clear difference. What this does is keep all the skills -- we call them skill arrays -- so you take all the skills that kids have to need from first grade to ninth grade, and you just add two more grades.

Let me use my metaphor of the high jump. You'd say to a little guy in the second grade or a little girl in third grade, "Here's how high you have to jump. If you jump this high, you're on the path to passing the HSPT." And so that bar goes up, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth grade. And we know how high it has to go up for someone to jump over it in ninth grade. Now the bar is at ninth grade. What we would then do is raise that bar in tenth and eleventh grade. We could now say to the public -- whose trust we have to have and whose money we want -- "These children are better prepared to take their place in the workplace."

We are going to have more and more children coming from our urban districts. My demographic studies say that in the year 2015, we will have a majority of minorities in the State of New Jersey. If we don't do a better job in our urban areas, part of it is setting through standards, part of it is through money, part of it is through program, part of it is recruiting and retaining teachers, it's an amalgam, a melange, which has to go together. And I think we've got the programs in place. This just adds one more piece.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I don't think you've really answered the question of what impact you're going to have on the curriculum.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Tremendous in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Do you believe in subject testing?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Sure. Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Do you think that the High School Proficiency Test is a content or subject matter test?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Absolutely not. It tests--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Why isn't it?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Because it tests the basics in reading, the basics in math. It doesn't test Algebra I. It doesn't say, "Is Algebra I consistent throughout this State?" It doesn't say, "Is Biology I consistent throughout this State?" It just says in the basics-- That's why I say I'm hoping one of these days that we're not going to have a basic skills test. We'll say to the public, and they'll have confidence, "We've passed the basic skills. Now let's get on. Let's focus more with gifted and talented because all of our kids are up to this level."

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to come back, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: We have a lot of time. We've got another hearing next week.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: There's a lot of questions I have, a lot of questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Sure. Assemblywoman, do you have any questions at this time?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RANDALL: Actually, just more a comment. I'll be brief because I think we have other speakers.

Well, if you want to know how I feel about this, I'll start by saying I was very angry with Assemblyman Kyrillos for not asking me to be a co-sponsor. But I've forgiven him. (laughter)

I think we have an obligation to look at the end product that we're producing. It occurs to me that the current ninth grade HSPT is really a misnomer I suppose in some ways, because we're really looking at a ninth grade product at that point. If I'm an employer, and I want to bring in someone, I'm willing to train a high school graduate in my law office, and maybe he or she would like to be a paralegal. But I'll do that training. I'll teach them how to be a paralegal, but I would like to know that that person has the ability to read what I give them, and has an ability to perhaps even draft a cover letter. If I say, "Send this to so and so, and say this, this, and this," I would hope that that person can take what I have given the individual and write the letter. I mean, we're talking about a cover letter, and I would hope that's one of the things that our high school graduates would be capable of. And if they want to handle a real estate closing, and work up figures for a real estate closing, I hope they could take a year's worth of taxes and divide it by 365 and give me a per diem rate, and adjust them for closing.

Those are the things I would hope I would not have to teach that individual who came in, to seek employment with me. I frankly think if it weren't for the problems I guess inherent in analyzing the very end program, I'd be in favor probably of the twelfth grade test.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: I appreciate those comments. And Assemblyman Kyrillos, I would certainly suggest that you get a co-sponsor form for Assemblywoman Randall.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to remedy that right away.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Yes, before we leave this room.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: It would be a great addition to the bill, by including Assemblywoman Randall.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Do you have any comments, Joe?

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, just a couple of quick questions because I know there are a lot of folks that want to testify. Thanks, Commissioner for coming and for everything you said this morning.

I don't need a whole lot of convincing, but some friends of mine have expressed concern about the potential dropout rate that this change may bring about. My understanding is that the dropout rate has held firm when we moved from the minimum basic skills test to the current HSPT; that things haven't changed at all. And I know you've mentioned some of the socioeconomic factors that come into play with the rate. But there is some concern with how the Department calculates the dropout rate. Can you shed any light on that?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Yes. We calculate it the way almost every other State Department calculates it. That's by taking the ninth grade cohort -- so-called -- and looking at that cohort as it moves through to twelfth grade. So if kids don't come back between the summer school, the end and the beginning, we don't count that as a dropout. We make the assumption that they've gone to another school, they've moved, or whatnot. A dropout is between the year, between September and June. The dropout rate, I think the important thing in measuring it that way, has been constant.

We heard that the dropout rate was going to go through the roof when we gave the HSPT. It did not. It didn't move at all. It stayed at a constant. We are very very pleased with this.

But one other thing, a test does not cause a dropout rate. Continued failure can cause a child to drop out; continued failure in school, and every teacher and administrator knows this. As kids tend to fail, or if a kid comes in that has a record of failure in a high school, within two or three days cleaves like a magnet to a group of other kids who are already having trouble, to reinforce their self worth.

Work causes dropouts. The minute you start moving beyond 12 hours per week, the incidence of a kid dropping out increases.

So, what I'm saying is, the way we count dropouts, the way most states count dropouts, it has not changed in four years. And the cause for dropouts is primarily within the family, and within the peer group, and how much a child works. I reviewed that before in talking with Assemblyman Pascrell.

One of the things that we're studying is what the Rochester school district is doing in calculating their dropout rate. It's much more sophisticated than what we're doing. And if we see that they have any insights that we don't have in tracking kids, to see where kids go, to be able to put them on computers, we will do that. But moving it to eleventh grade will not cause additional dropouts.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Another criticism of our bill is that this new eleventh grade test comes too quickly on the heels of the ninth grade test. It seems to me that there is adequate time, that the first test won't be administered until 1993, in the class of 1995. Can you speak to that?

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: That's absolutely right. If we don't get started now-- If someone said, "You're going to give the test next year," then I think the criticism would come in abundance. They'd say, "My gosh, you're springing a test in one year. We didn't have time to prepare." But if you look at this time line, and you look at the time line that was given to move from MBS to HSPT, this is one year longer than that. I thought when we were moving from MBS to HSPT, that I couldn't go through that first term, and I called it and argued all over the State. We were arguing that it was a tyranny of minimums, and I meant it. I would hold up that MBS booklet and say, "Is that what you want your kids to learn? Is this what an education is?" And I'd quote from the specifics.

1993, you're right, is the first time the test will be given, and it won't count until the graduating class of 1995. We're at 1988. That's seven years to do all the things we have to do: Get the committee together, develop the skills; once we develop the skills, the test items are tested for ethnic bias, for racial bias; get the tests out there, have our TAC committee look at it. It's a long and arduous process. If we don't get on with it now, every month we lose is another month that it will go into 1996.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: I think you're absolutely right. And I think one way to put it into its proper perspective is to realize that the people that will be tested, the first class to be tested, currently is in the fifth grade. So these are fifth graders we're talking about right now. There's lots of time ahead.

Thank you very much, Commissioner. I'm proud to be a part of the effort.

COMMISSIONER COOPERMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Assemblyman. Thank you, Commissioner.

We'll now go to Chancellor T. Edward Hollander. And keeping with the baseball season, on deck will be the NJEA. That's the old baseball term, who's up next, you know.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Cleanup. Ducks are on the pond.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Nice to have you with us, Chancellor.

CHANCELLOR T. EDWARD HOLLANDER: Thank you very much. It's a delight to be here. I don't often have a chance to come before this Committee. So, it's a special pleasure

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Always nice to have you, sir.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Commissioner Cooperman presented many of my arguments in favor of the test. I share his conviction that we must graduate more students with the ability to read and write at eleventh grade levels; students who can think critically, who can enjoy the full cultural life of our community, and who recognize and carry out our responsibilities in a free society.

If we do not, we will not be able to manage our industries, staff our hospitals, or meet the minimum personnel requirements of our economy.

This year, one out of every two high school graduates went on to college, not just from New Jersey's majority communities, but from New Jersey's minority communities as well. Many who do not go to college now, will go to college sometime during their working career. Ultimately, two out of three high school graduates will complete some form of post secondary education.

Tens of thousands of high school graduates are so poorly prepared for college that they require remedial work. Thousands more drop out of college because they cannot complete remedial work. Thousands are not employed because they cannot pass company administered basic skills tests.

Large numbers of ill prepared students come from high schools located in the major urban areas of the State. The education they receive is neither thorough nor efficient. The preponderant majority of these students are black or of Puerto Rican descent. They are cheated out of a fair chance in life.

The proposed graduation requirement will help these students the most because: First, their schools will be required to increase the performance of their high school graduates. Second, we will measure and report on their performance. And third, remediation will be available in the senior year of high school to raise their performance levels so they can pass the test and graduate.

But basic skills deficiencies are not a minority problem alone. The majority of students who fail the New Jersey College Basic Skills Test are white. Most come from poor families. They, too, will benefit from the availability of the new test.

So I ask you, I plead with you, to support this legislation. In so doing, you will reduce the burden on our colleges to provide remedial education. But you will not eliminate that burden.

The Commissioner wisely proposes that the test be administered near the midpoint of the junior year of high school; students will continue to learn for a full year and a half after they will have taken the test.

A full 12 years of high school is essential for college level work. Students who are barely able to pass the test in the senior year will still be short one and a half years of essential schooling.

The test will be equated with the General Equivalency Diploma examination. Students who come to us with only a GED skill level are not likely to meet our minimum standards for college level work. Two out of three such students, for example, now fail the verbal skills test. But they will be

very close, and we are confident that our colleges will be able to supply the necessary missing skills. But what a boon that will be for those high school graduates who now graduate with less than ninth year reading and writing skills. What a boon that will be for poverty level students who are able to receive remediation, if needed, in the senior year of high schools.

If this program is implemented, at last we will be able to give all high school graduates a fair chance in life. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Chancellor. Is there anyone-- Yes, Mr. Pascrell?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Good morning.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Good morning. How are you?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Chancellor, how are you?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Fine.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: On the second page of your statement, in your second sentence, you're talking about students who can think critically and, "who can enjoy the full cultural life of our community." How can you talk about those kinds of things, and at the same time not test for content or subject matter?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: If a student can't read or write or compute, I don't see how that student can function effectively in a community, either in employment, in his cultural life, take advantage of his library, take advantage of all the amenities we have to offer as a society. That's kind of fundamental. We can't teach a student world history if he can't read the history book. We can't teach the student art if he can't read the art book. So reading and writing is fundamental to any further progress.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I don't think there's anyone here in this room that would argue with that. We're dealing with fundamentals and before you move into content area, you must have some--

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Well, you learn in content areas, but what you take out of the content areas and apply to other content areas is fundamental qualities and skills.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: You've had no experience in content areas haven't you, in New York?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: You mean in terms of the Regents examinations?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Yes.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Yes, that's a content area oriented examination.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: What do you think about that component of testing and evaluation?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Well, I think it serves a very major purpose in New York State. It assured that any student who took, say, geometry, anywhere in the State, received the same scope of coverage of the course. When the Regents examinations were first implemented, or before they were implemented, if you took geometry in Niskayuna, New York, you may have covered a different level and quantity of material than if you took geometry somewhere else. So the purpose of those examinations were to increase the standards and the subject matter content in those districts and high schools around the State which didn't meet what the Regents considered to be a minimum level for recognition of course work in that subject area.

The Regents, by the way, examinations had other problems. A lot of detractors from the Regents exams argued that it created two classes of high school students, those who pursue the Regents examinations and those who did not. But we had a great debate, I remember. I'm from New York, as you know, and we spent a whole Regents board meeting discussing and debating those examinations, and we concluded that on balance they served a worthwhile purpose in the State.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: If they served a worthwhile purpose in New York, do you feel that-- Are you anticipating my question?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: I'm anticipating your question and--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Let me put the question this way, in a fairer way.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Let me just say, before you ask the question, that my area of expertise is the collegiate level. The Commissioner is the expert on the elementary and secondary schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: In New Jersey. He's talking about New York.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: In New Jersey, is there a place for content or subject testing in terms of what you see coming into freshman year in the four year and community colleges in the State of New Jersey?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: You mean, should there be uniform, statewide tests available in high school subject areas?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Well that would be my second question.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Well, if that is the question, then I have--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: My first question is different. It's more comprehensive. Is there room for such subject matter testing, or content testing, in the State of New Jersey?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: In that context, in terms of your second question I would argue that there is much to be gained by doing that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: There's much to be gained?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Yes. I wouldn't argue that content area testing for other than well defined subject matter courses like Algebra, or intermediate Algebra, or Trigonometry, biology, English literature--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: What interaction does your Department have with the Department of Education, in terms of the developing of tests, development in research dealing with the impact on curriculum, if any?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Oh, we have lots of areas of discussion. We, on all of our committees that involve testing, have invited and do have representatives from the Department of Education sit, so they are fully familiar with what we do. We share with them, and with every high school in the State the results of their students' performance on the college basic skills test; broken down in such detail so that they can evaluate where it is the student lacked, where it is the student did not. So that the high schools could reexamine their curricula in light of the performance of their students on our tests.

The Commissioner shares with us -- I sit on his board -- all of the specs and issues that are raised before his board, including the specs for this test. And I'm sure the Commissioner will invite us to participate in whatever committee defines what the test ought to measure. So, we're in close communication all the time, and our staffs are.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Forty percent of our urban area students are dropping out, literally by their sophomore years. And the ones that finally get through, of those who remain, get into the community college or the four-year college, you're remediating a good 50% or 60% of those. Am I on target so far?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: For the community colleges, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Do you really believe that moving this proficiency test to the eleventh grade is going to have any impact whatsoever on that statistic?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Extraordinary impact.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Tell us about that.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: I'm sorry. Let me back off a little bit. Not on that statistic, but on the level of preparation of the students who come to the community colleges.

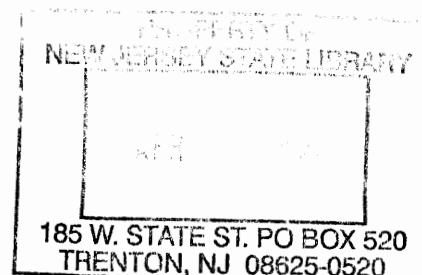
ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: On the level of preparation of the students who come into the community colleges. Let me answer your question, and then make a point. We have had applications and have accepted into our community colleges, students who are high school graduates, with reading and writing levels as low as the fourth grade. In fact, President Yamba at Essex County College, came to us one year and wanted to take high school dropouts rather than high school graduates, because high school dropouts did better at Essex County College than the graduates; because they were older, more mature, they had functioned in the community; and the high school graduates were not coming out with -- the ones who went to Essex County College. Lots of high school graduates from Newark went to four-year institutions and out-of-state. The ones who went to Essex County College were in the fourth to sixth year proficiency level. We had great difficulty bringing those students up to twelfth year level so they can function effectively in college. And in fact, a relatively small proportion did that.

Now if those students came to Essex Community College reading and writing at least at tenth grade levels, we'd have no difficulty in one semester -- at most in two semesters -- in bringing them up to twelfth grade level. And I'm confident that most of those students would be able to survive in college and get an effective education.

So if the students come to us reasonably well prepared, our colleges can take that last small step. If the students come to us at eighth grade levels and ninth grade levels, the risks to those students' survival, even in our remediation courses, are very high. So it will make that difference.

Now, let me tell you where it won't make a difference. Our New Jersey Basic College Skills Test is



designed to answer only one question: Does this student need remediation? And it will not differentiate among students who don't need remediation. That is, if you got 100% on the test, that doesn't mean that you're much smarter than those who got 80% or 90%. Both those students would not need remediation. Now, the level of skill that's tested on our verbal test is somewhere at eleventh and twelfth grades. So if all the students came to us in one year at eighth grade reading levels, they would not pass our test and they'd need remediation. If they had tenth grade reading levels, they would not pass our test and need remediation. If they had eleventh grade, they would not pass. On the other hand, if they crossed that boundary, then they would not need remediation.

So the way in which we report test results is essentially 70% or 30% or 20% need remediation. So if you bring students from the fourth grade to the ninth grade, that will have an enormous impact on what we can do for those students, but it won't mean the percentage of those students who pass our test will change; because we don't test at the ninth grade, we test at the twelfth grade

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Anybody else? Gerard?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Chancellor, a question before I get into the meat of my statements/questions. You made the statement, "Ultimately two out of every three high school graduates will complete some form of post secondary education." What's the source of your information there?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Studies around the country, as well as-- We know in New Jersey, the last time we measured it -- and I'm sure the Commissioner measures it -- one out of two, I think it was 52% to 55%, of our high school graduates went to college or post secondary education immediately. Okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: The other--

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: In our community colleges, one out of every two students today is an adult.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Right.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: That is, a student who graduated many years ago from high school, or may have dropped out of high school, who's now coming back into college. Now, you put those two statistics together.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Okay.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Let me give you one other statistic. In New York City, when they had free tuition and open admission -- which is a combination of maximum access--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Same thing in California.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: --seventy percent of the high school graduates in New York City went to college, right out of high school.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: But the flunk out rate was pretty high too, back then.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: The more high risk students you take, the more will graduate, but the more will also drop out.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Because I had a read a report from CCNY in the '60s about that. Let me say this. Here is one apprehension I have -- and I've expressed this as a professional educator, as a member of the General Assembly -- teaching the test could occur as a result of a test having been given heretofore in eleventh grade. And by heretofore I mean, the balance of eleventh grade and all of twelfth grade is left over within the kids' education K-12. Could we not, or might we not, run the risk -- inasmuch as teachers, principals, and other people are graded by, so called, measurable standards -- of in fact teaching the test to the exclusion of teaching a broad spectrum, and thereby cutting into the content areas, as my colleague from Passaic County has stated. That's a concern that looms very--

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Sure, it's a concern, and I think it's a legitimate concern. Let me answer it in two ways.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Sure.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: First, I really wonder about how much diversity you can introduce into a student's curriculum if he can't read or write? I said that before. That is kind of fundamental, though I expect that when one teaches one to read or write, there is content area. For example, when we teach students in our remedial courses at the college level, they study content as well as remediation. They write about subject area. It's not sterile.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: So you're saying it cannot be done in a vacuum.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Well it isn't generally.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: It shouldn't be.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Yes. The second issue is -- and this sounds harsh -- it's better to teach to the test than not to teach. Let me give you an example.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: If it's either or, yeah.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Well, in some cases it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: All right, if it's either or.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: The Commissioner and I -- I tagged along with him the first time -- visited Central High School. And what surprised us most about Central High School, aside from the physical deterioration -- which was abominable -- was that there were very few students in school, and there was no learning going on. In most of the classrooms there were one, two, three, or four students.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Central High where?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: In Newark. Okay? I went back there about six months ago and I didn't believe it was the same institution. Aside from it having been physically rehabilitated, there were large numbers of students in the classrooms. And in some of those classrooms the students were preparing to pass the High School Proficiency Test. They were working very very hard reading and writing so they could pass the test. Is that teaching to the test? Perhaps. Was it

worthwhile? I'm sure it was. Would they have been there if there hadn't been a test, a hurdle to overcome? I doubt it very much. So in some ways--

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I thought it was because the administrators were walking around with maces and chains in the school. (laughter)

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: No, no.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: We won't answer that question. Do you have anything else, Gerard?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Yes, I do. I had written a note to Paul Muller on my left here, and I'm going to read it verbatim as best as I can understand my own cuneiform.

"By the conclusion of twelfth grade, a standard shall have been passed successfully. So many critics here, there and there--" I'm paraphrasing here. And I've come to a conclusion, perhaps it's a rhetorical question -- I think it is -- Wouldn't eventually it make more sense to combine a basics test with a subject matter content test, based on those sum totals of the credit requirements for twelfth grade graduation? You can call it a Regents, a Regent of sorts, but I keep emphasizing that you cannot teach basics in a vacuum. They must be applied to something.

A kid who writes his views on-- Let's say he watches a presidential debate. "Well, tell me what you think of what so and so said. Why would it be a good or a bad foreign policy?" He's got to do so properly, demonstrate a knowledge of mechanics and what have you. The two really can't be separated. You're dealing with more abstractions. I'm sorry. You're dealing with something more abstract by comparison when you talk about basics at the lower level. The higher you go, the more it is applied. For example, in sixth grade you're told that a noun is a name of a person, place, or thing. By the time you get into ninth grade, or eighth grade certainly, you should be able to write that in a composition and apply

it. There you are combining mechanics with composition. Then you've got to move that composition into other subject areas. The abstractions become less and less, and they should become more rarefied the higher you go; which means that, very simply, you cannot escape content. Eventually I think we've got to be moving toward that area.

And given that, I still harbor the fear that I expressed a moment ago, that we could be moving away from that, despite some of the advantages that you pointed out. I can appreciate what you're saying, but the temptation is so great, because of the fact that too many schools are going to be based on having met numerical standards, their evaluations. We might teach the test. It frightens me a little bit.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Yes, I understand that it's frightening, but let me try to assure you by giving you this example. It's at the collegiate level because I can speak to that, because I know a little more about it. A student takes a core curriculum when they go to college, so they have a common basis of discourse.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: I had breakfast with Dr. Eickhoff. We were talking about this yesterday.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Okay. And it's all content. Okay? Five years or ten years after that student graduates from college, he or she will not have remembered very much from that particular course. But what they will have taken away from that course are critical thinking skills, the ability to write, the ability to reason, the ability to use the tools and techniques that they learned in that course, in other settings. So that all teaching of basic skills -- and critical thinking is a basic skill -- comes out of study of content. But you can test for that independently of the content to see whether one actually got that out of the contact. You know, we say everyone ought to have a liberal arts or general education in the first two years of college. The purpose of that isn't

to instill within the student the subject matter content so much as to give them a frame of reference and a set of tools that that student can take out of those first two years into the major.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Gerard. Assemblywoman, do you have anything?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RANDALL: No. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Assemblyman Kyrillos, do you have anything?

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Just a quick question, Mr. Chairman. Chancellor, thanks for coming this morning.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: My pleasure.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: I mentioned earlier--

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Thanks for introducing the bill and getting a lot of co-sponsors.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Well, that's great. Absolutely. It makes it easier that way. The Xerox Chairman, David Kearns, said it costs America \$2 billion to re-educate its workers. Would you know offhand about the current dollar amount that we spend in New Jersey's colleges today?

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: In remediation?

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: In remediation. That's a hard one, but it would be interesting to know.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: It is a hard one. I keep getting asked that question at Appropriations Committees. I know why it is being asked, so I have avoided successfully in answering it. The reason is, it's hard to put a price tag on it. If a student is taking 15 hours in the first semester, and that student needs no remediation at all, that student will be taking 15 hours of college level course work. If that student has a serious remedial deficiency -- say, in reading or writing -- that student will not take any college level courses that depend upon reading or writing, but might take some other

courses that do not, at the college level, say for six credits, and then spend nine hours in remediation. Now, the faculty time that had been for other students teaching college level, will now be assigned to remediation. So we reallocate the college resources in order to provide that remedial instruction.

The actual marginal dollars that were put into our college to provide remediation, has been relatively small. It's in the order of \$5 million or \$6 million, but much more of that is spent if you allocate the costs between college level and remediation. If you asked me to guess, I'd say 5% to 8% of our total expenditures.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: That's a lot.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Chancellor.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: We appreciate your testimony, and for coming before our Committee.

CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: By the way, before we call up the NJEA, is there anyone else who wishes to speak today? I wish you would sign in with our slip that we have up here so I can recognize you, please?

Who will be speaking on behalf of the NJEA? Mr. Dennis Giordano? Dennis, would you just identify yourself for the record please?

D E N N I S G I O R D A N O: Yes, sir. I'm Dennis Giordano. I'm the President of the New Jersey Education Association.

I'd like to begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Committee. The NJEA appreciates the opportunity to present its views on A-2928, the proposal to create a new more difficult High School Proficiency Test, and indeed, move its administration from the ninth grade to the eleventh grade.

Twelve years ago, when the original State law on minimum statewide standards was being deliberated by the Legislature, the NJEA was concerned about the issue under discussion again today; that being a gatekeeper test, if you will, designed to make sure certain students could not receive a diploma.

We testified in '76, and we testify again today, that a single instrument of evaluation would place a burden and blame upon our urban children through an identification process that would actually exaggerate social separatism, and diminish the State's efforts toward improved learning. We were correct then, we believe, and we remain correct today.

In 1978, the then President of the NJEA, Frank Totten, an educator in the City of New Brunswick, testified before the Senate Education Committee that, "The real question on State imposed diploma requirements is whether those who advocate them want to help all students succeed or to penalize those who do less well than others. If the State is genuinely interested in helping students," President Totten said then, and we repeat today, "then there is much which can be done to address the issue of preparing children to meet the complex challenges of life."

Through the whole New Jersey history of statewide testing and graduation requirements, one important question continually appears, and still has not been fully answered. What is the purpose of the testing? Is it to help children learn, or rather is it to simply be the gatekeeper?

Dr. Jeff Smith was one of those who originally developed the ninth grade High School Proficiency Test. Speaking to the New Jersey Urban Coalition in August of '85, Dr. Smith commented, "It is clearly not a diagnostic test. When you get the test score back you are not sure of the reason for the question being answered wrong. The district would have to come up with other types of tests for the diagnostic insight."

Doesn't that tell us that remedial efforts can't be based on the test results? Some other method for getting to the root of the students' learning problems has to be used. Later in that same meeting, Dr. Smith noted, "The State really wants an accountability lever. We would lose a lot of students in the interim." He meant before the ability to pass the test catches up with the cut-off scores. "If you look at the test and teach to it," Dr. Smith went on, "you would spend ten years before you would get the scores up. Even if we phase in, we will be faced with the dropout problem."

But let's move closer to the present, to May of '87, when the New Jersey Education Association responded to the State's invitation to serve on the study panel looking into the "feasibility" of moving the HSPT from the ninth to the eleventh grade.

We declined the invitation to serve on that panel. It appeared to be a mechanism to verify a decision already made. We have been absolutely consistent in our opposition to using any single instrument as the determinant of whether a child deserved a high school diploma or not.

To serve on such a study panel would have at least implied NJEA might abandon its responsibility to our students, and change its position.

However, in an effort to be constructive, we responded with four points of rationale as to why the test -- assuming it would continue being imposed upon our students -- should not be moved. Those points bear repeating here at this time.

First, after three administrations, with results available from only two, data about the test and its impact on students, curriculum, and schools in general, is sketchy. The first class hasn't even graduated yet, and won't until 1989.

Second, the high incidence of failure on the HSPT by the students in urban districts suggests the longest possible remediation period is needed, and therefore no move upward should be made.

Third, the total elimination of the \$48,574,00 line item for HSPT remediation in the '87-'88 education budget was appalling, and was inconsistent with any consideration of the needs of students, which, we are assured, is the real motivation behind all this testing.

Fourth, the problems of urban districts suggest massive assistance, commitment, and change. Moving tests years is the last thing urban school districts need. Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, it's a monument to triviality.

We believe, as Dr. Smith noted, that the State really wants an accountability lever, though perhaps "blunt object" would be more appropriate a term. As the Commissioner states in his introduction to "Preparing to Enter the Twenty-First Century," the Department of Education's apologia for the eleventh grade test: "Raising the level of academic achievement of all students in New Jersey has been a major goal of the administration of Governor Thomas H. Kean since its inception in 1982." And later he posits, "Recent history in New Jersey and the nation indicates that the pressures and expectations created by a statewide high school graduation test can positively influence the level of achievement for all students, whether from urban, suburban, or rural school districts."

Improved academic achievement brought about by a single test -- that's what the Commissioner would have us believe-- And it would take an act of faith because, in spite of all of the Department's charts and graphs, there is no evidence that all our students -- and I underscore that word all our students -- can even do better on that one test. Nor is there evidence that their academic achievement has increased. You see, they changed the test, and they changed the number of correct answers needed to pass the test. I ask you, where is the accountability in that?

It remains true, as ETS has long acknowledged, that there is no more accurate predictor of collegiate success than class rank and teacher assigned grades. ETS, let me remind you, is the maker of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the single most relied upon measure that colleges use to select incoming students.

Accountability for learning rests primarily with the student and the student's parent or guardian. Accountability for instruction, assessment, and evaluation rest primarily on the classroom teacher and the school.

Accountability for programming such as remediation, bilingual education, counseling, vocational training, and alternative programs, rests primarily with the school district.

Accountability for resources, funding, facilities, and a world of support services, rests with the local community and the State.

The State does not fulfill its accountability to our students by administering a test, scoring it, and pronouncing from on high, if you will, who may receive a diploma and who may not.

Let me put you, for a moment if you will, the members of the Assembly Education Committee, into a classroom setting for awhile. Imagine, if you will, that you are a classroom teacher. And I note, for some of the people on the panel, that's an easy task: "You been," if you will, to paraphrase "Up the Down Staircase."

Now, as a classroom teacher, you spent a lot of time teaching a unit of study to your students. Yet, when you test them, only 30% or so manage to pass the test. What should you do? Is that a signal to create a tougher test? Isn't that what the State wants to do?

Maybe your students just learned the wrong material, if you will. Should you teach them in that case the answers to the test? Is just concentrating on the answers to the test

questions giving them an education? Isn't that what many school districts have been doing and been forced to do to cope with the pressures applied by our HSPT?

Perhaps, on the other hand, you should decide that there was something wrong with the test you gave, or with the teaching/learning process during that unit. Perhaps you should even re-teach the material. Perhaps you should look for advice and counsel from your colleagues or your building principal on the other methods to present the unit or to reach that particular group of students.

But perhaps not. Do you think you should simply fail the 70% of your students who didn't pass that test? Should you tell them they can't get promoted because they failed that one test, because indeed, they are failures? What if your child were among them?

Figures from a report issued by the Public Education Institute, show that in 1985-'86, less than 20% of Paterson students who took the test, passed all three sections. In Elizabeth, less than 40%, in Trenton, 25%, in Camden, Newark and Jersey City, less than 20%.

The improvements the State claims in the '86-'87 testing cycle may look like dramatic percentages, but they really represent very few students, especially when all those who didn't take the test at all are made part of that equation.

And that forces consideration of another key question. Who takes the test? Doesn't everybody take the test?

In fact, no. For example, many classified students are waived and need not take the HSPT. That's good, but how many students are suddenly classified so they don't have to take it, for fear that they will fail and drag down, if you will, the district-wide results.

We know it happens, but we don't know to what extent. Do you? Shouldn't you know the answer to that question?

And how about absenteeism? How many students don't show up on test day? Do they ever take the test? What happens to them in terms of remediation and basic skills improvement?

In 1985 and '86 in Jersey City, 31.7% of the students didn't take the test. In Asbury Park, 46.8% of the students didn't take the test. Those figures come from Dr. Philip Burch, a respected researcher from Rutgers University.

Dr. Burch notes that these figures have been adjusted for limited English proficiency students. And while the figures were not adjusted for special ed students, Dr. Burch indicates that the adjustment for special education students would have produced little change in those percentages. The result is still dramatic.

Is the appropriate question, how many students passed or failed based on those taking the test? Or is the real question, how many students did not pass the test based on the total enrollment? Remember, you have to pass the test to get a diploma.

And how many of those absent students ever come back? How many of those failing students ever come back? The State has been pooh-poohing arguments that the HSPT encourages dropouts since its inception. NJEA remains unconvinced by the State's dropout statistics, that they have very much to do with the reality faced by many of our school districts.

A recent study of Trenton Public School "Leavers," prepared by the District's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, shows that the District's attrition rate was 45% for the class of '86 when compared to the ninth grade enrollment in '82-'83. That's far higher than the Department would have us believe by its method of gathering statistics.

Why did 461 children leave Trenton's schools between ninth and twelfth grade? Where did they go?

Rutgers' Dr. Burch tells us that Newark's 1982 ninth grade class was over 5100 youngsters, but it graduated only 2100 in June of 1986.

Similarly, Irvington had 732 ninth graders in 1982, but graduated only 431 in 1986. Jersey City went from more than 2500 to just over 1200. And, while the numbers may vary, the pattern is consistent, and may I say, frightening.

What role does the HSPT play? Is it helpful in solving this crisis?

You see, we don't know what's happening to those children. The local school districts don't know either. And statistically, the Department of Education doesn't even know if they exist.

Before making these quantum changes in testing, shouldn't you know those answers? Shouldn't you ask Dr. Smith what he meant when he said that even if you phase the test in, you'll still have to deal with the dropout problem?

Now, if you're still that classroom teacher I asked you to be earlier -- and I hope you still are -- think of some of the questions you might have about the HSPT, whether given to ninth or eleventh graders.

Think about the tremendous need for remediation the test generates. Who pays for that remediation? The State will tell us that some of its compensatory education money is sent back by local school districts. But isn't that because the regulations require so much form filling and delay that the districts don't receive the money until the end of the fiscal year is at hand? Then it's a "use it or lose it" mentality. But there isn't any time to use it, or at least all of it.

And what about those students who don't take the HSPT? They don't qualify for special programs for the system's failures, because you see, they didn't fail, at least they didn't fail yet.

But even if the money were delivered on time, and enough were sent, what could you do with it?

What does Paterson do? They've had the same temporary classrooms in use for 25 years. The State monitors say that they must build the equivalent of six new buildings to bring the physical plant up to health and safety code level, without even attacking their class size problems.

Where does Paterson house new remedial programs? Does Paterson simply strip its regular school curriculum and teach only remedial subjects? Should Paterson be reduced to teaching answers to HSPT test questions? Are we content to call that an education?

Members of the Committee, are you comfortable that you have the answers to all these questions that I've been raising?

Educational policy requiring statutory approval is the province of the elected Legislature of New Jersey.

We believe you, as the Committee charged with studying education for the General Assembly, will want to review the state of educational assessment, evaluation, and achievements in New Jersey, before rushing into further experimentation.

That's why we're asking you to defer action on this proposal. That's why we're asking for a blue-ribbon panel, appointed by you and responsible to the Legislature, to study these important questions.

Only with answers supplied from a single bias -- what's best for children -- will you be able to make the important decisions you must if education is to improve for our children.

Such a blue-ribbon panel should have representatives from the Legislature, to lead it and keep it focused on the topics legislators need to master to make wise educational policy decisions.

It should have representatives from the ranks of educational experts to bring their academically oriented expertise and research data bases to bear on the challenges confronting us.

It should have representatives from on-line professional educators to bring their understanding of the real world of public schooling and the real world of public school students and teachers to the Legislature at a local level.

Such a task force could devote itself to reporting on the real needs of our public school students and our public schools.

You know, as we do, that our problems are not with the students of Moorestown or Saddle River or any other New Jersey community with the resources and the civic will to use those resources to provide the best education for their children. Our problems are not in those districts that can afford to implement the tenets of educational reform on their own.

The mission of our State, the mission of the Legislature, must be to concentrate educational improvement on that 40% of the student body living in communities too poor to provide properly for them. Our mission is to provide for those students who come from environments too poor in dollars and, all too often, too poor in spirit, to give their children the resources they need if they aren't to become yet another generation lost to society, and useless to themselves.

Let that challenge be the mission of your blue-ribbon panel. Should it consider evaluation, assessment, and achievement? Of course. But not at the expense of everything, or anyone, else.

NJEA and its 124,000 members believe in accountability. We believe in testing. We applaud the State's plan to institute an eighth grade test targeted, as we understand it -- or perhaps I should say this morning, understood it, because I did not know that we were going to possibly use it as a gatekeeper -- on assessing problems, on being that desperately needed diagnostic tool.

We condemn reliance on any single instrument, any test or other device used as the gatekeeper, the single determinant of whether a child's life in school, of whether that child has been a success or a failure.

Now, I've dealt with many topics surrounding education these last few years. Unfortunately, too many of the real issues remain untouched and unresolved; schools' needs and students' needs.

I ask that you please review the NJEA/NEA Urban Challenge Report. Please review if you would the 89 recommendations for improvement that it contains.

And please, put this bill aside. At this time take no action on A-2928, until you receive the report of your independent task force. For then you'll have the information you need to decide whether the State is fulfilling its responsibility to the children, or simply holding the children responsible for the failings of our State. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Dennis. Ladies and gentlemen, we'll start at this end. Assemblyman Kyrillos, do you have any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dr. Giordano, for your testimony.

MR. GIORDANO: Well, would that I were a doctor, but I'm just a country boy.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: You sound like one.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Yes, he does.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: But, I look forward to reviewing it a little more carefully, and talking to you and your representatives about your concerns, and going back to the Department and questioning them about some of your concerns. Do you feel -- if I can ask one question -- that our children from urban schools and rural schools and suburban schools, or wherever they come from, are entering the world prepared to deal with what they face? Are we teaching them the minimum basic skills that they need?

MR. GIORDANO: I think many of them are, and I think the schools in New Jersey are doing an outstanding job, have been doing a fine job for many many years. And if your question is, "Then why weren't the test scores what they are today, with the improvement on the test scores?" I think that's attributable, in a straight line from point A to point B, to the fact that we are now teaching to a test. Teaching to a test will result in higher scores. You could have asked me that years ago; I would have told you that. You need not be a world scholar to make that proclamation. The question is, when you're all done teaching to the test, have you really improved learning? And I don't know that you have a clear answer to that yet.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Well, I think there's a difference between teaching the test and teaching to the test, but nevertheless I see that you've got 89 recommendations in your Urban Challenge Report, so I can see that you see as well that there is a need for some improvement, some change, and we'll talk a lot about it in the future.

MR. GIORDANO: I'll look forward to it. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Thank you. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Assemblywoman, do you have any comments at this time?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RANDALL: Well, it certainly is a strong philosophical position that you take. All your comments have the same underpinning.

The characterization or the use of the word "gatekeeper" in your remarks takes on a rather negative connotation. I don't know if you intend it that way. It occurs to me that the notion of being a gatekeeper is not necessarily negative. The teachers are gatekeepers every time they promote a student or chose not to promote that student. I don't find that the fact that we are perhaps adding one more gatekeeper to that process necessarily a negative thing, although I'm sure you do differ.

In your remarks I think you have very properly pointed out that the most accurate predictor of collegiate success is often the combination of class rank and academic performance in terms of grades. I don't think we're talking about that group of students here, though. I don't think too many people would dispute that fact. I would wholeheartedly agree. But those are the people who are going to go on and do very well, and probably those are the people who aren't going to have a whole lot of difficulty with the eleventh grade test that we're talking about here either.

I know I'm confusing terms, and I shouldn't talk minimum basic skills all over again because that has a whole different meaning, but that's the way I view it. That's the way I view what we're talking about at this level, some basic skills.

I have a problem with the notion that-- I think what you're looking for is guarantees. You make the remark, "Can we as a Committee be assured that all students will benefit from the implementation of this requirement?" I don't think we can all say that, and I don't think you're ever going to hear anybody give you that guarantee in the context of whether or not that goal would ever be realized.

My concern is whether or not there are currently people getting out of our school systems and receiving diplomas who, quite frankly, don't deserve them. And you might say that there are no such students, in your opinion, graduating today, who should not be graduating. But I think there are some. And therein perhaps lies a bit of a philosophical difference that we might have, but I certainly appreciate your remarks and agree with many of the statements that you make.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you.

MR. GIORDANO: Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Sure. Go ahead.

MR. GIORDANO: May I reply?

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Certainly.

MR. GIORDANO: I don't think I argue necessarily with the notion that there are perhaps some youngsters graduating today who need to have increased programming. I think we disagree on the test being the single determinate as to whether or not they will be a success in life or not. Just for purposed of clarification.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Okay. I want to congratulate you. I think you set an all time record for question marks in the testimony. (laughter)

MR. GIORDANO: And may I say, punctuated correctly and grammatically.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Correctly. I was checking that out all the way.

MR. GIORDANO: Let me hasten to add that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: That had to set an all time record, Dennis. That was very interesting. Gerard, how about you?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: You set a record for rhetorical questions. I do that a lot myself.

I just want to say that I agree with what you said. I remember talking to a group of students, oh, 25 or 26 years ago, and telling them when it came time to be examined, anything which went on in the room was fair game. And I said, for example, if Brian is asked a question and Suzy raises her hand and says she can answer it, what Suzy said, if it's correct, is a part of what would be examined. The minute you zero in on that single determinate, and the teacher or principal becomes influenced by that -- certainly not to any lesser extent -- that danger just looms. And I've argued with my colleagues many times on this. "Don't be a fool. You want to make yourself look good, push those damn scores up." I think the concept is great, Joe, but that fear just lurks in the back of my mind.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you. Yes, Assemblyman Pascrell?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I've got some questions, Dennis.

MR. GIORDANO: I hope I have some answers.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: It's time for me to ask some questions now.

MR. GIORDANO: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Through this whole discussion of testing and before-- You know, we're really talking about real lives, not rabbits. And testing is a part of the human situation. It's incredible that your statement can be so different than the statement of the Commissioner's, because I know that you feel deeply about education, sincerely.

MR. GIORDANO: Yes, I do.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I find that incredible, but again, doctors disagree too when they look at a patient.

MR. GIORDANO: That depends on which side you choose to take your view from.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: And we have a patient, don't we?

MR. GIORDANO: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: We have a patient that's not doing very well, and he's lingering. He's not dead, and we want to sustain him so that there will be productive life.

One of the major things, and I think-- I was a teacher, and once a teacher always a teacher. One of the things-- And please understand my comments within the context of which I say them. I have a great deal of respect for the NJEA. I don't agree with every one of your positions, and I don't feel I have to. But you always get a fair response from me, Dennis, and I think that's all you're asking for.

MR. GIORDANO: I know that to be true.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: The last 20 years -- and testing is a major part of this -- from all sides of those people who have been interested in education, all sides--

Let's just deal with those who are sincerely involved in it, rather than those who nitpick and complain and never try to improve, and that certainly has not been the motto of the NJEA or the Commissioner. I hope I have some answers.

But I think that we're caught up so much in an attempt to bring equality of opportunity, and to move education in that direction, that we've attempted to construct an egalitarian system. Everybody isn't the same. Each person is different. We've often held out false hope to urban parents, that if resources were there, and if given those proper opportunities, that every child in an urban community could do just as well as any other child in the universe. And it didn't matter really whether we were talking about the parents of urban or suburban, because what I'm saying is equally true, I think. We got caught up in equality, which is not something bad to be caught up in. But the way to move to equal opportunity is not egalitarianism. It's to understand that we want to get people to work to the optimum of their skills and their talents. We have an obligation, whether we're on a board of education, whether a teacher, or whether a legislator, we have an obligation to provide the resources, so that there is equal opportunity, so I can be what those talents submerged in me want me to be, pronounce me to be.

So we're partners. Okay? Regardless of which side we're coming from, we're partners in education. We're talking about not egalitarianism though. We're talking about expectations. We want the same expectations of a child in this State; a life, not a rabbit. We want the same expectations and the same equal opportunity for everyone. Because if we were given that equal opportunity we would never be the same anyway, would we, because I'm sure that our intelligent quotients are different. Yours is much higher. The point I'm trying to make is, we are all different, Dennis. So we cannot make what is not there. So what this ideal is, is very interesting.

Now, first you started to say -- you did say, you didn't start to say -- that you didn't join in the feasibility study. ~~And you didn't join in the feasibility study because~~ you did not want to give credibility to the whole concept of the testing methodology that is pronounced by the Department. Is that correct?

MR. GIORDANO: Because we did not want anyone to presume that we are departing from our position, and further because our presumption was that that was an academic exercise.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Okay. It isn't that you don't believe in the credibility of certain testing?

MR. GIORDANO: Not at all. We are proponents of diagnostic testing.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I'll get to that in a second. You say that after three administrations, with the results that are available from only two, and the data that's available to indicate the impact of testing on students, real live human beings, the curriculum -- I still didn't get an answer to the question I asked an hour and a half ago --

MR. GIORDANO: I observed that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: -- and schools in general; that the first class hasn't even graduated yet, and won't until 1989. So you're saying -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- we cannot totally and fairly judge what's being proposed, even though what's being proposed may not be so bad or may be good -- because I think there are many excellent parts of this resolution. But you're saying you can't really evaluate unless you know where we are, and we don't know where we are because we haven't evaluated the testing that exists right now. Is that what you're saying?

MR. GIORDANO: I believe that's correct--

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Okay.

MR. GIORDANO: --especially, by the way, when you wrap it up in the other statistics that I offered for your consideration.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Okay. Secondly, one of the other points you make is that there's been an elimination in this '87-'88 budget of over \$48.5 million in terms of HSPT remediations. I purposely asked the question to the Commissioner, because the analytical statement of the bill in the last sentence speaks about remediation. I've got to ask you this question:

MR. GIORDANO: Yes, sir?

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Is this a fact?

MR. GIORDANO: That line item was deleted. That's a fact.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Is that true, Mr. Chairman?
(affirmative response from Chairman)

It's true, okay. I find that-- Can I use your terms? Can I plagiarize with you here?

MR. GIORDANO: Please.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I find that to be appalling and inconsistent. It doesn't detract from the idea though of the bill. But I find that fact to be appalling. How in God's name can you have students take a test and not follow up to want to make them improve? And I don't believe that the Commissioner wishes to do that, but you're telling me, and my Chairman is telling me, that that is a fact of life. That is pretty serious.

MR. GIORDANO: I believe so.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Then you went on to say this -- maybe you'll change your thoughts about this -- "It's appalling and inconsistent with any consideration of the needs of the students, which we are assured is the real motivation behind all of this testing." You're really now questioning the motivation of the Department as to why this test is being moved to the eleventh grade. My question is: If that is true, if my analysis is true, what in God's name could be the motivation?

MR. GIORDANO: I don't know. But I think you would accede to the fact that it does bespeak a certain lack of credibility to intensify your testing effort, and not maintain your level of remediation.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Ergo?

MR. GIORDANO: Ergo, your statement is largely correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Okay. You quote the Commissioner as saying, in terms of the eleventh grade test, on page whatever of your statement, "Raising the level of academic achievement of all students in New Jersey has been the major goal of the administration of Governor Kean since his inception in 1982." I ask you this question, because I'm not a rabbit either and I take my job very seriously: Has the goal been realized in any way?

MR. GIORDANO: I don't know that you could give a clear answer to that based upon the results of the HSPT test, simply because I don't know that that demonstrates improved learning. As a result of teaching to the test, I think you have eliminated the credibility that you sought with respect to: Has learning improved? Have the academic grades improved? I don't know that that's the case.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Well, you've certainly come to a conclusion about what's happened in the last six years--

MR. GIORDANO: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: --or 6000 years, but let's talk about the last six years.

MR. GIORDANO: I'm not nearly that global, I assure you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: That's an interesting word "global" isn't it?

MR. GIORDANO: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: The Governor talks about global, and I can't get out of Trenton at five o'clock in the afternoon. (laughter) Dennis, let me ask you this question.

MR. GIORDANO: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: The goal of the administration of Governor Thomas-Kean since its inception in 1982-- Forget about that for a second. Let's talk about yourself and your perception of education in the State of New Jersey. Your goal probably would have been the same.

MR. GIORDANO: It is indeed synonymous with that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Have we reached any part of that goal in April of 1988?

MR. GIORDANO: I think that the Governor's heart is in the right place, as I believe, candidly -- and I have said this on varying occasions -- that the Commissioner's heart is by and large in the right place. I don't mean to suggest that he's about the business of some sort of manipulative aberration for any furtive type of reason. Okay? But I think we have made progress in the State, not singularly the result of that test, though. The Governor's minimum salary bill has helped. The increased funding over the last few years has helped. If and when we get substantial effort, and we hope to achieve that, with respect to facilities improvement, that will help.

Things that don't help, though, are cutbacks in remediation, intensification of testing efforts at a time when you're not positive, by your own admissions, that that would serve any useful purpose.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Just one more I think, Mr. Chairman, if I may?

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: I'm sitting here patiently.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: This continues next week, right?

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: We have another hearing to go next Thursday. The way things are going, I'll probably add a couple more.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Then, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Really, I will.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: Let me conclude by saying this: I think the test may not be -- the idea, the resolution -- may not be so bad, Dennis, but I think we have bigger problems on our hands, and I think you've brought them out. I think you've accentuated them. I'm bothered because I don't want to walk away from this hearing thinking that this test being moved to the eleventh grade is going to have an impact of significance on whether kids are learning in this State of New Jersey. And if we're just using it -- and we're not going to use it for seven years -- maybe we want people to walk away from this hearing-- We're going to improve expectations that it's going to help reduce dropouts, it's going to help us with our kids to learn to read and write, but know some content and some subject matter, and know to appreciate music and geography and things like that -- you know, those old fashioned ideas -- but those expectations are important. Children are important. And maybe we should meet the subject head on.

Maybe we can compromise between what you are suggesting and what the Commissioner is suggesting. I don't believe, by the way, that putting something into effect such as this test, necessarily does away with what you are suggesting. I think the two can go on together. We can change things. God knows we have in the past six years, haven't we, Dennis?

MR. GIORDANO: Yes, we have.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: In terms of testing, it wouldn't be the first time. Whether we have enough evaluative material or not, that's another question. That's a pretty serious charge you've made. And I think you're accurate by the way.

MR. GIORDANO: Thank you. There is a presumption, though, that is made when you suggest that the implementation of an eleventh grade more difficult test, if you will, will effect noticeable change in the students' performance. That presumption is -- and I find it incorrect, if not insulting, by

the way on behalf of my members -- that as a result of that test we're going to work harder. That's absolutely ludicrous. My people are putting out 110% in many cases, in particular in the urban centers. You're intimately familiar with some of the rigors that go with working with an urban center. My people are doing one hell of a job. And to presume that the implementation of a more difficult test is going to change their effort, is absolute lunacy.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: I think that your members and those who aren't members, are doing one hell of a job. I think the Department is doing one hell of a job. And the Legislature, under Joe Palaia, has done a great job.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: It's even doing better.
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN PASCRELL: It's even doing better, okay. But for some reason we're on different tracks, and we're here from 1976 evaluating T & E. Now, maybe this is the time when we'll really make the bend in the road. Maybe this is the time that we put it all on the table and not be caught up in cutting deals about school takeovers, because Dennis, it's all part of the perception of education in this State. You can't have one without the other. Put it all on the table, take a look at it, and see what's positive, and move on accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

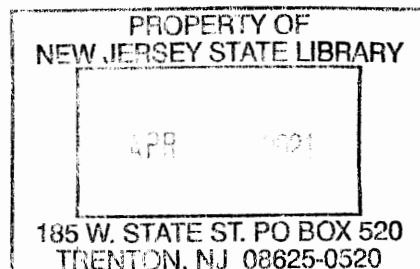
MR. GIORDANO: Not from these lips, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you. I just have one comment, Denny, and I have a couple of people who wish to speak on the Committee. I just want to address the blue-ribbon panel that you have recommended.

MR. GIORDANO: I'd like to comment on that before I leave also.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Yes.

MR. GIORDANO: Please do.



ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: My one question, Denny, really if you look at what you have up here -- and we're not bragging, believe me, we're not. We do our job, and I think everybody out in this audience, and anybody who has come into contact-- I think you're looking at the blue-ribbon panel right here, because you have a diversification. You have on this side the three of us who have been directly involved with teaching and administration, and what have you; and on this side you have people who were not in education, but yet who bring another viewpoint. I really believe you have five good people up here who are really looking at the issues, and are trying to do the best we can. But you wanted to address that? Go ahead.

MR. GIORDANO: Well, yes. I wanted to address it just by way of closing out Assemblyman Pascrell's remarks. That is to say that there may well be exactly this window of opportunity, right now as we speak, that you are describing. And to that end, I think our suggestion would serve us well.

As to the panel that sits before me, I certainly mean no disrespect to the body before me.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: No, I wasn't looking at it that way.

MR. GIORDANO: But I would suggest the following to you, that the panel before me could only be enhanced with the additional participation of school superintendents -- just by way of example, in particular one or two urban superintendents -- and an additional one or two practitioners. And while you may not select me necessarily, because of my background and my position right now, there are any number of practitioners in the field who I think would serve well on a panel of that type; and in fact, do the State of New Jersey a great service examining the issues before us.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Denny. Assemblyman Kyrillos, and then we'll go to Assemblyman Naples who wanted to say something.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. One point I think that needs to be made, because I feel that there's been somewhat of a misleading exchange, and I missed it when I spoke to Dennis earlier. Dennis is right when he says that the \$48 million line item for HSPT remediation has been eliminated. That's true, but the money hasn't been eliminated.

MR. GIORDANO: Please tell me where it's gone.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: It has been transferred into the general comp-ed account. The figure, as I understand it, is \$155 million earmarked for Fiscal Year 1989. I'd like to verify that with the Department, and I will afterwards, but I wanted to make that point.

MR. GIORDANO: Well no, no, I will accept that, but perhaps you didn't recall the other remarks I made about comp-ed funding and the problems districts experience with it. And it is indeed a fact that many of the districts are required to send it back. They are required to send it back because they just plain don't have the time to spend it within the parameters of the paperwork involved in the time they receive it. Those are problems. So while some of that money may go in a circular fashion back into the pool for remediation, a lot of it isn't getting spent as it was intended to.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Those are problems, but the financial equipment is there. I just wanted to--

MR. GIORDANO: I didn't say it wasn't. I said that line item was deleted.

ASSEMBLYMAN KYRILLOS: Okay, very good.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: The line item was eliminated. The answer to that is yes. Gerard?

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Real quick, let me just digress to Bob Swissler for a moment. Bob, 60% of the urban kids failed the HSPT. Could you give me for the next hearing a breakdown on rural and suburban kids who fail it? (affirmative response from audience) Okay?

Dennis, let me say this. I agree, teachers do a 110% job, and I'm biased, obviously being a teacher myself. And I made a little comment here which will be the subject in large measure of the next hearing, talking about testing as it relates to teachers and administrators. But I just want to conclude by saying that I agree with a lot of what you said, and throw this out to everybody on this side of the table and that side of the table. The other day I got a call from a student. She wanted to interview me on education. I get a lot of calls from people around here, and I noticed it was a 313 area code. It was in Michigan. It was a graduate student from Michigan State doing a paper on New Jersey education. We're under the eyes of the nation. We're a bellwether state in a lot of areas, and we better know what the hell we're doing. That's all I have to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Gerard. Thank you, Denny.

MR. GIORDANO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Good testimony. Before I call Paul Smith, Bob Swissler?

ROBERT J. SWISSLER: (from audience) Just one statement so that we can all have the same understanding and accept it for what it's worth, and its effect is \$48 million. Joe gave off some of the figures, but in Fiscal Year 1987, the comp-edlamount was \$110 million. That's generated based on the old MBS performance. That same year we were introducing the new HSPT. In order to help districts adjust to the impact of that new test, we current year funded the-- Well, what we anticipated is the impact of that test, and figured out it would cost \$48 million. So the total commitment that year was \$110 million based on the MBS, plus the \$48 million based on the HSPT, for a total obviously of \$158 million. In Fiscal year '87, that total was \$152 million, based then on performance on the HSPT -- the actual real data -- and then

next year, Fiscal Year '89, it's the \$155 million that Joe referred to, which is based on performance of the HSPT last year.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Bob. May we have Paul Smith from the Chamber of Commerce please? He's the last speaker that I have listed. We will be holding another hearing on April 14, at the Cedar Ridge High School in Middlesex County at 11 a.m. I would appreciate if you would spread the word. (consults with Committee aide) Oh, the hearing is at 1:30. We're meeting at 11 a.m., right. Paul, nice having you with us.

P A U L F. S M I T H: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Would you please identify yourself for the record?

MR. SMITH: Sure will. Paul Smith, with the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce. I'm the Director of Government Relations.

Our prepared text is somewhere in our typing pool, and I apologize. It's not available, but we'll get it to you anyway.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: It's okay. You can still submit that.

MR. SMITH: But we're going to support this legislation before you for a number of reasons. The most significant of which is that it does bring our students to a higher standard, and we, as the end consumer of this process, need a higher standard student coming out of our schools, who will be a higher quality worker.

Our workers today are not as well trained as we would like them to be in the basic skills of communications, and basic computations. And, quite frankly, it's putting us at a international and national competitive disadvantage.

I'd like to try to draw an analogy, if I could, to the automobile industry. For years we had a standardized vehicle that was built from about 1950 to about 1975. For 25 years we

based the entire industry on a single technology. It never advanced. And the American public finally said, "Hey, we're tired of junk. Somebody over in Japan and somebody over in Germany is building us a better product." Quite frankly, that has put our American industry, not only just automobiles, but electronics in the consumer area, at an extreme disadvantage. And quite frankly, we're looking at the education system right now, and we're saying, "Where is the new technology?"

Assemblyman Pascrell very adeptly brought up the fact of egalitarianism in our education system. And quite frankly, we look upon it as really another word for lowest common denominator. And that is not what we need in our future. We don't need it because our workers have to become more competitive, day by day, in the world global village. It's just a smaller world, and we are having to compete head-on with nations that are more productive.

And one of the reasons that they're more productive is-- Take Japan for instance. Their students are staying in school 210 a days a year. That's almost 30 days more a year than our students. In Europe, they're about 200 days, that's 20 days more. Just by simple exposure these students are going to learn more. And these are the people, and these are the students, that in the future are our workers. And these are the people we have to compete against.

By asking our students to excel to a higher level of education is tough medicine, perhaps, for those who are practicing the profession of education. But if we don't have some tough medicine now, we're going to look like England. During the 18th and 19th century, England, very simply, was the technology capital of the world; as we have been for the last 40 years.

ASSEMBLYMAN NAPLES: Until World War I, right.

MR. SMITH: That's right. And because they did not prepare adequately their student base, and became a very egalitarian society, educationally, socially, they are now the second lowest economy in the Common Market. In fact, they are probably just one step above some, what we call, Third World nations. I don't want to see that happen here. I don't wish that on my son and my grandchildren. And I'm sure you don't on yours.

The business community supports this legislation. In fact, we would like to see the dates accelerated. We think the students who are in fifth grade today, that are going to be coming out of that system seven years from now, deserve a higher standard to excel to.

Now, we've heard a lot of arguments about teaching to tests. Quite frankly, we don't care. We want better students out the other end.

The process of better education is what the business community of New Jersey is concerned with. And as has aptly been put, this is a bellwether state. We are number two in research and development. We've got to move forward. We have to have a higher standard. And the business community supports this legislation, and hopes that the Committee will pass it on to the Assembly floor quickly.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALAIA: Thank you, Paul. Again, I'd just like to say before we leave that our next hearing will be next Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at Cedar Ridge High School in Middlesex County. I thank everybody for the testimony. Paul thank you for coming.

We will break now for just a half an hour. And we will come back and finish our agenda. Thank you.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman
Remarks to the
NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

April 7, 1988

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to discuss Assembly bill 2928, legislation that would require students to pass a test of 11th-grade reading, math and writing skills as a graduation requirement.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Assemblyman Kyrillos, the prime sponsor of this important bill, as well as its co-sponsors, Assemblymen Palaia, Pascrell, Doria and Villane. I also appreciate Assemblyman Palaia's work in turning immediate attention to this legislation.

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The State Department of Education has been hard at work for six years, helping educators to better prepare students for New Jersey's future. We began with initiatives designed to staff our schools with the best available teachers, the heart of any effort to improve education. We also addressed the need for strong educational leadership. And a third group of education reforms focuses on raising expectations for students.

New Jersey's first step in raising academic standards was the Minimum Basic Skills test -- the MBS. As you recall, it was a ninth-grade test and, as its name implies, it assessed minimum reading and math skills. The last class required to pass this test as a graduation requirement is currently in 12th grade. Approximately 95 percent of those students had passed the test on their first attempt as ninth graders.

This high passing rate capped four years of annual increases in the percentages of ninth graders passing the MBS. We were pleased with this progress, but, frankly, not surprised. The test, after all, assessed minimums. It was a starting point.

With the hope and expectation of reaching that first goal, the state in 1982 began planning a second step toward raising academic standards. With your support, we developed the High School Proficiency Test as the new high school graduation standard. The HSPT is also a ninth-grade test, but the skills it assesses are a significant step up from the MBS.

One obvious difference is that the HSPT includes a writing portion, in which students are asked to write a coherent and well-organized essay, while the MBS had only math and reading portions. Also, in contrast to the MBS, the HSPT assesses thinking and problem-solving skills. This occurs through multiple-step math problems and the reading and understanding of longer and more complex reading passages to infer meaning and draw conclusions.

The difference between the two tests is not simply the degree of difficulty within the same set of skills. The HSPT assesses the added skills of critical thinking, problem solving and writing. Thus, the HSPT

represents a major shift in what students are expected to learn in kindergarten through grade nine. In fact, many school districts had to realign their K-9 curricula to respond to this shift, and we helped many of them to accomplish this task.

The skills assessed by the HSPT were determined to be those that high school graduates need to function politically, economically and socially in our society at the ninth-grade level. The specific skills were identified by a committee representing public education, higher education, business and industry, and parents. Each year, when a new HSPT is developed, the items it includes are designed to assess those skills generally mastered at the end of ninth grade.

These skills still continue to be critically important for all students. But shouldn't a high school graduation test measure a level of those skills near the end, rather than the beginning, of high school?

The proposed 11th-grade test would assess most of the same skills as the HSPT, at a level two grades higher. It would not be another major shift in the assessed skills. Students who can demonstrate these basic skills at a ninth-grade level should be capable -- after two more years of instruction -- of demonstrating these skills at an 11th-grade level. As we already have seen with the MBS and the HSPT, what's tested is what's taught. Districts would align high school basic skills curriculum and instruction to the new graduation test.

Therefore, an 11th-grade graduation test is the next necessary step in raising basic skills performance in New Jersey. Administering a graduation test in grade 11 would assess basic skills closer to the end of high school. Yet it would allow students to retake, up to three times, any part of the test they don't pass on the first attempt.

In preparation for retesting, these students would receive remedial assistance provided by local districts and funded by the state. This compensatory education aid now is provided to districts for students who don't pass all three parts of the HSPT.

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A graduation test administered near graduation is necessary. But do we need to begin now to change from the HSPT?

A study recently released by the federal government indicates that we can't afford to wait. According to the study, up to 23 million Americans in the work force lack the reading, math and writing skills necessary to compete in today's job market. The study also found that some 75 percent of the available workers in the year 2000 are already out of school.

In other words, business and industry will be forced to absorb the cost of remedial education for millions of workers. That cost, including lost productivity while workers are learning, is anticipated to be \$25 billion per year. David Kearns, chairman of Xerox Corporation, describes this remedial teaching by business as "doing the schools' catch-up-recall work for them."

The federal study defined lack of basic skills in terms of today's job market. But the jobs themselves are changing, too. Service industries are outstripping manufacturing.

Already, jobs requiring little or no basic skills are disappearing while opportunities abound for those who not only can read, write and compute, but also reason and make decisions.

The young adult with a solid foundation of such basic skills can pick up the classified section of almost any newspaper and find a variety of good, entry-level job opportunities, many of them including occupational training.

For example, in a recent edition of a New Jersey daily newspaper, I counted 16 ads for administrative assistants. Only five stipulated that job candidates possess any specific occupational skills. The other 11 were looking for the basics: strong organizational skills, assertiveness, an "aptitude for figures" and good written and oral communication skills. In other words, employers already are requiring, at minimum, that workers be able to think for themselves and organize their own work, as well as read, write and compute.

These employers included a packaging company, a law firm and a real estate office. The salaries they advertised ranged from the mid-teens to the low 20s.

A review of the same day's classified section illustrates a similar demand for bank tellers, bookkeeping assistants, various clerical workers, customer service representatives, data entry clerks, printing assistants and sales representatives. Any one of these jobs is a pretty good start for someone with a high school education.

The problem, however, is that most of these employers will be hard pressed to find job candidates straight out of high school with the basic qualities and skills stressed in those ads.

In a recent meeting with corporate leaders from 30 of New Jersey's largest employers, nearly all of them told me that it's necessary to administer basic skills tests in the hiring process. The reason, they said, is that almost a third of their job candidates cannot demonstrate the required reading, writing and math skills.

To further exacerbate the problem, demographic projections indicate that in the next 10 years the number of available workers is likely to shrink. And available jobs will require more than ninth-grade basic skills. Tomorrow's workers will be expected to reason and make decisions at a higher level. They will need a strong educational foundation to help them continue learning new occupational skills in their jobs.

Public education can begin now to prepare students for these future demands, or we can continue to force business and industry to do our job.

And, the lack of an educational foundation is a problem not limited to students entering the work force after high school. Higher education officials report that large proportions of college freshmen -- more than half in some academic areas -- require remedial instruction before beginning undergraduate work.

When colleges must devote students' first semesters to teaching what should have been learned in high school, there is less time for courses that prepare students for professional and technical occupations.

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The legislation before you would ensure that our high school graduates are taught the necessary basic skills in high school, not in college or at work. This is a viable, effective plan for implementing an 11th-grade graduation test.

As you probably know, the Department of Education, at the direction of Governor Kean, studied this issue for a year before recommendations were made to him.

In addition to the new 11th-grade test, the proposed testing program includes an eighth-grade basic skills test to identify students who need remedial assistance, before they enter high school. The first students to take this eighth-grade test, scheduled for 1990-91, also would be the first 11th graders required to pass the 11th-grade test to graduate. Thus, the first official administration of the new graduation test would be in December 1993 for the graduating class of June 1995.

The proposal also includes practice testing of 11th graders each of the three school years preceding the first official 11th-grade test. These practice administrations will provide "due notice" of the new test and help educators prepare their students for it.

During those three years of preparation, the Department of Education would provide assistance to local educators. This would include curriculum workshops, skills publications and other materials for basic skills instructional staff. Again, this support would be similar to state support for implementing the HSPT.

The results have been encouraging. In the four years the HSPT has been administered -- the last two of which counted toward graduation -- the percentages of students passing have increased every year. The passing rate for each part of the test was at least 20 percentage points higher in 1986-87 than when it was first given in 1983-84.

Also encouraging are the gains made by our urban schools. Their passing rates have lagged behind the remainder of the state. But their increases in passing rates during the past two years have outpaced the gains made by non-urban districts. In sum, most urban schools are narrowing the gap in basic skills performance on the HSPT.

During the five-year timeline proposed for developing and implementing the new testing program, the goal will be to continue making gains on the HSPT, particularly in the state's urban districts. These gains will help educators and students make a smooth transition to the new testing program.

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Again, I would like to thank Assemblyman Kyrillos for sponsoring this crucial legislation, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss it with all of you today. An 11th-grade graduation test makes good sense. We have the opportunity, with this legislation, to prepare now for our children's -- and New Jersey's -- future. I urge you all to support this bill.

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