
Committee Meeting

of

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Presentation of Jersey City’s Strategic Plan”

LOCATION: Room 319
State House
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: October 21, 1996
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE PRESENT:

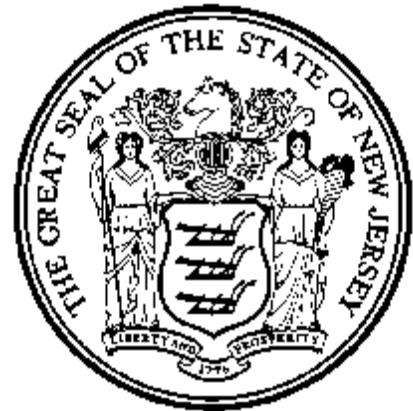
Senator John H. Ewing, Chairman
Assemblyman John A. Rocco, Vice-Chairman
Senator Dick LaRossa
Senator Gordon A. MacInnes
Senator Ronald L. Rice
Assemblyman Joseph Charles Jr.
Assemblyman Raul “Rudy” Garcia
Assemblyman Jeffrey W. Moran

ALSO PRESENT:

Joseph Weisberg
(representing Senator Robert J. Martin)

Sonja Burkett
(representing Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger)

Melanie M. Schulz
Executive Director
Joint Committee on
the Public Schools



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each individual section of the high
school proficiency test in the 1993-94,
1994-95 and 1995-96 school years”
submitted by Frank M. Sinatra

2x

mjz: 1-114 (Internet edition 1997)

SENATOR JOHN H. EWING (Chairman): Good morning. We now have the copies of the teaching plan. Do you want to start off?

DEPUTY COMM. RICHARD A. DiPATRI: Yes.

Good morning, Senator Ewing, Assemblyman Rocco, and other members of the Joint Committee. On behalf of Commissioner Klagholz, we appreciate the opportunity to report on the progress of the State-operated school district of Jersey City. Unfortunately, the Commissioner is ill this morning, and he apologizes for his absence and for any inconvenience it may cause the members of the Committee.

This past January, the Commissioner appeared before this Committee and reported that Jersey City: had made important organizational and programmatic gains under State operation; had cleaned up its central office practices; had significantly increased early childhood and kindergarten programs; had increased advance placement offerings in the high schools; and had made gains in district infrastructure, building several new schools and introducing technology to classrooms in the district.

I am pleased to report today on the measurable and important progress the district has made in improving student performance. In Jersey City, test scores improved in all nine benchmark areas -- reading, writing, and mathematics on the 4th, 8th, and 11th grade levels. The work the students, educators, parents, and leadership have done in New Jersey since State operation is now showing signs of success, and the Jersey City education community is to be commended for these improvements.

Mr. Frank Sinatra, Acting State District Superintendent in Jersey City, will share with you further details on this impressive jump in student performance in the district.

The performance in Jersey City this past year suggests that continued progress at this level will lead to State certification and a return of the district to local control. It is our belief that this type of improved performance is based on a concerted and systematic effort in the district to set high expectations for students and staff, implement effective programs, and hold principals, teachers, and others in the district accountable for student performance. This systematic approach is what the district's strategic plan demonstrates and what the Department expects in State-operated school districts.

In January, Mr. Sinatra presented to you the Jersey City five-year strategic plan. The plan identifies annual performance benchmarks the district seeks to achieve and describes the strategies that will be used to reach those benchmarks.

Today, Mr. Sinatra is here to present the district's progress against the benchmarks for 1995-1996, to share with you how implementation of several key initiatives is proceeding, and to lay out the direction the district will be taking over the course of this school year.

The plan Mr. Sinatra presents today has been reviewed by the Commissioner and his staff, and has been presented to the State Board of Education for feedback. On December 12, Dr. Laval Wilson, from Paterson, will be here to report on the progress in Paterson, and on December 16, Dr. Beverly Hall will be present to discuss the Newark strategic plan and to report

on the progress made in the State-operated district of Newark over this past year.

At this time, Mr. Sinatra will speak for approximately 15 or 20 minutes, and then we welcome your comments and questions.

With us today, to my right, is Pete Contini, Assistant Commissioner of Field Services. I would also like to mention that Dave Brandt, Chairman of the State Board's Committee on State-operated School Districts, is here as well.

With that, Frank--

FRANK M. SINATRA: Thank you, Dr. DiPatri.

Good morning, Senator Ewing, Assemblyman Rocco, members of the Joint Committee. It is a pleasure for me to be here representing the Jersey City public schools to report out on the results of the first year of the implementation of our strategic plan. As Dr. DiPatri stated, this is something that we presented to you last January.

I have with me several members of my staff who, when we get to the question and answer portion, I may ask to assist me in answering some of your questions, particularly if we want to get much more in depth. I have no problem doing that at all, and would welcome that type of questioning.

First of all, I want to say that the idea of requiring the district to develop a strategic plan is probably something that should have been done -- and this is not casting aspersions on anyone -- but it should have occurred a little earlier, because it has now given the district the ability for everyone to see what it is and where it is that we are trying to go. It enables us to focus in on what our objectives are.

Needless to say, there are many individuals in Jersey City-- Something that I ascribe to is to get the district back to local control. I really think that by the implementation of the strategic plan, and the progress -- sequential progress -- that is made toward achieving what has been laid out in that strategic plan-- This should provide a series of benchmarks or landmarks to have the district returned to local control.

The strategic plan has enabled us to have individuals be more accountable for their actions. Also, we have laid out the expectations in the strategic plan as to what is expected. With the accountability, we have also given responsibility to the various staff members, particularly the building principals throughout the school district. I come from a district, where I served the vast majority of my superintendency in my professional life, Perth Amboy, which exemplifies a great deal of pride. I have found that that same type of pride exists in many of the professionals who are working in Jersey City. We have been able, I believe, to turn on the pride that is an inner pride with those individuals to achieve success. Where success is being made, we are acknowledging that.

At the same time that we developed the strategic plan, we also went through an administrative reorganization which helped us to define the accountability and the responsibility that we have in the plan. If I had to just sum up the importance of the plan, I would say that it gives the district the ability to focus in on what is important to have the district make meaningful progress and, at the same time, return to local control.

In the area of student performance and behavior, which seems to be the major grading that takes place now of the worth and the attainment of

school districts, I am pleased to note, as Dr. DiPatri stated, that in each of the nine areas that the district is measured on in testing, the district has made progress this past year. This is in the beginning of the plan, but just so you have it in front of you--

I would like to point out that the test scores are rising in Jersey City. In the area that is shaded (witness using charts)-- For instance, the 8th grade early warning test in reading is shaded at 77.4 in the 1995-1996 school year. The shaded blocks indicate where the district is already meeting the State standard of 75 percent at the 4th and 8th grade levels. Unfortunately, we do not have any area of the high school proficiency test where we have achieved to 85 percent. But if you notice, there are four areas this year where the district at large has already achieved the State standard.

At the same time, and this is what is important, because it is what the individual schools are also doing-- In the area of writing, 18 of our schools in the 1994-1995 school year, where there were 28 schools, achieved the State standard. For 1995-1996, that number of 18 grew to 23. So that means that we still have 5 more schools that would have to come up to State standard, and, at the same time, in the area of writing, the district, as a whole, has already achieved 83.1 percent.

What we have done in our strategic plan is, we have set a goal of 85 percent for all of our schools at the year 2000. That has been the benchmark that has been established in the plan. At the same time, in the 4th grade, in the 1994-1995 school year, 15 of the 28 schools made the State standard. That went up to 22 schools this past year. And in reading, where we are lagging -- you can see that on the results -- there were only 9 schools in

both years that met the State standard. We have taken proper action to remediate that in terms of the reading recovery program that has been instituted.

We have amended a great number of full-day kindergarten programs. Those children will now be coming through the line. At the same time, in the 8th grade, in the area of reading, 13 schools of our 25 schools that have 8th grade classes met the State standard in 1994-1995. That went up to 16 the following year. In writing, there were 14 of the 25 in each of the two years. And then in the area of math, we went from 4 to 7 schools meeting the standard.

The school benchmark, which is the manner by which we have asked each school to achieve at a minimum level, in the 4th grade, 17 of our schools met the reading benchmark. In writing 24, and in math 24. At the same time, at the 8th grade level, 21 schools made the reading benchmark, 19 the writing, and 19 the math.

Yes, sir?

SENATOR MacINNES: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR EWING: Yes?

SENATOR MacINNES: May I just ask a question about the benchmark? (no response) It is not explained in the plan how the benchmark is established.

MR. SINATRA: The way the benchmark was established, Senator-- In the 1993-1994 school year, wherever that individual school was in any one of the areas of the task, the difference between that score and 85 percent was divided by five. Then, each year, they would have to achieve that

number. In other words, if a school had 50 percent of its students reading the benchmark in 1994-1995, for the next year we would have subtracted the 50 percent from the 85 percent, and it would come to 35 percent. So they would have had to come to 57 in the 1995-1996 school year to meet the benchmark.

What we have done is, if a school has exceeded its benchmark, when we revise our plan for next year-- Let's say the school instead of scoring 57 scores 67, then we would subtract the 67 from 85 and divide that 19 by 4, and then go from that number. So we are constantly pushing them up.

SENATOR MacINNES: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: You can explain it to me later.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Did you get that, Senator?

SENATOR MacINNES: I did. I can explain it.

MR. SINATRA: He is a mathematician.

SENATOR MacINNES: No, I--

SENATOR EWING: We can have a class after this.

SENATOR MacINNES: What did you do by way of benchmarks with schools that already exceeded the State standard in 1993-1994?

MR. SINATRA: They have other goals that go beyond that. They are monitored to make sure that they do not go below the 85. In fact, if they drop down from where they were, then they have to develop a plan to bring them back up to where they were over the State standard. That is one of the things that you have to really guard against, that once they achieve the goal, that everybody just doesn't go like that (demonstrates) and then the scores end up going like that also.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR EWING: Yes?

SENATOR RICE: What mechanism are you using to determine--

MR. SINATRA: You are going to have to talk a little bit louder, Senator. I'm sorry.

SENATOR RICE: What mechanism are you using to determine why the other schools are not meeting the benchmark?

MR. SINATRA: The subject area supervisors, under the direction of the associate superintendents, are monitoring the schools. The benchmarks we are talking about here are primarily statistical. The kids take the test. How many kids pass the test? How many kids don't pass the test? The same thing in the area of attendance. If your average daily attendance last year was 89 percent-- We monitor at the end of each month. We can do that on a monthly basis to make sure that it is moving up over the 90 percent. The same thing with dropout rates. We are comparing the number of kids now who drop out this month to the month of September last year, so we are able to decrease our dropout rate, which, right now, is 13.7 percent -- to bring that down to less than 10 percent over that five-year period of time that we are talking about.

SENATOR RICE: Let me ask the question another way, then: What criteria, or how are you measuring why the students are not passing the test?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER PETER CONTINI:
Causal analysis, Frank. What causes were there?

MR. SINATRA: The staff has several remedial and preventative programs that have been put into effect. For instance, for the HSPT, we have run extra classes after school for the students, starting as soon as school began

in September. This year, we only had five Saturdays before the HSPT was given -- also on Saturdays -- to prepare the students. The reading recovery program that I talked about a little earlier was a successful program, also programs that are designed to prevent students from failing on tests. At the same time, there was another program that slipped through--

SENATOR RICE: I don't mean to be rude, but let me cut you off. Maybe you misunderstood me. What you are doing is giving me possible correction types of elements. My issue is-- I come from a school of thought that said in order to resolve a problem, you have to determine causation.

MR. SINATRA: Right.

SENATOR RICE: Schools were taken over, some of them, because we felt that between the politics, in some instances, corruption, and other negative types of things, they were having an impact-- They were at least some of the cause and some of the causal elements that were stopping our students from getting involved in education and learning.

We are in there now, so the question is: What are we doing to determine the real cause, besides classifying everybody? What are we doing to determine the cause of why these youngsters are not really picking up? You know, if someone does not want to learn, that's one thing. If someone is giving their all and they still are not passing these tests, there is a reason for it. Is it the instructors in the classrooms? Is it the curriculum you have? Are the expectations too high, because we do want to keep expectations high? Is it an attitudinal thing?

I mean, there have to be some reasons given. We can't go through any of these takeover districts without having criteria set up to, number one,

determine causal factors, because they are going to be different depending on the group you are working with, and then have the elements to deal with trying to correct them so we can measure out to see if they are truly corrected elements, and then move forward. If not, then we are spinning our wheels by hoping that these things gradually go up, just putting in programs to sound good, or programs that worked someplace else, but will not work here in New Jersey.

I guess the question is: Have you determined the cause of these other schools not passing the tests sufficiently to come up like the other schools have done?

MR. SINATRA: There are many direct and a lot more indirect reasons why students cannot pass the tests. Much of it is educational deprivation when they first come to school. That is the reason for the large amount of effort that we have put into the full-day kindergarten program, to attempt to get those students up to some sort of level where they will be more ready to learn once they hit the first grade, in many instances. It is not unique to Jersey City. I think it is an urban problem that goes across our country. Many times, the first time students from many of our deprived homes come to school is the first time they see a book. They do not have people at home reading to them as many other students do, so that when they come to school there is a readiness to learn.

That is at the very low level. That is the reason for the reading recovery program, which is an extremely expensive program. We are in our first year now of fully implementing it. Research shows that the students who go through that in grade one, at least 80 percent of them do not return to

where they need any type of remedial reading all the way through, but it is a one-on-one program. It becomes a very expensive situation, and we are doing that in 11 of our schools in Jersey City. In our reading recovery program, we put two or three teachers in our poorest-performing schools to deliver that program.

Another thing we are doing is, in order to help the--

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me, I do not mean to do this again. I don't want to be rude today.

Let me do it this way: Mr. Chairman, through you, would you make a request that all these takeover districts send us a list, through you, of what they have determined, what they are seeing, as the reasons -- particularly the schools like in Jersey City, we have been there for awhile-- What are the elements they perceive or determine are causing the lack of progress? We have been in some of these schools for quite some time. I think that is important, because we may have to legislate some other things around to give you support. All of us know about the social factors that we never talk about. We can't do things halfway, we have to do them fully.

This way you do not have to give me the corrective measurements, because talking about how you are correcting something without letting me know exactly the rationale of the causation aspect of it, does not help me. Maybe I am from a different school, a different world. If I can get that--

My final question to you, through the Chair, is: You mentioned the dropout rate. I think it was 13, or something like that.

MR. SINATRA: It was 13.7.

SENATOR RICE: What is that compared to the past years, from the time the State has been in versus the time they were not there?

MR. SINATRA: I'll ask Dr. Duva to respond to that question. He is our Director of Research.

N I C H O L A S A . D U V A , Ed.D.: Yes. The 13.7--

SENATOR EWING: Stand up so we can hear you. You have to speak into one of the microphones, because we are recording.

DR. DUVA: The 13.7-- That was the dropout rate that was measured for this year. For the first time, we used a new measuring system. The new measuring system was to take every student who was 16 years of age or older as of September 1 of last year, and then figure out the number of students 16 years or older who remained -- you know, who still remained in school in June. That is what gave us the dropout rate of 13.7. We did not measure it that way in previous years.

However, the dropout rate, which, for example, I personally kept for the past maybe 14 years, shows our dropoff rate to be actually much higher than that. The dropoff rate is the number, let's say, of 9th graders who started school in 1980 and the number of students in 12th grade who actually finished school in 1984. In that case, we are much closer to 30 percent or 40 percent of students who actually leave school, for a number of reasons.

SENATOR EWING: Yes, but some of them might move to another community or move out of state.

DR. DUVA: That is exactly right. That is why it was suggested that we use the 16 years and older formula, which happens to be the State monitoring formula that is used in the other districts.

MR. SINATRA: If I may just--

SENATOR RICE: On this, Mr. Chairman, through you again, could we, as a committee -- because I went through this four or five years ago, long before takeover-- We did not measure dropout directly. We can track students who drop out versus students who move and relocate. Maybe we have to put a system in place, legislatively, to do that -- I went through this with Gene Campbell and them, but we never moved the legislation -- along with some other important data.

So maybe this is something we can look at. I think both ways, it is very distorted. We have to take a look at that.

MR. SINATRA: I would like to just take another minute to explore another dimension of your question. It is in the area of accountability.

This past year, we have withheld the increments of 43 teachers in Jersey City, 13 of them for poor attendance, and 30 of them for poor performance. That compares to the previous year, a total of 30 teachers between both performance and attendance, and then in the 1993-1994 school year, 6 teachers. So this comes to one of the other areas where people are not providing the type of or the caliber of service that needs to be provided.

At the same time, we have increased the amount of time the students are spending on tasks in the academic areas by revising our curriculum and by the taking out of some of the subjects that are no longer what we are going to spend a great deal of time on. As a result of doing that, we were actually able to curtail-- I think it was either 33 or 35 teachers we saved in the process of elimination, also very strictly making the schools accountable for the amount of instructional time that teachers were

performing. The contract requires that they have one prep period a day. In some instances, a lot of teachers had more than one prep period a day. So by zeroing in on that and by changing some of the subjects that were no longer being offered, we were able to reduce our staff. This has really helped us to pay for reading recovery teachers, in effect, the shift in staff. That is one way in which we are addressing part of your question.

SENATOR RICE: Once I get the information through the Chair, I can analyze the cause. Just listening to you tells me Jersey City in 8th grade reading, the majority of Jersey City students don't have anyone at home to read to them, or assist them, and that teachers who are not doing what they should be doing are situated in four schools. I cannot believe that. That is almost like saying, "Everybody goes here." That is why I say that there is something wrong with the information. So I will listen more, because that is distorted.

SENATOR EWING: Frank, please finish your report, and then we can go into the question period.

MR. SINATRA: In the area of school effectiveness what we have been able to do is, with the cooperation of Fairleigh Dickinson University, we have developed six professional development schools. These are at Schools 5, 29, 34, 40, 42, and Ferris High School. We have also participated a great deal in a statewide systemic initiative, and we completed all of our activities in that area.

As I mentioned, we also increased our teacher staff time. Where teachers now are in school for 15 minutes a day longer, our administrators' time, where they formerly worked a 200-day calendar, we have increased that

to 205 days. Also, the amount of time that some of our supervisors and directors -- not some, all of our supervisors and directors, where working was formerly six and a half hours, through the negotiating process last year, we increased that to seven hours this year. That is providing more time with the same number of staff members.

We have developed a partnership to assist us with student attendance by having the Police Department actively involved in our Truancy Task Force, where the members of the Jersey City Police Department are now riding in our van, and also picking up students off the street who are truant. We have a central place where these students are brought to, where we also house the Juvenile Aid Bureau. We have found that the number of students being apprehended has dramatically increased.

Now, that isn't good, because we don't want a lot of kids out there being truant. But as we apprehend them, the first and second time, then we should start seeing a real substantial decrease. In fact, in one month, using the Jersey City Police Department, last year -- at the end of the year -- we apprehended more students in one month than we did the whole year before, using our attendance officers. That has worked out very well.

Probably the most substantial programmatic change that we have made is to go into block scheduling. We have implemented the Copernican Plan in our high schools. All five of our high schools are now having the students take four subjects a day and two semesters a year. The teachers are teaching three periods a day. The periods now are running for 80 minutes. In order to do that, we have trained what we call the Professional Development Corps. It is a group of teachers in Jersey City who have been trained by the

Princeton Training for Leadership group. They, in turn, are bringing to our regular staff the different methods and materials that high school teachers now have to use, where they are getting away from the straight lecture, which many times existed in many of your high school classes.

It has made a significant difference. It is certainly too early to completely tell, but the whole mood and the environment in the high schools in Jersey City now is greatly improved over where it was. It has lessened discipline tremendously, because those of you who are acquainted with the operation particularly of high schools-- A lot of your discipline results when students move between classes. We have cut the student movement in half by this.

The Professional Development Corps is a group of 55 staff members who were trained last spring. Then, the first four days of school this year, they worked with our teachers. They are continuing to be trained, and they are teaching one less period a day so they can work with their fellow staff members. It has made a tremendous difference as far as the teachers are concerned. We had a parent/community survey last year in order to find out what the parents were thinking about our schools. We received an extremely positive response. I will see to it, Senator, that you get enough copies of our report on that for all of the members of the Committee, because we have not sent them out yet. We released it to the public in Jersey City, and we will send it on.

We have also established a parent resource center for the town down at former School No. 35, which is now an adult learning center where we have an accredited high school program during the day. It has been very

effective. In each of our schools, we have tried to provide a space for the parents to have a resource center for the Parent Council to work on whatever it is that they want to work on.

In the area of community relations, through Comcast, last year, we were able to develop a weekly television show that showed the Jersey City community what is happening in the schools. Unfortunately, Comcast has had a change in their programming, and they are not providing us that opportunity this year. We have, together with the Jersey City Council, been working on getting our own studio established and a direct hookup. Hopefully, we will get that back on line very shortly.

In the area of facilities, which is of great importance, and is not anywhere near an easy answer, we have had to take one of our schools -- School No. 32 -- and renovate that particular building so that we can house Academic High School in it, starting next year. The Academic High School is the school in Jersey City that receives -- always receives State and national recognition. It is a magnet academic program. It has a little bit more than 400 students in it, and those students always do exceptionally well.

However, its physical plant, I believe, for about the last 15 years, has been in a former parochial school. The Middle States has refused to accredit the program if it continues to stay in that facility. So we are presently, this year, renovating School No. 32, which has been a major accomplishment, because that is something that Jersey City has been trying to do for the last 10 years, and we have not been able to get it done.

In the area of leadership and governance, our Board now is voting on all items, with the exception of personnel. We are having them work on a

committee system. The Board committees are meeting once or twice a month. The Board is still having at least one public meeting a month. Members of the Board are giving reports at the public meeting. The Board itself has had some difficulty in terms of its interrelationships once they started running for office. However, I am sure all of us are aware of that who have to run for office. But by and large the Board is moving along. I believe that the relationship that exists between the administration and the Board is a positive one.

I would just like to say in closing that when the State did the analysis of our strategic plan, the evaluation -- which you also have a copy of -- we had 43 strategies that were priority areas for 1995-1996. As you look through that, you will find that 25, or 58 percent, of them were marked as attained; 5 were not attained, or 12 percent; and 13 priorities were seen to be in progress. Well, those were things that we did not plan to finish, but planned to have going in that first year. However, of the 3 of the 5 priorities that were marked as not attained, they happen to be in the testing area we talked about a little earlier. In every one of the testing areas where we did not meet the benchmark per se, it was less than 1 percent of where we said we would be.

In the fourth area that was marked as not attained, we had committed to developing a students' store at Newport Mall. However, there was a change of management. The former management had agreed to do this as a partnership with the school district. The new management decided that they would rather rent it to a paying entity, and, therefore, we did not get the store. So that is what happened on that. That will be one that is not attained.

Then the fifth one has to do with substandard rooms, which we do have in Jersey City.

At this point, I think I would like to close, and then respond to questions. Before I do that, however, one of the areas that causes a problem -- I guess it is a good problem to have, particularly if you are in business -- is when your business is increasing, the difficulties you have in managing that increase in Jersey City. We are now up approximately 4000 students, including this year from where the district was when the State first took over in 1989. Now, 4000 students is a lot larger than most of your school districts throughout the State of New Jersey. Unfortunately, we have not really put any new capacity on line in Jersey City.

There have been two new schools that have been built that have opened during the period of State intervention, but both of them were replacement schools. They were not new schools. This year, we have 404 additional students than we had last year. This is the lowest number of increase over the past several years. But it is of prime necessity that we look for increased capacity, not just replacement.

At the present time, we are probably a month or so away from finally having a site for a replacement for School No. 3, which has been an oddity, as I understand it in Jersey City, particularly if you speak to the parents in that area. We are working with the city once again, and I think we are on the same page as to being able to get a site. But that isn't going to solve our problem. That is only going to take care of School No. 3. One of the things we are doing is, we are looking toward the middle school concept and

reconfiguring the way we are using some of our buildings, which should free up some additional space for us within our present plan.

The area of Jersey City that is referred to as The Heights is the area that is really growing by leaps and bounds. Land in The Heights is at a premium now in terms of the fact that there is really very little open land. There is a possibility -- we have been discussing it with Mayor Schundler-- There is a reservoir in that area that has been abandoned. We may be able to get a site in Jersey City for the first school that would add capacity in The Heights area. However, we cannot really tackle that until we get the problem of School No. 3 solved, because of the commitment that the Board has had for I don't know how many years to replace the old School No. 3.

The whole facility issue is something that certainly deserves your attention, as well as my attention out in the field.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

Assemblyman Rocco?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: What is your present student population?

MR. SINATRA: The present student population is 32,000 plus.

SENATOR MacINNES: How many?

MR. SINATRA: Thirty-two thousand plus.

SENATOR EWING: I might just add that if any of the staff is asked to speak, please come over to this empty chair over here, because there is a microphone. They can sit right there. And you might introduce each staff member you have here.

MR. SINATRA: Yes, I would like to. Tom Purwin is our Director of Technology. Dr. Nick Duva is the Director of Research, Planning, and Evaluation. Dr. Grisel Lopez-Diaz is our Associate Superintendent in charge of school programs. Dr. Debbie Alexander is our Executive Director of Support Services.

As an aside, I would like to tell you about the support services we had under Dr. Alexander's leadership at the time of the recent tragedy of the student who died at Snyder High School as a result of a football game. The services that came out of her department in handling the staff, the students, and the community were extraordinary in handling the way that we pulled through in that area.

Then, Mr. Ed Miklus is our Business Administrator -- the State Business Administrator.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So you say you have a 32,000-student population?

MR. SINATRA: Thirty-two.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: In looking at all your test scores at the various elementary schools, they look like they made significant progress, and really that is where the change will occur. Certainly, you know, we know that with the high schools it is a little bit more difficult to find the changes and improvements that we would like to see because of the predisposition of the previous learning patterns.

Snyder High School specifically is the one that apparently has declined significantly from 1993-1994 to the present? That is on Page 41.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Was there a specific reason for that? The other high schools seem to have fared relatively well.

MR. SINATRA: I think one of the-- I don't think, I have been told that Snyder High School has been a school that has been out of control in Jersey City for at least a decade, if not longer. I believe what has happened there this past two years was that that school has turned the corner. We do not like to refer to a tragedy as being the reason, but I can tell you that as a result of the situation we had with the football matter that the entire school community has come together and has actually started working with one another.

We have had, for the past two years, new leadership in the role of the principal. One of the problems at Snyder is that they have gone through a large succession of principals where the leadership in the school has not been stabilized. I think all of us can recognize that you need stable leadership. Everybody has to understand what is going to be expected and what someone will stand for. By constantly changing--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So they have had a turnover--

MR. SINATRA: Pardon?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: They have had a significant turnover of principals there?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I see David Brandt behind you. How do you feel the core proficiency standards are going to impact on your program?

MR. SINATRA: I think the core proficiency standards are going to help us. It comes back to what I said about the strategic plan. You are now able to focus in on something that is the standard, and everybody knows what it is that is expected and it is going to be there. There will be some difficulty in moving over, or realigning, the curriculum to meet the requirements, but Dr. Lopez-Diaz's shop is in the process of doing that. In some areas, we have already accomplished that.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: And your professional development schools with Fairleigh Dickinson-- I assume they will help in terms of reaching that goal.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: The last thing I have is, I agree with Senator Rice. I think the dropout rate-- You know, it is hard to get what is actually occurring from the way you put it together. I don't know what a better way to do it might be, but I think we are certainly not getting what the actual numbers are. If we are losing 30 percent of the students from the freshman year to the senior year, I think that is one significant piece of information versus maybe doing it a different way.

MR. SINATRA: I think this, though: If you look at it, it is 13.7 percent a year. If you do that, multiply it by three, what do you come to?

SENATOR EWING: About 30 percent, 40 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I am not a math major, but--

MR. SINATRA: Well, it's 39 percent, 40 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Generally we ask you questions, just so you understand how it works here.

Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may?

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Thank you.

Doctor, thank you again for coming. It is always a pleasure, whether it be Newark, Paterson, or Jersey City.

As an educator in the fourth largest school district in the State of New Jersey, right behind you, I find it interesting reading and comparing us to you, with our being suburban. I see a lot of similarities.

First of all, being on this Committee and visiting Jersey City, I am glad to see the results on paper. I was mentioning to Rudy and Joe that maybe it is time we make another visit there. I have not been there in awhile.

I have a number of questions: Number one, your reading recovery program-- Could you walk me through how you identify a 1st or 2nd grader who comes into your school district, or goes through your preschool program, your kindergarten program, your 1st grade? How do you diagnose this youngster as being eligible for the reading program?

MR. SINATRA: I could give you the \$5 response to that question, but I would rather you get the \$100 response, so I will refer your question to Dr. Lopez-Diaz.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Fine. Between us we probably have \$5, so-- (laughter)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I would say a \$2 response for you, Frank.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

GRISEL LOPEZ-DIAZ, Ed.D.: Good morning, Senator Ewing, Assemblyman Rocco, Committee members.

SENATOR EWING: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Good morning.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Gee, you really raised the level of concern with the \$100 response, but basically, the children participating in reading recovery are in the lowest 20th percentile of their class in the area of reading. How is it established? We have a questionnaire and teacher observation sheets that are conducted and administered by the classroom teacher, together with the reading recovery teachers during the first two weeks of school. So they work one-on-one with the children so we can determine-- This is the first year we are implementing it at the 1st grade level.

Last year, we did a lot of this surveying in kindergarten, and we have done it this year as well, in order to determine who the prime candidates are for the program the following year.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: So you identify a youngster to be eligible for this reading program.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Exactly.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I imagine it is the same for the writing and the math.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Well, reading recovery encompasses both reading and writing.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Okay. And is there a math recovery program?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: In math-- We have math specialists in the schools where we have the lowest performance in math. In other areas where children are below in the area of math, as determined by test scores, etc., then the classroom teacher provides remediation in the specific area. They have an individualized student plan.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Now, with this plan, once a youngster is identified, is that youngster in a pullout program, or is it a before-school and/or after-school program? I heard the Doctor talk about Saturday.

MR. SINATRA: Saturdays.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Years ago, when I worked in Rahway, we had what we called the Saturday Enrichment Program, which was experimental at the time. It was so successful that we canceled it. It was bizarre.

How do you run your program?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: In reading recovery?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Yes.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: It is a pullout program. It is one-on-one. The secret of the success of the program, I believe, is the fact that the teacher, again-- Remember, these are the children in the lowest 20th percentile. So the one-on-one work that the teacher does is extremely important. They are constantly diagnosing reading difficulties and addressing them. It is a program that teaches the child successful strategies for reading. It has developed and studied the strategies that the children who are successful readers employ, and they are constantly reinforced so that the children begin automatically to use

those strategies to look at context clues from pictures, for example, and say, “Oh, I can get meaning from this,” to decode using initial consonants, etc.

The other piece that is very important is, the children have reading recovery every single day. We stress attendance very, very much. The teachers are selected through a very rigorous process. Besides the interview and their own teaching performance, we look at their attendance, and we stress, with the parent, the importance of the attendance of the child in school. They are taken for reading recovery every single day for 30 minutes during the reading period, so they are not missing something else. The reading period is longer. It is usually 90 minutes. Thirty of those minutes would be when they are taken for the program.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: And it is one-on-one?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: It is one-on-one.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Do you have any type of a program before school or after school?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Not for 1st graders.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Okay. Let’s go up to the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: All right. In some schools, they have established before-school and after-school programs as an extension. We have Saturday programs for the HSPT as well.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Right.

MR. SINATRA: Also, we are able to supplement some of this with the Casper program.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Exactly. And we have tutorial program also at eight housing projects in the district. It has been very successful this year. The children who reside in the housing projects are eligible to attend this after-school tutorial. We pay for the teachers on an hourly basis. We work very closely with the housing authority, so it is another vehicle for keeping tabs on the students and another vehicle for increased parental involvement. The teachers who work as tutors in the housing projects obtain a copy of the child's report card through a parental release form every marking period. We have provided a vehicle to communicate with the classroom teacher as well. So that is another avenue. This is at eight housing project sites, on a daily basis, throughout the district.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: What is your average class size going from grade level -- K through 6?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: It depends on the school. We have some areas in the city where class size is quite high, up past 30. We have some areas where it is in the 20s. As Mr. Sinatra said, we are really in a crunch up in Jersey City Heights.

MR. SINATRA: It is very unfortunate. In many instances, our class size is 30 or a little bit more than 30, which is a reflection of the enrollment growth without additional capacity.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Is it staff requirements, or is it facilities?

MR. SINATRA: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Is it because of staff, or is it facilities?

MR. SINATRA: It's facilities. Of course, it would also be a staff problem if we had the facilities and didn't have the money to pay the staff. It could come that way, but at this point in time-- By the way, we are in rented churches around the community right now where we have overflows. I believe the money would be there if we had the places to put them.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: You know, it might be a wise investment to visit Brick Town, Rich. (speaking to Deputy Commissioner DiPatri) I know your office has been actively involved in it. They built a kindergarten resource center which houses, I believe, 26 kindergarten classes in a corporate center, which the School Board bought for facilities with the blessing and cooperation of the Township Committee and the Commissioner's office. I believe they paid, like, \$2.5 million for the facility, and put another \$1 million into it. On a normal square-foot basis, it would have cost the community somewhere in the range of \$18 million, and they now have this state-of-the-art facility.

I visited the facility, and it is unbelievable. It is a great facility. When I think of those communities, such as ours in the suburbs and those of yours in the cities, I think there are so many opportunities out there that all we have to do is use some creativity. We do not need to build new facilities. I think we have to look at what is available to us in a community, redesign those facilities with a little brick and mortar, and we could really have some creative facilities.

In the preschool programs-- You know, I have been to your preschool programs. When I get back to the suburbs and I see ours, I think that part of the problem, as Senator Rice pointed out, is, why aren't the kids

learning? I am a firm believer that environment has a great deal to do with it. I think that if a youngster does not have an opportunity to go to a school and feel that he or she is in an environment where learning is important, he or she is not going to learn. I think those are the kinds of things, whether it be Newark, whether it be Paterson, whether it be Jersey City, where we, as the State, not just a community-- I think we have to start to be a little more creative about what we can do in those communities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR EWING: Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: You indicated, if I heard you correctly, that the population -- the school enrollment increased by about 4000.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Where is the funding coming from?

MR. SINATRA: The funding?

SENATOR RICE: The additional funding.

MR. SINATRA: It is just part of the formula. It wasn't until--

SENATOR RICE: I guess the question is: Did you have increased funding from when you started, or did you raise the local property taxes?

MR. SINATRA: Two years ago, when we changed the formula, we recognized the fact that the enrollment in Jersey City went up, so there was additional State funding. The municipal levy for the last four years in Jersey City has remained static at 80 million some odd thousand dollars. There has not been any additional local moneys, but there has been some additional State moneys.

As I say, two years ago, you recognized the fact when you changed the formula to take into account the increased enrollment. At that point in time, we got a substantial increase.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman, the reason I raised that is, I know we are dealing with Jersey City now, and we will be dealing, I think, in two other sessions at the end, with the City of Newark. Our argument up there has been -- and I have met with the Commissioner's office on this -- that you can't just wipe out 30 million, because I indicated two years ago that there would probably be-- We cannot determine what the increase in enrollment is going to be. If people think that the State is going to do a good job-- People cannot afford to get these kids into private schools or to sneak them into other districts. They're purging, and they are going to wind up back in the system. I think that happened in East Orange.

That is why we have been very adamant about, if need be, setting those hundreds in reserve so the Commissioner would have the discretion to use them, rather than taking them out of the budget. Then we said, "Well, we need the money, but we won't have it next year." Next year is probably, I think, part of the causal factor of some of these things not happening.

In your case, it was different. In our case, we want them spending \$2 million more locally. I wanted to at least say that for the record. We do not want to go through anything negative, the roads that Jersey City went through as pioneers for us. We don't need to travel those roads. That is why I am asking the kinds of questions I am asking, because it is obvious there is something you all didn't do up there in terms of defining cause. Maybe it is something that we need to look at. I just wanted to raise that.

The other issue I want to raise is, you know, when I went to high school, we used to beat Snyder so bad in football. I guess maybe that is why they can't seem to get it together. But seriously, you said that Snyder seems to be one of those schools that just, for some reason, seems to be out of control.

I don't need you to define control, but what I do need you to do is tell me how the principals -- who selected the principals? If you are going through a lack of stability with principals, then it seems to me that the principals are quitting of their own volition, or they just don't have what it takes to deal with it when they go in there. That would raise the question of whether these principals or newcomers to the system understand Jersey City, or are they from the old school? Can you kind of elaborate on those thoughts?

MR. SINATRA: In Jersey City, the principals are selected really on a two-stage -- actually I guess it is a three-stage basis. Every two years, there is a principal, an assistant, and a vice principal eligibility list that is structured. People apply. They can apply to be on all four of the lists. There are two parts to the application process: One is a written test that we have had scored by three outside college professors, no one from Jersey City. Then there is an interviewing board that is made up of the associate superintendents, the director of human resources, and the director of our affirmative action office, Mr. Philip Flood.

These people are then rated, and they come up with a score. The list that is to be promulgated is the top 20 individuals -- the top 20 scores. That becomes the list for the next two years. In the event that there aren't 20 people who have applied, for instance, the high school principal's pool-- There

would not be 20 people applying for that. The bottom of the list that had 20 people on it, which usually are the assistant principals-- That is the elementary vice principal, who is called the assistant principal in Jersey City. That lowest score becomes the cutoff score for anybody on the high school list.

So if you had 10 people who were going to be interviewed, you would not have someone who scored real low, because you would use that other low score. That is the first level where this list is then-- They call it an eligibility list. It has certain advantages and, as I see it, it has a lot of disadvantages. The biggest disadvantage I see is that it does not allow the district really to get any new blood into the system at the principal's or at the assistant principal's level, because it is open to people from the outside, but really, who is going to apply from the outside for a job that doesn't exist? That is what is in their contracts, both the teachers and the administrative group.

SENATOR RICE: Are you indicating that at Snyder-- I don't know how many principals they have had, but are you indicating that all those principals came from the system that was there?

MR. SINATRA: I'm sorry, sir?

SENATOR RICE: Are you indicating that the principals who were at Snyder came out of the system that was already there? There was no reaching outside to, like, Newark?

MR. SINATRA: They were on the list.

SENATOR RICE: Then who assigned them to the school from the list?

MR. SINATRA: The next step is: When Snyder High School was open -- when there was an opening -- then people on the list who were

interested in being the principal of Snyder High School would then apply for that. Then there would be another screening committee that would meet with any of the people off the eligibility list who were interested. This committee would be made up of other principals, other high school principals, the associate superintendents who would be in charge of that, the director of human resources, a parent, and also the director of affirmative action.

They would, once again, interview the person and they would come out with a score. The top three individuals would then be recommended to me, the State Superintendent, to be interviewed. I would interview them and I would select one of the three who I thought was the best for that particular school at that particular time. When that occurs, I make up a recommendation, I forward it to Dr. Contini, because anyone above the rank of supervisor has to be approved by the State before the State District Superintendent can recommend him or put him in place. That's how it goes.

SENATOR RICE: My final question relating to the principals: Do you have the ability, for example, to transfer the principal of Academic High School over to run Snyder?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: All right. I am raising that for a reason, because sometimes in a human resource piece you see someone who cannot handle the rough aspects of our communities. There are others in the system who are doing a very effective job and who understand the community. I am not saying to train for the principal of an academic, but my point is, maybe there are some of these high schools where things -- if you go back and look at the history of them, you can see where you had something close to Snyder --

I don't know if it could have been too close, but something close to Snyder-- Maybe we should take a look at what that particular administrator is doing if, in fact, he or she was there long term and maybe talk to them about maybe doing some troubleshooting for you, or some changing around, as long as you can get someone in your system to hold up to the progress of the other school.

I am concerned about whether the superintendents in the State are doing all they can here to make these things work, because there is a difference between Brick Township and Newark, but there is no difference in terms of needs. I would hope for the State if, in fact, the Superintendent of Jersey City could visit that school, the all-day kindergarten, or whatever it is -- that you don't ask, you mandate that Newark go and visit also at the same time, so at least they will know that there is something else out there so we can stop pulling everything in from New York.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Assemblyman Charles.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Good morning.

A couple of questions, I guess, in the first area of educational achievement within the district that we have or have not experienced. When I went to your list, the book that has been put together, I looked through it and I turned, initially, to Public School No. 22. That is where I went to school. I look at the results, and some questions come into my mind. But before I get to the particular questions, just some information, some education that you gentlemen can give to me.

I remember reading in the papers some time ago when they reported the results of the tests throughout the State, particularly in Jersey

City. You know, a lot of our schools did not perform well. In a lot of cases, the students did better in writing than they did in reading. How is that? I mean, I always thought that writing was a more difficult activity than just reading. Maybe it is just articulating. Give me just the-- Help me to understand that -- why we have better performance in a writing test than in a reading test.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Writing is subjective.

MR. SINATRA: You know, I really wish I had the answer to that one. When I was back in Perth Amboy, I thought I had the answer to it. That was, writing is scored on a holistic basis. When they first started talking about giving the writing test, I started to train my teachers to have the students start to write so they could be measured by holistic scoring. We did very, very well. We came out better in writing than we did in reading. Maybe Dr. Contini can help me in this area. It is not only--

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: That suggests to me that something may be a little invalid about the writing portion of the examination and what really I should conclude from the results of writing. But I will move on. I won't get bogged down on that. I'll talk to you gentlemen later about that. But that is an intriguing question to me. I can't quite understand what underlays that.

The second question is this, and it goes back to the area that was opened up originally by Senator Rice, accountability and identifying reasons or causes of, and then fashioning remedies to correct: Jersey City has been taken over since 1989. In October it was seven years. The promise was that there would be improvement.

We should recognize that improvement seven years later in 4th grade testing and in 8th grade testing. Why is it that we still have these, I guess, low performances in those grades still, seven years later -- reading, writing, and mathematics? Shouldn't we have seen some dramatic increase in improvement and performance at those levels in this period of time?

MR. SINATRA: I certainly agree with you that we have to, and should be doing better. I am just reacting to taking the district from where it was when I got there to where I have it today as far as the improvement is concerned.

One of the things you always have to remember about education is, it is sequential. It is really from the bottom up that you are really able to build.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: But that is the reason I asked the question, Mr. Sinatra, because seven years later, 4th grade, we should see something, 8th grade even, because we have had those kids in school for seven years during the takeover period. I would guess -- I don't have the statistics in front of me -- that the results you are seeing now, early warning, and also the 4th grade tests in Public School No. 22, for example, they are no different now than they were in 1989 when the district was taken over.

Somebody needs to explain that to all of us who sit here as legislators.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: May I take an opportunity to do that, Assemblyman? (no response)

First of all, it is an orange and apple comparison. The standards in 4th grade-- It was actually 3rd grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade, HSPT, that

were the standards at the time in 1989. The testing that is going on today, particularly the 8th grade and the 11th grade, are much more rigorous tests. So by a relative comparison, if you would judge Jersey City's performance to other special needs districts', you would see a marked increase in improvement. Effectively, they are performing much better than districts that were fully certified under the former standards, standards 3rd, 6th, and 9th grades. So there is tremendous growth in terms of comparison. You just don't have a comparative number in 1989 with 1996, because they are different instruments. The expectations are more rigorous. The standards for 8th grade and 11th grade are much more difficult than they were under the 3rd, 6th, and 9th grade tests that were administered at that time.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Joe, let me jump in for just one second on that question.

Were there any Metropolitan or Iowa stats given that would be the same, that would show you from those tests if you had the Californias or the Ivors?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: There were, but again--

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Excuse me. But we can go to another analysis. What about the other districts throughout the State of New Jersey? Are they still performing with these current tests at the low levels that Jersey City is performing at?

MR. SINATRA: Assemblyman, last year, several of the urban districts became certified. I made up a short report. It was not to diminish what they had done, because I was very happy to see that they were certified.

But I brought to Dr. Contini's attention that they got certified on the basis of test scores where Jersey City was higher.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: We can provide you with that information by comparison.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: I would like to see that, because--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: I think it is important for you to realize that the bar has kept moving; that we are not trying to attain certification at the 1989 standards that Jersey City was not performing at the time they were State operated -- State graded.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: So you are saying that you would be certified today under the 1989 standards?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Absolutely, if you were measuring 3rd, 6th, and 9th grades, the HSPT 9th grade, which is a less rigorous test.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: But do you know what? That--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: It is no longer administered now.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Excuse me for interrupting you, but that avoids the issue, too, which is this: Once you take over, you are supposed to be educating these kids--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: --so that they can pass whatever standards there are that you impose, whenever EWT came into effect and whatever, and the other tests, and the nature of those tests. You have been in

Jersey City. Why aren't the kids learning at those levels and passing at the rates that others are passing? We need to examine that.

For example, a question that comes out of that is this: In Public School No. 22-- You can go around the district -- and I remember seeing the breakdown even in here -- and look at some of the schools. Public School No. 38 does better than Public School No. 22, for example. What additional resources are put into Public School No. 22 as a result of those kinds of findings?

MR. SINATRA: That is why we have reading recovery presently. The full-day kindergarten program would be in Public School No. 22. For instance, up in the Heights, where the schools, generally speaking, score better, the only school we have with a full-day kindergarten program is Public School No. 28.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: So I guess in answer to my question, you're saying-- Are you representing here that you have redistributed and placed greater resources in the poorer--

MR. SINATRA: In the poorer schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: --schools, and we could find statistics and other information to verify that that is being done?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: And we can quantify and identify what it is that is extra in the conforming districts? Is that right?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: All right.

Another question: On the principal stuff, I see in the report that there is some evaluation plan and some way -- I don't know how you call this, but some scheme for evaluating principals, and so on and so forth. How long has that system of evaluation been in place in an upgraded and effective sort of status?

MR. SINATRA: Last year, our department of human resources was asked to design a new evaluation for principals. This has been finalized and is supposed to be in effect for this year. The previous plan--

Grisel, would you be able to handle that, how long we have had the previous principals' evaluations?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: I think he is more interested and wanting to know how you are holding them accountable with (indiscernible) and benchmarks.

MR. SINATRA: All right.

If you are interested in the benchmarks, the principals in schools where they either slipped or they did not make significant progress in meeting their benchmark have been required to develop a special plan as to what they are doing this year that is different than what they were doing last year to get there. The associate superintendents are also required to monitor those schools to see to it, on a sequential basis, that they are making progress on what they said they would do.

At the same time, all of the principals, after we had all of the test data in, received a letter from me which pointed out the areas where they did

exceptionally well. We rewarded success. At the same time, if they fell into one of the other areas, we directed that they do what I just described.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: After the original reassignment of principals, after takeover was implemented in 1989, there was a transitional period where evaluations were done. I don't know the particulars of them. Then principals were put into place. At that point, we were at a stage where, I guess, we were ready to go forward with our team players -- meaning the district's team players.

Since that time when our team of players was put into play, what have been the results of the evaluations of the principals? Have there been evaluations that resulted in the change -- replacement of principals? How much of that has happened?

MR. SINATRA: There has not been the type of action that I reported concerning the number of teacher increments that have been withheld. That is the reason we have changed the evaluation procedure for this year, so that we can have that in place. There have been disciplinary actions brought against some principals. In fact, I have tenure charges. A principal has been suspended and is awaiting termination on tenure charges.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: That was in one case. You are talking about Snyder.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: That is an exceptional kind of a case, but I mean in terms of just evaluation of the performance of a school. That school is not performing. We look at the player we drafted first. That

draftee is not performing. We want someone else. How much of that has happened in the district?

The case you mentioned is Snyder. That is an exceptional case. I am not going to talk about that. You and I know what that was about. But just across the board in all 28 schools, the high schools, and so on, how much movement of principals have we seen based upon nonperformance?

MR. SINATRA: On the basis of nonperformance as of this time, I would have to tell you that at least while I have been there, other than building a case and starting a paper trail, there has not been the kind of action that you are referring to, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: I have some other questions, but I will let others ask their questions. My final area is what, I guess for want of a better phrase, we will call affirmative action. How is that concept playing out in the district from the point of view of the community, the point of view of the Advisory Board of Education, and from your point of view?

MR. SINATRA: At the present time, within the past several months, there is a great deal more concern that is being expressed concerning the number of minorities in administrative positions than has been expressed at any time since I have been there. I cannot give you the exact reason why that is occurring, but that is occurring. In fact, at our last Board meeting, last Thursday, Kabili Tayari, the Chairperson of our Board, requested that I have an affirmative action plan developed for our December Board meeting, even though we had reported out on the acceptance of the State of our equity plan, which includes the employment of personnel. But he wants a separate

affirmative action plan, which I haven't even had an opportunity to discuss yet with Dr. Contini.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Just on the issue of equity, is there any basis for his recent concern about that, or is that just something that is coming from left field without any kind of basis?

MR. SINATRA: I wouldn't say it is strictly from left field. It is certainly from the eyes of the beholder, though. One of the things we have is a problem with the pool where -- and that is why I went to such lengths to describe that to you-- In many instances, there are not a great number of minorities in the pool to begin with, so it does have a negative effect from that point of view.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: I have some other questions, but we do not have enough time and others have questions.

Thank you, Mr. Sinatra. Thank you, Doctor.

SENATOR EWING: Assemblyman Garcia.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Sinatra, for being here with us today.

One of the questions I have -- and we have heard it before -- is about the continuity in some of the high schools where they have the turnover on the principals. I think we face a graver problem in Jersey City, and that is the changing of superintendents.

Now, I know, Mr. Sinatra, unfortunately, you are leaving in December, come hell or high water, I understand. There is no way you are going to stay there past this--

SENATOR EWING: Let's check on that in January.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: No, do you know what, this has been dismissed too often, Mr. Chairman. I think we keep putting in superintendents and, with all due respect-- I know Mr. Sinatra. We have worked together, and I have the utmost respect for him. I think you are seeing some of the results of improvement now that he has finally been there for awhile and has finally been able to locate what teachers and what principals, what works, and what doesn't work.

What we face is the problem that we are going to bring in a superintendent-- Thank God we didn't bring in the superintendent we thought we were going to bring in, who was going to be here for two years and then just leave again. I think it is up to the Commissioner, and certainly the members of this board, to make sure that when we bring in the next superintendent -- and hopefully--

Do you have any names of candidates for us today, who the possible candidates are for the post of new superintendent? Is that search being conducted? I would like the next superintendent to be there, not for a two-year contract, but maybe a five-year contract, and certainly someone who is familiar with the present school system.

Maybe, Dr. DiPatri and Dr. Contini, you could tell us a little bit about that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I would like to comment, if I may.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Because we already lost Jack Smith. He is already in Palisades Park.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Charlie Smith.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Charles Smith. I'm sorry.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I would just say that the concern you raise is surely one that the Commissioner has as well. We think the key to improvement in Jersey City, as well as in other districts -- the other two State-operated districts -- is all about leadership. I think evidence to that is Frank Sinatra. I think you can only sense today the improvement. You guys who are up there know it as well as I do.

Frank came in and inherited a \$7 million deficit, and in 10 months turned that into a surplus and, while doing so, improved instruction. Last year when we talked with Frank and we looked at how he had improved the governance, with the assistance of the people behind me as well, he said, "I had to get the structure in place. I guarantee you that next year you are going to see positive student results." You have seen that. Pete, myself, and the Commissioner were there last month to see. I invite you, really, to go up there and see the tremendous implementation plan at the high school level. They are going to look at a way to implement reform and change, go visit the Copernican Plan. All of that is about leadership. Frank and his staff deserve a lot of credit.

What happened this past summer in terms of finding a replacement for Mr. Sinatra was unfortunate, as you know, the way it played out. So we are committed to-- The Commissioner is committed to finding the best person available within all the resources we have available to us to advertise, to seek out, to recruit a person -- to get the best person to come in there, not for the short term, but to continue the excellent leadership provided

by Frank. I can just tell you that from the time we spent on it alone -- Pete, myself, and the Commissioner -- trying to address that issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: My only suggestion would be to try to bring in someone who is at least familiar with the school system and is willing to make a commitment to the children of Jersey City for longer than a two-year period of time. Because by the time they figure out where all the schools are, who all the players are, then their time is up and they are moving on. Then we are back to the stage of, "Guess who the new superintendent is."

That is no criticism of Mr. Sinatra. I think Mr. Sinatra has done a wonderful job, and I have the utmost respect for him. But I think the next superintendent has to be someone who is going to be committed to our children for longer than a two-year period of time.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Let me answer the first part: The search has started and will conclude at the end of this month -- the recruitment aspect of it. Over the course of the following two to three weeks, there will then be interviews with a recommendation coming forward from the Commissioner to the State Board.

With regard to the length of contract, it is a concern only in the context that a State District Superintendent is appointed by the State Board of Education. If the district reverts back to local control, then it is the local Board of Education that would have the right to make the selection. So the reason two years came into play, Assemblyman, was because there is a year of transition after a determination that it goes back to local control. So that is why the two years -- the current year, as well as the year of transition. So we

are researching that issue with the Attorney General to see if a contract longer than that can be issued.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: May I interrupt just for one second on that narrow point, just to put a different point of view than Assemblyman Garcia's on the record--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: --with respect to who should be a superintendent and what some of the elements are that should be taken into consideration?

SENATOR EWING: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: It seems to me that depending upon your evaluation, the State's evaluation of what is still needed in the district, a different set of factors may be implicated in the selection process. It may very well be, based upon your analysis of what is yet to be done, that you need somebody for just a shorter period of time who is going to be leaving after a shorter period of time, who can do some of the tough things that maybe need to be done, if such need to be done. I think if you have a situation where there are tough decisions that have to be made, then you may be better off with someone there for a finite period of time to make those tough decisions who is going to be marching on, than to have someone who intends to stay.

If that is the case, take that into account. If that is not the case, then I think what Assemblyman Garcia says is the case.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: I will distribute, through the Chair, a set of the criteria, qualifications, which express the types of consideration the Assemblyman is raising. That came directly from

community members, as well as the Board of Education, as well as the central office administration, capturing the kinds of issues and concerns you just addressed, so you can see the type of individual we are recruiting and looking for.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Just another question. Mr. Sinatra is not here, but maybe someone else can answer this. What is the percentage of the number of students who are classified as special education in the Jersey City school system?

DEBORAH S. ALEXANDER, Ed.D.: (speaking from audience) Five to six thousand students, I believe.

SENATOR EWING: Do you want to come up here to a microphone? We want it for the record. Please. I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: So that is about 20 percent of the student population that is classified as special education in Jersey City?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: I think we want to get the exact number for you, Assemblyman.

DR. ALEXANDER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: I just wanted to get a ballpark figure.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Well, Frank is coming in the door now, but whether we have the actual number-- We can get that to you, through the Chair, exactly what the percentage is.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: It's funny. There may be a reason why I asked this question, which leads me to my follow-up: What type of impact, monetarily, is the new Comprehensive Education Plan going to have

on Jersey City, and how much money are we going to lose for the other 10 percent of the students who are now not going to be funded? What is that going to cost? How is that money going to be made up? Have we thought about that? How is that going to impact on the local property taxes?

Maybe you could comment on that.

MR. SINATRA: There are approximately a little more than 10 percent of the students in Jersey City right now who are classified. One of the things that we--

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Excuse me, Mr. Sinatra. When you were out of the room, they said there are close to 6000 pupils who are classified.

MR. SINATRA: That would be 20 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Yes, that's 20 percent.

MR. SINATRA: Now, I discussed this with Dr. Elias. She has told me what the State guidelines are for the number of students that you could have classified, that we were very close, where we would not be losing any funds on the new formula because of that.

One of the things that we are trying to do in general, is to bring back -- we have brought back a considerable number, but once again, the facility factor comes in -- the students that we have in out-of-district placements. We are trying to get as many of those back into the community as possible. One of the adjuncts of the building of Public School No. 32 for a new Academic High School-- That is going to enable us to increase the number of students we have who were in that program that was being serviced over in

School No. 32 next year when it reopens as Academic High School. Then that program moves into where presently Academic High School is.

To specifically answer your question, I have not worked the numbers, Rudy, and I would only be faking it if I tried to tell you anymore.

SENATOR EWING: Let me just add something: The final formula has not been released yet or devised. So I mean, you can't say, "What are we going to lose," or, "How are you going to make it up," or whether we are going to gain anything. We have to wait and see. Nobody knows what it is going to be.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: The problem is, sometimes I just want to make sure that we are looking ahead toward this problem. The number may be a percentage or two off, but we could have a general conception as to what is coming down the pike here. I mean, let's not bury our heads in the sand, at least not at this point.

Mr. Sinatra, I think this is going to be a real problem for Jersey City, at least from where I stand. Please start looking at that, because I think it is coming soon.

The other question is: We talked about substandard rooms and the teacher to student ratio. How many more school buildings or classrooms do we need, and what do you think the cost may be of a proper buildout to house the number of students we have in Jersey City at this point?

MR. SINATRA: We had, as part of the strategic plan, a five-year building facilities plan developed that called for \$275 million up to the year 2000, which was to the point of only building School No. 3 and a replacement for School No. 20, the site for what I was talking about up in the Heights, and

another high school because of the overcrowdedness at Dickinson High School. Beyond that we have not gone into any more additional buildings because of the realistic approach to how many dollars can there be.

One of the things that we are doing is switching over to the middle school. A renovation clause for that is incorporated. By having some of our schools become K through 5 schools and other schools becoming 6 through 8 schools, we will pick up space. We will gain capacity with that configuration. That is the way in which we are moving, at least until the year 2000. But we do have, as part of that plan, a new school for School No 3, a school for No. 20, and then the site, or another building up in the Heights, and a secondary school for Dickinson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Mr. Sinatra, may I back up for just one second? I apologize, Assemblyman Garcia -- one second.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Okay.

MR. SINATRA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Back to the special ed. You said you were going to send us the information. Could you send us some special ed information by classification and the total numbers by grade and the percentage of the whole?

MR. SINATRA: Total number of-- I did not hear you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: By the classification.

MR. SINATRA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: And the percentage of the whole.

SENATOR EWING: Also you want it by grade, you said?

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Yes.

MR. SINATRA: Grade levels.

SENATOR EWING: Are you finished, Assemblyman Garcia?

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: I will now finalize my questions, if you will allow me, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: One of the things that really concerns me is, when we look at the dropout rates, I think we have to devise a mechanism to see whether or not the students are really dropping out. We have that 13.7, but it is really 30 or 40 over the course of time. We need to find out whether these children are being enrolled in other school districts, or if they are just leaving the system.

Now, do we have that in place?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, we have, through outbound collection, but I would also suggest to you that there is a piece of legislation, sponsored by Senator Rice. When you look at it, we allow students to leave at 16. We have to recognize that fact. That is what the dropout data suggest. We sanction students not coming to school the day they turn 16. I think the Senator was persuasive in a meeting with the Commissioner to suggest -- to persuade us that we ought to look at that because of the expectations that are set in the very low grades, which say, "It's okay to leave at 16." Many times we place the blame on ourselves and on schools to say, "What are you doing to keep them in?"

I think we need to recognize that there may be an alternative.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Yes, but I know how to increase test scores, too, and that is to put pressure on those kids once they turn 16, and say, "Listen, you guys, if you don't want to be in school, just get out." That is a way to increase test scores as well. So that is another concern that cuts both ways.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Assemblyman, your question is right on target. It is the issue of tracking the cohort, the students from the time -- basically they are in 7th and 8th grades -- to track them as to when they should be graduating. The major problem we have statewide -- which we hope will be remedied within the next year -- is actually having information where we can track the student by an ID number, which will, in effect, allow us to take into consideration the mobility issues within a district, as well as mobility to other school districts within the State, and be able to then say at the conclusion of the 12th grade, when that cohort should have graduated, how many students actually did realize that graduation successfully, and where were they in New Jersey. It is possible they could be out of state, but more importantly, where are they in New Jersey.

We do not have the capacity to do that currently. We are moving toward that, first with the HSPT, and then overall with the dropout. The reason we went -- and Dr. Duva presented to you a quick analysis of the calculation-- We were calculating dropouts predicated on the entire high school population, even though the kids were not eligible to drop out because they were only 13, 14, or 15 years of age.

So what you are receiving now by way of both monitoring and the data that is in the State-operated district report is, of the number of students

who could have dropped out, how many did based on that number 13.7 percent of the kids who were 16 years of age or older during the course of that year. It now gives us, at least categorically, the kind of information that will allow us to track the student population. It certainly does not take into consideration, however, the other variables, like that they did not report back at all because they went to another school district, possibly even back to Puerto Rico or other kinds of communities where they may be attending school.

But it is a real issue and one that-- It is not, by the way, just New Jersey, it is a national issue. It is one that we are trying to have some leadership on.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Okay.

MR. SINATRA: Just to follow up on that -- and it is a problem I had back in Perth Amboy -- particularly now, the requirements say that if we do not get a recognition from the receiving school that the child has reported there and they request records, we have to count that child as a dropout.

Now, it has been my experience that most of the kids who return to the Caribbean -- they never request records. There is a great deal of movement -- as I am sure you are aware, Rudy -- between the Caribbean and the mainland. So there are many kids that we are counting as dropouts who have returned to wherever it is they came from. They may or may not have been enrolled in school, but to hold us responsible for that kind of movement is, you know-- It just isn't fair.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: That's right. I agree.

My last question is: I was reading on Page 46 that you give stipends to teachers for perfect attendance.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Of \$700.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Don't they receive credits for those days once they retire at the end?

MR. SINATRA: When they retire they get up to a certain number of days at the rate of \$40 a day, if they have accumulated sick days.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Okay.

SENATOR EWING: To a maximum of what?

MR. SINATRA: The maximum in Perth Amboy was \$7000. There is no maximum in Jersey City.

SENATOR EWING: They can get 25, 30, or 100?

MR. SINATRA: Well, no. At \$40 a day, you can't get that high.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: One last question: Do you have any ideas-- Should there be another early retirement or, like, a buyout plan, do you think, to help to move some teachers who have been there for awhile? Do you think that would be useful?

MR. SINATRA: After the first year that I was in Jersey City, I did start to consider possibly doing something to accelerate some of our older teachers to leave.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: I know Hoboken has a big problem with that.

MR. SINATRA: In discussion with Dr. Contini, we felt it was an area that we, as a State-operated district -- at least this is my recollection of it -- should not get ourselves involved with that. As a result, I have not pursued it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Do you think-- Well, all right.

SENATOR EWING: Okay.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: We were just discussing it in the context of an individual district, because there are pension problems where districts identify incentives for early retirement. There is an issue when they are not pension board proven. Talking about on a statewide basis, we never discussed it. We were just talking about its application to Jersey City.

SENATOR EWING: Senator MacInnes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sinatra, when did you become the Jersey City Superintendent?

MR. SINATRA: July of 1994, acting.

SENATOR MacINNES: You became the Acting Superintendent July of 1994, so you have been there for a little over two years. Assemblyman Garcia reports that you are going to be leaving in December, so you will have served two and a half years.

MR. SINATRA: Senator, I was clear to say I was appointed acting, because I went there as an interim. It was not my-- I am retired.

SENATOR MacINNES: Yes, I know. You don't look it, but that's okay.

MR. SINATRA: I'm glad you know, because I don't. No, but seriously--

SENATOR EWING: Senator MacInnes should be retired.

SENATOR MacINNES: A lot of people think I am in an acting capacity in my Senate seat.

MR. SINATRA: Very seriously, I only went there to fill in until the Commissioner's office could get the permanent State Superintendent.

SENATOR MacINNES: Which never happened, I guess.

MR. SINATRA: After being there a short time, the Commissioner's office was kind enough to ask if I would stay for at least the first full year, which I agreed to. Then things were moving along, and I recognized the ability, or the necessity for continuity, so I agreed to stay for a second year. But I am ready now to steam, gentlemen. Senator Ewing and I are a little older -- at least I am.

SENATOR MacINNES: Don't put yourself in that category.
(laughter)

MR. SINATRA: No, I think I am older than he is.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Nobody is as old as Jack. He is the only guy I know who puts B.C. after his birth date.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: That's not fair.

SENATOR MacINNES: So Assemblyman Garcia is correct that you are going to be leaving in December?

MR. SINATRA: Yes. I have asked the Commissioner to find someone, hopefully for January 1. If they do not have anyone identified by January 1, I am not walking out the door. I will stay until they get someone.

SENATOR MacINNES: My next question, I guess, would be for Commissioner DiPatri. The specifications you are using to recruit Mr. Sinatra's successor-- How are you describing the term of the job?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I believe Pete addressed that briefly. The problem is that we could not commit for more than two years -- that was out interpretation -- because of the possibility that they would return to local control.

SENATOR MacINNES: When will you know about the return to local control?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, I think we are having the Attorney General look at the possibility of extending the contract. Whether we can, in fact, extend beyond an anticipated date for return to local control-- So, Senator, if we get an affirmative response, then our intent would be to offer a contract longer than two years, because it is real difficult to recruit.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would think so.

You are now in the process of trying to recruit?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Have you hired a search firm, or how are you doing that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: We are working with the School Boards Association, and we have a committee of Department staff, as well as local board members to do the initial--

SENATOR MacINNES: But right now, you are advertising for a two-year job?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: No. We did not advertise it as two years. Did we?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: No, we did not specify.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, one of the first questions to be asked would be--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: We will have an answer by then, Senator.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Yes, we expect an answer.

SENATOR MacINNES: You have done no trimming. You have gone through no trimming of this--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: The deadline for applicants is the end of this month, Senator. During the month of November, the interviews will take place and a recommendation will come forth from the Commissioner to the State Board.

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, that is one of the fastest chief executive search processes that I have ever heard of.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Our intent, Senator, is to do it as expeditiously as possible, and hopefully doing a quality job. I know the Commissioner spoke with Frank just last week about the possibility of extending beyond December 31. Ironically--

SENATOR MacINNES: Let the record show that that moan came from Mr. Sinatra. (laughter)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, again, despite that, we have been really actively looking, in fact, went on to do some recruiting and

thought we had someone on the hook, but lost him. Now, it is really a wide-open search.

SENATOR MacINNES: Are you going to include-- Well, I guess not. I gather that the State Assistant Superintendent who helped to prepare the plan has departed Jersey City. Is that right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: That is correct, Charles Smith. In fact, we have lost two quality Assistant Superintendents, Charles Smith and--

SENATOR MacINNES: Why would people who are at the assistant superintendent level inside the district, who have a good reputation-- Why would they choose this time to depart? Wouldn't this be an opportunity that someone who has been in the system and who has good marks would want to--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, Charles Smith, one of the two who left the district, was one of the three finalists, and was not selected by the Commissioner. In fact, there was a Jerome Harris who was recommended by the Commissioner. We know what happened with that. In the interim--

SENATOR MacINNES: I don't know what happened to that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Okay, I will go back over that in a minute. In the interim, or after that occurred, he accepted a superintendent's position, I believe in Prospect Park.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Palisades Park.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: That is why he left. The other District Superintendent--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Bob Richardson.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: --has taken a position in West New York as a superintendent. Both are good positions.

SENATOR MacINNES: Was the second Assistant Superintendent on the list for consideration?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: No, he had left earlier.

SENATOR MacINNES: He had left. I don't know what happened to Jerome Harris. What happened?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, the background check was completed and the Commissioner chose to withdraw the recommendation to the State Board.

SENATOR MacINNES: He had earlier recommended that Mr. Harris be approved, but then a background check revealed things that made it ill advised to continue the recommendation. Is that--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, I think it was pending a background check. With that, and other factors, the Commissioner chose not to make the recommendation.

SENATOR MacINNES: I would say, Mr. Chairman, that looking ahead, and looking back, you have to be a little worried about the State stewardship of Jersey City, given the leadership problems. With all due respect to Mr. Sinatra, and I commend him for the job he has done, and certainly I have found his answers to be candid and his record to be commendable, but here we are, two months from his retirement, and we do not have -- we have not even closed the list of possible applicants.

Now, having been through CEO searches myself in the business sector, in the nonprofit sector, for companies, foundations -- large nonprofits -- schools, this kind of lead time is terrifying, frankly. We are imposing on the goodwill of Mr. Sinatra, who has pretty well described himself as wanting very much to move on. This is a leadership situation that I think is worsening. You know, I don't know the details of the Harris search. Maybe if that had gone right and the background check had come back the way it was hoped, then maybe this would not be a problem. Maybe that is just one of those things that happens, but if you are looking back and, as I said, looking ahead, I find this scary that we are at this stage and we do not have a clear sense of direction.

MR. SINATRA: Senator, if I may, because I feel an obligation to, actually to the children of Jersey City, it is that basic-- I have informed the Commissioner that-- Actually it was my intention to leave Jersey City back in July. My intention when I first got there was for several months until they could find someone. I feel, though, that you should be aware of this. As Dr. DiPatri mentioned, the Commissioner did speak to me, I believe it was last Thursday, about the situation. I assured him that I would continue on, but at the same time, I did not want the search to stop because I said I would continue on.

I can also assure you, the same as people who know me understand, and the Commissioner understands, that the job I am doing in Jersey City today was the job I did on the first day that I got there in July, and it will be the job the last day that I am there that I will do. As far as that level of leadership, that is not going to be diminished because it is well known that

I intend to go back into retirement. But at the same time, I do want the district to get the "right superintendent to lead it."

SENATOR MacINNES: I appreciate that. I think, though, that in your own words, Mr. Sinatra, describing the situation at Snyder High School, you described the benefits of having stable, continuous leadership. We are now looking at a situation where your status has gone from interim to acting -- you know, from interim for a couple of months to acting for a year, to acting for two years, to acting for three years, which is really what you are describing, I think, particularly if someone has to relocate. Then I think you would be talking about a full three years.

In terms of maintaining a management team in place, where I think now you have evidence that that is at least a problem -- two highly regarded members having left in, apparently, the last six months or so -- I think that is what I am talking about. I share your view of the need for some stability in leadership, some predictability as to what is happening. This is a situation which has defied those standards for two and a half years now.

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: I think that is unfortunate. That's all. You don't have to comment on it.

SENATOR EWING: Let's get to the next question. Let's get to the next question.

MR. SINATRA: I would just like to--

SENATOR MacINNES: I happen to think--

MR. SINATRA: --suggest that maybe you would want to talk to Assemblyman Garcia as far as the reason why Pablo Casals left. It had nothing

to do with the State operation per se. I think Rudy would be able to fill you in on that.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Yes, Bob went to West New York.
Sorry, Frank.

SENATOR MacINNES: If I may, Mr. Chairman, I am interested in what the records show us about how the individual schools perform -- I think that is a good place to look to see how the district itself is performing -- and what kind of expectations we have of the people who run those schools.

I listened with interest to your colloquy with Assemblyman Charles, and I want to confirm this. He is an alumnus of Public School No. 22. Earlier, you described teachers receiving-- You noted that they would not be given increments. Are you telling me that based on the 1995-1996 performance of P.S. No. 22 that the principal of that school did receive an increment?

MR. SINATRA: Yes, the principal did receive increments.

SENATOR MacINNES: And he is still in the position?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: And the same thing would be true of Public School No. -- 39, I think it was, where I saw another sharp deterioration. It went from 74 percent of the kids passing the 4th grade test to 35 percent passing the 4th grade test. And the same thing is true there, the principal there suffered no consequence as a result of half of the kids who presumably would have passed, not passing?

What is going on at those two schools that you are able to identify in terms -- to explain this dramatic deterioration in performance? What is happening at those two schools?

MR. SINATRA: I would really want the associates who would be in charge of those two buildings, whom I do not happen to have here today--

SENATOR MacINNES: Well, as the leader of the district, you must have asked the question.

MR. SINATRA: I understand that, sir. I would be very pleased to forward to the entire Committee the reports the associates have received in both of those schools as to what caused these drastic dropoffs in their scores, and then what they are doing about it during this current year.

SENATOR MacINNES: But surely when you got the test results in from the schools -- the elementary schools -- you must have gone down the list and said, "What happened here?" You must have called the associate responsible and said, "Look at this record. What is going on at 22 and 39?" Do you recall what you were told at that time? I mean, did you have a conversation with anybody?

MR. SINATRA: Yes. Part of it had to do with the mobility. And there was some question about the voracity of the test the year before.

SENATOR MacINNES: The year before?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: So there might have been cheating the year before and now this was a more accurate reflection of what was going on? That is what you are suggesting?

MR. SINATRA: As I said, the voracity of the test procedure the year before, sir.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay.

Now, how do you explain Public School No. 27? Is this a magnet school, or what is going on?

MR. SINATRA: Public School No. 27 is in the Heights. It has a tradition of scoring up at the top in the district many more years than are described in this particular--

SENATOR MacINNES: So it has always been a good school?

MR. SINATRA: It has always been a good school.

SENATOR MacINNES: It is in the area where the overcrowding is the greatest?

MR. SINATRA: There is overcrowding in School No. 27. In fact--

SENATOR MacINNES: Class size in No. 27 is greater--

MR. SINATRA: --I put two modulars on that building because of the overcrowding.

SENATOR MacINNES: Is the class size in Public School No. 27 higher than the average class size in the elementary schools in the district?

MR. SINATRA: It approximates the average. It is not lower.

SENATOR MacINNES: It is not one of the 30-plus then?

MR. SINATRA: No.

SENATOR MacINNES: The same question occurred to me in terms of Public School No. 33 and Public School-- I mean, are these numbers where when you hear them you say, "Oh, yes, everybody knows about 33"? Is that how people respond when they hear 33 in Jersey City, or 42? Are these

in the same vein as 27, where they are in stable neighborhoods with a middle-class population?

MR. SINATRA: School No. 42 is a K through 4 school. Generally speaking, you will find that our K through 4 schools do better. They are a smaller facility. They do not have the age range of students from 5 to 14, 15 in them.

SENATOR MacINNES: I notice that when you went to--

MR. SINATRA: By the way, School No. 33 is also a K through 4 school. If you notice, the 8th grade early warning test is an A in both of those schools.

SENATOR MacINNES: All right. But you are not suggesting, though, that the answer to our problems in Jersey City is to make more schools K through 4?

MR. SINATRA: That, I believe, is part of the answer, Senator.

SENATOR MacINNES: If you have to capacity you would start it over.

MR. SINATRA: The elementary school of 1000 students, 1100 students, K-8, is too big, and the little kids get lost in the shuffle.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. Is there any way to divide schools?

MR. SINATRA: That is the reason for the middle school. They are moving into the middle school.

SENATOR MacINNES: So you are moving in that direction?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Okay. In terms of the capacity problem driving that, rather than an educational volatility, it sounds to me.

MR. SINATRA: It was actually a matter of both.

SENATOR MacINNES: I noticed that when you talked about the professional development schools that you worked at with -- is it Fairleigh Dickinson?

MR. SINATRA: Fairleigh Dickinson.

SENATOR MacINNES: What was the criteria used to select those schools, because I notice School 42 is one of the schools selected?

MR. SINATRA: Part of it was the willingness and the anxiousness of the staff, but I will have Dr. Lopez-Diaz specifically answer that question.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: They were schools that were doing some innovative things where a sizable number of the faculty were acting as facilitators and were already doing -- presenting for their colleagues. I definitely became aware of it, and the principals were willing to open their doors to the concept of being a professional development school. It requires a great deal of work, and you really need a great deal of staff support behind you. We found that in these schools.

They also represent a variety of schools -- primary schools, a high school, schools where the -- a school-within-a-school middle school concept, special ed classes, bilingual, so we would be able to show different types -- highlight different types of exemplary programs in these schools.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: But the teachers--

SENATOR MacINNES: So the--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I'm sorry. I was going to try to get clarity. I think -- if I may ask for you -- I thought you were asking

also, can other teachers -- do other teachers participate in their schools? It is not the teachers just in 42?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: No, no, other teachers do participate, but this whole concept of the professional development school leads to the school receiving teachers from other schools. It was key to have that staff willingness and commitment to have other people come into their classrooms to observe.

SENATOR MacINNES: So the schools that benefit now from strong leadership are going to be the sites, really, for the professional development activity of Fairleigh Dickinson?

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Just one question on that point, too: Geographically within the city, those schools which have been identified for this program, 40, 42, and so on, where are they located in Jersey City? Are they scattered throughout Jersey City, or do we find them located in just one part of Jersey City?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: They are scattered throughout Jersey City -- Greenville, downtown, and one in the Journal Square area.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: So all of the areas have access?

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: Exactly. We hope that all schools will benefit from these professional development schools.

SENATOR MacINNES: Maybe you should just stay there, because I wanted to ask about some of the good news in the document that we have been given.

How do you explain what happened at Public School No. 9, where in one year you had your 4th grade percentage passage go from 25 percent to

56 percent, your writing go from 40 percent to 77 percent, and your mathematics from 40 percent to 77 percent? What explains that?

MR. SINATRA: Senator, there is another piece of data, and I will take a minute to develop the concept. What you are looking at here on the test scores-- You are not looking at the same kids. Each year, you are looking--

SENATOR MacINNES: That is a given.

MR. SINATRA: --at a different group of kids. What we have done -- which is another set of data that does not show in here, and I will be happy to provide it to the Committee -- in terms of the kinds of questions you are getting at, is, we have taken the students as to what they scored in grade 2, tracked them -- or grade 3, tracked them to see what they did in grade 4, tracked them to see what that same group of kids did in grade 5, also in grade 6, grade 7, and grade 8. That way you are measuring the students -- the same basic group, regardless of the mobility we have, but the same group. There are those people who are in the school business who sometimes can recognize that there are classes that, as a class, do better as they are going through the system than other classes have done, and are the classes that are always, as they have gone through the system -- are always poor. So by doing this kind of analysis, we are assuring -- which is probably even more critical than what you are looking at -- that as students are going through the system-- For instance, if the average grade NCE was 39 when the group was in the 3rd grade, we would look to see that that went up to 41 or 42 the following year when they were in the 4th grade, not that it would drop down to 36.

So we also have that kind of an analysis. So when School No. 9 has a tremendous increase, it could be that the 4th grade class that was there

last year was the “notoriously poorer class.” What is there this year when we test is a better class, and it has been that way.

SENATOR MacINNES: Is that, in fact, the case with School No. 9, or is this just a-- Is that, in fact, the case with Public School No. 9?

MR. SINATRA: I can tell you, because I have it in my folder.

SENATOR MacINNES: But this is such a huge difference. I mean, is the principal the same in School No. 9?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Did he get a bonus?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Yes. The bonus is that he has to come in next year and testify on behalf of -- to answer your questions. (laughter)

SENATOR MacINNES: That would be a bonus then.

MR. SINATRA: Actually, in School No. 9 in total reading back in 1994 when those students were in the 2nd grade, the NCE was 25. In 1995, it went up to 40; last year it dropped down to 34. In math--

SENATOR MacINNES: Wait a minute, in reading?

MR. SINATRA: In reading.

SENATOR MacINNES: In Public School No. 9? It says 55 percent, 56 percent.

MR. SINATRA: This isn't the NCE. The number--

SENATOR MacINNES: More College of Engineering. What is the NCE?

MR. SINATRA: What we have here are the percentages of students who met the standard. This is the average NCE scores, which--

SENATOR MacINNES: Which is which?

MR. SINATRA: Pardon?

SENATOR MacINNES: I am confused. Is this the percentage of kids who passed the State standard?

MR. SINATRA: The percentage of the kids who passed. Whatever the passing mark was, that is what the percentages are in this book.

SENATOR MacINNES: Right.

MR. SINATRA: What is in this is the average NCE--

SENATOR MacINNES: That stands for something, I'll bet.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: That is normal curve equivalent.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Now that you know what that means--

MR. SINATRA: What the average was in that grade when they took the test. If it was 50, it would be average. Okay?

SENATOR MacINNES: Yes.

MR. SINATRA: And it is how much 50 below or above you are. All right?

SENATOR MacINNES: So it's 35?

MR. SINATRA: In 1994, grade 2, which is now grade 4, was at 25 in reading. It went up to 40 in 1995, and it dropped to 34 in 1996. Math went the other way.

SENATOR MacINNES: So this is wrong. They are in 5th grade now, right?

MR. SINATRA: Yes. This year, they are--

SENATOR MacINNES: They are in 5th grade, and 1996 is this year, right?

MR. SINATRA: Spring. This was the spring of 1994, the spring of 1995, and the spring of 1996 when they would be in the 4th grade.

SENATOR MacINNES: This report I have reports on the spring of 1996.

MR. SINATRA: This is the spring of 1996 -- what you have.

SENATOR MacINNES: And you are telling me, again, what percentage of them-- What was the number you gave me for NCE?

MR. SINATRA: Thirty-four.

SENATOR MacINNES: That yields a 56 percent passage rate of the State?

MR. SINATRA: This is based on the minimum level of proficiency -- the MLP.

SENATOR MacINNES: So the NCE of 34 leads to an MLP of 56. Is that what you're telling me?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: The NCE of 34 doesn't sound good, but an MLP of 56 against how the class before them did looks tremendous. You are saying that 34 isn't a very good score, yet it is yielding this 56 percent minimum level of proficiency attainment.

MR. SINATRA: The minimum level of proficiency is the way that that is designed. I agree--

SENATOR MacINNES: So this is not an encouraging number. It suggests that-- I mean, we should look at that in terms of how the MLP is

being set, if this is the case. You're talking about a sharp falloff like that, 34 percent. That sounds like *F* to me, and now you are saying its yield is a sharp improvement over the class before it. Moreover, huge increases in writing and mathematics as well.

MR. SINATRA: That shows in the NCE, Senator. In 1994, it was 22; in 1995, it went to 45, and in 1996 it went to 53.

SENATOR MacINNES: That shows on those two-- Was that in writing?

MR. SINATRA: That was in math. In language, which is writing, it went from 24 to 41 to 44.

SENATOR MacINNES: That does not explain this difference.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Senator, it is a statistical issue you are raising. The numbers in the booklet are the percentage of students scoring above a level called a minimum level.

SENATOR MacINNES: Right.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: What Frank is describing to you is an average score where it takes into place all the outliers. So, in effect, it is possible to have 55 percent of the kids scoring at an MLP which might be a percentile rank of say 35. That is a percentile rank. It does not tell you the power of that score. The student could have scored 90, could have scored 86, could have scored 78. That same student counts as one. The student who scores 15 counts as one not passing. That student in an NCE could draw down an average NCE significantly. So you are looking at an average compared to an absolute number of kids.

SENATOR MacINNES: Right, I understand.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: So you have to look at the outlying data to determine what is really causing it.

SENATOR MacINNES: I understand. However, the data we were given where the percentage numbers--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: This is a State standard. These are how all districts are measured.

SENATOR MacINNES: That is not what we were given. All the NCE talk I have heard does not explain how in one school you have this doubling of the percentage of kids from the prior year. I assume it is the same neighborhood, coming from the same kinds of homes. Right?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Yes.

SENATOR MacINNES: Kind of an interesting number you have here. The same thing could be said, I would think, about School No. 3, particularly with mathematics, where you also have a doubling of the percentage of kids who pass the minimum level.

SENATOR RICE: Yes, Senator, but saying the same type of home doesn't necessarily in that neighborhood depict the same type of character or abilities, etc. The social fact would have an impact, but--

SENATOR MacINNES: Senator Rice, excuse me a minute. Here is the point: You have a strategic plan. I have always disagreed with the Commissioner on his approach. I say that the problem is leadership at the school level, and that you should identify schools that do particularly well when they serve neighborhoods, on a random basis, and that we should be able to explain why particular schools do well against averages in the city. You

ought to be able to explain why schools do well year to year and make dramatic improvements.

I think therein lies answers for our larger question. I think you can do all the strategic plans you want to and have, you know, credible and worthy objectives that are spelled out in the language of strategic plans, but if you do not focus on what it takes to get kids who are from poor families to do better and to reach for the standards that are set in -- not in lights, for their kids, then we are not doing our job. And we are not doing our job.

As Assemblyman Charles pointed out, 4th graders have been ours. They have been the Department of Education's responsibility ever since they have been in school. These numbers, as you pointed out in your own (indiscernible) here-- We are far from there. I mean, we are at 70 percent. It is up only modestly since 1993. It went from 67 percent to 70 percent, a very modest increase. Those are all kids who have never been in a system that wasn't controlled by the Department of Education. Now, if the Department of Education cannot do that -- and it has not been working -- then it seems to me that you look at places in Jersey City where it is working, and you find out who is running it and what they are doing that is different from the other schools, and you start sending the message by saying, "Gee, look at this performance. You don't get your increment this year, Mr. Principal." And, "Look at this performance. You get a bonus."

I listened to a management plan which rewards people turning in records which are trash compared to other schools, and they get exactly the same reward as someone who is participating in the Fairleigh Dickinson system and making their school available for all sorts of other teachers, giving

leadership. Man, that system is wrong. That is a bad system. The wrong messages are being sent. The Department -- not you, Mr. Sinatra -- has the obligation to put into place a leadership incentive system that says to people who turn in lousy numbers, "You are not getting your increment," or, "You are losing your job."

MR. SINATRA: Senator, I would say to you that the members of the Jersey City Board of Education have been very clear on that, and that message has gone out.

SENATOR MacINNES: But it does not result in any tangible difference in other--

MR. SINATRA: With these results this year, the message has gone out.

The other thing we have done is that within each of our divisions-- We have both of our elementary divisions now divided into half. Each one matches up to a particular high school. Within that division, we have high-scoring schools and low-scoring schools. The associate superintendents are working with the principals of the high-scoring and the low-scoring schools to get the discrepancies -- working out with the principals what you are doing that I am not doing, and conversely, and the same thing is going on as far as classroom teachers are concerned. They are supposed to be sending teachers over from the low-performing schools to see, in the same kind of neighborhood, same grade level, what is happening in those classrooms. That is going on this year.

SENATOR MacINNES: Let me ask just one last question: Do you really expect, Mr. Sinatra-- We have had a lot of experience with this, or

let me just say that we have had enough experience with this, for example, in Newark, with schools that serve poor neighborhoods, that do so much better, and consistently, year after year. When you go to those schools, you find out that they have principals who set high expectations for the kids, parents, and the teachers. They demand that those expectations be met. They do it by paying very close attention to the details of daily life in the schools. They visit the classrooms and they make sure that all of the things that an institution like a public schools can do send us the consistent message that we should expect a lot from these kids.

Now, do you expect, in Jersey City, that it is going to be any different, or that you are going to find that in schools serving large numbers of poor kids you have principals who set high standards and monitor those standards and expect people to work hard, expect the kids to work hard, expect the teachers to work hard, and set an example in their own leadership in their own school? I mean, I think we know an awful lot about what hasn't worked in these kinds of schools.

SENATOR EWING: Well, do you think compared to Newark-- Do you think they are doing so well?

SENATOR MacINNES: There are schools in Newark that do very well.

SENATOR EWING: One or two, yes. You talk about that one all the time.

SENATOR MacINNES: That's right.

SENATOR EWING: Until they get the corruption out of Newark, it will take a long time--

SENATOR MacINNES: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR EWING: Excuse me. I am the Chairman.

SENATOR MacINNES: That's right, you are.

SENATOR EWING: Remember that.

SENATOR MacINNES: I have never forgotten it.

SENATOR EWING: Until they get the corruption out of there and get rid of some of these teachers up there who have been placed there through friends either on the Council or on the School Board, or other members of groups up there, it is going to take a long time.

SENATOR MacINNES: I don't disagree with that.

SENATOR EWING: Don't say that Newark is that-- You talk of one school. What is it called again?

SENATOR MacINNES: The Tubman School.

SENATOR EWING: What?

SENATOR MacINNES: The Harriet Tubman School.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me, Senator. You have a couple of schools, but I just want it said -- if I may interject here -- that the Senator is correct. Even though it is only a couple of schools, my argument has always been, to Gene Campbell of the Board, "What are you doing in those schools?"

It is interesting because in those schools they were doing some of the things -- including Camden and Miller at one time -- that the Senator is talking about. But my question was, "Then why don't you duplicate that if it works? Look at the characteristics and the backgrounds of the principals, the teachers, and the program." "Well, it would cost us too much money." Then

what good does it do to have something that works, if it is not going to go across the spectrum?

It is the same thing with University High. According to the last education committee meeting I had, the parents at University High and some of the leadership there took a look at Academic High. They are very concerned about University High versus Academic High. But when they looked at Academic, they said there were some things happening there, from the resource perspective, that are not happening in Newark.

I just wanted to interject here. I guess the final thing on that-- I have to emphasize this, then I am not going to say anything more on it, and this is to the State, because superintendents and people come and go, and I hear that they are coming up all over the place-- Maybe this is a place where all of us who are elected could do something, and Assemblyman Rocco from the Assembly Education Committee can help us. I am telling you that you are never going to convince me -- as you told Assemblyman Charles -- that you are asking these two principals to go back and come up with some correction mechanism because of these dips without assisting them in finding out what the causes are of these problems.

That is what is disturbing me the most. I keep hearing that come out. We are losing good principals in these school districts that have been taken over. The message to the public is that they are not working at being principals, they do not have the basic stuff, but primarily it is because we are not giving the principals help in identifying causation. Maybe they can administratively plan around something, but maybe it is the State that has to

come up with a system of measurement, or go further to find out what all of these elements are.

We know there are social factors. We know there are some other kinds of things. We know that some systems may have corruption. But it is a combination of things that we are not looking at, and we are saying, "Principal S., if you don't correct this thing and come up with another plan -- which you have not worked -- it is never going to work."

That is bothering me. It has nothing to do with Jersey City. This has to do with the State takeover law, because it is Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark today, and tomorrow it may be someplace else. We should not have to travel these grounds again.

SENATOR EWING: Gordon, don't you feel that doing this in some of the schools and looking at the other schools that are doing well up there--

SENATOR MacINNES: I think whatever that--

SENATOR EWING: In Jersey City.

SENATOR MacINNES: Yes, I know the city. I even know the county it is in. What I was thinking-- What I was going to say is, professional involvement in a program is -- identifies effectively the principals and the school communities that are the most aggressive about trying to make improvements. I am saying to the State, as long as the-- While we look for a silver bullet -- which we have been looking for, for 30 years, all right, which does not exist, obviously, or otherwise we would have found it by now-- So it does not exist. Maybe we just have to go back to effective schools, groups, set in the early 1970s. When you find places that do better than expected, schools

that do better than expected, it is almost always explained by the presence of strong principals.

This is not a surprise. We have known it for 25 years, at least. You can pick the examples in New York City, in Newark, in Jersey City, wherever you have large concentrations of poor kids, and where schools do better than expected, you have that result. Therefore, it seems to me that you need to focus on how to find large numbers, or larger numbers, of smart adults willing to spend their lives in tough neighborhoods bringing higher standards to the expectations of kids, teachers, parents, and everybody who works in a school. How do you do that? That seems to me to be the best avenue that has ever been identified.

I know Assemblyman Rocco is going to cooperate by putting up for a vote as soon as we get it passed in the Senate, right, the new administrative tenure procedures?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Not in a million years, Senator.

SENATOR MacINNES: Where you can say that people should be accountable and where they should-- If they are not accountable, they leave. If they don't do the job, they leave. This is the opportunity. You have the laboratory, because you have the takeover law that allows you greater flexibility than is true of other school districts.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: On that point, Mr. Chairman-- Mr. Chairman, on that point the Senator is just now making, I think it is related to-- To me, it suggests the need to even reevaluate the process that Superintendent Sinatra described that is in place now for the identification of principals. It may very well be that one perspective is that it is there and it

produces a list. It may be that we need to generate an eligibility list based upon some other criteria that might produce an eligibility list of people who can do that kind of a job.

I would suggest, I think probably, that some maybe nontraditional factors need to be weighed pretty heavily in evaluating who can do the job as principal in certain situations. I wonder whether or not the system we have in place takes that into account sufficiently.

SENATOR EWING: You are already doing that, aren't you? Didn't you say earlier that you are reevaluating how you evaluate principals?

MR. SINATRA: How we actually evaluate them. He is talking about the pool, the eligibility pool.

ASSEMBLYMAN CHARLES: Developing that pool, that's right.

Just a final comment, and then I have to leave: There is a suggestion in Jersey City that that is not what is happening; that we are generating a pool of persons who are eligible for these principalships who may not be -- who may be good, but that procedure eliminates some people who might also be good.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: That's right.

We're looking at that in terms of the contract, that is in contract.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: That would also just -- if I may, Senator, comment on that point-- I think we do agree, Senator, that leadership is the key, leadership at the school levels, as well as at the superintendent level. In Newark, as well as Jersey City and Paterson, I would sense that you have noticed the significant change of putting accountability on those principals; in Paterson, the signing of contracts between the

superintendent and every principal to focus on the kind of student performance and expectations that have been set. Frank is doing the same thing in Jersey City. We are working closely with Dr. Hall to do exactly the same thing in terms of the number after the first principal assessment we have done.

It is just wrapping up now. I believe there were 28 principals who have now left the system, or assistant principals, and we are working closely with the Dodge Foundation to put together some extensive leadership training for the principals. So I think we agree wholeheartedly on that.

SENATOR RICE: Yes, but to have the best principal and not the resources-- Come on, that is what is happening in Newark. We shift--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I think Newark has significant resources, Senator, if I may.

SENATOR RICE: Then let me ask you something: You tell me why I have a class I have to go to tomorrow that has Trio, and the only person who spoke Trio was the system person who they transferred out. There is a resource factor, and I am not going to school to get a-- So maybe it is something that you don't know about that is being raised here, but I am telling you that there is a resource factor. I like what is going on, but I don't like what is going on. That is the same thing. You can get the best principal in the world, but I am telling you, 28 can go, you can pick your person and identify him as the best in the world, but you are not going to go forward unless you identify what the real problems are. Once we get the corruption out of the system, there are other problems taking place besides the social barriers. And I know that.

SENATOR EWING: Assemblyman Rocco.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: You know, having been a principal, I know how important leadership is. I don't think there is any doubt in that regard. If you have a bad principal, you want to get rid of that person. I mean, no one disagrees with that. People who are in the profession are as much in favor of that as anyone. Thirty-seven years in education, you know, there are no silver bullets. We know that.

But all in all, when I look at Jersey City's performance, it is not great, but it is not horrendous either. I think it has made steady progress from 1993 to 1995-1996 rearranging the system, restructuring the system. The block scheduling, for instance, makes a great deal of sense, because so many difficulties occur in the hallways. In my estimation, having grown up in an orphanage, basically, I know that a close relationship is very, very important. So when you take the block scheduling, you give the students an opportunity to find a relationship, and develop a relationship with that teacher and with others in the classroom that is more than 45 minutes. Then they can develop well past typical lecturing and go into projects that might provide a great deal more interaction with students, and with teacher as well.

So, you know, I think you are headed in the right direction. The elementary, in the preschool and kindergarten programs-- Are you going to have every single student covered on that?

MR. SINATRA: No, about 80 percent of our students are in all-day kindergarten. The area where it doesn't really exist is in the Heights, which is the-- If you had to choose an area in Jersey City where you were not

going to have it, you would probably choose the Heights to be that area. That just worked out that way, because that is where the kids are from.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I have had the mandatory bill for preschool and kindergarten, you know, calling for 100 percent, and I am going to continue to push that bill -- in the special needs districts.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Just one clarification, if I may, Mr. Chairman. That is only for full-day kindergarten. What percentage in the preschool program?

MR. SINATRA: A very small percentage. Nick, would you know?
(no response from Dr. Duva)

SENATOR EWING: Are they mostly in the housing projects, the preschools?

MR. SINATRA: It is in the housing and it is in a couple of our schools -- the preschool.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: (speaking off mike) I believe we have about 400 students.

MR. SINATRA: Approximately 400 students.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Are we looking to expand the preschool program once we get the lock on the full-time kindergarten -- the 100 percent of the students? Are we looking, then, to move it into the preschool?

MR. SINATRA: When we have sufficient facilities, yes, but I would look to have all full-day kindergarten before I made a major impact, except in a couple of pilot schools, those that could be described as the most needy.

While I am on I would just say -- and I liked your pickup on the word expectation-- That whole level of expectation has to come from the top right on down. I believe one of the things that helped me immeasurably last year was the fact that I became very vocal in Jersey City that I expected test scores, districtwise, to rise. As Dr. DiPatri pointed out in his opening remarks, they did, systemwide. However, we did have some schools where that did not happen.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Overall, your test scores are have--

MR. SINATRA: Pardon?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Overall, your test scores have shown some growth. Do you test other than the State test? Do you use Iowa's or Metropolitan's?

MR. SINATRA: We use the MAT -- the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: How do the students stack up to the national norms on that? Do you have national norm scores?

MR. SINATRA: Yes. I don't have that with me, and I do not know offhand. Maybe Dr. Duva does.

DR. DUVA: (speaking off mike) That is what we took off the NCE scores.

MR. SINATRA: That is the NCE scores coming from the MAT.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I would like to see copies of the Metropolitans, if that is what you use, in terms of grade level test scores. You know, I have great concern about the State developing tests. I have told them

about a hundred times that I do not think they are qualified or capable of doing it, but that is a whole different story.

I guess the last thing I have is, as a principal, if you have, let's say, School No. 22, where Joe went to school-- Does that school have another name, or is it just called School No. 22?

DR. DUVA: It is just School No. 22. We do not have another name for that.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Can't we, like, get a humanistic--

SENATOR EWING: Call it the Charles School.

MR. SINATRA: School No. 22 has a name.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I mean, isn't it better for the parents and the children and the graduates to say, "I went to the Martin Luther King School" or, "I went to the John F. Kennedy School," the Ronald Reagan School, or whatever versus "I went to School No. 22"? (indiscernible, witnesses and Committee members all speaking at once)

MR. SINATRA: School No. 22 is one of the schools in Jersey City that primarily serves a low-income housing project. That is where it primarily rose from.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Well, I am not thinking of School No. 22 specifically, I am just using it as an example, as opposed to any of the other schools. Can't we get a name for them?

SENATOR RICE: Like Snyder, Dickinson, etc.?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Call it School No. 22, but the Albert Einstein School, or whatever, you know.

MR. SINATRA: Well, most schools in Jersey City do have a name. For instance, School No. 3 is the Cordero School. I just don't know them all.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Oh, okay, sir.

MR. SINATRA: We just went through the renaming of School No. 27, which became somewhat of a problem in Jersey City. It is now the Infante School. I'm sorry, that is School No. 1.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I guess my point is, I think it would enhance--

MR. SINATRA: School No. 27 is the former principal, Zempela.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: I think it would enhance the program for parents, students, staff to have a name affiliated, as opposed to having a number affiliated.

SENATOR RICE: It's pride.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Mr. Chairman, may I ask one last question? (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: You know, it is kind of like when you check in. When I went to school, you had to say "No. 542, sir." That is not really good stuff, you know. I would like it to have a warmer feeling about it. Like the Joe Charles No. 22 School.

SENATOR RICE: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Just a quick question: One of the things I know is that the plan is not out, we have not voted upon it, or anything else. But one of the criteria for the Comprehensive Education Plan

is that some of the urban school districts like Jersey City are going to have to have a preschool program for all of their students.

Now, what is that going to cost Jersey City, in your estimation, Mr. Sinatra, and how the heck are we going to implement that if this thing ever goes through? From your own accounts here, only 400 students are in that program now. We are not even at 100 percent of the full-day kindergartens, and we are already overcrowded. How is all of this going to take place in Jersey City next year? Maybe not even you, but does the State have any plan on how to get there?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, I think the whole idea of the plan, Assemblyman, is just to do that, rather than just dump the money there.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: So the problem is, we do not put any money in for that.

SENATOR EWING: Well, support our bill.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Jersey City used to get \$34 million. It is projected, based on May projections, that they would get \$34 million more. What our plan wants to ensure is that the districts plan to implement that and not leave it to chance; that they will go to full-day kindergarten, whether we are talking about Jersey City, Camden, or Plainfield; that there is a plan in place that that is going to happen.

So even those districts that have facility problems, we are going to allow them to bank that as long as they can show a plan over five years to do it. So in Frank's case, if he gets that additional money, the first thing will be

to pick up that 20 percent on the full kindergarten, and then move in a systematic way to putting preschool in for every youngster.

That is the whole idea of the financing plan, not just to drop the money in, but rather see that there is a purpose for which it is intended.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Dr. DiPatri, I do not mean to debate this point, but one of the things is, we are putting in 34 million additional dollars. One of the things we see is that we have a reading recovery unit now that costs additional dollars. We have all these other programmatic improvements with teachers that are going to cost money. So we are taking already from that \$34 million. We are already taking out *X* millions of dollars.

What I am saying is, what is left over for all these programs is not nearly enough to meet the needs in terms of facilities, to meet the needs in terms of full-day kindergartens, and certainly we are going to be here next year and there is not even going to be one more child in an early program for education. The dollars are not there. So until we recognize the fact that these programs are not going to come out of nowhere, it is not going to happen in Jersey City. It is not going to happen in Paterson. It is certainly not going to happen by taking \$30 million away from Newark.

These are all the things we have to take into account, because no matter who is there next to you next year, they are not going to be able to do it. Jersey City is certainly not going to come up with the money by itself. So things are all things that I ask the Department to consider. When you talk about implementing full-day kindergartens and putting in more dollars, yes, a lot of those dollars are just going to be eroded to try to catch up for the academic programming that is still not up to par.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, as you know if by nothing else by the Newark experience, what we are trying to do is focus on all three districts -- and, frankly, I think we have done an absolutely superb job -- focus resources on instructional and academic programs. In fact, we do not think that happened before, as I said, in Newark, for example. We are seeing a little more of that in Camden right now. I think that is the key. We have to focus it on instructional programs, where it benefits children the most. We, I think statewide, to some extent, have failed to do that. We are doing it now.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Well, in Jersey City we have had control for seven years, so if the money is not going to programs by now, then the State is at fault. Let's be honest.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Agreed, no question about it. I think you have seen progress. It has been seven years, but I would say, when I step back and look at it-- I was here in 1989 when we took over Jersey City. I know what Jersey City was like in 1989. I went there to visit, and I'm telling you, it is significantly better than it was in 1989. Far and away, the results say that. I think if you go in there and see it in terms of the climate in the schools, the block scheduling, I think Jersey City is leading the way in this State to one of the most exciting innovations. It is about what Assemblyman Rocco said, the individual attention the students receive. It is about more instructional time for youngsters at the high school level. It is for better climate within the school. But it really is exciting. I think Jersey City Technology -- the gentleman is here on technology -- I think they have one of the best technology programs in this State, not only in urban areas, but in this State.

So I think there are a lot of good, positive things happening. I believe that the funding Plan will continue to support those.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Yes, but \$34 million is not going to be able to address all of those areas you are talking about. That is the only thing I was talking about.

SENATOR EWING: Rudy, you had your one question.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You have been very open today.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: He's liberal.

SENATOR MacINNES: You must remember, he is the Chairman.

SENATOR RICE: If he doesn't remember, Mr. Chairman, I will remind him for you.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF COMMITTEE: That wasn't a question, that was a declaration.

SENATOR EWING: Frank, a couple of questions I wanted to ask: Do all the schools have all the books they need and all the supplies nowadays, or not?

MR. SINATRA: Yes. They certainly should, Senator. In fact, when schools closed last year, we had all of our supply orders out, and they were all in, I believe-- I have forgotten the name of the company. I don't want to give a commercial, but 99.9 percent of our supplies were in all of our buildings by the middle of August when the principals returned.

One of the things that did happen was, we had to change some of our classroom assignments around over the summer. So there was some shifting that went on, but everything is there as far as materials and supplies.

SENATOR EWING: But there are sufficient books for each child to have a book, etc.? And are they up-to-date books, or are they 20 or 30 years old?

MR. SINATRA: We are on a five-year cycle, and we are right on target.

SENATOR EWING: Great. Your food preparation and everything, are there any problems with that?

MR. SINATRA: With what?

SENATOR EWING: Meals.

MR. SINATRA: Meals? No. In fact, we operate at a surplus.

SENATOR EWING: What about the-- Do you run a large Breakfast Program or is there a feeling that-- I understand that with some of the groups, some of the immigrants who come in, they do not want their children taking breakfast, because they must confide that they do not have the money to feed them at home. Are you getting great use of the Breakfast Program?

MR. SINATRA: I believe it is approximately 40 percent of our kids who are in our Breakfast Program. We had a big push for the Breakfast Program this year. We do not have it to any extent in our high schools, but in our elementary schools it does exist.

SENATOR EWING: Teen pregnancies, are you staying even, going up, or going down?

MR. SINATRA: Unfortunately, we are not making any progress. Dr. Alexander could give you the specific statistics, but we still have a lot of teen pregnancies.

SENATOR EWING: You providing classes for the mothers, aren't you? They have the baby downstairs in the day care center.

MR. SINATRA: Yes. We have what is called the Temp Program in the school that we now call the Academic High School. We have a middle school where we house some-- It is a middle school type of remedial program, special education classes, and then also we have two rooms for the pregnant girls in that building.

SENATOR EWING: What are you doing about parental involvement? Are there a lot of parent committees in each school working with you?

MR. SINATRA: Some schools are much further ahead than other schools in that area. We just completed, last Friday, a three-week training program for our site base planning teams that was conducted over at School No. 35 by the -- I guess it was Academy North. The parents who are on our site base planning teams were part of the people who were trained as to how those teams should be functioning.

In addition, under Dr. Epps' leadership -- the Doctor is in charge of our Federal programs -- we have put on programs as to the way parents can be empowered, how to deal with the Board of Education. Herb Green runs a program out of Rutgers University on this. We ran that last year. We are running it again this year. As I said a little earlier, most schools -- not all schools, but in most schools, we have a parent resource center now. At School No. 33 Annex, which is the school that School No. 17 replaced -- that is the old 17 School -- we have made that into a kindergarten center. That was how I was able to expand the number of all-day kindergarten programs. We have

put a reading recovery training room in that building, together with a districtwide parents' resource center for parents who come in to learn how they can work with their students helping them to learn to read.

SENATOR EWING: In the reading program in this one-to-one and everything, do you ever get volunteers in, parents to help the teachers?

MR. SINATRA: We do have some volunteer parents who come in and read to children, yes.

SENATOR EWING: No, not read, actually teaching them how to read, etc.?

MR. SINATRA: I would have to have Grisel specifically respond to that. We do not have a formal program where parents teach kids how to read.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: (speaking from audience; no microphone)
No, they assist teachers by reading to the children.

MR. SINATRA: They assist teachers by reading to the children.

SENATOR EWING: Would it be worthwhile to try to get some of the parents to actually work with you on this one-to-one basis teaching a child to read -- period?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCCO: Reading, Mr. Sinatra, is a very complex skill. I think it requires very specific training, although those in modern education think it is a very simple process.

MR. SINATRA: One of the things I try -- and I have not gotten around to trying to do it in Jersey City -- is to get a volunteer retired teacher pool that could come in and work in some of our poorer schools. We have not

implemented that, but that is something that is on the drawing board, as far as I am concerned.

Go ahead, Grisel.

MS. LOPEZ-DIAZ: In the reading recovery program, parental involvement is key. The children take a book home every night which they read to the parent. They also take sentence strips which they put together as part of the writing program for the parent. The parents are in constant communication with the teacher that this is an expectation. I think a great deal of the success of the program is due to that.

So there is reading going on at home every single day. With our regular reading program, the children-- There is an at-home component and the children take a book home every night. It is the at-home connection.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

How often do you meet with Wilson and Hall -- I mean, the takeover superintendent? Do you have periodic meetings?

MR. SINATRA: We have a monthly meeting under Dr. Contini's leadership. We meet in one of the three districts every now and then down at the Department.

SENATOR EWING: And trade back and forth on different ideas you have and they have?

MR. SINATRA: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: I am not sure if that is good or bad.

SENATOR EWING: Why? (no response)

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CONTINI: Why don't you talk about the committee -- the curriculum committee, the district-like curriculum committee?

MR. SINATRA: Also, as a result of the Urban Initiative Grant that Jersey City and Paterson received last year, that has spun off to a curriculum committee where our curriculum people from the-- Initially, the two districts -- Newark has now joined them -- were working together on curriculum matters amongst the three districts.

SENATOR EWING: You said you cut down on the absenteeism of teachers. What about your substitute teachers' costs? Have they gone down, too? How much do you think you are spending, roughly, on substitute teachers?

MR. SINATRA: It is approximately the same.

SENATOR EWING: Well, what is that, \$100,000 a year, \$500,000 a year, \$1 million, or what?

MR. SINATRA: Perhaps Mr. Miklus knows the number off the top of his head, but I don't.

SENATOR EWING: Well, would you get it and send it on?

COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: We will get that for you, right.

MR. SINATRA: What we have in Jersey City is what we call standing substitutes. Those were teachers who are employed at \$18,500 who report every day. They are assigned to a school. They normally fill in. They are the first line for filling in when someone is absent from that school. Depending upon the size of the school, we may have more than one person assigned that way.

If, in fact, there is nobody absent from that school on a particular day, and another school is short a substitute, then we move the person over.

SENATOR EWING: What is being done about fiber optics in the schools and interactive TV?

MR. SINATRA: That is why I have Mr. Purwin here. I was hoping that someone would ask so I could get him up on his feet.

Mr. Purwin?

T H O M A S P U R W I N: We had five schools with ITV installed prior to the beginning of this school year.

SENATOR EWING: Is that interactive TV?

MR. PURWIN: Yes, that is the county program. Then we have three additional schools that came on-line in September, and we are looking to see whether or not we can get funding through grants for another additional site to come on-line before the end of the school year, which brings us up to-- I think the number is eight.

We also have two schools that have fiber-optic cabling running through every classroom, and we have the new P.S. No. 32, which is the Ronald McNair Academic High School, which is being partially wired for fiber, but is being completely wired for coax and copper.

SENATOR EWING: What about on the interactive TV, do they have it in the high schools definitely?

MR. PURWIN: It is a combination of high schools and elementary schools which takes advantage of the connections with the Liberty Science Center, etc.

SENATOR EWING: And you are getting courses from-- Where else do you get--

MR. PURWIN: Most of the courses we are involved with are-- Last year, we were getting courses from other county schools, but because of the Copernican Plan, the schedules do not coincide with the other county schools. So what we are doing is, we are using the high schools to feed programs into the elementary schools. So they are receiving, for example, Spanish and mathematics and getting high school credit in an elementary class.

SENATOR EWING: You have advance placement courses, don't you, in some of the high schools?

MR. PURWIN: We have advance placement courses in the high schools, yes, but this is only the second year that we have been using ITV, and last year was pretty much a pilot when we were receiving courses. So I have not seen any schedule for advance placement courses being used over the ITV. This year it is a little bit in flux because of the Copernican Plan, in terms of that schedule. Now, instead of having one period, you have two periods, so it is a little harder to juggle the schedules for that. That is why it is easier to have the high school courses feeding the elementary programs.

SENATOR EWING: But you are working on trying to expand that?

MR. PURWIN: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Also, what about tying in with some of the colleges on the freshman courses, like Stevens Institute or NJIT?

MR. PURWIN: We have access to courses at Jersey City State, Stevens, etc., but so far we have not scheduled any. Part of it is a funding issue, how we are going to pay for the course credits, and things like that.

SENATOR EWING: There needs to be work done.

MR. PURWIN: It is on the board.

SENATOR EWING: It is interesting. Why wouldn't Middle States approve that parochial school? You said you had to move out of a parochial school.

MR. SINATRA: The building is in very poor shape, has no gym to speak of, has no auditorium, cafeteria, all the core facilities, has no library of any size. We have to use St. Peter's for our science labs. There are no science labs in the building.

SENATOR EWING: The last question I want to ask you is about the computers in schools in all the classrooms and at home. Are you able to get computers and fix them up or something and give them to families, because they are doing that, I believe, in Paterson? I know they have 200 or 300 out there with families.

MR. PURWIN: Right now what we are doing is, since we have so many students -- we have less than-- We have approximately 3000 computers in the district.

SENATOR EWING: Three thousand?

MR. PURWIN: Right. So we are recycling the computers. We are not at a point where we can actually say, "We can't use this computer anymore," and then give it away. So we have five different generations of computers. Some of them are very old and need to be replaced. But when we

come in with new equipment, we are taking an old one and recycling it within the building.

Part of the success Paterson has, has to do with an educational foundation that takes the responsibility of taking that equipment and refurbishing it, and then sending it out to the parents. Jersey City does not have an educational foundation yet. That is the first issue. And the second--

SENATOR EWING: Is it being worked on?

MR. SINATRA: We do have an educational foundation that has been defunct with Pepsi-Cola right now. A little while back, the issue came up where Pepsi-Cola, on the basis of sales, was going to make donations. We have revitalized that. That will be coming on this year. However, we are using it for scholarships.

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: For vouchers, right?

MR. SINATRA: No. Maybe Schundler is, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA: Oh, yes, right.

SENATOR MacINNES: A tradeoff of people, right?

MR. SINATRA: But we do have a foundation. Hopefully, if we get the spark going there, then we would be able to do other things with it. It is something that has been on the books, but was never really developed. But we are developing it right now.

SENATOR EWING: That's good. Okay.

Let us know if you get it developed, because I have been able to get some computers from AT&T for Paterson, which they fixed up and then gave out to families. Some of the corporations up there have done that.

MR. SINATRA: Tom, we do get some computers donated to us.

MR. PURWIN: We get computers donated to us, but, to tell you the truth, harvested computers from organizations do not really help us. We have the kind of computers that we can give away to somebody to be harvested. We need cutting edge technology. We have invested a lot of money in cutting edge technology. For example, this year, we have 13 elementary schools that are getting three computers in every kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade classroom. That is costing us over \$1 million.

That was to fill an equity issue related to-- Five years ago, we received funding to put computers in the primary grades and, at that time, because of early childhood programs, they identified 15 schools that got computers in kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade. So for five years, we have had 13 schools that did not have those programs. This year, we have put those in. By now, we are ready with the second phase to survey those original schools and identify the classrooms that do not have three computers in them. The third phase would be actually replacing the obsolete equipment that is in those classrooms.

Whenever we do anything with technology in Jersey City, it is on a larger scale, so to do a lab for \$50,000, it ends up being, you know, \$1.2 million in the number of sites we have.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

Does anyone have any questions?

SENATOR RICE: Just some final ones: In terms of your system over there, do all of your schools have libraries?

MR. SINATRA: They all have libraries of some form or another. Many of them have a formal library. However, there are several that have

converted classrooms that have been made into libraries. One of the things we are doing this year -- and it is on line -- is, many of the Jersey City schools were built with a large auditorium in the middle of them that had balconies. We are in the process of renovating some of those balconies to make libraries for some of the schools that do not have a formal library.

As far as the numbers, Senator, I cannot give them to you off the top of my head. If you really need it, I will get it for you.

SENATOR RICE: But you are not eliminating libraries. You are trying to bring libraries back to capacity -- right? -- unlike my system.

MR. SINATRA: We are not eliminating libraries. We are expanding libraries.

SENATOR RICE: What about art, music, the things the State has been cutting out? Have you found a way to put them back? There is no way, I don't think, that any student -- I don't care what the State says, and this is not because I am a Democrat -- can sit in class, look at a blackboard, and things like that-- That is what got me motivated.

The question is, those kinds of programs-- Where do we stand? The State-- You know, you all want to save money, but it is hurting us long term.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Senator, respectfully, we are not cutting out. In fact, we are guaranteeing -- with the standards here for the first time guaranteeing -- that they have to have art, music, the performing arts, and so on. So I don't know what you are referring to.

SENATOR RICE: That is in all of these districts? When you guarantee them, are we paying, or are you saying to raise the taxes locally to do that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: No, I don't believe so, Senator.

SENATOR RICE: I'm asking. Don't get an attitude, I am just asking.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: I'm sorry, I apologize, and I say that respectfully. I did not mean to give an attitude, but we have provided-- We have adopted the standards. We have developed a funding Plan to implement those standards. In that is the implementation of the seven standards, which include arts, music, the performing arts, and physical education. So that was my point.

SENATOR RICE: I know that in Irvington, for example, they just about wiped the library budget out.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Well, Irvington--

SENATOR RICE: I am hearing the same thing from other school districts. Everybody forgets about the librarian (indiscernible) that is committed. I am saying, how can kids learn today if they do not start like we did going in line holding hands going into the school library? "Well, use the local one." No, no, no. I want to be sure, because we have, in the City of Newark, for example -- and I think Jersey City has some similar things -- where there is no music. The city spent a lot of money on a drum and bugle corps. The school system keeps snatching our young persons we train to play in their band, when we have a mess of kids in line just waiting to get an instrument.

Some say, "Well, where is your music program?" If we can train 100 on the outside, and you can train 100 from your list, that's 200. But just to say that you are going to do this, I am getting a little concerned. That is why I am asking how Jersey City is doing it, because I want to see if this is something local that the State is not paying attention to, district by district, or if it is something that is happening across the board. If it is happening across the board on the negative side, I want to know how Jersey City is addressing this to make it positive.

But if I am hearing from the State that the programs that people have been complaining about, vocational types of things, the art, music, cultural type things -- and civics-- In your system, they are there, and you are trying to build on them. That is what I am saying. The funding does not come from local property taxes per se, it is in your overall budget.

MR. SINATRA: It comes from the total budget, which is a combination of both. Actually, the State aid is, by far, the majority of the money that Jersey City has to spend. We do have, on the payroll, at least one librarian for every school that we have in Jersey City. In some schools, we have more than one.

SENATOR RICE: I can't wait to get Dr. Hall in here to answer, assuming you are right.

Those are just my questions. I think you have been trying to do a great job over there. I was hoping -- and I took a lot of whipping for the State takeover in Newark -- that we are not going to waste seven years-- We should not have to waste seven years here doing things right. The problem is--

I think we are doing some things wrong in Newark. It will be interesting to see what Paterson tells us, because it has been quite some time since I have sat down with Paterson. The last time was when we had that report. That did not make any of us happy, because it went up and down. I know we have met since then and have had the benefit of analyzing it, but I really think, from the State's perspective, if we are going to take over any district, we have to be conscientious about corruption and all the things that may be wrong with a district.

But I really believe that if we are going to ask persons like Mr. Sinatra or Dr. Hall to come in, we should make sure that even if it costs us more, we start them off with the resources they need so that politics can stay out of it, and we can get things happening. Right now, we are telling people to take over districts, do better, don't measure anything. It has taken us seven-plus years to move the first one forward. That is no reflection on any one individual. I would not blame the legislators, because what we did, we went in there and structured legislation, and probably because it was our first time we did the best job we could. To me, we did not take some things into consideration.

Senator Ewing also promised, some time ago -- because I made some of those meetings -- we listened to parents, we listened to educators whom we thought were helpful -- that we were going to try to amend legislation in the future. I think the time has come, Senator, at least from what I know about takeover, to start to amend legislation, which we said would not help the Newark takeover because of the time frame, won't help Jersey City, but I think we can amend it for future takeover districts. I also think we can do legislation

to maybe give the Commissioner a little bit more discretion on some things -- because there are some things that are hurting us -- to move forward a lot quicker because of these time frames and things we are doing.

I don't know if I can continue to hold down the fort in Newark to help anybody, because I am getting angry about good people getting hurt. Some of the people, probably, in your district -- it's been seven years-- What I know in my district is that the people who are doing the job, who confidentially and quietly came to the State, saying, "Please help us to resolve this mess," are the people who are getting hurt in the district, because of money. I want to make sure that Jersey City is not in the same boat after seven years, that your resources are not being cut -- you got money, we didn't -- but that you at least have the level of funding you are going to need to get the computers and things like that.

Do you have after-school programs and recreation, or do you just have educational programs at the schools?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Both.

SENATOR RICE: Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Senator, I--

MR. SINATRA: The city runs the recreational, Senator.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: We agree with you that the time has come to amend the bill. We appreciate your thinking along those lines. I know that Senator Ewing has had conversations with the Commissioner. But I think it is important, because you raised it, as did Senator MacInnes and some others, about resources.

Newark is another story, as you well know. If you look at the example-- Someone asked Mr. Sinatra about meals. Jersey City provides excellent meals to its students, at least as good as, if not better than Newark -- and I would suggest better -- and makes a profit, meaning that there is enough from State and Federal funds to support their entire program.

In Newark, it is subsidized--

SENATOR RICE: What is its population?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Excuse me?

SENATOR RICE: What is its population?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Thirty-three thousand.

MR. SINATRA: Thirty-two thousand.

SENATOR RICE: Okay, I just wanted to keep that clear.

Go ahead.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: In Newark, the same program -- the food service -- operates at a \$16 million to \$18 million deficit, which means that we have to take State money -- General Fund money, a combination of State and local taxes, the State being 77 percent, to subsidize that. So now Dr. Hall has gone in and had a study done, totally independent, an objective study done by a group called Inteam, national experts, not just in New Jersey. They came in and said, "This is ridiculous. You are subsidizing this program, and it should be -- maybe not at a profit, but at least at a break-even point." So she has implemented a plan now that over the next three to four years, rather than one fell swoop, to eliminate that so that the \$18 million that could be spent on instructional programs like reading recovery and technology, do not have to be spent on the lunchroom.

What is that being spent on the lunchroom? It is being spent on adults. I mean, we all want to see everyone working, but, unfortunately, it has created a situation there where it is costing, well, \$4.00 per student a day, where the State average -- the national average is \$1.96. So there is a lot of waste, and it is going to take a lot of time to root it out and get the resources focused on instruction.

SENATOR RICE: I agree, and that is why I am watching Jersey City. Jersey City did not, if I recall, privatize much. Is that right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: No, it's--

SENATOR RICE: Okay. So there are issues that need to be addressed, because we can cut costs in Jersey City.

SENATOR EWING: Ron, let's get into that when we--

SENATOR RICE: No, no, I'm dealing with Jersey City now. My point is, they were able to do these things effectively. I would suspect, knowing some of the actors, that maybe Jersey City cost more prior to the State also. I am not sure, but I would suspect that maybe it cost a little bit more. They were able to put it into perspective where it was acceptable for the taxpayers and voters and the society out there -- and the politicians, I guess, too, without privatizing. That is why I am saying, we need to cut costs.

MR. SINATRA: Just for the record, Senator, we have both. We do our own cooking in some instances, and in some instances we are purchasing from a vendor. But all of the servers in that are Jersey City employees. However, we do purchase some premade meals.

SENATOR EWING: Frank, thank you very much.

I am very pleased with the progress you have been making up there. The only problem I see coming up on us is that I have heard rumors around that the Board going back to being elected, we are getting more pressures up there about putting people into jobs, which did not exist when there was just an advisory board. I hope to God we can be strong enough to resist that, because what Newark has done to the people up there, to the children, is just criminal, making placements of people in jobs they had no right to be in. That partially existed, certainly, before, definitely in Jersey City as well.

MR. SINATRA: Well, we will certainly do our best in that regard, Senator. Actually, that is probably one of the reasons why it has taken so long, at times, to get into the educational issues.

SENATOR EWING: Right.

MR. SINATRA: The State superintendents were dealing with some of these other issues early on in the takeover period, where you just didn't have time to deal with the educational issues. I came in when these issues had been taken care of, so I have been able to focus in on the educational issues.

SENATOR EWING: Also, these systems, Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark, certainly did not go down in the last 10 years or so. It took them a great number of years to get down to the bottom, and it is taking a long time to come up.

SENATOR RICE: But there is a difference--

MS. BURKETT: Senator, may I just ask one question?

SENATOR EWING: Certainly.

MS. BURKETT: Following up on Senator Rice's early question about what works and what does not work, for the computer expert, I wonder if there-- Did I understand you correctly to say that not all the schools have had computer systems in them? Can you qualify that for me?

MR. PURWIN: Five years ago, we had a technology plan that said that the first thing we were going to do was to take all 7th and 8th grade computer labs and upgrade the equipment. We went in and we did that. Discretionary funds became available to put computers in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. The amount of discretionary funds only allowed them to go into, probably, 60 percent of the elementary schools. Because of the implementation of technology since then, some of those things that happened early on did not happen districtwide. So now we are playing catch-up this year, and we are implementing, you know, primary computers in kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade in the schools that did not get them. By now, we had thought we were going to be putting computers in the 7th grade and the 8th grade classrooms, not just the labs, and by now all of the elementary classrooms would have had computers.

MS. BURKETT: Is there any correlation, then, between what you have just said and what we see here either on test scores or in other measurable means?

MR. PURWIN: School No. 27, which was touted as one of the better performing schools, had no computer equipment in the elementary program, except for the 7th and 8th grade computer labs.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much, Frank, and thank you to staff.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman, through you--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Thank you, Senator.

MR. SINATRA: Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me, this is State business now.

The Commissioner's office, I want to know between the Committee folks -- and I am talking about this Committee, because I am not on the Education Committee-- Are we going to sit down real soon and maybe even, if necessary, hold some public hearings to start to amend this legislation?

See, I can always put in my own stuff -- and we can argue publicly now-- I would like for us to sit down and listen to-- Senator Ewing has spent a lot of time in the community with people, so have you guys and ladies. It seems to me that there are some things we can do, and I do think for Newark, Paterson, and Jersey City, unless we make some things retroactive, we are going to have to give the Commissioner a little bit more discretion on some of these things.

Is there a commitment for the record that we are going to do something soon?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Absolutely. We would welcome working with you.

SENATOR RICE: Well, through the Chair, because--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DiPATRI: Absolutely. We are working on-- (remainder of comment indiscernible; speaking off microphone)

SENATOR RICE: Yes, but I want some input. I don't like something thrown at me and they say yea or nay, and I have to throw in, like,

a bunch of names just to get some attention. I want to have some input in general. You forgot this, you forgot that. I should not be amending anything.

SENATOR EWING: Well, we will sit down with them then. We will sit down with them.

SENATOR RICE: Okay. All right.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)