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PUBLIC HEARING

before

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCHOOL INTERVENTION

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"The establishment of a State-operated school district in Jersey City and the implementation of the corrective action plan for the district"

December 11, 1990
Hepburn Hall
Jersey City State College
Jersey City, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Anthony J. "Skip" Cimino, Chairman
Assemblyman John Paul Doyle
Senator John H. Ewing

ALSO PRESENT:

Senator Joseph A. Palaia
District 11

Kathleen Fazzari
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Subcommittee on School Intervention

New Jersey State Library

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
CN 068
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SENATOR MATTHEW FELDMAN
CHAIRMAN
ASSEMBLYMAN GERARD S. NAPLES
VICE-CHAIRMAN
SENATE
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KATHLEEN FAZZARI
SECRETARY

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Subcommittee on School Intervention of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools will hold a public hearing on the following topic:

The establishment of a State-operated school district in Jersey City and the implementation of the corrective action plan for the district.

The hearing will be held on Tuesday, December 11, 1990 at 1:30 p.m. in the Gothic Room, Hepburn Hall at Jersey City State College, 2039 Kennedy Blvd., Jersey City, New Jersey.

The public may address comments and questions to Kathleen Fazzari, Secretary to the Committee, at (609) 984-4811 and persons wishing to testify should contact Patricia B. Scott, at (609) 984-6843. Those persons presenting written testimony should provide 10 copies to the committee on the day of the hearing.

Issued 11/30/90

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ASSEMBLYMAN ANTHONY J. "SKIP" CIMINO (Chairman):
Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to get started with the hearing this afternoon. I will ask the Committee aide to call the roll of those who are here for the purposes of the public hearing. Kathleen?

MS. FRAZZARI: Senator Palaia?

SENATOR PALAIA: Here.

MS. FRAZZARI: Senator Ewing?

SENATOR EWING: Here.

MS. FRAZZARI: Assemblyman Doyle?

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Here.

MS. FRAZZARI: Assemblyman Cimino?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Here.

Let me first thank Jersey City State for the utilization of their facilities today. My name is Skip Cimino. I am an Assemblyman in the 14th District. I represent the middle part of the State. To my immediate left are two gentlemen who have a wealth of knowledge in education. The farthest on my left is Senator Joseph Palaia. Senator Palaia is from the Monmouth County region of the State, and serves on the Senate Education Committee, as well as the Joint Committee on Public Schools. I might add, he is a former principal, and has a long-standing commitment to education.

To my immediate left is Senator John Ewing from Somerset County. Senator Ewing has been a long-time advocate of education and has done much on the Committee on Public Schools as well. To my right is the Deputy Speaker of the General Assembly, John Paul Doyle, who serves on the Joint Committee and has had a long and extensive career in public education advocacy for the people of this State.

The purpose of this Subcommittee hearing will be really to assess the State takeover of the Jersey City school system. Let me be very clear: We heard from Dr. Scambio, as well as from Dr. Ellis, approximately a month ago. Thereafter

Senator Feldman, Chairman of the Joint Committee, charged this Subcommittee with going forward to receive input. The purpose of the input is for us, in a twofold function-- First is to assess what, in fact, is going on in Jersey City; whether, in fact, the Joint Committee agrees with everything and whether, in fact, there need to be changes as they directly impact upon Jersey City. And thereafter, in a broader perspective, if you will, to look at the State takeover legislation and whether, in fact, changes are needed to that legislation for the purposes of ensuring that if, in fact, this becomes a necessity in the future with regard to schools in New Jersey, that we implement what changes are necessary.

I know the President of Jersey City State is with us. I don't know if he would like to make any remarks to the Committee at all. He is certainly welcome to at this point, if he is smart and uses brevity as his byword.

W I L L I A M J. M A X W E L L: I just want to welcome all of you to the College. We are delighted to have you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much, President Maxwell.

Are there any opening remarks from the members of the Committee? (no response) Hearing none, we will go to the list of those who have requested to give testimony. Let me also state for the record, this is not the end of hearings with regard to Jersey City and the takeover. This is but the beginning. There will be other hearings, at which we believe we will be able to avail the public of a greater opportunity for input. Those hearings will be held in the evening. I intend to call this Subcommittee back to Jersey City approximately sometime mid-January, when schedules will facilitate. The next hearing will be held in what I consider to be an "after business hours" session, so we can receive the input of both the employees, as well as the parents who are directly affected, and the taxpayers who are directly affected in this community.

With that, I would like to call forward as the first witness a parent, Doris Massey. Ms. Massey?

D O R I S M A S S E Y: (speaking from audience) Can you call the next person? I just walked in.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Oh, I'm sorry. Sure. The next person who has asked to testify is Gerard Brancato, Learning Disabled Consultant, Jersey City School District. Is Mr. Brancato here? (no response) How about Richard Boggiano, President, Hilltop Neighborhood Association? (no response) How about Joy Dechert, who is a parent?

J O Y M. D E C H E R T: My name is Joy Dechert. I reside at 88 Hancock Avenue. My main title is "parent." I belong to many organizations, but the one I am proudest of is parent.

One thing I want to know is-- I found out about this by chance -- this hearing. I don't know who was notified. It was only in the paper yesterday. This room would probably be filled if it had been properly publicized and people were notified. So in the future-- I know Citywide Parents' Council has a mailing address that you could probably get from Mr. Tayari, or someone in the room. I have a mailing address: 88 Hancock Avenue in Jersey City, and I could have notified the parents who are in my chapter, No. 6. They would like to come and, as you said, after hours is the best time.

I feel we have not given Dr. Scambio a proper amount of time. She has only been in a little over a year. I, personally, see improvements coming down. In my school I see fantastic improvements. We have an after school activity starting in January. We have a discipline code that is now in effect that I haven't seen in my school, and I have been connected with the school -- my son is now 26 -- for 21 years.

I have been coming to Board of Ed meetings for roughly 17 to 20 years. I feel that Dr. Scambio does reach out to the parents. I can go up to the Board anytime I want, and Dr. Scambio does come out of her office to speak to me. I can get

a hold of my Associate Superintendent whenever I need to. I, personally, have no problem. I see improvements coming down. I really do. I see education being upgraded, maybe not as quickly as we would all like, because we wanted it done yesterday. But we will have to wait until tomorrow.

But I do see numerous improvements. I see my daughter who, for quite a few years was harassed because I spoke at a podium, to where she lost interest in education-- She is starting to regain that, and she is in the seventh grade now. Last year and the year before, she would make all sorts of excuses -- her stomach hurt, this hurt, and that hurt -- not to go to school because of the pressure she was under. This year, I sat down with her -- she is 12 years' old -- and she enjoys going to school now, which is mainly what it is all about.

She is looking forward to going to Dickinson High School, and you can't say that about a lot of students. But my daughter's two older brothers and sisters graduated Dickinson. They have told her the plus side of it, and she is looking forward to high school now, where she was trying to think of a way to get out of going to high school. She wanted to quit now at 12 years old. She is looking forward to it. She was always an honor roll student and a credit roll student, and she has begun to get good marks again. In her worst subject, which is social studies, she got a 79 average and is bringing it up, which is great. Her science is A+. Her math is A+. These were things that she had lost interest in during the past few years. She is bringing them up. So I definitely see improvement in the school system.

I see that the doors are open to the school. I have now been in the school more than I have been in the past 17 years. This past year I spent more time in the school.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR PALAIA: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, a question, certainly, Senator Palaia.

SENATOR PALAIA: Just very briefly: With all due respect, about the people coming out-- I think the Chairman has stated, and correctly so, that he is going to be coming back, you know.

MS. DECHERT: Yes, I said that.

SENATOR PALAIA: If you could leave your address, I'm sure they will make sure that something is delivered to you. The Chairman has made a commitment to be back in Jersey City more than just once. I think it is very nice of you to come and say what has transpired. I like what you said, to give Dr. Scambio a chance. I think that is the idea behind it. You just can't change things around.

MS. DECHERT: No, you can't; you can't.

SENATOR PALAIA: There are a lot of good things that took place before, and we want to embellish those, too.

MS. DECHERT: Yes, definitely.

SENATOR PALAIA: Your comments were very nice, and I'm sure that Dr. Scambio would like to hear them.

MS. DECHERT: I have told her. Thank you.

SENATOR PALAIA: Good.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: A further question from Senator Ewing.

SENATOR EWING: It's Ms. Decker, isn't it?

MS. DECHERT: Dechert -- D-E-C-H-E-R-T.

SENATOR EWING: Has there been discussion, or have you heard any talk at all as to what the extra money Jersey City will get in their funding next year will be used for?

MS. DECHERT: Dr. Scambio has said, I believe, that it would be put into updating the curriculum, and I believe more in the after school activities. I believe it was mentioned at the last Board of Ed meeting exactly what it is cited for. I am not sure, but I believe she is going to put it right back

for the children, which she has done with the after school programs. In 17 years I haven't seen after school programs in my school.

SENATOR EWING: Are there various citizens' groups that are giving input to Dr. Scambio, or not?

MS. DECHERT: Yes. At Board of Ed meetings, yes, they do. The Parents' Council attends. Some block association attends. Yes, they are at every board meeting, plus she has other meetings going on also, where parents are included. I was in on the interviewing of the principals, when there were principals being interviewed to be put into the public schools who had retired. I was one of the parents who was chosen to be in on the interviewing. I have a new principal in my school.

SENATOR EWING: And the harassment has stopped that you mentioned before?

MS. DECHERT: Yes, it has.

SENATOR EWING: Thank God.

MS. DECHERT: It started when she was seven.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ms. Dechert, I think Assemblyman Doyle has a question.

MS. DECHERT: Yes, Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Was that harassment and pressure from nonstudents, I mean, from teachers?

MS. DECHERT: Teachers and other workers, yes. There was pressure directly from a teacher.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: With respect to the physical plant of the building, was that acceptable, or has it not been acceptable? Is that improving?

MS. DECHERT: The physical plant of our building? Slowly it is improving. There is a lot wrong with my school. The electricity has to be done. In fact, that is why we are supporting Bill No. 3391, to get the bonding for the electricity for my school, because it is in such disrepair. I

guess that is the word we would use. There is so much wrong that has been neglected for the past years by past administrations. The school building was totally neglected. There are academics going on, education going on in the building, but there is a lot that has to be done. There is not a blackboard legible. Dr. Scambio promised that-- She was at my parents' meeting on the 28th, and we will be getting blackboards. But there is so much that has to be done in every school, not just my school. There are a lot of schools that need repair.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: When you say "my school," are you speaking of a K through 8 school?

MS. DECHERT: Yes, I am.

SENATOR EWING: Which one?

MS. DECHERT: No. 6 -- Public School No. 6.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: There is not a blackboard that a teacher can write on that a student can read?

MS. DECHERT: They can write on them, but reading is very hard because they are antiquated blackboards, very old. In fact, the past principal had the teachers paint them, and the paint, at points, peeled, because you can't write on paint very well. Dr. Scambio has promised us that new blackboards would be one of the things, because they are one of the most important tools of learning. You can do without a book at times, but you can't do without a blackboard to illustrate, for instance.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: I guess I shouldn't even ask about computers. (laughter) I guess I got my answer.

MS. DECHERT: No, we do not have them in our school, but we are working on that. We have been promised computers in the eighth grade. Dr. Smith has promised computers in the eighth grade classes. We are taking collections. Campbell Soup is offering for so many labels you get computers. Shop Rite receipts we're saving, which is something we should have

done in the past, but were not allowed to do. Now we are working with the administration of the school doing all this.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: What prevented you from being allowed to work with them for that kind of private contribution?

MS. DECHERT: The principal would not allow it. The past principal would not allow it.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Has the new principal set up an organizational setup that allows you to have input, or is it just on a volunteer basis

MS. DECHERT: Yes, she has. She calls constantly. She comes to my parents' meetings constantly. She comes to my board parents' meetings. Her door is always open for any parent who walks in. We have a parents' room. We never even heard of a parents' room before this principal came. Now there is a room where parents go when they want to speak with the principal or when we want to have our own meetings, with a coffee pot. Half the time people call me at the school. That is how they find me, because I am at my daughter's school practically everyday.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Thank you very much for coming today.

MS. DECHERT: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I have one question for you, ma'am.

MS. DECHERT: Yes, sir?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: First off, as Senator Palaia said, if you would be kind enough to leave us with your address--

MS. DECHERT: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: --in terms of future hearings, we will communicate through you. We will communicate through anyone who wants to leave their address with us, as well as through Dr. Scambio's office itself, for that purpose.

Let me get your individual perspective. I don't know that you can answer the question, but you have been under the

process of takeover now for in excess of a year's period of time. I am happy to hear that you see progress where it counts most, in the classroom, and that you feel that your child is in a better setting and environment than perhaps what the child was before.

What do you think in terms of the takeover legislation? Is there anything that should be changed? Do you see any flaws from an outside parental perspective?

MS. DECHERT: Well, the taxes are what the people complain of mostly. I think it is a hardship on the Jersey City taxpayers. If that can be adjusted-- We do need the extra funding in Jersey City. I would not take one cent away from our children's education, because I think education is one of the most important things. That is what I try to tell my children. "The only thing I can give you-- I don't have money myself, but I can make sure that you get an education." But the tax levy on the City itself is horrendous on a lot of the people, because we are not rich people in Jersey City.

So, if that could be adjusted-- If the tax rate could be adjusted for the people, with more State money coming in to subsidize-- We don't want to lose any of our money for education, but we don't want to make it a hardship on the people of Jersey City.

SENATOR EWING: Aren't they getting some money back? Isn't some money going back to Jersey City?

MS. DECHERT: Yes, I believe there is.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Well, under the new Quality Education Act, you are one of the special needs districts which will be brought up to the 95th percentile. Those districts which are the wealthiest districts in the State of New Jersey, the State will pick up the difference under the aegis of the Court's ruling -- the mandate. That, in fact, will happen.

MS. DECHERT: That's great.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: So there should be more moneys coming in starting with next year's budget.

MS. DECHERT: That's great.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: May I just--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: If you own your house or your unit, what is your tax bill?

MS. DECHERT: I did own it, but I was forced to sell because I am a single parent and I could not keep it up because my taxes increased. I sold it over a year ago before the State took over, but over a year ago taxes had increased tremendously. Before the increase, it was, say, like a thousand dollars, and it increased double, or triple, when the new tax rate went into effect, when they reassessed the property. So I was forced to sell, and I now rent.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

MS. DECHERT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Next, Doris Massey.

MS. MASSEY: Do you mind if I sit? You can see that I have a book for you. (no response)

Good afternoon. First of all, I would like to take a moment to say good afternoon to the Committee for the takeover. Quite naturally, as you can read, I am Doris Massey. I am from 12 Audubon Avenue, just around the corner, and I am the parent of four children who attend the public school system of Jersey City. I am also the President of the Parent Council, and a concerned citizen.

To the Subcommittee this afternoon, I would like to say: One, the insensitivity of the Committee to plan such an important hearing at a time when those who are most affected by the decisions made by this Committee is most troubling. I feel that if you really wanted the concerns of the community, educators, and children as well, you would make a session at three different times. This particular time is very

inconvenient, especially for the working parent and for the student and for the school personnel. They are all at work now. We got the last-minute notice from Father Santora.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ms. Massey, in case you did not hear my comments, this is not the end; this is just the beginning. We will be back here-- We intend to at least be back here in mid-January. That meeting will be held in the evening, to avail those who would like the opportunity to speak before the Subcommittee to do so. So we will be back here. I appreciate your comment.

MS. MASSEY: Also, I would look for a different time slot.

SENATOR PALAIA: It will be at night.

MS. MASSEY: It will be in the evening?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: It is going to be at night. That is correct.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, yes.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. You know, most of the educators who teach here in Jersey City live out of town. So if we could have something, like, from three to six, and then do your seven to eight, or your six to nine, it would be appreciated. That way, people would not have to hold over, and you would get a larger attendance.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I thought, when we set this up for 1:30, that that would avail those educators today, but again, we are here to get the input, so we will come back. That is what this is about.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. And if we can have advance notice-- Had it not been in The Jersey Journal yesterday, a lot of us would not have known about it. And that is not a slap on the hand. I am just concerned.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Oh, I understand that. That is what we are here for.

SENATOR EWING: It is a Tyson right.

MS. MASSEY: All right. I would like to know, first of all, who received the invitation for today?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That is a reasonable question. The Office of Legislative Services put out an open public meeting notice. That went to the press. The invitation was extended to all of the employee groups. I will tell you that I have personally spoken to the Department on three different occasions. The Department had asked, through the Office of Legislative Services, whether, in fact, we wanted departmental personnel here, or Dr. Scambio here. Inasmuch as we had heard from Dr. Scambio, as well as the Commissioner previously, I suggested that this meeting was more for the public's input, as opposed to those who are either in charge in Trenton or here in Jersey City.

MS. MASSEY: You are going to have to bear with me, as I forgot my glasses. Can you also-- Well, you just answered my question, too, as far as who sponsored this hearing.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: This hearing is sponsored by the Joint Committee on Public Schools, which is a composite of the Senate and the Assembly. The members of the Committee were appointed by the respective leaders of their two houses. Now the Committee in total is comprised of 14 individuals, and this particular Subcommittee was appointed by the Chairperson of the Joint Committee, who is Senator Matthew Feldman.

The reason for the appointment of the Subcommittee is that as part of the legislation that went forward, and was ultimately brought into law, it was advised that the Joint Committee should, in fact, review the takeover. This Subcommittee is here for that purpose today. Additionally, I might indicate that the Subcommittee as well will appoint, independently, someone who is an independent individual, who, when we have collated all of this information, will provide an independent assessment, absent that of the Department of Education. That is the purpose of this.

MS. MASSEY: Would it be someone from the State of New Jersey?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: It will more than likely be someone we will appoint who will come from the State of New Jersey. That is not a criteria. The criteria for this is to ensure that the person who is given the request for quotation, who wins the award to do this job, is the most qualified. That will be the base line, the foundation by which this Subcommittee will govern itself.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, thank you. My intent is not to cover up or paint rosy pictures of what is presently happening in Jersey City schools. I need to have immediate answers to some of the questions here, and if you gentlemen will bear with me, and can possibly answer them, or get back to me with the answers, I would appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Surely.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. Now that the State is here, who will monitor the State? I know you said that this Subcommittee will be watching over things. But I am saying, on a more frequent, on a monthly or a biweekly basis, who will monitor the State?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Well, I don't know that the Subcommittee is going to monitor on a biweekly basis. I will only tell you that the charge to the Subcommittee is to do a monitoring process here, and to look over what is evolving in Jersey City. Not only is it important to your children, quite frankly -- and we view it in the Legislature as important to your children -- but we view it as equally important to the State of New Jersey and, indeed, to the United States of America.

This is the first takeover of its kind in this country. We have an additional responsibility inasmuch as there are other districts which are in the Level III process in the State. Secondly, we are talking about expending in both

the needy districts, as well as the middle-class districts of this State, significant sums of money, and we are in the process of changing the monitoring law that will govern accountability. So, there are a number of things at stake. This is important to us, and that is why we are here. (brief pause here)

MS. MASSEY: You know what I'm doing? I am viewing my questions to make sure I don't--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You go right ahead. To what extent we can answer -- if I can't, one of the others can -- we are going to do that.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. These are my feelings: I strongly believe that an objective monitoring team needs to monitor what is presently taking place. But, can the State really monitor itself?

You are the State. You are in here. It is like a double standard. So, you know, can something else be set up? I would like to see more parental involvement, or I would like to see opinions about how this could be done from the citizens in this community since the school district has been taken over.

SENATOR PALAIA: Mr. Chairman?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes?

SENATOR PALAIA: To answer the one part about parental involvement, you do have a 15-member community board made up of the people of Jersey City, who are part of the school takeover plan.

MS. MASSEY: I am well aware of that.

SENATOR PALAIA: Oh, you are? Okay.

MS. MASSEY: But I don't feel that the general public, or the general community has input. As a matter of fact, the State reviewed these people and appointed them. Some of the requirements were oversights on one of our members, which I have no objection to, but according to the legislative law, they have no power. They can recommend.

SENATOR PALAIA: That's true.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, so can we consider that really representation for the community?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ms. Massey, that is why we are here. We want your input. That is exactly what Senator Palaia said. We want you to--

SENATOR PALAIA: Yes, we want you to tell us.

MS. MASSEY: Yes, but they have no power.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Well, you know, this is the first of its kind in this country. When something is brand-new, modifications need to be made perhaps. That is why we are here. We are concerned enough about the education in this town, as well as the education of the other children in this State, to garner this input. We are looking to you for some of the answers, quite frankly. We don't have a crystal ball, and we don't necessarily, as legislators, have all of the answers. We are here to listen. So that is what we would like from you. We would like some input as to what you see as the positive aspects of it, and what you see as the negatives and the flaws. Then from there, maybe we can go ahead and change some thing.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. I am not here to accuse you gentlemen of any wrongdoing. If I sound a little incensed--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You don't.

MS. MASSEY: --it is because I have very strong feelings about this. I have studied it.

SENATOR EWING: You should have.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You should.

MS. MASSEY: I have studied the process and the actual happenings since State takeover. It has its pros and cons -- okay? -- more cons. But, you know, especially starting with the legislative law, I see a lot of holes in that. I can see where it didn't truly represent the district, nor our children. There were a lot of important things left out of our

legislative law; for instance, the bonding issue. Okay? The reorganization should be more in-depth and more in detail. There was too much removal of people in the educational system who were not accused of wrongdoing, but could have helped, and could have assisted, and maybe Dr. Scambio would not be under so much criticism as she presently is from some people. Some people happen to be pleased. You are not going to please everyone, but I feel that had you not eliminated so much, or demoted so many of the central office administrators, they could have assisted with the process of setting up with the State coming in here.

No one coming into anyone's home is allowed to go in and remove the furniture without asking permission.

SENATOR EWING: The mother-in-law does sometime.
(laughter)

MS. MASSEY: Okay, well then we will go to the banks. You wouldn't let anybody spend your money in your bank, okay?

We have a top-heavy, costly administration; heavier at the top than it has ever been. Forty million dollars more than in the spring of '88, yet I don't feel-- I may be a little overboard on the dollars, but I know it has been several million -- close to \$40 million.

SENATOR PALAIA: You know, Mr. Chairman, here is a perfect example where we should be able to get the answers to Ms. Massey. We can't -- and I don't think the other gentlemen can -- really verify how many administrators now as opposed to before and how much they are making. But this is the kind of a question that we will make sure an answer is given back on. Right, Mr. Chairman?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Absolutely, that is correct.

SENATOR EWING: But it is interesting to note that in Dr. Scambio's report to us before, with Commissioner Ellis in Trenton -- several weeks ago-- She stated then that they cleared out from central headquarters 117 teachers and

principals who were in the salary range of \$50,000 to \$60,000, who had no jobs there. They were purely patronage plums. They assigned people to it and they didn't have anything to do.

MS. MASSEY: I have no problem with--

SENATOR EWING: Whether that was true or not, I don't know.

MS. MASSEY: --the statement you just made.

SENATOR EWING: So when you say it is "top heavy," I can't believe they eliminated 117 bodies. It must have been really tipping over before.

MS. MASSEY: When you say "top heavy bodies," are you talking about demotions or actual removals?

SENATOR EWING: I am using your statement here. You say, "We have a top-heavy, costly administration."

MS. MASSEY: Well, as we go down-- Like I said, everybody is not going to be pleased. I am not here to challenge, you know. When we were children coming up, we were taught, "Don't believe everything you see or everything you read." I have always been the type of person who questioned. Give me an answer. If you give me a statement, I want an answer and I want proof.

SENATOR PALAIA: Well, that is what we are going to get for you.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, that is all I am asking.

SENATOR EWING: That is what the children were not getting from the Board of Education up here in Jersey City over the past years.

MS. MASSEY: Well, to a large capacity, yes, and to a large capacity depending on what area you are looking at. I think we have these difficulties clear across these United States, and across this State of New Jersey. We have too much of it, and not enough proper education for our kids. But, like I said, I am not here to condemn anybody. We are here to reach out for the truth and to find answers to any statements or questions. That's all.

We were the guinea pigs, and that is an understatement. Who do we turn to if we see this experiment failing? You gentlemen have already stated that it will be your Committee.

SENATOR PALAIA: Right here.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, very good. The State had no right to come into Jersey City, or any other city, because it had no plan in place. That is the problem I see with the State coming into any city. You should have projections; you should have objections; you should have curriculum. I feel that before you go into anyone's district you should have all of these things set in place, because it takes two years-- All right, we are in the second year, and there are people still learning, still trying to find out, still trying to seek, and still trying to write curriculums. This is why I feel had you kept on some of the original people, it would not have taken so long. It has taken two years to learn this district, at the expense of our kids.

SENATOR PALAIA: You have to understand something: Before we came into Jersey City and went through the monitoring process-- That took almost five years. And you really don't understand a school district until you get into the school district. That is why it has taken a little longer than you might want, but it is going to take at least two to three years for the people who are involved with the schools now in the administration, to understand it better. I think that is what they are trying to do.

MS. MASSEY: I understand what you're saying.

SENATOR PALAIA: So it took us almost five years to get to this point.

MS. MASSEY: Exactly. So we're talking about five years of monitoring a district--

SENATOR PALAIA: That's right.

MS. MASSEY: --and another three years to learn it, and in two years you will be out. But look at whose expense that is at. That's all I'm saying, Senator.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: But what is the alternative?

MS. MASSEY: The alternative--

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Not to have come in at all?

MS. MASSEY: I am not saying that the State didn't need to come in here, okay? To some capacity, you did. But I don't feel it was necessary for the State to come in here and take the district over. You could have come in; you could have monitored; you could have assisted. You could probably be here another 10 years, and you would still have the advantage of the process of elimination of the wrongdoings, and enhancement, and encouragement.

SENATOR EWING: But, Ms. Massey, they did come in, and they did--

SENATOR PALAIA: They did come in and they wouldn't listen to us.

SENATOR EWING: They brought bodies in here to help your people set up curriculum, to help your people to do transportation, to help your people to do personnel work. They brought bodies in here prior to the takeover. So, the help was here, but the final determination was, even with that physical help here, it was still not sufficient enough to redo the ills that had been caused over a great number of years.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. You weren't actually in here for five years. You came in and went out. On the last--

SENATOR PALAIA: No. We were in here on a monitoring basis.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: May I, Senator? Excuse me, Senator. Ms. Massey, the fact of the matter is, we're here.

MS. MASSEY: Oh, yeah, no problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: What we want to do now is go forward and look at what it is that has been positive and what

it is that has been negative. To rehash the perspective of how we got here is just simply a rehashing of the history. In some people's perspectives, I am sure it is unfortunate that we are here, and in some people's perspectives it is good that we are here. That is an issue that is moot now. We are here. The process has been ongoing. It is going to continue to go on.

What we are here to do is to get some input from people for the purpose of making sure that Jersey City, in fact, is not a failure, but does become a success.

MS. MASSEY: Okay.

SENATOR PALAIA: Ms. Massey, one other thing quickly. We have already taken steps so it won't take us so long to go through the monitoring process. We have moved that Level III up to Level II already, so in case a school district needs help, we are going to move that up. So we have already taken those steps because we saw that it took too long with Jersey City.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, but correct me if I am wrong: I think the intention of your being here today to hear my viewpoint, whether you like it or not, or someone else's viewpoint, is so that you won't make the same mistakes going into another school district.

SENATOR PALAIA: Absolutely right.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. So don't feel offended by anything I say.

SENATOR PALAIA: No, no, I just wanted to tell you that things are happening already.

MS. MASSEY: It might be lucrative information that maybe you have overlooked. Being a parent and having kids in the district, I might be a little bit more sensitive than you gentlemen. So I don't want anyone to become defensive. I might help you when you get ready to go into that other district. Okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You're right.

SENATOR PALAIA: Yes, you're right.

MS. MASSEY: Again, I want to touch on the two to three years to hire or demote or plan at the expense of our children and the taxpayers. I think that is a little unfair, and very costly. In your process of monitoring, maybe you could set up something where while they are in here monitoring, they are learning as well, and it wouldn't take another two or three years to learn the district at the expense of our children.

Have you ever viewed the total costs of State takeover and the process used? That is another thing, before going into a district. I have never been given the figures. I have asked for the figures of what it actually took, but I have never gotten them. The only thing I have gotten from one of our legislative bodies was what it took to take the school district over, and it would fund our school district for a year-and-a-half. I'm talking about all capacities, all areas, monitors, assessors -- the monitors coming in to monitor our HSPT schools. That is very important because this has contributed to our present deficit in education, in addition to the Abbott v. Burke. Maybe that was moneys that could be given-- Now with the elimination of the bonding issue, those moneys could be here right now helping to build some schools.

SENATOR PALAIA: Ms. Massey, if the people of Jersey City -- the administration -- had cooperated with us in the first place, the costs, believe me, would have been practically nothing. We were not getting the cooperation we needed, because the programs were not getting down to the children's level. The money was being wasted in other areas. That is why it was so costly, you're right.

MS. MASSEY: Are you speaking of the legal--

SENATOR PALAIA: Not legal. I am just saying that when we were doing the monitoring process, we were not getting the cooperation. If we were and changes were made, we wouldn't

even be here today. But obviously it wasn't being taken under advisement because of the monitoring system, so we are here today.

MS. MASSEY: Well, I object to no one fighting for what they feel is right.

SENATOR PALAIA: No.

MS. MASSEY: I have no objection to that at all. It is just like when you get ready to run, Senator. You are going to fight for your spot, and I couldn't much blame you. So I have no objection to that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Again, if I could bring you back to center, Ms. Massey-- We are here for the purpose of getting input in terms of-- We will assess what the total costs of takeover were; we will assess that. Again, we would like to have your public input, now that we are here, as to what you see as the advantages and the disadvantages within Jersey City. We are going to do the other assessments in a broader context of what it has cost the State of New Jersey.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. May I go on to the next question?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure.

MS. MASSEY: Or would you like me to just go on and answer your question?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No. I would like you to continue with your testimony, please.

MS. MASSEY: Okay. Well, this is another-- When you do your investigation as far as the moneys it cost for the State to take over the district, you, quite naturally, won't get the percentage of the State deficit at the expense of the State takeover.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I think you have raised some good questions in your testimony. I don't think we are going to provide you answers to all of those questions today.

MS. MASSEY: Oh, no, quite naturally.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I think if you want to raise those questions, I think it is good and I think it is appropriate. I think what we will do is get back to you and everyone else when, in fact, we come forward with a report as to how we view things.

MS. MASSEY: Probably at your next meeting, or the third meeting, you might be able to have the answers. I don't expect these today. But, you know, I am giving them to you so that possibly down the road we will get them.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I appreciate that.

MS. MASSEY: Well, this is a statement: I just feel that the money would probably have been best spent teaching the children to read and write, giving them all immediate service from the moneys that were spent on the State takeover. That is just my opinion.

The negativeness of the State takeover -- and I am going to jump down to number nine (referring to her written statement) -- was appalling. It affected our children. My daughter, who was already in college at the time of the State takeover, said that she felt the impact of what was happening here. I felt that the publicity was too negative. It was publicized nationwide. It was on television. They infiltrated our schools and projected a negative image. Believe me, it affected the children who had already left this district and were in college.

I am going to give you a little story to tell you what happened. I would rather not mention names, because I heard it, but I don't know if it is true. A young lady explained it to me and I feel it was true: We had a young lady we knew here in Jersey City who wasn't up to par. Most children in grammar school, to be very truthful with you, don't take education as seriously as we would like them to. She was one of those kids who have the capability, but she just slid through grammar school; passed every grade. Went on to high school, slid

through high school, quite capable, and in her senior year she decided, "I am going to go to college."

Well, when she went to college, the college didn't pamper her and baby her as our public school system did, and as our high school did, and she started to slide through college. Then she realized, "I am not getting anything out of this." So in her last two years, she decided to go and work out of your Assembly part-time. She brought her grades up to a 4.0 in English, and a 4.0 in political science.

There was a list of names that came up. I don't know whose decision it was to take the list of names -- and this was all during the process of the State takeover-- But, they decided it would be poor taste to now take this student, along with other students, and offer her a scholarship at Harvard. So they nixed her name because, number one, she was from Jersey City; number two, she graduated from Snyder High School; and three because the State was in here trying to prove how poor our school system was. There would be a little conflict of interest.

So she came back and discussed it with one of our teachers. The teacher said, "Apply on your own," and she did. She applied to five major colleges and was accepted at all five. She is presently in her second year at Harvard University. I just wanted to say that that is another thing, that impact upon our kids when you were in here taking over our school district. It came to a point where we had to be proven failures in every capacity before the State could justify its coming in here, even to the point of demeaning and undermining the progress of education, to some capacity, and putting our kids out as being low-grade readers only up to the eighth grade. And here we have a kid in college doing 4.0 in political science and English.

I think that if you are ever to go into another district, that is one of the worst things you can do. If you

have found this to be so, in fact, there is no need to put the whole city down; there is no need to put the educators down. Those who are not doing well know who they are, and those who are not handling our moneys correctly, or implementing education correctly. You have the power, just like me. I can call the telephone company and tell them, "Don't turn me off until Friday," but if I don't pay on Friday, they have the advantage of cutting me off, just like you gentlemen have the advantage of going to any district, and if you see a drastic failure, fail it, take it over, do whatever is necessary. But the effect it had on our educators here, the people who were working, and our students who now have ventured out of this district and gone on to college, was devastating.

I don't think it had to go to those measures. It has left a very bitter taste in our educators' minds, and we feel that a lot of people were labeled and lambasted unnecessarily. We, the parents here, who sat at board meetings until 4:00 a.m.-- We could have told you what was going on. We could have pointed out the people who were not doing the job. We could have even told you who was stealing the money. Had the community had more input into the process of the State coming in here -- and the parents who are out there -- I don't think it would have gone to the extent which it did.

As parents we must look at the whole child -- the effect of takeover on our children psychologically. I just said that, but this was never addressed. Children who have been taught to respect their teachers and admire them, now see their role models being unfairly and publicly demoted, fired, and negatively monitored. How do we expect these children to take the educational process offered to them in Jersey City seriously? Believe me, these children are questioning. They want to know what is going on: "Why are we being labeled? Why are we being called dumb?" And it did have a terribly adverse effect on the kids.

Before you did the hiring -- whoever did the hiring -- why didn't you view the necessary need for the overburdened staff of the Central Office? I understand that excess people have been hired because of the house plan. I would like to review it with the Committee, because there is a lot of excess, I feel. I feel that 117 people haven't actually been let go. Some have, but some have been demoted, with other people being hired in their place.

SENATOR EWING: Bumping rights in the union.

MS. MASSEY: Right. So when you say "the elimination of 117--" What was the process of elimination?

SENATOR EWING: Well, they bump down.

MS. MASSEY: I understand, but they weren't fired, Senator.

SENATOR EWING: If you take my job, and I take his job, and he then takes someone else's job, the last man is out, so somebody was let go eventually.

MS. MASSEY: Yes, I understand that process, but when it appears in the paper, or as you mention it here, you lead people to feel that 117 were dismissed. Most of them were demoted. Therefore, now you have people who were hired in their place, in addition to other staff. This is one of the reasons why I feel it is top-heavy, and an additional million dollar, or possibly more, burden on the payroll portion of the pie of education.

I am not saying this to be critical. I really feel that if we are looking at dollars and cents, that is one of the things that needs to be adjusted. Again I will say I can't understand why we didn't keep some key original staff. This way the State would not have taken three years to learn the district. It could have been a collective effort. Do you understand what I'm saying? You don't expect anyone to come in knowing. You have to give everyone a chance. But if some key staff were kept aboard and able to assist -- and I am not

talking about staying in the same title they held, but just kept in the Central Office to assist -- that would have lowered the process of three years of them learning and implementing. We did have some good programs in place and in progress here.

SENATOR EWING: That was number 11? (referring to written statement)

MS. MASSEY: Yes. I don't have my glasses, so my eyes are starting to cross and I have to focus in again. (person in audience hands witness glasses)

SENATOR EWING: Does that help you?

MS. MASSEY: Yes, that's better. Thank you. There were hiring practices that made the parents, the teachers who had capabilities, and other personnel in education who had their-- I know several who could have been very effective, who would have been familiar with specific areas, who were not afforded these opportunities to take on some of these jobs. I am not saying that on a friendship basis -- nepotism, cronyism. I am talking about real good people who could have done an effective job in the area for which they were applying, who could have slowed down the process of the State finding its way.

There were some, but I saw a lot of oversights with several people. I was part, one day, of an interviewing team for administrators. I saw some good people walk in, and I saw some bad people. But again, the parent counselors of Jersey City know these people. Some people gear themselves and train themselves for a good interview. But you give them that actual job to perform, and they fall by the wayside. I think the parents should follow the process all the way, with our recommendations being reviewed for whom we see -- especially parents who have been out there for 10 or 12 years -- whom we would like to see over our children in any specific area.

We eliminated or demoted an extremely talented music teacher whose experience spanned over 34 years, who had proven

her ability, and they replaced her with an individual with less experience. I am not questioning anyone's capabilities, but that is a fact. They put someone in there with less experience. I don't understand how you can explain this.

This woman taught our children music -- reading, instrumental, vocal -- in different languages. There is not a community here in Jersey City that she has not serviced during the holidays -- Italian, Jewish, black, Hispanic. How can you get rid of a person like this, who is quite capable -- quite capable -- and taught our children a well-versed, ethnic culture in a musical way? Yet this person was let go for someone inexperienced. That is what I have problems with. You could not replace this person in a million years.

Even most of our educators today, who are working in education, do not extend themselves to that capacity to be able to teach our children at all levels, as she was able to do. She is still in our system, but she has not had the opportunity to perform and teach our kids as she had in the past. I have big problems with that.

We were here with 12 vice principals throughout the district. There are now 23 vice principals starting at a salary of \$60,000 plus. This does not include administrators added in the grammar schools. I feel that is a bit heavy -- when our schools are still obsolete and deteriorating, that we have so much top-heavy administration, and we are still lacking teachers. It is probably not because Dr. Scambio has not reached us, but you know how hard it is to find specific teachers in science, math, and English. Everyone who goes through the process of wanting to be an educator, usually looks for the easiest subject, history. You can walk in on history at any point and still learn it. Gym, okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ms. Massey, not to cut you short, ma'am, but we do have others who wish to testify. It appears to me that your testimony is pretty much a list of questions,

which I think are important questions. Some of those can be directed to this Committee for answers; others of those questions would really be better put to Dr. Scambio and the Department of Education, and we will do that.

So, if I may ask you to summarize your feelings for us, ma'am, in a couple of minutes, then we will get back to you with answers to all of your questions as succinctly as we can.

MS. MASSEY: Well, you will have to excuse me. When we go to our Board of Education meetings here, we are only allowed to speak for three minutes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Right. We tried to give a little bit more latitude today.

MS. MASSEY: Yes, you did, and believe me it is greatly appreciated. I know I brought here a little mini book, but these have been my concerns.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure.

SENATOR EWING: Is that the new Board of Education where you can only speak for three minutes?

MS. MASSEY: Three minutes.

SENATOR EWING: The new Board?

MS. MASSEY: The new Board. And three minutes once a month, with all the new processes of education coming in here-- There are some genuine questions. Now you can hardly get the answer to one question. So what I generally do is, I go up and I compose a question for three different answers. This way I try to get my time in. What happens is, I usually have to become hostile because three minutes once a month, with all the new processes going on, is just not substantial time for any parent to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure, I can understand that.

MS. MASSEY: This is why I came here today with a book. Also, there are times when we call the Central Office, even with these types of questions-- See, I am viewed as

opposition here. I ask too many questions. I don't mean to step on anyone's toes or hurt anyone's feelings, but these are genuine questions about the process of education, and I feel that every parent is entitled to ask.

I have been allowed to come down here and sit and talk. I will continue to ask questions, not to badger anyone, not to step on anyone's toes, and I will always keep my questions in the best interest of education. I feel you have come here and put forth the effort -- whether I think it is good or bad -- but there is always room for improvement.

I think the only way you are going to get improvement in education -- and not because I am a parent -- is to call on the devoted parents who have been out there for 12 years, who have stayed up until 4:00 in the morning, who have followed their children. That is the only way you are going to know what is going on in education. Until you fully involve the parents in the process, until you fully involve the community, until you fully involve the students, until you fully involve the administrators of the schools-- You will never get a true answer unless you involve all of these people in education.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much, Ms. Massey.

MS. MASSEY: Thank you.

SENATOR EWING: Ms. Massey, were you ever involved with the education system itself?

MS. MASSEY: As an employee?

SENATOR EWING: Yeah.

MS. MASSEY: No, sir.

SENATOR EWING: Any part of it, or no part of it?

MS. MASSEY: No, sir. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Next will be Mr. Gerard Brancato, if he has come into the room. (no response) He has not. How about Mr. Richard Boggiano? (no response) He is not here yet either. Chester Kaminski? (affirmative response from audience)

C H E S T E R K A M I N S K I: Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good afternoon.

MR. KAMINSKI: My name is Chester Kaminski. I am a resident of Jersey City. I am the former Business Administrator of the Jersey City Board of Education. I am currently a teacher in the Jersey City school district. I am a former Councilman in the city school district, and was recently dismissed from my business administrative job as of October 4, 1989, when the takeover was put into force.

The first thing I will address because I heard you say, "Is there any corrective action that could be taken toward the legislation?"-- Well, over the process of a year or a year-and-a-half, I was monitored by the State team which was in under Level III monitoring. For the period prior to that, I was a business administrative intern, and then later I was put into the position of Business Administrator, which the State gave me a license to do. During the course of the time I was up at the Board of Ed, there were a lot of things that were wrong that I tried to correct. It was a monumental task, but I tried to give it my best.

As I look at the legislation, I think it could be corrected in a lot of ways. First of all, I think it was too severe a measure to come in and abolish the Secretary of the Board, the Business Administrator, the Legal Department, and everything that was given as an option to do. I was never given an opportunity to be evaluated and to work with the people who took over. But as a result of the day, October 4, when the legislation was passed, I was given a letter at 1:30 that I was to clear out my desk and evacuate the office by 4:00, which I complied with. I canceled all the checkbooks we had, the keys, the car, and everything else.

The measures that were inflicted upon me had a drastic effect on my family because, you know, financially you are reduced in salary, and other things go along with that. I

felt, at that time, that I wouldn't like to see that happen to anyone else in another school district. There were other districts at the time that were undergoing scrutiny just like ours -- Union City, Newark, Trenton, Paterson -- and nobody ever took the time to go in and really, you know, maybe try and take over there. This was a first, so you had to go along with what happened.

As a result, you know, I applied for other jobs throughout the State. It is very difficult when you are coming off a situation like Jersey City, and difficult, as well, for some of my peers. One of my peers has yet to find a job in the outside world because of his affiliation with Jersey City. He has a family, I believe, of four boys, and it can be very difficult, especially with today's recession and unemployment. If you are looking for the kind of money -- as reasonable as it was that we were receiving-- It is difficult to get the same amount with benefits.

If you are going to do anything with legislation, I felt there should be sort of a symbiosis type of thing, where they would come in and you would work hand in hand, as we were doing during the monitoring process. Just about everything I did for a year-and-a-half to two years was under Dr. Scambio's examination. With her staff, we would go through contracts, we would go through purchase orders, and everything would have to be in order or it would get rejected, and you couldn't pay it, or you couldn't do anything with it.

That process could have continued, or a relationship of that process could have continued with Dr. Scambio in the school district. But what happened was, the severe measures stopped that. It was very drastic, and a reorganization took place. Now, we had a reorganization within our school district that, you know-- All lessons have to take time to work. There are some shortcomings, there is some unhappiness, but the potential is there for growth in the city under the current

structure. I think everybody would venture to say that it is not any worse or it is not any better at this point. You just have to wait and see.

Another aspect of the legislation which is very critical is the bonding. I know there is something pending in legislation which is going to allow the district to bond. Now, this is very important. Since the school district has been-- The highest amount of taxes are raised for the school district, and that is what has escalated it this year. It is not the city departments -- the fire or the police. It is the Board of Education. I feel that if you allow the school district to bond by themselves without any say-so from the legislative council, you are going to run into big problems, because they are going to have to foot the bill eventually through taxation.

I felt that one of the most important aspects was maybe that the State should take a bigger portion of it and handle it from their end. If they want the schools fixed -- and that was my biggest problem-- The State has built in flaws itself. I would get a lot of the plans and architectural things done on the outside to have bonded, and yet, when you go down to facilities in the State, that is where your big tie-up is. You have months and months, and maybe even a year to two years waiting before they can review the plans on a renovation of a school. That department has to be beefed up. If you are going to get any productivity out of Jersey City with bonding, you have to look at that aspect of it. I'm sure that anyone who is in there, or who has ever worked there can tell you that that is a major problem in Trenton.

Now, I am sure you have examined that in some way, or have heard of it, but I really wish you would put some people down there. It is not a matter of being incompetent people or anything. They are very competent. It is just that there are not enough of them. They can go to the outside world and make a lot more money doing a job than they can looking at

electrical plans, or structural things. They are really professional people.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Governor Florio has recently signed into law a piece of legislation that allows people to utilize those who have certification and are registered back in municipalities to approve some of the plans to eliminate some of the bottleneck in the Bureau of Facilities Planning in the Department of Education.

MR. KAMINSKI: That is really good. That is a big plus then, because that is where bottlenecks really occur. A lot of the things that I would have liked to do would just be held in abeyance for, you know-- And then I got the brunt of it at parents' council meetings, and when I used to go to the Board meetings, "Well, you are not fixing the schools. You are not acting fast enough." And yet, it was not my fault. But somebody else in another school district would probably have been faced with the same problems. Well, what's fair is fair. I would just like to tell you that aspect of it.

Another aspect of it is, the taxpayer in Jersey City is really suffering. I know myself, having a child in public school and owning a two-family home, I pay approximately \$5000, no, \$6130, I think it is with the new tax raise, and that is a lot of money on a two-family home. We have just had a 100% reeval in Jersey City which, you know, everybody is supposed to be equated fairly. That had taken a long time to go through its processes, and we had appeals and different things like that. But now everybody is supposed to be paying their fair share.

Well my fair share, I feel, is high, basically because of one thing: the educational costs. I think that next year, if they are going to implement more programs, and go through with union raises and facility plans and everything else, well, again, I am going to be hit hard. I think that senior citizens, or anybody who is just starting out, newlyweds who

want to buy a house, or anyone who wants to live in Jersey City, is really going to have a difficult time.

So, I don't know where you are going to address the legislation as far as helping out tax-wise. I know you are giving incentives. You say you are going to pump more money into us here. I don't know whether that is because of the takeover and you want to see successes accomplished, or is that basically to show that urban areas do need more money? Maybe Abbott v. Burke changed a lot of people's minds, but, you know, there are things that you have to look at in reality. There are people here who cannot afford it, especially the senior citizens. I must emphasize that. We have a 17% noncollection rate at this point in time, and that is unconscionable. Most districts around the State are, like, 95% to 100%. Jersey City, in taxes, is falling way behind. Where are we going to get the money? We are going to have to rely on the other taxpayers eventually down the line to make up that deficit.

We have water problems, you know, where we have a collection rate of about 85%, 88%. Another problem: If collections are not coming in, we don't have the revenues to dish out. I know Dr. Scambio is all the time saying she would like to go and get the money that is owed the Board of Education, you know, from the city taxes. Well, eventually there is not going to be enough collectibles there to get. I mean, we will just get to the point of no return. We are either going to have to have massive layoffs or cutbacks in areas that are a necessity.

Those are the legislative concerns of mine at the moment, but there are other things. You ask about the feelings of teachers. Being a teacher, I feel that things will take time. You know, there is a lot of grumbling right now, a lot of unhappiness, but I, personally -- and I know you have talked to the union representatives in private sessions-- I have personally turned in grievances, basically because I think some things are being done unfairly.

I will give you just one or two examples: I, myself, having been an administrator as a director of human services in the city, a legislator, a school business administrator, a teacher for 23 years-- I have pretty well-rounded credentials. I applied for four or five positions in the district, and I don't even get an interview. I'm talking about positions that are not high in the administration, like a vice principalship or a supervisor. You are not even allowed to come in. Maybe it is because of my affiliation with the past, my position that I held, or what, but these are the things that I feel are being held personally against me. You know, the State issues all these licenses and everything, and I feel that I am just as well qualified.

There are people in this district who they have waited for to come in and make principals. We just had one come in as of October 1. Well, they waited to get the credentials, when we have hundreds of people in this district who have gone on to Jersey City State or St. Peter's or whatever school to get a master's, to get certification from the State, and to get principals', vice principals', and supervisors' licenses. You know, these people should have been interviewed first, before they allow others from the outside to come in, especially when you have to wait for them to get credentials. There is a certain amount of unfairness to the things that are being done.

Monitoring reports that monitored me for, you know, maybe gasoline usage and car usage and things of that sort-- Those things are still going on. They buy 10 new cars for the Board of Education, and nobody says anything. If I bought one back then, the roof would have blown off. If I used my car for personal use, I'd hear it. Nobody says anything. I think the honeymoon with the press has to be over.

There are things that have to be said. You know, there are things that I am even afraid to tell you right here now for fear that something will happen to me. Those are the

kinds of things that I don't like. I don't like the fear of what I have to do and the freedom of speech that I would like to give. I think it is a luxury that should be, you know, cherished. It really should. But sometimes you have to just bite your tongue.

I am glad you are going to have an evening meeting. This is the first time I have taken off from school. We have a policy: If you have perfect attendance, you get an increment -- like a bonus at the end of the year, like \$500. I took a half of a personal business day today to come here. I did it because I read in the paper yesterday that you were having this meeting. Now, if I had known somewhere down the line that you were going to have one in the evening, I would much rather have gone then. But I think the advertisement of what you have done today-- Every teacher was saying to me: "Oh, I would love to go there today just to say something and tell them how the system is being run."

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Then I will expect to see a lot of teachers at the next meeting.

MR. KAMINSKI: I would hope so, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I hope so, too.

MR. KAMINSKI: Well at least from my school, Ferris High School. I will be very honest with you. There is a feeling of discontent about certain aspects. I hope that in the next session, when you have it in the evening, I can come if I am free. I made the time today, and I am sure I will make the time for the next one.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much. Are there any questions for Mr. Kaminski? (no response) Thank you very much.

Next we are going to hear from Dr. Jonathan C. Gibbs.
Dr. Gibbs?

J O N A T H A N C. G I B B S, M.D.: Good afternoon, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good afternoon.

DR. GIBBS: My name is Dr. Jonathan Gibbs. I am a school physician. I would like to bring to the attention of this body that there is a breakdown in medical/legal continuity. I brought this to the attention of Ms. Elias, but nothing has taken place in the interim to correct the situation. It relates to the Mantoux testing in this city.

Now, what is necessary, as I related to Ms. Elias, is informed consent. It is necessary for the parents to sign, but this should have come out over the signature of the Commissioner of Health of the State of New Jersey. The city wanted the individual physicians to sign the authorization for the school nurse to administer the Mantoux serum and to read the tests. Now, since there is no medical director, the medical/legal continuity then is the school nurse, and she then is under the medical/legal jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Health of the State of New Jersey.

If a physician is acting anywhere in-between, then he becomes the medical/legal authority.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Doctor, pardon me. Are you saying that the school system has no school physician -- chief school physician?

DR. GIBBS: No. We have 12 individual school physicians, but no medical director, no chief school physician.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That's what I'm saying. There is no chief school physician?

DR. GIBBS: That is correct. Therefore, the nurses-- There is a certain amount of medical liability involved as far as the nurses are concerned. So, in our present litigious society, I think it would behoove the Legislature to make sure that the medical/legal continuity be established at that level.

The critical item is the informed consent. If you have a single person who is handling the medical department, and it is under a medical doctor and not laypeople, then there is no problem with the continuity. For instance, home education, or home instruction will now be handled 12 different ways because you have 12 different physicians. Example: A private physician--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Doctor, may I ask you a question?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Are those individuals full-time physicians for the school system or contracted by the school system?

DR. GIBBS: They are part-time physicians.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: They are part-time physicians?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: On a contract?

DR. GIBBS: No, we are on salary. We work one hour a day. I have, say, five different schools. I go to a different school everyday, so that is not a full-time job at all.

I am just going to give you a brief example: If a child is in school and has asthma, his or her physician will allow them to be out of school for, say, two months. Then it is up to the school physician to determine whether or not that child can come back to school. Well, some of us have different opinions as to whether a child should be in school with asthma or not. Therefore, you will have several different opinions and you are going to run into problems with the parents, whereas if there were an individual medical director, or policy was set by the State under the signature of the Commissioner of Health, in the absence of a medical director-- In other words, if medical continuity was established, then policy would flow, and there would be no conflict nor problems, and the individual physician would not have to worry about being sued.

Those are my principal concerns which relate to you. The only reason I am bringing them to your attention is because I have been unable to get any attention paid to them by the local School Board.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: A question from Assemblyman Doyle.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Was there a chief school physician prior to the takeover?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: And there hasn't been since the takeover?

DR. GIBBS: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Is the chief school physician who existed prior to the takeover one of the 12 salaried physicians now employed?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: So he was, in effect, demoted and made one of the tribe instead of the chief?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Well, do most schools in the State have a chief doctor?

DR. GIBBS: I do not know, sir. Most districts, do you mean? I would presume so, but I do not know, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Has this problem been directed to Dr. Scambio, to your knowledge, Doctor?

DR. GIBBS: I directed it to the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Personnel Services?

DR. GIBBS: I discussed it with the supervisor first. Since I did not get any answer from him, I sent a letter to Sylvia M. Elias, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services. I have never met any of these people, but in order to follow protocol I directed it up the line.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: When were those letters--

DR. GIBBS: Unfortunately, we are dealing with laypeople.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: --sent?

DR. GIBBS: This was November 30.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Of '90? November 30, 1990?

DR. GIBBS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: What has been your relationship with the Jersey City school system?

DR. GIBBS: I am a school physician.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

DR. GIBBS: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: We appreciate your comments.

Next we will hear from Father Santora. Good afternoon, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER M. SANTORA: Good afternoon. I am delighted to have this opportunity to address this legislative Committee. I believe these hearings can represent a significant turning point for truly reforming Jersey City's schools.

I was born, raised, and educated in Jersey City, and except for my seminary training and one year serving in Linden, New Jersey, Jersey City has been my home. I love Jersey City and am happy to serve as a State-appointed member of the Jersey City Board of Education because I believe I can help our schools improve and do something for the children of our district.

I hold advanced degrees in divinity, moral theology, journalism, and education, the latter from Montclair State College, where I was also certified as a teacher for the State of New Jersey. I taught high school students for four years. I currently serve as a parochial vicar at St. Aloysius Church here in Jersey City.

I am grateful to Dr. Saul Cooperman for appointing me to the Board of Education. While many people argue the merits

of the State takeover, the State's action has created a new educational climate here in Jersey City. I am not here to question the pros and cons of the takeover. It is a reality.

I am not here to challenge the appointments of the State team to direct the district. I believe that Dr. Scambio and her team of administrators are qualified, capable, and dedicated educators who have made, and will continue to make progress for our schools.

But I am here to say that the takeover law did a disservice to Jersey City for failing to give it true partnership in the reform of our schools. The present Board of Education has a limited function in the process of reform and, as I understand the history, the State Department of Education did everything to make sure that the takeover law straitjacketed the Board from meaningful involvement in the district. The present arrangement was, I believe, a compromise with the legislators.

I think it is woefully inadequate because instead of an interactive Board that can shape the new programs and direction of the district, the Board is a reactive one. The State district superintendent reports her actions to the Board when everything is a fait accompli. This lacks input not only from the Board, but also from the veteran educators in the district who can give true perspective and insight on the various issues, problems, and solutions.

I plan to cite several instances where the Board could have taken action or directed that plans be developed further in the best interests of the city and the children of our schools.

Jersey City is in severe financial straits. Taxes have risen drastically over the last several years resulting from the revaluation, profligate spending, and plain old politics. We need to embark on an austerity course to cut costs. Yet, the State team and most of the Central Office

administrators have salaries that are plain and simple, too high. Take the State team and the four associate superintendents: they earn more than the previous superintendent and his many associates, which was an issue in favor of the State's takeover. And that doesn't include the perks -- like cars and special insurance coverage -- enjoyed by the State team. Make no mistake about it. I would cut salaries in such a way that Edward Scissorhands, the latest cinematic hero, would be green with envy.

Yes, the Central Office staff was cut, but have you seen the salaries of the new positions? Some people got \$13,000 salary increases in one fell swoop because of some paper shuffles. Most of the Central Office salaries are higher than the Mayor of this city. They are definitely double and triple the average laborer in this blue-collar community. Maybe after years of progress I would consider merit raises and increments, but certainly not when starting out. And don't say that people were hard to find to fill positions. When the district advertised for 37 Central Office positions, 1200 applications were sent in.

That brings up another sore point: Veteran educators in the district feel discriminated against in hiring. Many were not even called in for interviews. People have complained about the disorganization that followed the reorganization. Yet, the Board has no authority to step in and do something about it.

I believe in affirmative action, but not a plan that institutionalizes reverse racism. We can make progress in attracting and appointing qualified minorities without alienating many district veterans who feel shut out from appointments and promotions, especially when in certain instances some unqualified appointments have been made.

When five principal appointments were made in September, two of them could not start the first day of school

because they were from outside the district. I have inquired why they were allowed to interview for these specific positions and have received no satisfactory response. One just started a few weeks ago and her entrance into that particular school has caused disruption in the middle of the school year. A second has still not started. Yet, 55 State-certified, potential principals, who presently work in the district, have been bypassed. Furthermore, there has been some speculation that these two appointments have connections with present top level administrators.

But the most blatant disregard for the local community is that all the State's appointments can receive tenure in Jersey City with the local community having no say in their tenure decisions. Yet, we are saddled with them -- for good or ill -- at their inflated salaries for the rest of their professional lives. Talk about "taxation without representation," here it is.

The State team embarked on a house system -- breaking down our high school populations into smaller units -- this school year. I agree with the concept of personalizing their education. Yet, the Board and many veteran educators had no say in the way this plan has been implemented. The position of dean, who took charge of discipline, was eliminated and additional vice principals, at higher salaries, by the way, were added. But no one is responsible for discipline. Myriad people involved in high schools -- teachers, guidance counselors, vice principals, principals, parents -- have said that the present format is not working. Later today, I am attending a committee meeting to discuss this. But my point is that a real Board of Education could have asked some tough questions and required a detailed plan before it was implemented in order to preclude exactly what is happening now.

These are some of the many areas that the present Board has been excluded from and, I think, to the detriment of

the community. And yet, one amendment of the takeover law can rectify it.

Previous boards in Jersey City were appointed by the Mayor and this allowed for -- what some have called -- undue political interference in the school system. The process of eliciting candidates and State screening precludes that local political element. Incidentally, the Mayor made two excellent appointments, I believe, with Jack Finn and Dr. Nadia Makar, who are on the present Board.

I can understand a brief period of reorganization, say six months to one year, whereby the State team can get its house in order by doing the specific tasks called for in the takeover law and bypass the Board of Education. But then I believe that the local Board of Education has to assume all the rights and responsibilities of a regular Board. There is no reason why it should not. In fact, I have given you excellent reasons why it should, that is if you want to see a partnership between the State and city in reforming our schools.

There is no local review and oversight of what is presently happening in Jersey City. This is an abomination. No group of educators, regardless of their backgrounds or previous accomplishments, can operate a district without checks and balances. I am not talking politics. I am talking about the right of the local community to truly educate its students.

I fear that any progress that will result from the State taking over is slowly being mitigated by community resentment over the issues I raised and other measures taken by the State team. Many people feel that the tyranny of local politics, which tarnished our schools in the past, has been replaced by a similar one, but now the State is the culprit.

If the people in the past were derelict in carrying out their duties you remove them, but don't expect or blame that their successors will make the same mistakes.

The present system is unworkable. Please change it now so that districts operating under the takeover in the future are not hampered as Jersey City is now.

But most especially, give Jersey City the Board of Education it desperately needs by changing the takeover law now so that we can function as a real Board soon -- very soon.

Thank you. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you, Father. Are there any questions from the members of the panel to Father? Assemblyman Doyle?

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: In the interest of time and the length of the presentations, I did not feel it appropriate to question Ms. Massey or Mr. Kaminski, but to get a couple of additional facts from Dr. Gibbs. Not Dr. Gibbs, but I think their collective testimony calls for some response and for some plan of action on the part of this Committee.

I must confess that when I sat in a hearing room in Trenton a few weeks ago and heard the findings of the Corrective Action Plan that the central organization made it impossible to establish clear lines of authority; that there was no line of authority from the Central Office to school principals; that school principals did not have control over some areas of school management; that the role of the Board of Education was best defined as a patronage system; that appointments were made on the basis of favoritism, that the legal department was four years behind in its cases; that Workers' Compensation was used as a method of second income--

It was a listing of horrors that left me amazed. It seems to me from what I am hearing-- We agree that there were a lot of problems. We agree that it was terrible. But what has happened is, new people have come in and said: "Anybody and everybody in any way connected with the past is wrong," and they have thrown out some of the wheat with the chaff. Is that a fair analysis, Father?

FATHER SANTORA: Well, I think that is a bit extreme. My question does not have to do with the people who are holding the positions. I believe we have very qualified people from the State team. My concern is that no matter what group you have, you need a check and balance, and I think the local community has no real say in the decisions they are making. I think that is the thing that has to be addressed.

Some of the things I have cited, I wouldn't necessarily call abuses. I think there is no one to challenge them. See, the State district superintendent reports to us after things are done. So in a sense, there is really nothing we can do. My question is, because the Board does not have that legal standing the city is at a disadvantage, because we are truly representing the city. Therefore, we can have no say in the process of planning the things that are happening.

So, what I have cited are areas where I think if the Board could function and could say to them, "Now, wait a minute, present it to us, tell us what you are going to do, let us have input--" We get comments-- We get calls, or I should say I get calls from people who have been in the district for a long time; some who have been promoted, who say: "They are making mistakes, and we have no say in what is happening." I think the house plan I cited is one very important thing. It is a good idea, but not enough people were consulted.

At the last Board meeting, I raised that issue, that we have to look at how the house plan is functioning. I see students sometimes and I say to them: "Who is your vice principal?" Sometimes they know, sometimes they don't. But it is interesting. Some of them say, "I don't know because I have never been in trouble." Now, they perceive the vice principal as a disciplinarian, but they are not disciplinarians. The deans have that function.

Now, I could go into a lot of things that I think we should do, but the point is, we were never consulted on them.

Now it becomes a reaction problem. We have to challenge, and then say, "Let's look at it. We are hearing that there are problems." If the Board truly functioned as a Board, we would have been on ground one as that plan was being discussed and then implemented.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Through you, Mr. Chairman, our first witness, Ms. Dechert, mentioned that there was an improving circumstance of communication between her and parents like her and the local principal.

MS. DECHERT: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: What I am hearing from you is that that is not duplicated on the administrative level between the honchos of the plan and the 15-member Board?

FATHER SANTORA: No, the communication-- I mean, we get lots of things in the mail; we get lots of memos.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Let me interrupt you. There is a difference between hearing you and listening to you. Now, they might be hearing you, but are they listening?

FATHER SANTORA: Well, I would say that at this point, maybe 10% after it is done, if we raise things. But we are not included in the ground -- from the ground up when they are implementing things. I think--

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Father, is it fair to say it is your feeling that what you have indicated in your testimony is the feeling of other members of the Board -- the majority of the other members, or all of the rest of the Board?

FATHER SANTORA: I can't speak for all of the members of the Board. I think there are several members of the Board who feel that something has to be done because we are not truly functioning as a Board.

SENATOR EWING: Are they here today?

FATHER SANTORA: I don't think the ones that I mean are here today. (comment from Ms. Dechert from audience indiscernible; no microphone) There may be a member of the Board here, but I have not talked to him about this.

SENATOR EWING: Several members of your group who feel the system is wrong?

FATHER SANTORA: I don't see anyone else here.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: With your leave, Senator, just two additional quick questions: Have you ever, in writing or verbally, said to Dr. Scambio, for instance, what you have said to us here today?

FATHER SANTORA: I think I have dialogued with Dr. Scambio and members of the team with regard to what I think are my concerns, especially as I have recounted them here. For example, when it came to the five principals who were appointed and the two who were not present in September, I spoke to several people in the district with regard to that. But I have gotten no satisfactory answer. Basically, they went ahead and did that, and there is no turning back.

If we were Board members who had to approve of that, I, for one-- The two people, by the way-- I never met them; I know little about them. They may be the top educators you could find, but the point is, they couldn't start September 4, so two schools went without school leaders for all of these months. One started, I think, a few weeks ago.

The point is, we have 55 people in the district who are certified as principals. You're telling me that we couldn't find two among those 55 who could have become principals? But the point is, though, many of those people were not even called for interviews. Who screened this process? I can't really ask-- I can ask those questions, but I don't get the answers.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Do you think, Father, that there is a pervasive attitude on behalf of the present managers that anyone who was employed in the pre-takeover is somehow tainted and not to be listened to or included?

FATHER SANTORA: Well, that is something I hear from a lot of people.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Do you feel that, as a member of the Board?

FATHER SANTORA: I think yes and no. I think if you have people who were working-- I'll give you an example: I was at a funeral luncheon, actually, and someone came up to me who is a 18-year veteran in the system. He said: "The white male has no place to go in Jersey City," and talked about certain things. Now, I have heard that from many people. That is one area -- one group of people who feel that they have waited for opportunities to compete on an equal basis with other capable people who want to -- an example -- show what they can do for Jersey City. They feel left out.

Now, some of the response you get about the reorganization is that the summertime was a very difficult time. They were dealing with a lot of things at the same time. But the point is, if a person has given 10, 15, 20 years to this district, they should have an opportunity to interview for a position. Many of them did not. Then when you see five people being appointed as principals -- two from outside the district not even ready to start, they get the appointments and others do not -- that affects morale. I think if we are going to make progress in the classroom, we have to win over the rank and file; not that they think that they are part of the problem, but that they are part of the solution.

The way things are going, I would be one member on the Board who would have questioned a lot of the personnel practices that they implemented here in the district.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, I certainly think it would be counterproductive to turn our review, in any way, into an adversarial system pitting some of the existing people and hierarchy, including the Advisory Board, against the takeover team.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: On the other hand, I think the issues that have been raised inherent in Ms. Massey's testimony, in this testimony, and in Mr. Kaminski's testimony would indicate to me that between the poles of saying, "Anybody from the past is tainted and we need a complete new takeover," and, "Everybody ought to be listened to," there has to be some middle ground. In an effort to find what is the best middle ground, may I suggest, respectfully, that we ask, with the leave of Father Santora, that his prepared testimony be sent to Dr. Scambio for her comments and response, not that -- with all due respect -- we are endorsing the testimony, but merely that it has raised questions that we wish she would reflect on and review and report back to us?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I think that is a good suggestion, Assemblyman, and we will follow through on that through our office, and through the Department appropriately down to Dr. Scambio.

SENATOR EWING: Well, Skip, I think that all of Ms. Massey's questions ought to be sent--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I intend to do that as well. Senator Palaia?

SENATOR PALAIA: Father, obviously you have been involved. You live here and you have been involved. Where were all these people over the years when we had 250 noncertifiable teachers in the Jersey City school system? Where were all the people when millions of dollars were being spent in the district and none of it going for the children? Where were all the people when \$10 million in health benefits were paid for by the people of Jersey City for individuals who were dead, for individuals who weren't even on the payroll?

I can't understand how all this could have transpired, and nobody raised a voice. We are happy to hear you, don't get me wrong. In fact, the Chairman and Assemblyman Doyle have it right. This should be sent. But it just seems to me that this

has been going on, not for a day, not for a month, not for a year. This has been going on for years in Jersey City, and yet I did not hear the voices raised. I didn't hear these voices raised until now, when we are trying to rectify the situation.

I would like to know: Where was everybody when all this was taking place?

FATHER SANTORA: The question is-- (people speaking out loudly in audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ladies and gentlemen, please.

FATHER SANTORA: The point is this: There were certainly people who realized that there were problems. Once the State came in they unearthed more problems. But because there were mistakes made in the past -- whether by the Board or local politics-- The point is, there is a different climate now in Jersey City. I can't answer for the past. I am responsible, as a Board member, from the time I was appointed, and I take my position seriously.

What I am saying to you is: We are not talking about bringing those problems back. I think it is an insult to the people of Jersey City. I believe that rather than a State takeover, there could have been a measure short of that where we could have had a partnership with the State to correct those abuses and to make those changes. I think perhaps removing certain people in the Central Office could have corrected some of those things, but that is water under the bridge. We now have a takeover.

My question to you is: Why don't we have a meaningful Board of Education? If one group was able to get away with certain abuses, just because they have a State tag does not mean that they are inviolable, or that they can't make any mistakes. The local community does not have meaningful input. I am talking about that provision of the law that allows us to say, "This is our community. We will work as a partnership." That does not exist now.

So, rather than rehash the things that existed in the past, which I grant-- When we learn about them, we don't say, "Well, because they happened in Jersey City, we will let them happen again." We want to correct them. I think Dr. Scambio and her team have made progress, as I have indicated, in some of the areas. I am talking about an ongoing partnership with the people of Jersey City.

SENATOR EWING: I think what came about -- what the Legislature got anyway -- was such a horrible picture of what had been occurring for years, as Senator Palaia said, that they had to take drastic steps. Maybe the steps that were taken were too drastic, but that is the way it was formed; that this would just be sort of an advisory group, and we would put our faith and trust -- just the way we do, being Catholic, in our priests and bishops -- hoping to God that they would be straight and everything like that, and that they would be the ones, and that this person, Dr. Scambio, would do the job. We can't worry about her going to be giving jobs to friends and everything, because the situation was so bad before. Time is going to tell. This is the input we want from you.

There is a question I want to ask you: What was the special insurance coverage that people got? That does not include the perks like cars and special insurance coverage.

FATHER SANTORA: I inquired and I was told-- We get a lot of calls from people, and I try to check things out when I hear things and get back to the people to let them know either, "You are mistaken," or, "This is the case." Now, I inquired about that and I was told that there is a special clause in their insurance policies that gives them special protection. Beyond that, I don't know. Well, I don't know what that is.

SENATOR EWING: From what?

FATHER SANTORA: Well, I don't know what that is.

SENATOR EWING: From being kicked by people, from being bitten by a dog, or what?

FATHER SANTORA: I do not know about that.

SENATOR EWING: Well, but, Father, you--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That is something we are going to have to look into, Jack.

FATHER SANTORA: Excuse me. Senator, it is not hearsay. The State team confirmed--

SENATOR EWING: Show us the proof.

FATHER SANTORA: In fact, Dr. Scambio's assistant, Judy Granick, is here. She is the person I contact when I have questions.

SENATOR EWING: Good.

FATHER SANTORA: She is here now. She got back to me and said, "There is a clause in the State team's insurance that gives them some kind of protection." Beyond that I don't know what it is, but it is there. That can easily be ascertained.

SENATOR EWING: I know but, Father, what type of protection? That's all I'm saying. Maybe it is against libel or something.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: We need to--

SENATOR EWING: We've got to find out.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: We'll find that out.

SENATOR EWING: For you, with your stature, with a collar on, to make a statement like, "special insurance," and not determine what it is-- It opens up a can of worms in my mind, and that is why I am asking you.

FATHER SANTORA: But I did check, and it does exist.

SENATOR EWING: You can't have checked if you don't know what it covers.

FATHER SANTORA: Well, I have inquired about that, and I was told--

SENATOR EWING: All you said was, "special insurance" -- period.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Senator, I think he has a much larger point, rather than dwelling on the insurance, and I want to get to that larger issue.

SENATOR EWING: I agree with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Okay. Father, thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony.

Next we will go to William Applegate, from the Principals and Supervisors Association.

MS. MASSEY: (speaking from audience) Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes?

MS. MASSEY: May I ask you a question?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, ma'am.

MS. MASSEY: Will we be able to get copies of the minutes from this meeting?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, you will. This is a public hearing, and there will be an official copy--

SENATOR PALAIA: There will be a transcript made.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: There will be a transcript made of each and every--

SENATOR PALAIA: Everybody's statement.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, everybody's statement.

SENATOR PALAIA: That will be available.

SENATOR EWING: Tell her it takes a while to get it done.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Senator Ewing has just advised me to tell everyone that they will not be available overnight. It takes a while to get them done, but it will be done, and it will be available to you.

MS. MASSEY: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, sir, Mr. Applegate.

W I L L I A M G. A P P L E G A T E: Mr. Chairman, members of the Joint Committee on Public Schools: I am William Applegate, a former principal. I am acting as spokesman for the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

The first part of the text that I have given you I will not go over, for the simple reason that three or four people who spoke have spoken on the timing of this meeting, and

you have answered that by stating that other meetings will be held at times when our membership -- principals and supervisors of Jersey City -- can attend.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, with your leave, several people have related that to us. I hope we don't make the same procedural error to the degree that there was an error in the past -- and I don't concede that there was-- I mean, we advertised in the normal way, and maybe there were particular conditions-- For you and everybody else who think there are groups, citizens, councils, or others where specific notice should be given of particular dates, please, at the end of this hearing, leave the information with our staff so that it is as broad and as inclusive as possible. We only do a good job if we can get as much qualified input as possible. We do not want to limit it.

Thank you.

MR. APPLGATE: Okay, fine. Thank you. PSA's impressions of the takeover are founded upon numerous meetings with Jersey City principals and supervisors. To date, some of the major concerns that they have expressed to us are as follows:

1) Very little has changed in the management patterns in Jersey City. Only the players are different.

2) Top-down management is still the byword in the district.

3) Communication between the central administration, school site administrators, and supervisors remains at pre-takeover levels.

4) The process of evaluating the performance of principals leaves much to be desired. Our Association has already filed a petition with the Commissioner of Education on behalf of the principals challenging the evaluation process. The evaluation of the principals was done only on the six criteria adopted by the State Board of Education, without the

development of specific standards or expectations of performance.

The filing of charges represents the only attempt on the part of the central administration to provide any specific help or direction to principals to improve management practices in their schools. The evaluation procedures which are being used as a basis for challenging the tenure rights of nine principals are lacking in continuity and substance. We can't believe that the first of the three evaluations was not even based upon on-site visitations. In many cases, the findings of the evaluators seemed based on hearsay, rather than observed performance.

We believe the evaluations were patently unfair, thus we are challenging them before the Commissioner of Education.

This just highlights some of the deep concerns that PSA has about the Jersey City takeover. Not only are we concerned that many of our members in Jersey City are being affected by these questionable management procedures, but the reputation of PSA is also at stake in that we, along with the Jersey City principals and supervisors, were the ones who supported the takeover legislation and were the ones who called for quick action on the part of the Department of Education to consummate the takeover.

It is also a known fact that the New Jersey takeover legislation is being looked upon as a model for other states across the country for dealing with educationally bankrupt districts. It is, therefore, important that every action taken by the district be worthy of emulation across the country. At this time, we are concerned that the Jersey City takeover falls far short of these expectations.

To repeat, we would like to see the panel schedule the hearings so that you could speak directly with those who are experiencing the takeover, rather than accepting the assessment of our organization or that of the district administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these views with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Bill, we appreciate your comments and, as I said from the beginning, we are going to do more of these. Did you, in fact-- Did the Principals and Supervisors Association make their people aware that this hearing was going on today? If I am not mistaken, your organization did get a hearing notice. Is that accurate?

MR. APPELEGATE: I believe we did, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Did you make the people in Jersey City aware that this would be going on today?

MR. APPELEGATE: I don't know.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You don't know--

MR. APPELEGATE: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: --if, in fact, the Association was made aware?

MR. APPELEGATE: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Okay, that's fine. Questions, Senator Palaia?

SENATOR PALAIA: No questions. I just want to announce-- I apologize to the people of Jersey City, but I must leave now to get back to Monmouth County. I have a meeting this evening. I promise you that I will be back at the next meeting that the Chairman calls. But I do want to apologize to you for leaving the dais now, and I apologize to the speakers who are to follow.

MR. APPELEGATE: Well, before I leave, in case I don't see you -- all of you -- I wish you a very Merry Christmas.

SENATOR PALAIA: Hey, you, too, Bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you, Bill. Thank you very much.

Next we will hear from the former Mayor of Jersey City, the Honorable Anthony Cucci. Mayor Cucci?

A N T H O N Y R. C U C C I: Mr. Palaia, can't you stay for a few more minutes?

SENATOR PALAIA: I will. I didn't know you were going to be the next speaker, Mayor. I know you and I have had many discussions dealing with this. I didn't realize you were the next speaker.

MR. CUCCI: Thank you. I'm sure the traffic is heavy now. You will be better off waiting a while.

SENATOR PALAIA: Okay. Former Mayor, no problem.

MR. CUCCI: Thank you very much, and I will try to be as brief as I can. I am certainly not here in a combative mood, even though I heard some things that do raise the shield of the sword; things like the general statement, again, that "Things were so bad that something had to be done" -- those kinds of general statements.

Nevertheless, I just want to say here that you have heard some very reputable people. I have learned myself by listening, and I certainly endeavor at all times to be as objective as I can, regardless of the fact that I was the Mayor at the time.

I must go back to what I said before, and I am recommending it again. I said I never precluded the takeover of the schools, providing that the legislation would provide for moneys above and beyond whatever was mandated already, and if anything else was being mandated by the State, then the legislation should allow that the State should pay for those extra mandates.

I would like to recap very briefly what has caused some of the fiscal problems in our city and how it relates to education. When I first was inaugurated, within a few months, and before we even struck the first budget, I was informed that there was a deficit from underestimating the budget. We made that up. I was also told by the State, in Mr. Louis Acocella's office, with witnesses, and Deputy Mayor Jerome Lazarus was

told in Mr. Vincent Calabrese's office in Trenton, with witnesses, that we would have to provide 22 million additional tax dollars to make it equitable and for the potential of education to be served.

We finally settled for \$19.8 million, and not a penny less would the State hear of. The convenience, if you would call it that-- The amount of \$8.8 million of the \$19.8 million would be through bonding, and bonding would be allowed over five years. But the \$11 million would be an immediate impact upon the taxpayers of Jersey City and, therefore, the rent payers would be affected. At that time this was very, very severe because our tax dollar was based upon-- Approximately \$760,000 would affect one tax dollar. Today, with the revaluation, it takes \$5 million to move a dollar up or down. So you can see the immediate impact.

I had my first experience that the State demanded this money and I complied, and complied thereafter. And yet when the takeover was in its neophyte stages and investigations were going on, constantly you heard, "The urban areas waste the money. We do not need all that money. They are all inept. They are all corrupt." Those were the statements. They are on record from Mr. Ewing and also others, and from the former Commissioner. Maybe some may be, but certainly not all are.

Here we are, some 14 months later, and no one has gone to jail except one person, and the allegations and the charges are not directly toward education, but what he did and failed to do with his personal money as far as recording it. We certainly found out that not everyone is inept, because the marks improved. Regardless of now nominally they improved during my administration, they improved for the first time. And \$25 million later, and more since the takeover -- exactly \$25 million more-- Don't let Dr. Scambio tell you anything different. I left \$6 million additional in a budget than the previous year. She raised that to \$11.3 million more, and is now asking for approximately \$14 million more.

So in a short time, from October of last year, you're talking about 25 million additional tax dollars. And the marks are at the worst they ever were since before I got into office. This is a fact: Something must be wrong with the takeover. I do not wish to hear-- I do not wish in any way to hear, "Give it a chance." I had no chance, but we improved as soon as we got in.

Furthermore, the investigation and all of the inquiries made of the Board-- They claimed they knew our problems, so it was not like a team being thrown in that had to become oriented to the issues. By virtue of having been there in Levels I and II-- Certainly when I got there it became Level III. This team was well-oriented, so I do not wish to hear, 14 months later, "Give us a chance." I am going to repeat it if it hasn't struck home yet. Twenty-five million additional dollars mandated and taken by the State to be used for education. Jersey City scored, in those State tests, the worst in the State. That is what it was when I came in, and we improved each year above that.

Now, that alone has to tell you that something is wrong. Something is not being done right. Perhaps it is those issues you heard presented to you here, which I think are all very, very factual. They come very objectively and they certainly come from reputable people.

I feel -- getting back to the legislation -- that you should discuss how much of a blank check we should really allow Dr. Scambio and company, or the State. You are really giving them a blank check for what they think should be the proper amount of moneys to be expended, and yet it is the taxpayer who has to pay for the severity of this. No one wants to cheat on education. Jersey City has not cheated on education. The contradiction is, we never needed any more money. We were wasting it. Well, if that were the case, then why is the State taking so many millions of dollars more? Why can't you do with

less at a time when every taxpayer is certainly a part of those tax increases by virtue of a State mandate for revaluation, and by virtue of an educational mandate for \$19.8, which was the immediate impact?

I do not agree, nor did I ever agree with that part of the legislation that said a municipality which may be having fiscal difficulties could resort to the State for more money. Can you imagine resorting to the State for more money with the condition the State is in today fiscally? And, how sure are we about the Governor's plan -- which I agree with wholeheartedly -- that the urban areas have been shortchanged by virtue of a formula that has been inequitable? Yet you people are going to be part of that vote. I guess sooner or later it will come in front of you. Is that right? (no response) You have to make an objective decision here, and make a political decision down where you live, whether it is healthy or not to support it. Once again, what goes on? The polarization between urban and suburban areas, and then someone wants to say, "Kids first," you know, like she invented kids. We are all interested in the kids.

As someone said -- Mr. Kaminski -- if we do not encourage the young people to live here, to stay here and get economic stabilization, and get the productivity that we should be getting in all areas of our city, then we are not going to have to worry too much about the school population ever increasing, but constantly decreasing, and becoming less and less of a concern. That would be totally wrong. Taxes are very important to us. The moneys -- the proper moneys that are needed are very important. But to now have the entire thing turned around and saying we were wasteful-- All I can see now is that extra money, and the marks going down again.

As far as communication, I think it is wrong to say that communication is better. I attended, months ago, a Board of Education meeting. I could not get Dr. Scambio to answer me

honestly on what was supposed to be some form of a budget presented to us. My question was a simple one: Do you have a surplus? It took three consecutive proddings, and finally she did not answer. She got one of her associates to answer, and he said, "A few million dollars." I said, "How much?" He said, "A few million." It was \$7 million. Why can't these things be forthcoming, regardless of what position I hold, or what position someone else holds or will hold in the future?

Those are valid questions. Those are questions that have to be answered. The communication, I think, is very bad. A person is allowed three minutes. Sometimes three minutes is too much even for a person like me, and sometimes it is not enough. But there is a very deep lack of communication.

As far as some of the faults you found, that we did not go on a thorough search before we made appointments, we were always careful to pick someone who was qualified by the State. You have the same thing going on now. They are either coming out of Essex County or they are coming out of Montclair, and someone knew someone, just as someone knew someone before. (applause)

I am not going to hold you up with that kind of reiteration of what we went through before. But please don't leave here with the attitude that some had before: Everyone is corrupt; everyone is inept; everyone is strictly for politics. I think you are going to learn that there is always some of that that may exist, but not to the extent that you can make a generalization and just wipe out the integrity of an entire city and many good people and good educators.

In closing, I am a little disappointed, but you explained that there will be more hearings. I am just still curious as to why there wasn't enough publicity. When I was Mayor, we had publicity a week or two in advance of when you were coming, regardless of our differences or maybe indifferences. Of course, the evening hearings are very, very important to people.

Thank you. I know you will keep your word, Mr. Palaia. I wish each of you--

SENATOR PALAIA: By the way, I have to say something: Mayor Cucci attended more meetings during the State takeover than any official -- and I have to say this -- whether they were in Trenton, or wherever we went. Mayor Cucci was there. I have to say that. I didn't always agree with what he said, and he didn't agree, a lot of times, with what I said, but nevertheless, the point is, he did come and he did express his feelings about the City of Jersey City that he represented. I commend you for that, Mayor.

MR. CUCCI: Thank you very much, Mr. Palaia. I feel the same way. I feel as though there has to be some protection of money. Even you don't want to see money spent to such an extent that it becomes irresponsible. You are just trying to buy every piece of candy in the store, and you don't need every program. And I do agree wholeheartedly: There must be some kind of protection, too, for the taxpayers back here. I don't have to tell you what we have been through, and what I have been through as an official.

SENATOR PALAIA: You have to understand something: If we thought the bill was 100% correct, we would not be sitting here right now. You see, we know it is not 100% correct. I was a sponsor of the bill, and I know it is not. It was all-encompassing. You couldn't possibly have a bill that was perfect. Do you understand? That is why we are here. We wanted to find out what Ms. Massey had to say, what Chester had to say. We want to hear that. We want to get into the flow now of how it might have to be changed.

MR. CUCCI: Very good.

SENATOR PALAIA: That is all we are here for.

MR. CUCCI: Very good, but I still say, there has to come a point when people have to look into their minds and say, "I am making general statements, and it is not true as a

general statement. It may be a specific, but not a generality." The fact that things are so bad, and that everybody is so bad-- That is probably the worst thing we can do. First of all, it is not the truth. That is why it's bad. If some people are deficient, then those people are deficient, but not the entire population, any more than the entire Assembly is deficient, but some of you may be (laughter) -- right? -- just like I was, no doubt.

SENATOR PALAIA: Some of the others, that's true. Some of the others might be.

MR. CUCCI: Let's not make generalizations when they may be just pure specifics.

Thank you, and good holidays to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Assemblyman Doyle would like to talk to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Mayor, I truly appreciate the historical perspective and your continued loyalty and defense of the city which you served well. Let me make that clear.

MR. CUCCI: And the children, too. I like children -- kids -- not only Dr. Scambio.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Right, and kids. Let me make it clear: The cavalcade of horrors I read, I don't necessarily accept. I am reading what we, the press, the public, and, as someone pointed out, the country is being told, rightly or, as I am hearing in a lot of cases, wrongly, about the pre-takeover situation that existed. Our job, as I said, is to separate the wheat from the chaff, and not say, "Everything is bad. Let's start all over again."

I think we are hearing a collective voice. I can't describe the anxiety with which I await Dr. Scambio's response to the suggestions that I think have been across-the-board. There are a lot of good people in Jersey City who, wherever they were pre-takeover -- they were underground, they were there but were not being heard-- They are there now. I want

to know, if she is not listening to them, why she isn't, because it takes a lot of people to make the system better, not just the one person at the top.

MR. CUCCI: Right. Mr. Doyle, I thank you very much. I have known you for a long time, and I know the integrity you are all serving with. I am not going to impose in any way, but I certainly do want at least to help things to be objective at all times.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Your presence has done that, and we appreciate it.

MR. CUCCI: I don't want the exploitation of kids first, and then behind everybody's back, you know, it is the same old story. Who are we kidding, Doctor?

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much, Mayor. And thank you very much, Senator Palaia. (Senator Palaia prepares to leave room at this time)

SENATOR PALAIA: Thanks, Skip. See you, John Paul.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: See you, Joe.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Next will be Gerard Brancato.

G E R A R D J. B R A N C A T O: Good afternoon. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak with this Subcommittee. My name is Gerry Brancato. I would like to present to you from three perspectives, if I may:

1) As an educator and employee of the Jersey City School District.

2) As a community activist and a community leader.

3) As a resident and taxpayer of Jersey City.

For more than 23 years, I have serviced the children of Jersey City as a teacher, administrator, and learning disabilities consultant on a child study team.

I contributed to pioneering the field of learning disabilities in New Jersey, authored a handbook on learning disabilities for parents and teachers, and coauthored the

"Special Education Rules and Regulations for the Jersey City District," as recommended by New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6, Chapter 28.

Several years ago, I provided testimony to the State-appointed investigators of Cresap, McCormack, Paget, and others, indicating that some of my colleagues and friends were performing inadequately.

I alienated my fellow workers because I knew some services were not being provided competently to our school children and that some of the administrators were misusing their power.

Shadows of the past are apparently recurring.

I'm concerned and intimidated by the unprecedented power that our Superintendent of Schools has been endowed with by the "takeover" provisions. Nowhere in the history of our country has a superintendent of schools been given unlimited decision-making abilities to do as that office chooses and to answer to no ongoing monitoring body whatsoever. Theoretically, the Superintendent has the clout to spend tax money freely, hire at will, decide educational policy, and overall do anything at all that office chooses, without any internal checks or balances.

Superintendents should not be omnipotent. Only God is that powerful.

May I recommend an amendment to the takeover code? The Superintendent and administration should answer to a conventional Board of Education and to recognized neighborhood and community associations. Their approval should be required, since it is truly their school district, their tax dollars, and their children.

I'm concerned with some top level administrators who were appointed by the Superintendent. They were not appointed from within. Thus, many of us in the district aren't familiar with who they are, what their accomplishments have been, and

whether or not they are truly knowledgeable about Jersey City's unique educational policies and problems.

I've seen superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, and other influential district administrators come and go over the years. With them they brought into the district their team, their loyalists, their cronies.

This current district administration has done the same thing. I'm skeptical about these high salaried appointments and the "perks" that go along with their positions. Some decisions they have made appear to be questionable at the very best.

May I recommend that all top level administrators be reconsidered and reevaluated for hiring? Their credentials could be submitted into a pool of applicants who have been sought by a national search committee appointed by you, this legislative Subcommittee on School Intervention. Jersey City should solicit applicants throughout our country so that we get the best and become the model you wish us to become.

Senator Ewing, in his Star-Ledger editorial of November 18, 1990, spoke of the "vultures" who fed themselves on our school system, the "deplorable" shape of our buildings and classrooms, the "sweetheart deals," and the "no-show jobs."

Rest assured, gentlemen and ladies, that it is obvious to insiders who are sincere about the children in our district, that these unconscionable behaviors have been ameliorated. Dr. Scambio apparently has taken the criminality out of our district. Indeed, she should be commended for this astute administration.

However, I feel a need to comment on another aspect of that editorial, if I may:

Senator Ewing mentioned that 117 positions were dissolved in the Central Office and created were 38 vacancies. He intimates -- if I assume correctly -- that there are now fewer administrative and Central Office personnel. It is my

observation that there are now more Central Office administrators and personnel than what previous administrations had, and that the salaries of these personnel significantly exceed previous salaries. This change has resulted in a top-heavy administration and a tax burden on the residents of Jersey City.

May I suggest again that this Subcommittee be given a comparative analysis of positions and salaries at the Central Office so that you will know what the salaries are, how many administrators truly exist, and what the comparison is with previous administrations that ruled this district?

Permit me now to address the Bureau of Pupil Personnel or Special Needs Department of the Jersey City School District, for which I and all child study teams render services. This division of Central Office is chaotic and in greater noncompliance with Title 6, Chapter 28 than any of this administration's predecessors. My observation and experience is that there is a diminution of services to our children and to our specialists working with educationally handicapped pupils. May I give examples and recommendations?

Firstly, communication between the bureau's top administration and rank and file specialists is limited. Frankly, it borders on nonexistent.

Last year, an interim director was appointed from within who was knowledgeable and competent. He resigned shortly thereafter, and all of us who are insiders wondered why. Thus, the bureau had no leader whatsoever for nearly all of the second half of the school year and for the summer. You should know that the summer is particularly hectic since child study teams and other specialists catch up on new referrals, triennial evaluations, and annual reviews, as mandated by the Code.

In September of 1990, another director took the helm. She recently was apparently in dispute with the hierarchy and

considered resignation. And as I speak to you now, her status is unknown to me. She may or may not have resigned. She may or may not still be there. Until about two weeks ago, most department personnel in special services never met nor had a communique from this department head. Moreover -- and this is my personal experience -- it took nearly two months for my child study team this year to get a phone, a phone which we need to communicate, as you can imagine, with ancillary personnel, other districts, doctors, whatever. We had no phone whatsoever for nearly two months. "Bureaucratic red tape," we were told.

Also, it took nearly one-and-a-half months for me to receive the ancillary services of a psychiatrist and a neurologist I needed when I was ordered by the court to evaluate a child with deviant behavior. I never experienced the delay of one-and-a-half months to get a psychiatrist or a neurologist.

May I recommend that the Bureau of Special Services make an attempt to give written directives to their personnel so that communication is improved. We need more frequent in-house seminars and workshops for bureau personnel, so that we know who our leaders are and what direction they are going. Ancillary services of physicians, psychiatrists, otologists, neurologists, whomever we need to better deal with our disabled children, should be accommodated immediately, as they were prior to State intervention. We are taking a step backward, instead of forward, and I will document everything I have to say to you, as I did to the investigators when I testified before them to bring in the State Department, and to bring in a new Superintendent.

Transportation of our special needs pupils is also in chaos. Some children exhibit difficult behaviorisms often associated with their learning disabilities. Thus, some children may be difficult to control. Too many incidents of

inappropriate behaviorisms occur on the bus, resulting in aggressive and disruptive situations. Too many of our children are hurt. Buses are far too frequently late with delivering and returning children to and from school. Poor service is commonplace, not the exception.

May I get a glass of water?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure.

MR. BRANCATO: Please excuse me.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Sure. (brief pause at this point)

MR. BRANCATO: Sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That's okay.

MR. BRANCATO: Furthermore, parents are at times unable to transport themselves to appointments with child study teams, psychiatrists, or whomever. The district chose to disband transportation for those parents in need of meeting with these personnel. May I suggest that the district reconsider providing transportation to selected parents, so that their input can be more readily obtained by the personnel who need it, and that bus attendants and bus drivers be trained more extensively in how to deal with children with learning disabilities and the characteristics related to those learning disabilities? They need to know how to handle the children on the bus.

Moreover, the district should comply more closely with the Code in placing classified children within closer proximity to their homes. You should know that this administration is transporting certain handicapped children from one part of the city totally to the other part of the city, because the administration is not sound enough to make adequate room or to do necessary transferring of children so that they are in neighborhood schools. Compliance with this part of the Code would greatly reduce the difficulties we have on the buses.

I would like to comment on cluster autonomy and power that this administration has chosen to put into effect.

Cluster chiefs should not involve themselves with power struggles. There is absolutely no reasonable explanation why children and even personnel should not cross cluster boundary lines. If a child study team or other implementing body deems it appropriate to place a child in a specific situation in another cluster, they should be permitted to do so, and do so easily and readily, with people in administrative positions facilitating for them, not creating barriers for them.

When there is a need, personnel should be permitted to cross boundaries also. May I give an illustration of my own experience? Since September -- and you may find this hard to believe -- my child study team has been without the services of a full-time psychologist, as required by New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6, Chapter 28. This impedes our functioning, resulting in noncompliance of time lines and diminution of services to children. Our previous psychologist was transferred involuntarily in September to an unfamiliar situation. I service elementary schools. My psychologist for 10 years serviced elementary schools. She is now in a high school, and knows little about the implementing of high school curriculum and IEPs at that level.

She wishes to return to our child study team, but is not permitted to cross over cluster boundaries. Therefore, she must remain in unfamiliar territory, and therefore, in spite of the fact that we have over 120 classified children in my school building, and an avalanche of new referrals, we are unable to deal with them in a timely manner.

My recommendation to you and to the district would be to eliminate these barriers, resolve the petty power struggles of cluster chiefs, and insist that cluster chiefs facilitate district needs and requests from appropriate personnel.

On numerous occasions, the Hilltop Neighborhood Association, of which I am the founder, and which is a recognized neighborhood group in our community, has met with

the Superintendent, her designees, city officials, police, and others regarding the problems associated with Dickinson High School. We have discussed these problems for more than 10 years with Dr. Scambio's predecessors. The Hilltop community believed Dr. Scambio would be different; that she would be more responsive to our neighborhood complaints of drug dealing, loitering, harassment, violence, intimidation of elderly people, and so forth. The Hilltop Neighborhood Association, for which I am a spokesperson, identified the problems and suggested corrective measures in conjunction with the police and other recognized community agencies.

The district did, indeed, renovate the Dickinson High School cafeteria. However, the district appears to be somewhat hesitant in implementing other suggestions such as the training of school guards by community police for improved building and community security; modifications of lunchtime schedules; consideration of keeping kids on campus; beautification of campus; building of picnic tables by industrial arts pupils; planting of trees by science children; and so forth.

I would like to suggest that this Subcommittee seek input from community leaders, from Hilltop Neighborhood Association leaders, and other area leaders to determine the feasibility of implementing recommendations the community has made to the school district. I will be happy to provide names of neighborhood leaders to you.

Finally, apparently some district personnel seem fearful to discuss significant issues with the community and with the local press. It was intimated that some top level personnel are requested not to speak with the public or press. If a gag order exists, this Subcommittee should ban it. It should be eliminated. Any district personnel should be permitted to talk with anyone they desire, including the press.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address some of my concerns and the concerns of the community.

I would like to encourage this Subcommittee to hold quarterly hearings so that the public and district personnel can continue to give you input to better provide improved services for our district.

Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you, Mr. Brancato. Any comments? Mr. Doyle?

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Again, with the same caveat that I gave Mayor Cucci that I don't accept the findings, but just read them, let me read you two findings from the Corrective Action Plan as to what they found existed pre-takeover, and ask you to comment:

"Due to the lack of a comprehensive curriculum and student assessment program, no linkage occurred among teaching, learning, and testing. Further, this fragmentation created inconsistency in instructional planning and delivery. Therefore, it was impossible to effectively monitor and document student strengths and weaknesses." An accurate assessment?

MR. BRANCATO: I think it was.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Has it been cured?

MR. BRANCATO: No, I don't think it has been cured. I believe it is in the amelioratory state right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Moving as quickly as it should be?

MR. BRANCATO: No, I don't think so. But then again I want to also explain to you that I am somewhat limited in my knowledge of curriculum, and I don't see what goes on in the overall picture. My expertise is in special education, and I am confined to one school building, with the exception of servicing other school buildings periodically.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: A second finding: "The district's special education program was continually cited by State and Federal monitors for noncompliance, inefficiency, disregard for student and parent due process, and ineffective implementation

of instructional programs and support services for classified students. In addition to these aforementioned deficiencies, student individual educational plans -- IEPs -- reevaluations were not conducted in a timely manner, and student placements were frequently inappropriate. No standard operating procedures existed for the district's Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services." Is that an accurate assessment of the pre-takeover situation, in your judgment?

MR. BRANCATO: That I can speak knowledgeably about. I even testified to some of that, and I can say this -- and I say this frankly: It was better then than it is now. The functioning of child study teams was better then than it is now, and not because of poor personnel. All of these people have extensive training. In order to be a learning disabilities consultant or a school psychologist, you must have a master's degree, and it is an extensive master's degree. It is not your typical 32-credit deal.

Right now, as I told you, we are uncertain about whether we even have a director. The two directors we have had since the takeover were only there for a short period of time, and for the primary period of time there has been no leader since the State has taken over. The Department of Special Services, or whatever it is called now, has very poor communication. Quite frankly, I consider it a disgrace, and I am embarrassed, and you ought to know that. As I suggested, there should be outside monitoring for this. We need outside monitoring. The truth is, internal monitoring is a joke. That compliance officer must do as she is told. We need someone from the outside to monitor special services, and then you could see that we are more greatly in noncompliance than we have ever been before in special education.

These are but a few things I have cited to you in special education. I could spend days with you and document everything I have to say, and so could my colleagues.

Unfortunately, most are too intimidated to appear before you. I am not among them. This is my community. These are my schools, and I pay for taxes to supply the schools. And I am not intimidated to speak against this administration, or any administration, if they are not providing adequate services.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: I don't think anybody would confuse you with a shrinking violet.

MR. BRANCATO: Good. I hope that should there be any repercussions, I can come to you and make you aware of them.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Well, 2000 years ago Seneca said, "Who shall guard the guardians?" You are asking, who is going to monitor the monitors?

MR. BRANCATO: Exactly.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: And that is our job.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That's our job.

MR. BRANCATO: Yes, and I hope--

SENATOR EWING: You can come to us anytime. We represent our districts, but we represent all of the people in the State of New Jersey. You've got a telephone.

MR. BRANCATO: Good, and you can bet I will. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Mr. Chairman?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes, Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Unfortunately, I have to go back to Brick Township, where about half of my constituents were born or raised in Jersey City. I certainly got an earful, and I look forward to continuing the educational process in January.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN DOYLE: Thanks to everybody who came out.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thanks for coming up, John.

Next will be Luz Mayi.

L U Z M A Y I: Good evening. My name is Luz Mayi. I live at 393 (indiscernible) Boulevard. I am the President of the Parent Council at the Number 3 School.

One thing I heard not too long ago, that every time I go to a meeting it really bothers me to hear is, the Hilltop Association against Dickinson High School. I am sick and tired of hearing that over and over and over. I never heard of anyone in Dickinson High School not trying to help in anything about our children. These are our kids. They go there to get educated. If there is something wrong with the outside, I don't think we should blame the school. We should blame the parent if the kids are out there doing what they are not supposed to. I want to make that clear.

Another comment that I would like to-- I wasn't aware until I heard it here tonight that the district-- I heard tonight that they are not supposed to send one kid from one cluster to another. That was new to me. I was telling the lady next to me that last week we had a special needs child coming from another cluster to my cluster. So I don't think it is true, really, because we do have, especially in my school-- We have children from another cluster. We have children from Cluster 3 and we have children from Cluster 4 -- I mean Cluster 1. So I really don't think that this is true. Okay?

Now, another question I would like to ask: We meet every month at a different school. The Jersey City Board of Education meets every month in a different school. The parents have been fighting to keep it in one particular building, but they decided to move, and that way they could be available to different areas of the city. Where are these people when we meet? I don't see them there. It is a shame to say that being involved with the Jersey City School District for 30 or 40 years, I never see people -- never saw before anybody care so much since the State took over.

It's a shame that you people had to come home for us to (indiscernible). It is a shame. When the rumor was going around that the State was taking over, I saw supervisors in my building that I never saw before. I didn't know who they

were. I found out that the State was planning to take over, and I said, "Oh, no wonder I see people who I never saw before." This is something that is awful. Okay? I think it is awful because most of the people who have maybe spoken here have no kids in the district. Sometime when you have no children, you just go when there is something that affects your tax, something that affects your pocket. Then you go and fight for it because it is affecting the tax base. I can see that.

But I have four children in the district. Way before my kids started school, when my first one was three years old, I began to get involved with the district, because I wanted to know where my kids were going to go.

I am not saying we are perfect right now, but I believe, from my point of view as a parent, that I have better communication right now. I can call the Board anytime. The secretary will tell me maybe whoever I call for is busy right now, but, "Will you leave your phone number, and they will get back to you." Believe me, they have gotten back to me at 12:00 midnight, but they have gotten back to me.

My principal was in the hospital, someone I never saw before. One principal used to call me almost every day to find out about her condition. The Board of Education, Dr. Scambio, Dr. Foster, I think is her name, those people from the State used to call me almost every night to find out, "How is your principal doing? Is there any improvement? Is there anything I can do to help?" They even took the time to go to the hospital and see how she was doing. This is a little bitty thing, but I look at it as a parent. Maybe other people don't look at it that way.

The reason why I decided to come and speak in front of you tonight is, there was one mistake when the State took over. It was that they didn't take into consideration that the majority of our buildings are in very, very bad shape. They need repair. We need to construct new buildings. We have no

money for that. Yesterday I had a meeting with the Mayor of the city regarding my school building. I am fighting with him to give us at least a piece of land to build a new school. I have been fighting for this school for 14 years. He said, "The land will be no problem. You have to address the people in Trenton for the money to build a school."

So, I am addressing you people. Kids first -- show it to me. When my kids have to come all the way from the fourth floor to the basement of the school to use the lavatory-- We have no bathrooms on any floor, just in the basement of the school. We have no auditorium to have any activities with our children. We have a gyn teacher who goes to the backyard and does whatever he can do with them.

We have no cafeteria. Our children eat in the classroom, with teachers watching them. Now, if the kids are first, show it to me. Give me a decent place for my child to get an education. I believe that even though they are a minority, they deserve an equal opportunity. I believe they deserve a decent place to go and be educated. One thing I can say, and I have to give the takeover the benefit for this: In my school, I saw an improvement in-- My priority is to see my kids going forward in their education. My child graduated from Number 3 School and received a scholarship to St. Peter's, due to the good grades he got in school. I have to give thanks to the good teachers in my building, and the good administration I have in my building. I also have to thank the Board of Education for the job they have been doing. I have seen improvement in test scores. That I can see. I have seen improvement in supplies. It does not come September anymore with my kids having no books for science and social studies. The books were there when the school opened.

I have seen my building clean the first day of school. You know, there are a lot of things that I have seen happening. The main thing I would like to say is: Every child

should have a decent place to work in and be able to learn something. If they need to use the bathroom, they should be able to just ask for permission and go on the same floor.

Many of our children have to cross two or three blocks to come to the main building to receive physical education, art, music, or to see the nurse when they get sick, because we have three annexes. Each annex is a block and a half away from the main building. The principal has to be responsible for four buildings. How in the world she does it, I don't know. You have to be a superwoman to do it.

Another thing I heard here was, we don't have enough white males in the system. Off the top of my head I can count eight. If you are talking about-- What we don't have are Hispanic supervisors.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: I have a Hispanic principal.

MS. MAYI: Okay. She is the only Hispanic principal in the district. I am not complaining, because I don't look at racial-- But she is the only one in the system. So, when people talk, sometimes I wonder, "Do they really know what they are saying?" I mean, "We don't have enough white males--" I counted off the top of my head seven while I was sitting there. There is the high school. Almost all of them are white, and they are male. There is only one female.

So, you know, you really have to know what you are talking about. There is another thing that I don't see other people complaining about. Okay, maybe it is not a priority to them, but this is a priority to me: For my kid to use the bathroom, he has to walk from the fourth floor all the way to the basement, and sometimes he can't even make it. Many times I have to go home and get clothes for my kindergarten child because he wet his pants by the time he got to the bathroom. This is the situation where we are putting our children to learn. How is he going to make it? This child is sitting in a

classroom without the facilities that he -- or she -- needs, to make them be first in the city. What will be the future of our city if we are not giving them the proper education because they don't have the proper facilities to be educated?

We have good teachers; no doubt about it. I am proud of the teachers we have. Okay, I don't say 100%, but I am proud of the ones in my building. I am proud of the administration in my building. Communication with the Board? Yes, I do have communication with the Board. I have spoken with the Board members, people at the Board from the State level, many, many times at different hours. Please, I would like to see something in the bill where we could have a school built or some repairs made to our building.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

Next we will hear from Dr. Gunther? Dr. Gunther? (no response) All right, we will come back to him. Then next, Bernadette O'Reilly Lando.

B E R N A D E T T E O ' R E I L L Y L A N D O: Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good afternoon.

MS. O'REILLY LANDO: My name is Bernadette O'Reilly Lando. I am a former Councilwoman in the City of Jersey City, and I am also a Board of Ed employee for 21 years. I was a part of the only department that was completely phased out in the takeover. That was the Medical Department. Dr. Gibbs very briefly hit on a very sore point with the department, but I would like to bring a few facts of the department to your attention.

We had a dedicated, superior medical director who worked with vim and vigor to bring about many instituted formats that are still in use now. They were established by her. They were instituted by her. They were carried out by her. She no longer has the job, but the format and the

institution of the format still remain. Her salary was \$52,000 a year. In her place they have hired a nurse, and they are paying her \$55,000 a year. This nurse deals strictly with employee health.

The Jersey City structure was unique in its process of how it employed new tentative candidates through the medical format. All of the pre-employment physicals were done on an in-house basis. That means that the employee came to the Medical Department and was examined. If he was medically sound and passed the examination, he was hired. Now today, the Jersey City Board of Education pays \$52 per physical for each new incoming employee. To me, this is financial mismanagement.

An employee injured on the job was also handled through the Medical Department. An employee injured on the job was sent to the local hospital emergency room at the Medical Center, and there he was treated on an emergency basis. Any follow-up care that he required was all done through the supervision of the Medical Director. Today, an employee injured on the job-- The Board of Ed has a contract with the Healthnet Corporation on Christopher Columbus Drive. Just to walk in the door is \$100. If the employee requires an x-ray, it's \$70. If an employee requires a follow-up visit, it's \$50. If an employee requires physical therapy that is done on the site of the Healthnet Corporation, then that physical therapy is billed to the Board of Education. The physical therapy bill for the Board of Ed employees, not students, just employees, last month, was \$18,000. This is financial mismanagement.

I come to you and I say to you today that the lack of a Medical Department leaves 47 nurses and 12 school physicians without direction. I am an educator. I am also a nurse. I took my directions specifically from the medical director, whoever that was. In my tenure there were two. Whatever the medical director directed of the nurses we were allowed to do.

The situation is so now that in the month of September, Mantoux testing, which is tuberculin testing, which is required by State law for certain students to have in grade levels-- The serum was delivered to the Board of Education. This serum is a very, very potent serum that is given under the skin of a child to determine if he has any exposure to the disease. It requires immediate refrigeration. It was left out of the refrigerator for three weeks. Then it was given to the nurses to administer it to the students, without any conscionable thought that there could be a severe reaction, so much so that I raised the issue at the nurses' meeting.

The serum was taken back by the Lilly Company and retested for potency. But before the issue was raised, they would have just allowed us to go ahead and give it to the students. This is unconscionable. People who work in medicine have a license that entitles them and enables them to render the proper medical treatment and the proper services that are required by the students. Dr. Gibbs briefly touched on the home instruction aspect. These are our students who may be chronically ill, and they require tutorial services at home. As of now, a clerk is approving whether or not a student gets home instruction.

There are many students who would prefer not to come to school, but would like very much to stay home, but there is nobody there who can make a differential decision as to whether or not the student should be a valid recipient of a tutor. A clerk in the Bureau of Pupil Personnel makes the decision whether or not a student gets a home tutor.

Another thing is, being a large municipality and having a large school district, we are burdened, like every other municipality and large district with many students who have physical defects. These students all want to take part in sports. They all want to take gym. They all want to do the extracurriculum things that any normal youngster wants to do.

But in conscience, can you allow a student with hypertension to run out on a basketball court and perhaps have a coronary occlusion while he is out there. And yet there is nobody in this structure now who is willing to make the decision whether or not that student should go. Every night I pray that nothing happens to one of our students. Not one child should have to suffer the indignity of not having the proper medical treatment when he is in a school structure.

I say this to you because I have been an employee for 21 years, and never in the 21 years have I seen such disarray and lack of interest on the part of the physical disabilities that surround many of our students.

I would also very briefly like to tell you -- and several other speakers have mentioned it -- that in your takeover, in the law, it abolished the Board of School Estimate. The Board of School Estimate was the Board that determined the function and the funding, the budgetary process that the Board would need. I ask you not only to include that bonding should be a part, but I ask you to reinstitute the Board of School Estimate and allow the public to have input into the budget process. I am a taxpayer, and I say to you already that the financial mismanagement just in the quasi-Medical Department that does not exist any longer, is unbelievable. I don't have to tell you what you face with Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and you know that medical costs are astronomical. I say to you that this Jersey City Board of Education -- the taxpayers -- cannot afford to pay the exorbitant costs for employees who are injured on the job and give no medical service to our students.

I ask you to look very seriously at this. We have been lucky since last April, but I don't how much longer our luck will hold out. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

Next will be Katherine Burno.

KATHERINE CHOICE BURNO: Good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good evening.

MS. BURNO: My name is Katherine Choice Burno. I reside at 238 Bayview Avenue, Jersey City. I have the astuteness to be a parent of three youngsters, one of whom attends the Jersey City public schools, and is presently in an out-of-district situation right now. I have dealt extensively with the Special Education Department. I have dealt extensively with the Jersey City public schools. I am a product of Jersey City public education here in Jersey City. I attended Jersey City Public Schools No. 14 and 22, Lincoln High School, and Jersey City State College. I did some work at St. Peter's.

The notice of the public hearing has been mentioned, the time element, and that it is inopportune for many people, so I won't go into that.

The unique education of Jersey City-- I am not sure what that means, so I won't venture into the area of the unique situation. What I will say, as a parent and as a former student and as an adult who is presently working for the Jersey City Board of Education-- I will tell you that for the last approximately 32 years, I have attended the Board of Education meetings. I, too, like Luz Mayi, Joy Dechert, Doris Massey, and many others, have attended meetings until 4:00 and 5:00 in the morning. That has stopped, all due respect to Dr. Scambio and her team.

What I see today, and what I have heard today, and what I have heard in the grasses, hearsay, whatever-- It deeply disturbs me that somehow or other citizens of Jersey City have sat-- Some of them are presently sitting here now, and many of them are probably at home. It deeply disturbs me that we will not understand that for 20-plus years many of us who were either students or are presently or in the past were employed by the Jersey City Board of Education sat and did

absolutely nothing when children were massively suspended from school. We knew it was wrong. I will blame all groups, ethnic, or whatever you want to call it, be they white, black, yellow, or polka dot, whatever ethnic group you belong to. We sat massively by and allowed it to go on.

As a teacher I fought, and still fight. They hear and they don't hear. Therefore, it was necessary to have the school district taken over. I would be the first to tell you that I was totally in agreement with the school takeover as we know it today. But I felt as though we needed something-- Something needed to change. It got to the point where I, as a parent and as an educator, could not figure out where anyone was coming from. Someone would tell me on Monday that the special ed children-- I heard it here tonight that the special ed children are in worse shape than they were six months ago. We can agree or we can disagree. All I say to you is, let the records speak for themselves. Check the records. Wherever there is a deficient area, it should be corrected.

I, myself, personally, have dealt with the administrators at the Board. As one group was going out-- I got caught in the middle of one group going out and one group coming in. My youngster wound up being nowhere. The deficiencies with the principals, I said -- and I still say -- fire them all. If that includes me as a teacher, take me, too. However, that is not how the State Legislature went, so we all remained. Some people who were retiring, some people who disagreed with their firing-- They all stayed. Those who didn't have the proper credentials knew they didn't have the proper credentials, and they let them go. Those who had the proper credentials and weren't doing anything, and still aren't doing anything, they are still there.

So, I will not boost anyone's job. I have a job. My job is, one, to be a mother to my children and a daughter to my mother, and my second job is to get up in the morning and go

out to my school and do what I am told to do. I do that to the best of my ability. If I have a problem with it, as I have done in the past, I will get on the phone and call whoever, until they hear me. If need be, I will stand at the Board meetings and never feel intimidated. None of the administrators, none of the new group that is in, have never in any form or fashion intimidated me. They may have felt as though they should do something about me, and send me a few letters and tell me not to "rock the boat," but I have not had that yet. Maybe it is to come. I do not know. That still will not intimidate me.

I see today, and in the future to come, our young boys out in the Saudi Arabian desert fighting heat and what have you, and I would like to make sure that whatever youngsters we send to wherever we have to send them, that they are educationally equipped to handle whatever situation comes along.

I am seeing some changes in the school system, although some other people refuse to see them. That is their choice. We argued and fussed about the meetings always being at the Number 11 School, so one group decided to switch them. Now we argue and fuss that they are all over the place. (laughter)

If I say to you -- and this confuses me-- I do not intend to act like a child. I am 43 years old. But I have told many, many people and I will continue to tell them, the adults confuse the hell out of me. They say do one thing on one end, but don't do it on the other end. I have come to the realization -- and I have spoken to many, many people -- that this is no more than who is in control, who does the controlling, how the power goes, one group supersedes the other group, one over the top of the other, polka dot color today, orange tomorrow, not enough blacks, not enough Hispanics, not enough whites.

Yet and still, everyone says, "But I am not talking about the color," and, "I am not talking about this," and, "I am not talking about my friends." But it has been proven down through the years of history that when you come in-- I wouldn't bring a total complete stranger in. I would try to find someone-- If I were in control, the only people I would know would be the people I had worked around. They would be considered friends.

So as a teacher today I say to you, whether it is Dr. Scambio, "the person," or Joe Blow the plumber, if he puts my pipe on the correct way and my heat and my water flow the correct way, then I say that is what I asked the plumber to do. As far as the medical and legal continuity and the nurses and the doctors and nobody knowing how to follow their direction-- If a nurse who has been in the school district -- and I know some of them are hollering about the serum that was not refrigerated-- But there are many of us, I, myself, back -- and the records will show-- My mother did not sue. Here it is right here. (demonstrates) I lost the tip of my finger sitting in a school. Nobody wanted to know. We had a medical director, and we had several doctors. They told my mother, "Take her home. Just soak it a little bit and it will be all right." Okay? She didn't sue. I lost the tip, I lost the bone, so why worry about it? My children used to look at me funny and say, "What happened to your hand?" That didn't happen in a Jersey City public school.

So, tell me about the nurses' problems and the doctors' problems and the mismanagement. That could happen to anyone. The special ed situation-- My son sat for two years in a class where someone said, "Well, he's not emotional. He's not this, he's not that. Spend this." So I spent \$63,422 at Fair Oaks -- and 15 cents. Okay? Then someone said to me, "Well, Ms. Burno, they didn't write the right IEP." I said it from the very first beginning, back in 1986: "He's having

emotional problems." "Oh, you're an educator, you know, and you might be a mother who wants her child to be very, very bright. So, you know, we won't write it that way."

I will say to you, to Dr. Scambio, and to all the rest: "When he acts the way he acts, don't call me." That is what I said to them at the Board meeting several years ago. The principal who sits and watches television while he talks to the parents -- "Don't call me. Don't call me. Let him carry on any way he wants."

So when people tell me that parents are not concerned: "They don't fill up the room here and talk about Dr. Scambio; they don't talk about the old past administration, that's in the past; these people are doing terrible things--" I am not the one to dispute it, but they have worked with me to get my youngster where he is supposed to be. Therefore, I cannot say that nobody is refusing to work. I can say, "There are people who are still presently employed by the Board who are going to buck the system, and they have their rights." This is the freedom of the United States. We have a right to have our opinion, to agree or disagree. After the 20 years that I have seen people fuss amongst themselves, we now have the opportunity to speak.

Teachers, one person-- I do not lead my fellow teachers. I know my directions in my school. I follow them to the best of my ability. If I think something is wrong, I can call any one of them, new or old, and ask, "Is this what we are supposed to be doing?"

I would suggest that people begin to deal with the level of communication we have. Some people have sat here, and I have never, ever, ever seen them anywhere. Come on, let's be fair to the people. Taxes are wrong, sure. But if my youngster is supposed to get a good education and I have to pay-- I can pull out bills. I can take you right now. I have bills to show you that I am willing to pay it. I am willing to

pay whatever it takes for my youngsters to get an education. My personal birth youngsters, any that I have adopted, and the ones I have adopted or have been given to me from September to June -- they are my charge.

Whatever groups or organizations have a problem, I believe we can collectively come together and fight, if that is what we have to do. But to just stand here and say, "Oh, we don't have a medical director so the nurses don't know their directions. I have serious problems with that. What did they do before the directors got there 20 years ago? Doctors were in and out, in and out for an hour -- an hour. Some didn't even spend an hour. Some said, "Bend over, touch your toes. You're all right."

I was a student who had a slight heart attack in gym. As you can very well see, I was overweight then, and I am overweight now. No one ever bothered. My mother took me to the Jersey City Medical Center, where I was checked. First, my youngster had to be taken to his own personal physician.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Ms. Burno, pardon me. May I ask you to sum up now?

MS. BURNO: I will. I am headed there. My youngsters have to go to their own personal physicians first. Let's follow the rules. Personal physician first. No school doctor authorizes home instruction over top of a personal physician. They have never done that. No school doctor supersedes a personal doctor. Okay?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: That's true.

MS. BURNO: They have never done it in the Jersey City Board of Education. The evaluation process of principals-- Let me say this: Tenured principals get three; tenured teachers get one. Okay? Let me say this. Judgments have been made against them with one. So I say to you today, whether Dr. Scambio is doing a good job or a great job-- I don't think that is the question. The question is my saying to you that

there was a change needed. The change is taking place. If you have heard that there are some corrections, I say to you, look into those corrections. Check them out. Wherever corrections need to be made, change them.

But Dr. Scambio, and Joe Blow, and all the rest who have come in with this new team, have been receptive to me and to other parents. I suggest that you check all of those situations. I don't have a job except for teaching. I am not looking for any promotion to be anything other than that. I will hopefully resign, or leave the district at retirement in the classroom with my children. That is where the impact is.

They have never said that the teachers were so bad, so I don't understand the power and the control that some of us are working for. I don't understand it. I didn't say they couldn't tell me; I didn't say they couldn't explain it to me. All I am saying to you is, the children should be our first priority, always, to send them out into the world to get a decent job, as I have tried to do.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: Just one question: Did Fair Oaks help your son? Was he there for two years?

MS. BURNO: No, he has been there six months.

SENATOR EWING: He's there now?

MS. BURNO: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Are they helping him?

MS. BURNO: It's questionable. I'll never know until he becomes an adult like myself.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Holly Wojciechowski, please.

H O L L Y W O J C I E C H O W S K I: Good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good evening.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: We started with good morning, then good afternoon, and now we're up to good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That's right.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: I don't have a prepared statement, and I could probably refute a number of the things that have been said so far. I am speaking right now basically as a parent with two small children in the Jersey City school system, who happens to be a member of the Advisory Board.

When I applied to be on the Advisory Board, I did so with the hope that perhaps -- and we all did from my school -- one, or hopefully more of us, would have the opportunity to sit and have input to the State District Superintendent. Fortunately, I was selected. The question was asked of me before whether I feel that my child is being educated better today than he was a year ago? My answer was, "No." I still stick by that answer, but I should expand upon it by saying that the reason why it is not better today than a year ago, is because a year ago it was also good.

My children happen to go to a school where the parents did not allow the deplorable conditions that existed in many of the other schools to exist. We fought tooth and nail for everything we thought they deserved. Unfortunately, the benefits that my children and the children in my son's school have gotten were not gotten by the rest of the children in Jersey City. Some schools had one or more of the conditions. Most had all, and the ones that had all were the punishment schools. They either had administrators who were in disfavor with the Central Office, or other conditions existed that led to the conditions you found.

When the State was coming in, the parents that I associate with looked with hope that at least this was a chance. We did not look at it as a panacea. We did not look at it as being perfect. We looked at it as exactly what it was, a hope that there could be something better.

I hear people speaking about the fact that the taxpayers of Jersey City cannot bear the burden of educating

these children. They cannot afford it. Well, I am very sorry, but they cannot afford not to do it. I will agree that it has become exorbitant. It has been almost impossible to exist in this city, but to take from that that any child attending school in this district deserves less than any child in an affluent district, is criminal.

I don't care what color they are. I don't care where their parents came from. They deserve to learn and to have the same programs as any other child. Maybe this city cannot afford that, but that is not the issue. As you stated before, our intent here -- or I feel the intent here -- is not to decide whether Dr. Scambio is good or bad. I will not make that judgment. I do think there are many flaws in the takeover law itself. The bonding issue must be addressed. No matter how many programs we want to present, or offer to these children, we simply have nowhere to put them.

The mandates for special education and for bilingual education have choked this district to death. You will have a bilingual class with four children in it that sits next door to a first grade class with 35 children in it. It is inexcusable. It is a situation that this State District Superintendent does not have the power to rectify. If she is not given the money to expand the facilities, her hands are tied.

Another comment I would like to make is, I am very happy to see that the press is here today. There are many accomplishments going on in this district. Not too long ago, we had a student convocation for all high school academic achievers, students who were able to rise above the deplorable conditions that led to State takeover. These children deserve -- I should say, young adults -- more than applause, and they received only the recognition that we offered them, because the press, although invited, felt it was not newsworthy.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: That's true. It wasn't something bad.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: There was not one single representative of the press there. I have no respect for people who will not respect the accomplishments of our children. (applause) So from this point on, when someone from the press wants to get a comment from me because they want a story, well, there is nothing I say that I consider newsworthy. I am here because I am trying to do the best that I can for every child in this district. I don't have to worry about my children. This district does not have to worry about my children, because I make sure that my children get what they need, in school and out of school. Not all of these children have that benefit. But I will take the responsibility for all of these children. I take them into my home and I take them into my heart.

As far as Dr. Scambio goes, she has done things that have never been done in this district. As far as the principals' interviewing process, there were parents, principals, associate superintendents who sat in on the interviewing process. Parents had an active participation. That has never, ever happened in this district.

Do you want to talk about where top administration has come from? There are four associate superintendents.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Excuse me for one moment, please. Ladies and gentlemen, I know it has been a long afternoon, but we really don't need the background noise at this point. I would prefer to hear from the witness without a lot of -- without a cacophony of noise behind us, if you would, please. Thank you.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: There are four associate superintendents; two are from within. There were seven vice principals hired. Seven out of seven came from within. There were five new principals hired. Three out of the five came

from within. So don't try -- don't even try to tell me that the majority came from somewhere else.

As far as the State District Superintendent's closest administration coming from people she knows, they should have. To come into the conditions that existed and work with strangers would have been impossible. The Board of School Estimates being dissolved-- Quite frankly, that hasn't changed a thing, because the municipality, instead of using the Board of School Estimates to get its way, has instead used the DCA -- DEA, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: No, you were right the first time -- DCA.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: DCA. For the first time ever, the DCA was allowed to make a DEA decision.

If we are going to hold ourselves accountable and aboveboard and make moral judgments, then the State must stand behind its responsibility. That process was clearly laid out in the law, and the Commissioner's power and authority were clearly usurped. We are operating on a budget this year that has still not been resolved.

I don't know what the future holds for this district. I still continue to have hope. There are many good things going on here, and I would hope that as time goes on, we can see the good things, and that people will start to recognize the potential.

That's all I have to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you. Questions from Senator Ewing?

SENATOR EWING: You say that the budget for the year that we are operating in today has not been resolved?

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: No. It is still--

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That happens in school districts, with points of contention. As a matter of fact, I live in a school district where that is happening right now, where the

voters voted, and they could not resolve the issue with the Town Council. It is being appealed to an Administrative Law Judge. That is not an unusual set of occurrences.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: It is still in appeal.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: It is a normal course of activity when two bodies cannot agree.

SENATOR EWING: Yes.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: But the attitude keeps being, or the picture seems to be portrayed that Dr. Scambio is sick with omnipotent power; that she can make any decision she wants; that she can strike any budget she chooses. That is not the case. People need to know that whatever budget she strikes, and whatever budget she puts together has to be certified by the Commissioner. She does not sit all powerful and almighty.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I think that everyone at this table is aware of that.

SENATOR EWING: On this side of the table.

MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: Well, you are, but I don't think the public is.

SENATOR EWING: No, you're right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: That's great. Thanks an awful lot. We appreciate your testimony.

Next, Vickie Genette (phonetic spelling), Public School No. 17? Is she still here? (no response) She's gone, okay. Next will be Evelyn Bailey.

EVELYN H. BAILEY: Good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good evening.

MS. BAILEY: My presence here is a contradiction to some of the things that have been said. I have worked with the Jersey City school system for 35 years, and as of May 1 I was well on my way to retirement. Prior to that time, I worked as affirmative action officer and coordinator of the T&E project. I was a supervisor; I was a vocational educator; and also I

worked as a guidance counselor. I have worked under five superintendents. Having worked under five, I can say that there are some very positive things I can say about every single one of them. But when the State came in, like the others, my position as supervisor was abolished, and I became supervisor as a result of being successful with the NTA examination for supervisor. Had it not been for that, I don't think I would have made it. I doubt seriously that I would have been made supervisor.

But my position, as I said, was abolished, along with all the others. We were evaluated, and I received a satisfactory evaluation and was offered another position. Then I felt it was time to retire, so I sent my letter in on May 1. Then I thought about it, and I sought something else. I was offered another position, so I just removed the word "retirement" from my vocabulary, and substituted the word, "unretirement."

I sat and I thought about the story that we read in school during the early years about the elephant and the five blind men. Listening to the description of what is happening here in Jersey City reminded me of the blind man who felt the ear and gave that description for an elephant. Another blind man felt the leg and said that was the description of the elephant. Then someone else felt the trunk and said that was the description of the elephant. You have heard talk about taxes and about high salaries and people being dumped from the Central Office. A lot of those things did happen, but I want to just talk to you about some of the things that I am very happy about; things that make me excited about going to work everyday, because I work with programs that involve young people, and you have not heard that much about them.

The curriculum revision: As a supervisor, I was given the responsibility, along with other supervisors, to come up with a schedule for curriculum revision. We did that for a

five-year span of time. Then we were given the assignment of putting every textbook on the computer, so that we know where the textbooks are and we know if there is a need for textbooks at a certain school, they can be moved from other schools. That should be something that taxpayers should be happy to hear, and I do sit before you as a taxpayer, and as a product of the school system.

But back to some of the things that I am involved with. Holly just told you about the convocation. We had 957 youngsters who were involved in the convocation at Snyder High School. These were youngsters from all of the high schools in the city. The thing was, it's okay to be smart. They had people who talked with them about their personal experiences. There was one woman there who shared the many things that happened to her growing up. There was a youngster who walked up to her and said, "Gee, I thought I had it hard." See, that is what I saw happening that particular day, and that is what I heard.

Another thing I am involved with in my role is the Staff and Student Recognition Committee. We are now working to-- I am not saying these things have not been done, but these are things now that are being moved over to more of the schools in the city. As I checked, they have been giving staff and student recognition for years, but now it is all being brought together as part of a process that can be replicated in other places. That is what I see happening here.

Well, with the Staff and Student Recognition Committee-- This committee is working now to come up with creative ways of recognizing and rewarding youngsters for positive behavior. I am involved with parental involvement, where we will be working with parents. We've done that in the past, but we are doing it again. That is one of my former responsibilities -- parent involvement.

SENATOR EWING: What, keeping track of her?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: I was one of them.

MS. BAILEY: Now we will be working with parents to help them learn how to really be the kinds of parents who will make a difference with their children; how to help them to solve the everyday problems they have.

Another project that I am now involved with is the Hudson County Youth Commission. We have youngsters who travel every month to different high schools in the county to develop leadership skills; to listen to motivational speakers.

I am not going to take a lot of time, because I know you have heard a lot of this, but I just wanted to let you know that there is another part of that elephant that I wanted to share with you. That other part of that elephant is the things we are doing with young people. I said-- I hope I said it, and if I didn't say it, I am not here to affix blame on anyone. I am just here to tell you what I see happening as far as that elephant is concerned.

So I say to you, listen to all that is being said. Just listen carefully; listen carefully and do what you must do, because we are dealing now with some very, very precious people when we deal with our young people. That is what it is all about. It is not a matter of being pro or con anyone. It is a matter of doing what is best for our young people.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Our final witnesses for this evening are going to be Arthur Williams and John Allen.

SENATOR EWING: Oh, a duo.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes.

A R T H U R J. W I L L I A M S: Good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Good evening.

MR. WILLIAMS: Where is Senator Lipman, my good friend?

SENATOR EWING: Wynona? She is working on another project.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: She is not with us this evening.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good evening, gentlemen and to my colleagues in education. I am not a supporter of State takeover. I am totally against it. I do not agree with the concept of the State coming in to take over.

First, just let me elaborate, not on myself, but where I am coming from. I am a product of the Jersey City school system, and very proud to be so. I graduated from Dickinson High School, Jersey City State College, and Seton Hall University. I am from an area that may be very familiar to you in Jersey City as the A. Harry Moore Housing Projects, which is solely named after one of the great Governors of New Jersey. It is a community that is on the horizon. I am a product of it. I go back to that community each day and reach out to the younger people in that community.

Lo and behold, came the April State takeover. I am totally against it. I was riding up Duncan Avenue and I saw a big sign: "Kids First." All of my life kids have been first. Then I saw a marriage of the State and Elena Scambio -- not to patronize Dr. Scambio -- for the programs and the implementation of a thorough and efficient education for all students in Jersey City -- the black students in Snyder High School, Lincoln, Dickinson, and the Indian students as well.

The programs she plans to implement-- I think you guys are holding the wrong hearing, because when I saw the papers late last night, just to be aware of this hearing tonight-- I think our battle is funding. I think you guys should be here bringing a check, so that the students in Jersey City can get that quality education that they are getting down in South Jersey, northern New Jersey, in those areas.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Just so we don't leave any misimpressions, the worst county for funding in this State, and the worst area of population for funding in this State is Cumberland County. They have the poorest economic base and the

poorest population in terms of funding for the Quality Education Act. So, while we understand the dilemma of some of the northern areas of the State, and indeed some of us have been experiencing that through the committees -- the individual committees in the house -- you ought to be aware that that is not a problem that is just systemic to the northern part of the State.

In point of fact, in Cumberland County, when you talk about towns like Millville and Vineland and those particular areas, there are some very, very poor people there who need a great deal of assistance as well. Just so the approach is balanced.

MR. WILLIAMS: Sure, and include Jersey City.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Well, you got your check, though.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, more.

SENATOR EWING: You're getting \$35 million more.

MR. WILLIAMS: Did you bring it, Senator?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: We didn't bring it today, but it is on its way. You'll have it for the next school year.

MR. WILLIAMS: I'm sure you have heard a whole lot about the pros and cons of State takeover. Being against it, I sat back and I said, "Let me see." Then I met Dr. Scambio. She told me she was from the streets of Newark, so she's like me. She knew what it was to be poor. She explained that at a meeting. She knew what it was to be poor, but she knew what it was to give the students of Jersey City an appropriate education, which they so desperately need. The programs that are currently coming about, the complication they had at Snyder High School, and the many programs that are being instituted in this district under her leadership deserve an applaud from everybody in the room.

The State takeover did not say, "Well, we are going to send in Dr. Scambio to run Jersey City." They did not say that

her predecessors did a bad job. But you're here, and I think the marriage of Jersey City and the State should be a marriage of quality and decent education for all the students in this district, so that, Senator, when you move on, perhaps I will be sitting there.

I say to you, thank you. I urge your support in your marriage to Jersey City. Continue it coming, so that Elena Scambio can look back and be proud of the job that you and she did together.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Thank you very much.

SENATOR EWING: Providing it is spent on the children.

MR. WILLIAMS: Of course, Senator, on the children.

SENATOR EWING: Well, that has not been true. What is your job in life?

MR. WILLIAMS: My job? I am a student assistant counselor.

SENATOR EWING: In the educational system?

MR. WILLIAMS: In the educational system. I attend five elementary schools a day on alcohol and drug abuse prevention. When I go into a classroom, Senator, and I go from-- The geographical locations of Jersey City may not be familiar to you, but I will give you this geographically. I go from Park Avenue to 125th Street in Harlem, and the problems are all alike.

SENATOR EWING: No different.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: You're absolutely right. Thanks an awful lot. We appreciate your testimony. That's very true.

That concludes our testimony for this evening. Let me advise everyone once again, if there are people who want to give us their address, we will certainly make them additionally aware-- This is by no means being done to shield people from their opportunity for public input. We will be meeting here again in January.

MR. WILLIAMS: Bring the check, please.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: Well, we can't bring the check to you until Governor Florio tells us what is in the budget. So we can't very well do that.

But I would say to you that we will be back. I don't know that it will be here, but we will try to make it as convenient as possible and will try to let everyone know exactly what we are doing and when we are doing it. The next meeting will be held after 5:00 in the evening so we can get more public input.

SENATOR EWING: Well, there are some other ways that we can advertise this that were not done before.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Just a little more ahead of time.

SENATOR EWING: Ahead of time.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: The schools would be more than happy to send directions out, to have flyers distributed, etc.

SENATOR EWING: Would they give them to the students?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Yes.

SENATOR EWING: Tell them how to vote, and also to come here.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I'm sorry, what was that? (many people speaking at once; indiscernible)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Please notify the schools next time, because nobody knew. You should be thankful that this many people came out.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: I thought it was excellent.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Support Bill No. 3391 for our bond issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: We have already passed that in the Assembly Education Committee.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Good.

SECOND UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: And the anti-eviction?

ASSEMBLYMAN CIMINO: The anti-eviction-- We have problems with the anti-eviction, I think.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

To: The Sub-Committee on Takeover

From: Doris Massey- 12 Audubon Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey 07305

Parent of 4 children who attend the public schools of Jersey City- President of Parent Council and a concerned citizen

To the Sub Committee, Good Afternoon,

The insensitivity of the committee to plan such an important hearing at a time when those who are most affected by the decisions made by this committee is most troubling. Listed below are questions that I as a citizen, parent and friend of the schools would like answered:

[Who received an invitation:]

[How were these invitations or notices distributed to the citizens of J.C? particularly Parents Council, teachers, administrators, ministers or their representatives?]

[Who is the sponsor of this hearing?]

[What is the purpose of this hearing?]

My intent is not to cover up or paint rosy pictures of what is presently happening in Jersey City schools. I need to have immediate answers.

1. Now that the state is in here, who will monitor the state? I strongly believe that an objective monitoring team needs to monitor what is presently taking place. Can the state really monitor itself?

We have a top-heavy, costly administration- heavier at the top than it has ever been- 40 million dollars more than spring-1989- yet, serious change is not taking place.

3. Since we are guinea pigs, who do we turn to if we see this experiment failing?

4. The state had no right to come into Jersey City or any city because they had no plan in place. They are taking 2 to 3 years to hire, demote and plan at the expense of our children and the taxpayers.

5. Have you ever viewed the total cost of "takeover" and the process used? This includes comp. time, consultants, legal fees, staff sitting in court, outside monitors, evaluators, consultants, auditing firms etc.

6. What percentage of our state's current deficit is this experiment?

7. Wouldn't that money have been better spent teaching the children to read and write or better yet, giving immediate services to our children?

8. Wouldn't the district have been better served by giving the money and the technical services to this district rather than taking them over- since the state was not prepared to come in and since the state failed itself by not handling the situation ten or twenty years before?

9. Takeover was publicized by the state negatively from day 1 and this negative publicity has damaged and smeared the children, the city, techers, administrators etc. while our society is troubled with so many serious problems. This unnecessary stigma has been cruel and inhumane and the publicity is still continuing.

As parents we must look at the whole child- the effect of takeover on our children psychologically- this has never been truly addressed. Children who have been taught to respect their teachers and admire them now see their same role models being unfairly and publicly demoted, fired and negatively monitored. Ho do we expect these young children to take the educational process offered them in Jersey City seriously?

10. Before you did the hiring, why didn't you view the necessary need for this over-burdened staff from Central Office? (No matter what it is called- cluster or otherwise) these people are not working immediately with the children, which is what the whole thing is all about, Yet, their salaries range from 60,000 to 100+000 while we the parents of these students are struggling to make ends meet.

11. Why didn't you keep some of the key original staff since you kept the programs they developed and did not fire these people? They would have been able to assist you in carrying out these programs- Since they sacrificed four years of their lives doing the hard work? Then they would not have had to hire all of these consultants at a heavy tax burden.

How could they promote former teachers and make them principals instead of asst. principals? How could they experiment with our children's lives? Is this in the best interest of the kids?

Ex. They eliminated or demoted an extremely talented music teacher- one whose experience spans 34 years and one who had proven her ability and replaced her with an individual with much less experience and proven ability? How can this be explained?

Where there were 12 Vice Principals, there are now 23 Vice Principals with a starting salary of \$60 +000 and this does not include the administrators added in the grammar schools? A bit top heavy? To say the least.

Where there was 1 guidance director, we now have 6 minimum (one of whom never served this district as a guidance counselor or any district)

Where you had 1 math and 1 Eng. supervisor, we now have 16 math and Eng. supervisors. None of these top administrators work directly with children. As a matter of fact, many of these new appointees have been attending workshops or conventions to learn what they can teach those who are directly involved with the children? This is a bit costly!

12. Is there an Ethic's Dept. attached to the legislature? How can you explain former monitors becoming new employees of the takeover district? How can you explain former monitors receiving promotions before takeover became a reality? Isn't this highly unethical? You monitor a district, fail that district and then take the jobs?

13. They have hired people from out-of town with limited experience and over-looked many qualified individuals from Jersey City who have experience in and knowledge of this district. How can this be explained? Isn't this an affront to the trained people of J.C?

14. If the real truth is ever told, Jersey City was making tremendous progress-even as an urban school district, but the other urban districts did not have the real estate potential. Now the tax payers will have to pay for this increase in spending., And we are still a poor town.

15. All parents have never seriously been included in the decision making process. Parents were assigned to committees determined by Central Office- Not the real serious committees that impact upon education. I feel that we should be a part of the total

process -even those with varying views.

16. The state promised the politicians that takeover would be less costly to the citizens, have fewer top administrators and be more efficient. (This sounded attractive to a troubled urban town that had been underfunded for years) They were wrong on all three counts. NOW WE HAVE TO PAY FOR IT.

17. In the political haste to get this takeover legislation passed, the state left out one of the most important thing (deliberately or in error)- The bonding issue.

All we now have is top heavy administration and dilapidated buildings.

Committee, these are just a few concerns that I as a parent would like to address. At other meetings, I shall present you with more, but would like to suggest that if you really want in-put at these hearing, you should have them at 3:30- 5 and 6-9 and give sufficient notice to the interested citizens, teachers, parents etc.

Doris Massey



New Jersey
Principals and Supervisors Association

1479 Pennington Road, Trenton, NJ 08618
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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 11, 1990

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, I AM WILLIAM APPEGATE A FORMER PRINCIPAL AND AM ACTING AS SPOKESPERSON FOR THE NEW JERSEY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION.

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE IMPRESSIONS THAT OUR ASSOCIATION HAS FORMED CONCERNING THE JERSEY CITY TAKEOVER. HOWEVER, BEFORE I DO THIS, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY DEEP CONCERN OVER THE FACT THAT THIS MEETING WAS SCHEDULED EXPRESSLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PARENTS, STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE JERSEY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOICE THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THE TAKEOVER. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY SOME OF OUR MEMBERS HERE IN JERSEY CITY THAT IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO LEAVE THEIR BUILDINGS TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHARING THEIR VIEWS. ALSO THERE IS A MAJOR CONCERN THAT THE LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION APPARENTLY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO ADVERTISE THIS MEETING SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE AWARE THAT YOUR COMMITTEE WAS PROVIDING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. MOST WERE TOTALLY UNAWARE OF THE MEETING UNTIL THEY READ IT IN YESTERDAY'S NEWSPAPER. WE HOPE THAT YOU ARE CONSIDERING ANOTHER DATE AND TIME, PREFERABLY AFTER SCHOOL HOURS, SO THAT THESE PEOPLE COULD COME AND SPEAK WITH YOU FIRST HAND.

PSA'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE TAKEOVER ARE FOUNDED UPON NUMEROUS MEETINGS WITH JERSEY CITY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS. TO DATE, SOME OF THE MAJOR

4X

CONCERNS THAT THEY HAVE EXPRESSED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. VERY LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN THE MANAGEMENT PATTERNS IN JERSEY CITY ONLY THE PLAYERS ARE DIFFERENT.
2. TOP-DOWN MANAGEMENT IS STILL THE BYWORD IN OUR DISTRICT.
3. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL SITE ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS REMAINS AT PRE-TAKEOVER LEVELS (ALMOST NONEXISTENT).
4. THE PROCESSES OF EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE OF PRINCIPALS LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED. OUR ASSOCIATION HAS ALREADY FILED A PETITION WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION ON BEHALF OF THE PRINCIPALS CHALLENGING THE EVALUATION PROCEDURES. THE EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPALS WAS DONE ONLY ON THE SIX CRITERIA ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WITHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFIC STANDARDS OR EXPECTATIONS OF PERFORMANCE. THE FILING OF CHARGES REPRESENTS THE ONLY ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE ANY SPECIFIC HELP OR DIRECTION TO PRINCIPALS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THEIR SCHOOLS. THE EVALUATION PROCEDURES WHICH ARE BEING USED AS A BASIS FOR CHALLENGING THE TENURE RIGHTS OF NINE PRINCIPALS ARE LACKING IN CONTINUITY AND SUBSTANCE. WE CAN'T BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST OF THE THREE EVALUATIONS WAS NOT EVEN BASED UPON ON-SITE VISITATIONS. IN MANY CASES, THE FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATORS SEEMED BASED ON HERESAY RATHER THAN OBSERVED PERFORMANCE. WE BELIEVE THE EVALUATIONS WERE PATENTLY UNFAIR, THUS WE ARE CHALLENGING THEM BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

THIS JUST HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE DEEP CONCERNS THAT PSA HAS ABOUT THE JERSEY CITY TAKEOVER. NOT ONLY ARE WE CONCERNED THAT MANY OF OUR MEMBERS IN JERSEY CITY ARE BEING AFFECTED BY THESE QUESTIONABLE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES, THE REPUTATION OF PSA IS ALSO AT STAKE IN THAT WE, ALONG WITH THE JERSEY CITY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS WERE THE ONES WHO SUPPORTED THE TAKEOVER LEGISLATION AND WERE THE ONES WHO CALLED FOR QUICK ACTION ON THE PART OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONSUMMATE THE TAKEOVER. IT IS ALSO A KNOWN FACT THAT THE NEW JERSEY TAKEOVER LEGISLATION IS BEING LOOKED UPON AS A MODEL FOR OTHER STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY FOR DEALING WITH EDUCATIONALLY BANKRUPT DISTRICTS. IT IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT THAT EVERY ACTION TAKEN BY THE DISTRICT BE WORTHY OF EMULATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY.. AT THIS TIME, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE JERSEY CITY TAKEOVER FALLS FAR SHORT OF THESE EXPECTATIONS.

TO REPEAT, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PANEL SCHEDULE THE HEARING SO THAT YOU COULD SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH THOSE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING THE TAKEOVER RATHER THAN ACCEPTING THE ASSESSMENT OF OUR ORGANIZATION OR THAT OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THESE VIEWS WITH YOU.

SUBMITTER BY: WILLIAM APPLGATE

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Presentation to the N.J. Legislative Sub-Committee

on School Intervention

November 11, 1990

Gerard J. Brancato

(This document was presented verbally with only minor modifications related to spontaneous ad-libbing. Subsequently, two questions were asked to the presenter with responses. An official transcript can be provided by the Sub-Committee).

Thank you for permitting an opportunity to speak before this Sub-Committee. My name is Gerard Brancato. I would like to present to you from 3 (three) perspectives:

1. As an educator and employee of the Jersey City School District.
2. As a community activist and leader.
3. As a resident and tax payer of Jersey City.

For more than 23 years, I have serviced the children of Jersey City as a teacher, administrator and learning disabilities consultant on a Child Study Team.

I contributed to pioneering the field of learning disabilities in New Jersey, authored a handbook for parents and teachers on learning disabilities, and co-authored the Special Education Rules and Regulations for the Jersey City District when N.J.A.C. Title 6, Chapter 28, was originally initiated.

Several years ago, I provided testimony to the state appointed investigators of Cresap, McCormack, Paget & others indicating that some of my colleagues and friends were performing inadequately.

I alienated my fellow workers because I knew some services were not being provided competently to our school children and that some administrators were misusing their power.

Shadows of the past are apparently recurring.

I'm concerned and intimidated by the unprecedented power that our Superintendent of Schools has had endowed by the "takeover" provisions. No where in the history of our country has a Superintendent of Schools been given unlimited decision making abilities to do as that office chooses and answer to no on-going monitoring body whatsoever. Theoretically, the Superintendent has the clout to spend tax money freely, hire and fire at will, decide educational policy and over all to do anything at all that office chooses, without any checks and balances from any source.

Superintendents should not be omnipotent. Only God is that powerful.

May I recommend an amendment to the takeover code. The Superintendent and administration should answer to a conventional Board of Education and to recognized neighborhood and community associations. That approval should be required since it is truly their school district, their tax dollars and their children.

I'm concerned with some top level administrators who were appointed by the Superintendent. They were not appointed from

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within. Thus many of us aren't familiar with who they are, what their accomplishments have been and whether or not they are truly knowledgeable about Jersey City's unique educational problems.

I've seen Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Directors and other influential district administrators come and go; with them they brought into the district their team, their loyalists, their cronies.

This current district administration has done the same thing. I'm skeptical about these high salaried appointments and the "perks" that go along with their position. Some decisions they have made appear questionable.

May I recommend that all top level administrators be re-considered and re-evaluated for hiring. Their credentials could be submitted into a pool of applicants who have been sought by a National Search Committee appointed by you, this legislative sub-committee on school intervention. Jersey City should solicit applicants throughout our country so that we get the best and become the model you wish us to be.

Senator Ewing, in his Star-Ledger editorial of November 18, 1990, spoke of the "vultures" who fed themselves on our school system, the "deplorable" shape of our buildings and classrooms, the "sweetheart deals" and "no-show jobs".

Rest assured, that it is obvious to "insiders" that these "unconscionable" behaviors have been ameliorated. Dr. Scambio apparently has taken this criminality out of our district. Indeed, she should be commended for this astute administration.

However, I feel a need to comment on another aspect of that editorial.

Senator, you mentioned that 117 positions were dissolved in central office and created were 38 vacancies. You intimate, if I assume correctly, that there are now fewer administrative and central office personnel. It is my observation that there are now more central office administrators and personnel than what previous administrations had and that the salaries of these personnel significantly exceed previous salaries. This change has resulted in a top-heavy administration and tax burden on residents.

May I suggest that this sub-committee be given a comparative analysis of positions and salaries at central office so that this observation could be confirmed or denied.

Permit me now to address the Bureau of Pupil Personnel or Special Needs Department, for whom I and all Child Study Teams render services. This division of central office is chaotic and in greater non-compliance with Title 6, Chapter 28, than any of this administration's predecessors. My observation and experience is that there is a diminution of services to our

children and to our specialists working with educationally handicapped pupils. May I give examples and recommendations.

Firstly, communication between the Bureau top administration and rank and file specialists is limited. Frankly, it borders on non-existent.

Last year an interim Director was appointed from within who was knowledgeable and competent. He resigned shortly thereafter and all of us wonder why. Thus, the Bureau had no leader for nearly all of the second half of the school year and for the summer. The summer is particularly hectic since Child Study Teams and other specialists catch-up on new referrals, triennial evaluations and reviews.

In September 1990, another Director took the helm. She recently was apparently in dispute with the hierarchy and considered resignation. Today, we still haven't been informed of her status. Until about two weeks ago most department personnel never met nor had a communique from this Department head.

Moreover, it took nearly two months for my Child Study Team to get a phone, bureaucratic red tape.

Also, it took nearly one and a half months for us to receive the ancillary services of a psychiatrist and neurologist, more bureaucratic red tape.

Child Study Team personnel still don't have the services of a typist, this gives us an unprofessional perception.

May I recommend written directives from our leaders and more frequent in-house seminars and workshops for Bureau Personnel. Ancillary services of physicians, psychiatrists, neurologists, etc., should be immediate as it was prior to state intervention.

Transportation of our special needs pupils is also in chaos. Some children exhibit difficult behaviorisms often associated with their learning disability. Thus, some children may be hard to control. Too many incidents of inappropriate behaviorisms occur on the bus, resulting in aggressive and disruptive situations, too many children are hurt.

Buses are far too frequently late with delivering and returning children to and from school. Poor service is common.

Furthermore, parents are at times unable to transport themselves to appointments with Child Study Teams, psychiatrists or whomever. The District should reconsider providing transportation to selected parents so that their input could be more readily obtained. Bus attendants and drivers need to be more extensively trained with regard to handling special needs pupils. The district should comply more closely with the code in placing classified children within closer proximity to their home school.

I would like to comment on cluster autonomy and power. Cluster chiefs should not involve themselves with power struggles. There is absolutely no reasonable explanation why children and even personnel should not cross cluster boundary lines. If a Child Study Team or other implementing body deems it appropriate to place a child in a specific situation in another cluster, they should be permitted to do so easily.

When there is a need, personnel should be permitted to cross boundaries. Also let me illustrate. Since September my Child Study Team has been without the services of a full-time school psychologist. This impedes our functioning resulting in non-compliance of time lines and diminution of services to children. Our previous psychologist was transferred in September to a situation which with she is unfamiliar (high school, as opposed to elementary school). She wishes to return but is not permitted to cross over.

My recommendation would be to eliminate these barriers, resolve power struggles and insist that cluster chiefs facilitate district needs and requests from appropriate personnel.

On numerous occasions, the Hilltop Neighborhood Association has met with the Superintendent, her designees, city officials, police and others regarding the problems associated with Dickinson High School. We have discussed these problems for more than 10 years with Dr. Scambio's predecessors. The Hilltop community believed Dr. Scambio would be different, that she would be more responsive to our neighborhood complaints of drug dealing, loitering, harassment, violence, intimidations and so forth. The Hilltop Neighborhood Association identified the problems and suggested corrective measures in conjunction with Police and other community agencies.

The District did indeed renovate the cafeteria. However, the district appears to be hesitant to implement other suggestions such as: training of school guards by community police for the improved building and community security; modification of lunch time schedule; consideration of keeping kids on campus; beautification of campus; building of picnic tables; planting of trees and so on.

I would like to suggest that this Sub-Committee seek input from the Hilltop Neighborhood Association and other area leaders to determine the feasibility of implementing recommendations from the community. Some names of the leaders are the Rev. James Pagnotta, Pastor St. Joseph church and Rich Boggiano, President of the Hilltop Neighborhood Association. I would be happy to provide additional names.

Finally, apparently some district personnel seem fearful to discuss significant issues with the community and local press. It was intimated that some top level personnel are requested not to speak with the public or press. If a gag order exists, it

should be eliminated. Any district personnel should be permitted to talk with anyone they desire including the press.

Thank you for this opportunity to address some of my concerns. I would like to encourage this Sub-Committee to hold quarterly hearings so the public and district personnel can continue to give input to better provide improved services for our children and staff.

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