
Committee Meeting

of

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

“Testimony from the education field on the achievement gap”

LOCATION: School Number 28
Temple Street and Presidential Boulevard
Paterson, New Jersey

DATE: October 11, 2001
10:30 a.m.

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Norman M. Robertson, Co-Chair
Senator Ronald L. Rice, Co-Chair
Assemblyman Craig A. Stanley



ALSO PRESENT:

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

Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Edwin Duroy, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools City of Paterson	7
Michelle James Vice Principal Public School Number 28 City of Paterson	7
David G. Sciarra, Esq. Executive Director Education Law Center	28
Manny Axelrod Consultant Arthur Andersen Company	64
Jacqueline Jones, Ph.D. Senior Research Scientist Educational Testing Service	84
APPENDIX:	
Charts submitted by David G. Sciarra, Esq.	1x
Testimony plus attachments submitted by Manny Axelrod	5x
Testimony and résumé submitted by Jacqueline Jones, Ph.D.	25x

SENATOR NORMAN M. ROBERTSON (Co-Chair): Good morning, everybody. Thank you for coming. We'll be in order.

Let me just say, by way of introduction, the group that is meeting here is the *Abbott v. Burke* Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. The Joint Committee, as its name suggests, is a committee made up of Assembly members and Senators to oversee -- has certain statutory responsibilities, but part of it is to oversee school takeover districts -- State takeover districts -- to oversee certain other things that the statute requires, but also to get involved, in a larger sense, as a joint effort between the two houses in education policy.

One of the subcommittees that is there is *Abbott v. Burke*, and it has to do with compliance in the light of *Abbott v. Burke*. And everybody here, I'm sure, understands and knows that -- or at least knows of that case.

The purpose of this hearing, really, is something that came out of discussions between myself and Senator Rice, over a long period of time that we worked together in the Senate. And it has to do with the achievement gap.

While we note in the papers every year when there is a school report card with the various test scores -- the fourth grade test and the eighth grade test and the high school proficiency test and so forth-- While we take note of, frequently, how each school district does, whether it's Paterson or Ridgewood or Camden or Newark or any other district, we also know that there are schools within these districts where it's a lot tougher. And sometimes I'm not really sure that we understand how serious the problem is.

So one of the things that we wanted to do was to take a look at things in sort of a macro sense. And while we will be talking about compliance

with *Abbott v. Burke* as part of that discussion, especially from the Education Law Center's point of view, which has been a leader in this field, one of the things that I wanted to do personally is to bring sort of a macro view of this and discuss it, in some respects, in the way that people discuss it with us when they see us on the street, because in the final analysis, we're the people's representatives. And so when people come up to me and say, "Well, gee, how come," and then "dot, dot, dot," whatever the how come is--

And that's one of the approaches that I wish to take to these hearings. So even as we have a number of experts who have been completely immersed in a lot of the detail of not only *Abbott v. Burke* compliance, but things like testing and trying to gather as much information as possible about educational systems throughout the state, we also want to bring a larger question to the fore. I mean, the primary question, obviously, is, yes, let's discuss the resources, but also in the final analysis, even with the resources we have, why is it that so few children achieve a proficient score?

Now, one of the other things I might note, and this may sound heretical to those in the education community, there will be times, at least personally, when I will talk about proficiency. There will be times when I'll talk about how many children have passed the test, because I don't think, as I take a look at the difficult scores in some of our most difficult neighborhoods throughout the state, that it is a failure on the part of students. I think that all of us have a responsibility, the Legislature included, the Governor included, the Department of Education, the entire system. We all have a responsibility to educate all of our children, not just the children in the suburbs, but the children in the most difficult neighborhoods in our urban areas, as well. So we all have

a responsibility to take-- And while I know the terms are thrown about as proficient or partially proficient, frankly, proficient, to me, indicates that a student has passed the test in terms of being at grade level where they should be.

So if I lapse into that, don't bother correcting me too much, because I'm not going to worry about the niceties of whether or not partially proficient-- That seems to connote that there's something that we should feel good about when, in fact, we shouldn't.

So, in any event, I'll ask each of our members-- And I'm joined by Senator Rice and Assemblyman Stanley, and I thank both of them for coming out today. And I know that they've also been very active in their own districts in a very vital way in these educational issues.

And I'll ask Senator Rice, as Co-Chair of the Committee, if he has anything he'd like to say at the outset.

SENATOR RONALD L. RICE (Co-Chair): Thank you, Senator.

I just want to concur with the remarks made by Senator Robertson. It's most unfortunate that we're spending a lot of money in education, and then we debate whether we're spending enough. I think in urban districts we, in some cases, are spending enough. We're just not managing it properly or directing it properly or setting up the right priorities. In other urban districts, it's clear that we need additional help, but everything isn't money.

But even at what we're doing today, from a legislative point of view and administrative at the State level, there are great concerns, because it's easy for the Education Law Center and others to go into court to argue the need. But while we're arguing the need, someone needs to be paying attention to what is actually occurring presently, because much of what needs to be done may take

years to get done. In the meanwhile, our students are still passing through these systems or dropping out of them.

So this whole assessment, if you will, or analysis or scrutiny or scrutinizing of the gap, becomes very important, because even from a legal perspective, I don't know how one can properly argue his case in court without having all the facts relating to student performance, student proficiency, and recognizing if, in fact, there is a problem in today's society. New Jersey -- there is one, as it relates to the gap, looking at causation. I think the argument's become somewhat frivolous, although they sound and appear to be reasonable. But the end result of the decision is going to be detrimental to the students that we are responsible for and mandated to assist in getting a quality education.

So I want to commend Senator Robertson for asking us to not deal with the politics of the next three weeks, but to do what we get elected for, to deal with the issues, in this case, of education.

It's easy to stop paying attention to people's needs. But I can say this to you. After November 6, those problems are still going to be there, and the sooner we can stay focused on them and be consistent about meeting and doing our jobs as legislators, the better off we're going to be.

So I want to commend you for just setting aside campaigning to stay on top of student issues and education.

Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And I'll also point out that it actually winds up being a little more convenient, even though it's somewhat inconvenient for those of us who are running. It's also more convenient before we get back

into the regular committee schedule, because these committees are always difficult to convene during those periods of time. It's good to use the hiatus.

Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator.

I also want to commend the Senators for convening this Subcommittee meeting. We wouldn't have -- probably wouldn't have the legal issues that we have today within the educational arena if we were, in fact, implementing and practicing education on an equitable basis, as well as an efficient basis, as well as an effective basis. And I'm glad to see us reaching out to people who, I believe, have the information and getting a chance to really hear, firsthand, from people like Dave Sciarra from the Education Law Center; and, of course, Ms. Carter, the Principal of School 28; and others, who have taken a lot of time and effort in analyzing what it is that we need to do.

Of course, everything boils down to politics. And I guess it's-- And we have to be better at developing the political will to get some of these things done. But I think, of course, the first step is getting the information.

So I'm going to conclude my remarks for now.

Let's go ahead and move forward with testimony, Senator.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Great. Thank you, Assemblyman.

One thing I meant to mention before to my colleagues is, welcome to the City of Paterson. This is the city I grew up in. I went to School Number 9 on the south end of town and John F. Kennedy High School, which is a-- I guess this school feeds into Kennedy, I suppose, even though we have all the east side contingent here.

The Vice Principal here, Ms. James, is an alumna of Eastside High School under the Joe Clark era.

So I guess you've seen it all, educationally.

But I can remember, just before this building was built, working recreation right up the street next to School 4. So when I discussed how to structure these hearings with Senator Rice, I said, "Well, I'd like to-- Perhaps we should do three, and we'll start up in the City of Paterson, and then down to the City of Newark, and then on to the City of Camden." And one of the things we're going to try to do for the City of Newark hearing is invite both of the candidates for Governor in so that they can sit here on a public platform, just aimed at education -- not have a debate, particularly, but come up forward and present their own ideas. So we each are going to call our respective candidates.

I note the Passaic County Superintendent of Schools, Maria Nuccetelli, is here today.

Thank you for coming.

She's somebody I've worked with for a number of years in a lot of educational fields.

The first person I'd like to call up -- or two people -- to give us greetings and just to set the stage about where we are, and whatnot, geographically and otherwise, is Dr. Edwin Duroy, who is the Superintendent of Schools for the City of Paterson. Again, Paterson is a State-run district. And Dr. Duroy is the Superintendent. And Ms. James is the Vice Principal.

So why don't you come on up first? I'd appreciate it. Enlighten us.

EDWIN DUROY, Ed.D.: Good morning.

MICHELLE JAMES: Good morning.

DR. DUROY: I'm going to ask Ms. James to extend a welcome on behalf of the family of School 28.

MS. JAMES: On behalf of Paterson School Number 28--

Can you hear me? I don't know if this is on. (referring to PA microphone)

SENATOR ROBERTSON: You know what would be good -- if I could suggest taking one of these mike stands and then do this (indicating) with it.

Those are recording mikes. The silver ones are actually the amplification mikes. So just take one of these stands.

MS. JAMES: Good morning, once again. We'd like to welcome you to Paterson Public School Number 28. We're a primary school. We service grades pre-K to grade four. We have three pre-K handicapped classes, and then we have Kindergarten through four. We service approximately 530 students here at School Number 28. We're located on Presidential Boulevard, in Paterson, New Jersey.

I don't know if you've noticed or you've known, but we were interviewed by Paterson newspapers and also Channel 7, Eyewitness News, in reference to our low test scores, but we have increased our test scores this year, and we've increased in all subject areas. So we're steadily improving.

My principal, Ms. Carter, isn't here today. She's at another meeting, but she also welcomes you to our school. We hope you enjoy your stay. And if you need anything, you can always let me know, and I will provide it for you to the best of my ability.

And again, welcome.

DR. DUROY: Thank you.

As Senator Robertson indicated, the district of Paterson continues to be under State operation. Presently, we have approximately 26,000 students, operating out of 40 sites, here in Paterson.

Ms. James alluded to and commented about some of the test scores, in particular, here at School 28. And I just wanted to share some of the statistics themselves. It's true that two years ago, here at School 28, which has the fourth grade test, the ESPA -- was one of the lowest -- certainly the lowest in Paterson and in Passaic County. But as a result of some of the effort that the district has undertaken, we're very pleased to share with you some of the significant improvements that have occurred here at School 28.

When it comes to the area of language arts-- Actually, two years ago, students in the fourth grade -- only approximately 5 percent of the students actually passed the language arts test, which was abominable.

This past year, through efforts of staff development, aligning curriculum, instruction, tutoring, both professional -- that is to say certified staff members and students from throughout Paterson participating in an after-school program -- and, obviously, the analysis of data that we received two years ago, the students improved from 5 percent of the students passing the ESPA to 41 percent of the students passing ESPA.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And that's as of what? And those were tests that were given when? In May of 2001?

DR. DUROY: That's correct. So, we're comparing May, 2000 to May, 2001.

In the area of math: In 2000 there was 10 percent of the students passing; 2001, 37 percent of the students passing. In the area of science, which is an interesting and highest gain, I believe, in the State of New Jersey, 21 percent of the students passed the test in the year 2000. In the year 2001, 75 percent of the students passed the science test.

A lot of this was as a result of the effort, as I outlined. When people ask me what is one of the most important elements, among them has been staff development. The training and retraining of staff, making sure they have a clear understanding of their requirements of the curriculum -- New Jersey core curriculum standards and raising the bar, insisting that, in fact, students can do better, that we have to push the students, and the results will be there.

But in being able to demonstrate improvement, we had to analyze and get an understanding why that first year we were as low as we were. This particular neighborhood -- and perhaps Senator Robertson can attest better than I -- quite frankly, has been going through a tremendous transition, including the elimination, the knocking down of a -- how many story building was that, 25-story -- several 25-story buildings, which were right across the street from School 28. It resulted in a 57 percent transient rate the year that the scores were that low -- 57 percent, which is a very significant number, more than one in every two children had moved in and moved out within the same school year.

We have the largest single-family household percentage in this particular neighborhood -- a very poor housing stock -- besides the housing authority, the other neighborhood housing. And 95 percent of the students -- between 95 and 98 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch -- and also, one of the largest concentration of drug presence and crime.

But despite that-- And let me say that that has not been an excuse for us. To be able to come back within the year and to demonstrate that students in this neighborhood can achieve has been our goal. And I believe that we have achieved that to a certain extent, as demonstrated in our improvements. There is more to happen with our students here. But I think that we have now set the tone for this particular neighborhood and also have set an example throughout Paterson and other urban centers to raise the bar for their students, as well.

Just to put in perspective some of the other data relative to State testing in the eighth grade -- and this is-- I don't have the comparison for 2001, but in comparing 2000 -- and that's supposed to come out, I think, in December -- but comparing what we call the District Factor Group, DFG-A, which is basically 31 urban centers throughout New Jersey, in the area of language arts, Paterson has now ranked number 14 out of 31. In the area of math, we ranked number 11 out of 31, and science, we're ranked 21. Both language arts and math were above the 50 percent mark. When you look at, again, the District Factor Group, we're in the top half of the urban. That was not the case four years ago, where Paterson was truly in the bottom quartile of all urban and of all district factor groups.

At the high school level, we're very pleased that this past year was the first time we've hit 80 percent of our students achieving math HSPT, as well as 79.7 achieving writing -- passing the HSPT -- and I believe 62 percent in reading. Reading continues to be our greatest challenge, as a district. But to be able to achieve in those two areas, in essence, 80 percent of our students being

successful, is our high mark for the last, certainly 10 years, and since HSPT has been introduced in the State of New Jersey.

This assessment data has prompted the Commissioner of Education to examine the district a little closer and begin the process of examining whether or not Paterson is ready to be considered for local control. And there's multiple areas that need to be reviewed on the part of the Department. And I'm sure they'll be able to testify now or in the future. But we're pleased that key to getting to that level has been the district's effort to succeed in moving test scores.

And I just want to share, as my closing comments, some of the areas and/or attributes as to why we have set higher goals and expectations for our students than there has been in the past. We do an effective analysis of test data. In other words, where we saw in School 28 the problems that existed, that did not preclude us from determining and identifying strategies that can be implemented to improve the opportunities for our students. Staff development continues to be the number one area of improvement effort that has resulted in improved test scores.

Parent involvement, reaching out to parents and including them in the process, in the decision making, is key to the success of a student. And let me just say that that's probably all of us that can say we've achieved a certain level in life can look back and say it has been our parents. So why should it be different for those children today. And so parent involvement is important to this success.

After-school programs, which include tutoring, as well as enrichment programs: We can't just live by basic skills. So, therefore, I

certainly urge the fact that we always include enrichment and the arts as part of our overall education of our students.

In this particular school, we certainly have summer school for primary grades. We offer what we call a 195-day school year. That was introduced two and a half years ago to our students, and that has resulted in improved test scores. So, in essence, we do believe in the extended school day, as well as the extended school year.

I would be remiss if I didn't, at least, mention and certainly attribute a lot of this -- our ability to put in place programs, if it were not for the additional funds that we had received as a result of the *Abbott v. Burke* case. And I think that Paterson is a good example of how we've been able to utilize the funds effectively and have made a difference in the lives of the children of our community. We certainly believe that all children can learn, and I believe that we're making it happen.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Let me just ask a couple of questions. I don't want this to sound unfair.

This has been a 10-year takeover district. Has it been the lack of resources prior to the last couple of years that have hampered the school district from implementing some of these approaches?

DR. DUROY: There's been a combination.

But let me say, I got here four years ago, and I got here the same time the check was getting here for the *Abbott*. And I think that a lot of the decision making and leadership makes a difference in regular school districts, as well as State operation. So it is the dollars that give us the ability to make

decisions, but ultimately, it's how we utilize those dollars. Reducing class sizes-- For example, research demonstrates that reducing class sizes has a positive impact. We were able to do that as a result of additional *Abbott* dollars.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And what is the average class size here in School 28? What is the official average class size?

MS. JAMES: The average class size here is approximately 20 students.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, okay. Because on your printout, which may be a little time lagged, it indicated that it was 16.

MS. JAMES: It was 16 last year. This year it's 20.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, okay. And why did that go up?

MS. JAMES: We have new housing that's been built in place of the Christopher Columbus Projects.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: So you just physically have more students.

MS. JAMES: Right. We have physically more students.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, and this is one question I always wanted to ask, that figure of 20, if I were to go into an average general education classroom, is that what I would find, about 20?

MS. JAMES: No, we're the minority in the district.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Pardon?

MS. JAMES: We are the minority in the district, as far as class size is concerned.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: No, I'm talking about even here.

MS. JAMES: In here?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yeah. The reason I ask that is because you also have some special ed students with very small class sizes.

MS. JAMES: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, does that impact on the average of the class size?

MS. JAMES: No.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. So, if I went in--

MS. JAMES: The average class size for the special ed is 16 students. So it's not--

DR. DUROY: That's rather high for special ed.

MS. JAMES: Yeah, it's not small.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yeah, that's what I assumed.

MS. JAMES: And we have three special ed class rooms, but then we also -- we're building -- we have an additional special ed classroom. I believe it's coming in a month. So that will be four special ed classrooms.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: All right. Any other questions?

SENATOR RICE: I have a couple of questions.

There are always some variables that bother me with the education system. And I look at these statistics-- You indicated that your high school students, 80 percent passed the math portion of the test. Only 49 percent or so passed the reading.

DR. DUROY: Sixty percent.

SENATOR RICE: Sixty percent. The problem I have with that is probably from my experience. It appears to me that when I was doing math in high school, there was some written language to address problem solving. But

also, even for the multiple choice, there was some written language that kind of gives some instructions. And every time I see a student doing well in math and bad in reading, I say something's wrong with that picture. You have to be able to read reasonably well in order to do that math.

And that always bothered me. And my daughter went through that. She was a good student. But as soon as I saw the report card, I said, "You can't-- How do you get a B+ or an A," or whatever it was, "in math, and you're almost failing reading?" And it became clear to me, without her even responding, that she was messing around in class, or somebody was using a bunch of calculators to teach math.

What is it here? Are we using calculators in the math component, or is anyone monitoring the students in the reading? I mean, something's got-- It just doesn't fit.

DR. DUROY: The math strategies that we've put in place, I think, are a little more easier to mentor the students to get them to understand the concepts and the strategies that they can use to be successful.

In the reading, it's really a matter of kids having to read more on their own and not just what we instruct them to read. That has made-- That makes a difference.

And so, as a society, or certainly in our schools, we need to get the students to do more reading. And so we have to set different strategies. We did an analysis relative to that, as we're looking to put in place. And we have identified the fact that some of the content areas -- that is to say science and social studies teachers need to be versed a little more on reading strategies, as well, because if you're doing social studies, you are reading. If you're doing

science, you're doing reading. If you're doing math, as you indicated, you're doing reading.

But we're going to be retraining, again, our staff members in those various content areas, specifically on reading strategies. And we think that will make a difference down the line with our reading scores, as well.

But math-- We've had very pointed staff development. The teachers -- the math teachers have gotten a better understanding as to how they can pass students to meet the challenging math requirements.

SENATOR RICE: Well, I guess a follow-up question would be on the reading portion. You indicated that you've done more staff development and raised the bar and get a little bit more accountability understanding from those who have to instruct. Are we instructing these teachers to make it clear and understand that when you teach reading, you have to understand how to teach reading comprehension, because there's reading and there's comprehension. A lot of people can read and go through a book, but do you really understand it? And can they make it fun, because it's not the most jovial thing to do when you're reading a bunch of boring books, but you can make it fun for comprehension? I mean, have we looked at that for your analysis?

DR. DUROY: Yes, that's precisely what I had indicated -- that we need to retrain our teachers in the content areas. The science teacher and the other social studies teachers have to have an understanding of how they can improve and work with that student's comprehension in reading. And that will carry over to all the subjects. It can't be just the language arts department -- "Okay, you're responsible." So a social studies teacher, which may get a student that's not reading correctly, and say, "Don't worry about it. This is social

studies. This is not reading.” That can’t take place. Everybody has a responsibility to read -- relative to reading. And that’s the procedure that we’re using right now.

SENATOR RICE: Well, you’re going to have to get those English teachers, too. When you start reading Macbeth and all that crazy stuff that we never use, it could be very confusing. It wasn’t interesting to me, so I know it’s not interesting to them.

Just so we can move on, Senator, can I ask staff to do -- look at -- have some research done?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Sure.

SENATOR RICE: I recognize that there’s been an implosion or a removal of several housing units -- public housing units of high-rise buildings. And if you go down past the school, you’ll see the new construction of the townhouses.

And during that period of time when you were being questioned by the media, if you will, in terms of your low test scores -- the 57 percent -- and some of the transition that’s taken place, there’s been some differences. But you alluded to the fact that these buildings were here. The quality of life issues and the problems, in terms of the residency, economics, etc.--

I’d like to do a comparison analysis. I’d like, if you can, make a note, staff, and find out from this particular school district, the number of students that were actually attending from the public housing prior to this -- during this period of time of 57 percent and the rate of crime, the level of crime at that particular time, types of crime at that particular time.

And then have them look at, also, the City of Newark -- Dayton Street School, which is also down the street from public housing where we've imploded. We're building 143 units of townhouses presently. And yet, when I look at where we're going to hold the hearings dealing with the gap, the gap was on Avon Avenue, Assemblyman, where we don't have any public housing, not Dayton Street.

See, I need to look at that analysis to see what are the differences, once I look at the variables, to make sure we're looking at things that are pretty reasonable in terms of comparison. And I believe, knowing Paterson and knowing Dayton Street, we're looking at some of the same basic elements and variables.

So I need to figure out what we are talking about in terms of the socioeconomic area in which students are residing. Does that make a significant difference, even with the transition? Or is there something else. Certainly, it's a variable -- an element that makes a difference, because it's not just one. But the question is, how significant is that, given all other things, if you will?

DR. DUROY: Just a comment.

I think you may have included the transient rate, itself. Certainly, this school, with a 57 percent transient rate, has--

SENATOR RICE: Well, that's-- Yeah, I'm sorry.

DR. DUROY: --has significant--

SENATOR RICE: That's the term I'm-- I want to know the transient rate, too, of both districts, because I know in Dayton Street, what's left--

DR. DUROY: That, today, is no longer the case. I mean, I think we're down to maybe an average -- 25.

SENATOR RICE: No, but it may no longer be a case here because as of that fact, you did ABC. It may still be a case that we didn't look at in Camden. And we need to look at it in other cities.

MS. JAMES: It's true. It does.

SENATOR RICE: I don't look at the Paterson and Newark education system. I look at the education system statewide, but particularly urban. There's not much difference in Passaic's problems and Paterson's and Newark and East Orange and Camden, etc.

DR. DUROY: Sure. Absolutely.

SENATOR RICE: Folks like to think it is.

MS. JAMES: That's right.

SENATOR RICE: But it's not much different in terms of the commonalities.

DR. DUROY: But bringing down the transient rate, I think, makes a difference. Having a more stable population, stable neighborhood--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What would be a more typical transient rate? I mean, you have an unusual one because of--

DR. DUROY: Well, we're still rather high -- inner city. But we can be as high as 30 percent.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Are you done, Senator?

SENATOR RICE: Yes. Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Assemblyman, do you have anything?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Sure.

Can you give me the figures for the fourth grade test again? It seemed like there was just tremendous increase in the proficiency rates.

DR. DUROY: Language arts for 2000 was 5 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Was what?

DR. DUROY: Five percent of the students passing.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Five percent.

DR. DUROY: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Okay. I just want to make sure I heard that right. That was 2000?

MS. JAMES: That was the year that the projects were torn down.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Okay. Okay. And then that went to what?

DR. DUROY: Forty-one percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Forty-one percent. Yeah, that's--

DR. DUROY: A 37 (*sic*) percent -- percentage points increase.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: I mean, forty-one percent is nothing to jump up and down about.

DR. DUROY: But coming from five, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: But coming from 5 percent--

MS. JAMES: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: And you say that the primary reason -- the primary factor you probably said is transient rate in that instance.

MS. JAMES: It was the interruption of their lives during the time of the construction, or I should say the tearing down of the projects. These children lived in these homes their whole lives, and then they were being taken

away from them. They were going to live with other family members but still coming to school here -- maybe across town, not getting a proper amount of rest, and just being displaced from their homes. It was an interruption during their lives at that time.

DR. DUROY: I think, stated as well, is that we believe there was a need for staff development aligning the curriculum and instruction for the students, as well. So it wasn't just that factor.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: And this is a one-year period?

DR. DUROY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: How many hours would you say you spend in terms of staff development per teacher?

DR. DUROY: We did an analysis on the average, not specifically here, but on the average, it was, like, 35 hours.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thirty-five hours per teacher.

DR. DUROY: Yes. That was the eighth grade, and then we introduced that in the fourth grade. We introduced that in the eleventh grade.

Interestingly enough, the first year -- four years ago, when I got here, we focused on the eighth grade. And we did, again, around 30 hours when we-- After a year, we analyzed the data and said, "what's the story at the high school?" We were only doing eight hours of staff development at the high school versus 30. And the following year is when we introduced this 30. And the scores reciprocated by going up.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Let me ask you-- This is a very important area, staff development. What happens when the teacher -- or during what period do we do staff development, because I know one of the reasons

staff development is so limited is because of filling in for the teacher while she's in staff development, or he's in staff development, and, also, I guess, providing compensation for teachers when they're-- These are dollar issues.

DR. DUROY: We introduced-- A couple of years ago, we identified a cadre of substitutes, and we put them through a series of training, and offered them an extra \$10 a day. It's a per diem rate. But they participated in training. And it was that cadre that we would send into a school or grade. If we said we wanted to meet with all fourth grade teachers or all eighth grade teachers, that cadre of substitutes would go into those eighth grades -- and for a full day, off campus, staff development. We took them locally to a site where we provided training all day for the teachers, and in some cases, two and three days during that period of time. But the substitutes went into classrooms a little better prepared than, perhaps, the average substitute would be prepared.

So that, combined with certain days-- I believe there were two days during the year that are identified specifically for staff development. We, again, went beyond those two days and a couple of afternoons to add those full days, as well. There was consistency with the subs. I think that's also a factor when they went into the classrooms.

MS. JAMES: It was the same sub all the time. So if the one particular teacher had to go to a workshop-- Anytime that teacher was out, the same sub came in. So it wasn't different subs coming in, which made a difference. Consistency.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Yeah, consistency, continuity.

MS. JAMES: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Do you have a masters teachers program here or a mentorship program for teachers, as well, or anything like that?

DR. DUROY: Well, it's a requirement that we have a mentoring program for all new teachers. We don't have-- I don't know if you're describing a partnership. We do have common planning periods, which were introduced so, all, say, third grade teachers -- it would be once a week--

MS. JAMES: Have common preps.

DR. DUROY: --have common preps. And during that period of time, the leadership of the building will meet with the teachers or will send in a supervisor or resource teacher to meet during that period of time. And that collaborative effort has had an impact, as well.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Okay. Do you think you're doing-- And this is my last question.

Do you think you're having a -- or you're doing enough, in terms of training of teachers at this point, or would you like to do more, or is there anything specifically that you would like to do?

DR. DUROY: What we're doing-- Initially, we did focus on the testing grades, as far as staff development. The last two years, we've been working at what we call the off grades. And so every grade from first grade up to the eighth grade have gone through that process of the off-campus training and utilization of substitutes through the whole year. So our staff development begins the first couple of days in September and goes on through June.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: So you're pretty much set, you think? You don't need any additional staff development?

DR. DUROY: We're not going to stop. (laughter) You just keep going. I don't know if there's any more days that we'll add to the-- We do approximately 150 days of training out of the 180.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I realize that the test scores have been depressed for a variety of reasons, but I take it that some of the reforms you're describing you've done throughout the various schools in Paterson, correct?

DR. DUROY: I'm sorry. I didn't hear that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I said that--

You'll have to excuse me. I have a sore throat today. That's why I'm as quiet as I am. I'm usually not this quiet.

I realize that while the test scores here at School 28 were somewhat depressed because of a variety of factors, there were forms that you're talking about -- or the initiatives that you've started -- you started throughout the system -- throughout the Paterson school system.

DR. DUROY: That's correct. For example, all first grades -- every school in the district -- rather all fourth grades, all third grade teachers, all second grade teachers-- They all-- Again, it's consistent across the district. They all participate in a common staff development. Now, some schools, say 28, may receive additional services.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And how do these numbers--

DR. DUROY: We may target schools based on our analysis where we say, "Okay. We're going to do the 30 hours." But we may add five hours to School 28, or we may add five hours to School 6. We may have specific tutoring programs. So we will target schools that are in need of additional

assistance. But there is a common, common base that all teachers in specific grades have to participate in.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And how do the numbers that you talked about before from School 28 compare with the numbers from other grammar schools within Paterson?

DR. DUROY: Well, 28-- I think they were the last. They moved up eight ranking points out of the 20-something.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. So they moved up toward the middle, which is good.

DR. DUROY: So they've moved up significantly. Now we're after the others.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And this one last question. I mean, a lot has been written over the last year -- and certainly the State, in trying to comply with the *Abbott v. Burke*, has initiated things like Whole School Reform and those sorts of things.

The initiatives that you described, can they be ascribed to edicts or initiatives that have been taken out of the Department of Education through Whole School Reform, or are these a bit more homegrown and tailored to the needs of your particular school district or a particular school?

DR. DUROY: We do have Whole School Reform. Every school in the district has adopted Whole School Reform. But a lot of what I described has been homegrown initiatives.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. I don't have any other questions.

SENATOR RICE: Can I ask a final question?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Sure.

SENATOR RICE: If I wanted to be a sub, what do I have to do?

DR. DUROY: First of all, you need at least 60 college credits.

SENATOR RICE: I have a lot of degrees.

DR. DUROY: You have that, sir? Okay.

I don't know what the new address of the county office is, but they moved to Paterson.

Welcome to Paterson.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: 501 River Street.

DR. DUROY: But as far as substitutes-- Again, we're always looking for substitutes, as most urban districts are. They would report to the personnel department, and we would counsel them as to what they would have to do to proceed -- filing an application. We refer them to the county office, which is located now here in Paterson. And as soon as they take care of the paperwork, we would bring them on board.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: How much do they pay them?

DR. DUROY: Those particular substitutes that may have the special interest or have strengths in reading or whatever, we may offer them the opportunity to go through additional training and be a part of that special cadre.

SENATOR RICE: That's what I was getting at.

Maybe we need to take a look at this. I'm speaking to my colleagues now.

I'm listening to you, and it dawned on me that I could probably go into any school system tomorrow and apply and become a sub, because they're necessary and they're needed. But I'm concerned about-- It seems to me-- You

identified the special cadre. It kind of made me realize that maybe we should have some requirements that are not going to hamper the ability to get subs, but to give them some preliminary “orientation” or some classroom-- It’s the kind of things you are trying to do with the special cadre within reason -- but not something to say, “The heck with that. We don’t want to do that.”

Could you make available to the Committee whatever you have in writing about what you offer someone in the special cadre in terms of staff development so we can take a look at that?

DR. DUROY: Certainly.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What’s the per diem rate now for the substitute teachers?

DR. DUROY: One hundred dollars a day, \$110 if you’re part of the cadre.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: When I did it, it was about \$20 a day. All right. Thank you very much, Doctor. I appreciate it.

DR. DUROY: Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you.

I’m going to move to-- Since we are the *Abbott v. Burke* Subcommittee, I’m going to move to David Sciarra, from the Education Law Center, who can update-- There has been a lot of litigation that has been going on recently, but I know he has some larger issues that he’s concerned about and should be bringing it to our attention as part of this discussion.

DAVID G. SCIARRA, ESQ.: I’m going to use the overhead.

MS. SCHULZ (Executive Director): Do we need to move?

MR. SCIARRA: No. I mean, you can stay there.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: If you wind up using it, you can just detach this microphone so that we'll be able to hear you.

MS. SCHULZ: And he needs the little one for recording.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, and then the little one-- Yeah, the little one needs to be there, also.

MR. SCIARRA: Thank you, Senator, Senator Rice, Assemblyman Stanley, Melanie.

I appreciate her assistance in getting me here.

I do want to very much congratulate this Committee for what I hope will be the start of a long conversation that is long overdue in our state about the larger question of improving student achievement, improving curriculum and instruction in our low-wealth, high-poverty schools in our state, not just in the *Abbott* districts, but beyond -- and then related to that, a conversation about how do we assure full, effective, and timely implementation of the Supreme Court's decisions in *Abbott*.

We have to create what I would call space in our civic dialogue in the Legislature, with the Department, with the executive branch, with districts, with community agencies that are now providing preschools, so forth and so on, where we can discuss, without blame, without pointing fingers, the real problems on the ground, as best as we can assess them, that we can continue to assess those problems and deepen our understanding of them and, more importantly, begin to have a conversation about what I call -- like to refer to as an ongoing, sustained effort over time to improve curriculum instruction and, ultimately, student achievement in our -- in schools that serve our most disadvantaged children in the state.

Let me make a couple of preliminary points. And I want to emphasize that the *Abbott* case is not a school funding case. It was never brought as a school funding case. It's not a school finance case. It was brought by Ms. Morheuser and her colleagues back in 1980 as a claim for educational adequacy. It is about education, not about funding at its core.

One of the remedies involved -- it increases resources, as Dr. Duroy -- did he leave -- he's in the back -- talked about. It also involves another -- a whole other series of remedies.

But at its core, it's about closing these gaps. When you read the Court's decisions, at the end of the day, that's what the Court wanted. And much through our work the Court has, in recent years, in its most recent decisions, issued a number of directives based on recommendations from the Department and the Commissioner about how to close these gaps.

Another way to say that is how to take the resources and translate that into improved curriculum instruction in every classroom and all 450 schools in these 30 districts and throughout all 30 districts. So that is a background.

Let me present a little data, statewide. Dr. Duroy talked about the data here and in this school and in Paterson to some extent. I want to kind of orient this Committee, at the outset of your hearings, since you'll be heading to Newark and on down to Camden -- a little bit of statewide information that, I hope, will serve your Committee as you go forward about the *Abbott* districts as a whole.

The first overhead is our current enrollment information on the *Abbott* districts. (transparencies displayed) And I think it's very important for us to start out with this because if you look at-- We have to--

Well, let me back up. We have to recognize in New Jersey that we have some of the best public schools -- many, many public schools -- best public schools in the nation. You have to be very careful about people who talk about failing public schools. And we have to begin to challenge people, who say that, to be much more specific about what they mean. And when you do that, what you come to is the fact that we have an enormous number of schools and districts around the state that are some of the best in the country. We have some of the best public education in the country.

We also have schools, not just these, but others -- rural and other school districts -- that, through decades of disinvestment, both fiscal and human decades, need a lot of improvement. And one of the factors of those districts, and it's true of the *Abbott* districts, is that they have high concentrations of poor students and that they are, in many cases, very segregated in terms of race. So I think it's important for us to see, for example, as this chart points out, what the overall enrollments are of the districts and then to get a sense of the racial composition of the district. And the point, I think, has to be made. Many of the districts-- These districts are extremely isolated in terms of race. We have to just recognize that and be cognizant of that.

The other point I do want to make is you can see the statewide totals in terms of the *Abbott* and non-*Abbott*. The point of this is, *Abbott* districts educate about 20 to 25 percent of the total public school population in our

state. This is where most minority kids -- many, many of our minority students go to school.

The other point I want to make here is that the three State-operated districts account largely for about 40 percent of the *Abbott* district enrollment. We have many smaller *Abbott* districts, but the three largest, Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark, which are under State control, account for about 40 percent of the *Abbott* district enrollment total.

The next gets at poverty. And this is really the most important thing, because I firmly believe, based on the research, that the issue, in terms of student achievement, is not race but, rather, poverty. And you were alluding to some of those, Senator Rice and Senator Robertson, in your discussion with Dr. Duroy.

This gives you the free and reduced lunch percentages of total enrollment in the *Abbott* districts. And as you can see, many of the *Abbott* districts have extraordinary numbers of very needy kids. And I think when we talk about the gap and implementation of *Abbott*, we have to recognize the fact that what we have done in New Jersey -- what has happened in New Jersey -- not -- variety of reasons over the last 40 or 50 years, is that we've isolated large numbers of poor children and very poor children in a limited group of schools, so that you have schools such as this one that have extraordinarily high concentrations of very poor kids that, as we all know, and as had been alluded to earlier, bring with them to school lots of disadvantages, as we call them, and lots of impediments, which affect their readiness to learn.

So the reason for looking at this data and being cognizant of it is we have to recognize that the job of closing that gap is an extraordinary one in

these schools, because unlike schools elsewhere in the state, these are schools in which -- are concentrated in them -- high numbers of needy kids whose needs have to be addressed and that affect their learning every day and affect the staff -- the principals and the staff and others every day.

So let me put a little bit of statewide achievement data up just to give you a sense of where we are. I can put up lots more. Some of it's very hard to get. One of the problems we have to address is the absence of really good public data, in a timely fashion, from the Department of Education. It is very difficult to get anything out of them. As I know you know, it's a real problem. The issue of data collection, data management, and the dissemination of important data has got to be high on your agenda in the coming months. We've got to know more, and we need to have the Department of Education reoriented and restructured so that it provides us with data in a timely fashion -- lots more than just test data, as well.

I want to give you a little bit more of a sense of where we are, statewide, compared to the I and J district performance. Now, I and J districts, as you all know, are the wealthiest districts, most successful districts. Those are those districts. There's 120 or so districts that are among the best in the land, not just in New Jersey, but among the best in the land. So you get a sense of their performance on these State assessments and then the State average. This is where everyone is at the State level. I think we have to start to put out comparative data so that we're not talking just about *Abbott* districts among themselves. That's important, as Dr. Duroy pointed out. But we begin to start to look at where are we, the *Abbott* districts, in relationship to the statewide performance overall, and then in particular to the I and J, since the Court's

mandate is that urban kids are to have a program comparable to what our high-wealth suburban districts have. And we've equalized funding at that level. I think it's important to do that. So this gives you a feel for it.

Now, proficient and advanced proficient, combined together, equals "passing," just so you know what that means. These are the first two years in which the fourth grade test is-- And I think Dr. Duroy had 2001 data, which we have yet to get on a statewide basis. He has it in this district, but unfortunately we don't have it yet from the Department on a statewide basis. And they are the 2000 results. But this, just as a one year -- the Assemblyman raised the question of multiple years.

We have very little data collection that's longitudinal, unfortunately. And I say very unfortunately, because you've got to chart this stuff over time. A report card is unhelpful, frankly. And I'm going to be candid about it. I think the report card, as the State currently issues it, is not a useful device for schools to -- as a diagnostic tool for schools, because the data is not disaggregated very well. And secondly, it's not done on a longitudinal basis -- so that you can't sort of assess progress over time, which has got to be the issue. We're going to start to close some of those gaps. The issue has to be, as Dr. Duroy talked about very well, how do we start to move forward over time, recognizing that the needs of the kids and needs of the schools are so great and the disinvestment that we've had over those 30 or 40 years getting up to where we are now-- But this data gives you some indication.

Now, the tests have changed, so this is the best we can do. And you have to recognize we have different tests now than we had back in 1993. But it does give you some sense of the high school -- performance on the high school

test -- I and J, State, and *Abbott* average. And what's interesting is that there's been very little change overall from 1993 to 1999.

Now, again, I caution you that these tests have changed. You can see the eighth grade. We started the eighth grade tests in 1997 with the CEFA in response to *Abbott*. And we've had it since 1997. That gives you some sense of where we are. And you can see the fourth grade, which we've had since 1999.

Okay, any questions about that before I comment on this data?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What would be the-- Have you ever broken out -- simply broken out the *Abbott* from the non-*Abbott* and developed a statewide average that is absent the *Abbott* districts?

MR. SCIARRA: What do you mean?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, for instance, here, what you have is, you have the I and J districts, which, of course, represent the high end of the gap scale.

MR. SCIARRA: Right. And then we have the State average.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But that's the State average including the *Abbott* districts. Have you ever taken a look at a State average not including the *Abbott* districts?

MR. SCIARRA: We could do that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I mean, because we represent a lot of districts that may not be I and J districts like Clifton, like blue-collar suburban communities, things of that--

MR. SCIARRA: Let me say to you, Senator, we have to look at all of this data in all kinds of different ways. We're scratching the surface here. Believe me, this is just beginning to scratch the surface. And again, the problem,

as I alluded to earlier, is the absence of a good data sense being issued in a timely way by DOE, so we, on behalf of the kids and higher education people, Dr. Erlichson, who's studying Whole School Reform, so forth and so on, can have good data that can be disaggregated and looked at in a whole variety of different ways. We could do other comparisons. We can look at, for example, G and H districts, or we could look at rural districts. We could look at-- There's lots of different ways this needs to be cut. But that way would be pretty easy, and I think we could do that.

The other piece of data that I wanted to put up here that's critical, and I would urge you to get -- we'll try to get it to you, but maybe you should ask the Department for it -- is the graduation rate. That's the key piece of data we need to look at in terms of high school. High school proficiency passing rate is one important thing. But that only tests the kids who actually stayed in school. The real key is whether you're in-- How many kids starting in ninth grade -- or eighth grade -- started in ninth grade in particular, and wound up taking the test and graduating in the twelfth grade? That's the graduation rate, not the drop-out rate. Let me be clear about that, not the numbers of kids that may drop out in the eleventh grade. I'm talking about the real important piece of data that we had -- we have some of it, but it's old, and we can't get updates from the Department -- is the number of kids who start in ninth grade who wind up graduating. That's critical. That's critical.

Okay. Let me make a few comments. That's the end of that. (indicating) That's the end of my slides.

I should say-- Let me make another point about the data. The *Abbott* districts, if we didn't have this laid out-- I didn't have enough time to

put this together. But if you look at all the *Abbott* districts, they vary amongst themselves, as well. So you cannot, even when you talk about urban districts and needing improvement-- That's a very relative term that needs to be dealt with carefully.

We have some very small-- We have some smaller districts like Gloucester City, Burlington City, Phillipsburg, districts like that, where you see the same data at and above the statewide average, even approaching the I and J average in some cases. Nobody's at that level. So even the *Abbott* districts-- If you broke all 30 of them out, you'd see them on a continuum.

And the other point, Senator, is that this deepening conversation has to be looking at all of that so that we begin to talk about improvement -- closing the gap -- not just a gap, but how do we close the gap -- in a very careful way that analyzes all of this and really is based on deepening an understanding of where districts and schools are now, because that varies, and then, what do we expect from them over time.

Okay. Let me make a few points about-- We put up some data. You see that the *Abbott* districts typically -- now, I'm saying typically, again; let me underscore typically -- are below on these tests, anyway -- achievement levels and performance levels in the high wealth districts -- usually around three times on typically and two times in terms of the statewide average. So it gives you a kind of general sense of the distance we need to travel.

And my purpose in putting up that data was not to blame anyone. I want to be very clear about this. We have to have a conversation which is not about pointing fingers at anyone, but which is -- I think as was mentioned earlier about assuming responsibility at all levels for this -- all levels, starting at

the State, on down to the districts and schools and communities, and then beginning to figure out how do we start to move in the right direction and chart that course, again, over time.

The reasons for these gaps, historically, are many. And I just want to repeat them, because I think we have to recognize that we do have *Abbott* now, but it took us a long time to get to where we are now. And the courts, as Dr. Duroy pointed out, correctly so, didn't deliver, for example, parity level funding for the core program -- the standards based program -- the content based program until the '97-'98 school year. That was the first year in which we had adequate resources for the core foundational program.

The reasons for where we are now is the historic underfunding of the *Abbott* district schools, which had led to, over decades, inadequate programs; teachers that didn't have the staff development that they needed to have; teachers who were not -- who were hired to teach classes in content in which they did not have subject matter training; absence of ongoing professional development, coaching, mentoring, so forth and so on; lots of social and health needs of the kids that would preoccupy the staff; larger class sizes; and poor facilities. This happens to be a pretty good one in Paterson, but we could be in some schools in which we should have replaced them decades ago. So that's one problem.

The other historic reason -- historic issue for this gap is the recurring problems with students, staff -- that the kind of recurring problems with students, staff, and buildings has led to district leadership that's been forced to be basically crisis managers, not educators. We have to recognize that what's consumed a lot of the central office staff, and even school staff in the *Abbott*

districts over these many years, has been crisis, one crisis after the other, rather than how do you organize the faculty and the staff and the community to be engaged in a continuing journey of curricular improvement and instructional improvement. So crisis management has been a big problem.

I will tell you up front, political interference, dictating local board policy and appointments to key positions that have led to inadequate leadership and accountability, we have to be honest about, has been a problem and, in some cases, is still a problem. Inadequate preparation of teachers and administrators-- And higher ed bears some responsibility for that. And then, most importantly, the absence of leadership at the State level, the ongoing resistance of the acceptance of the *Abbott* decision, the recognition that while we might not like the fact that the State has been required to do this by virtue of court order-- We would have loved to have the executive and legislative branches, 30 years ago, come together and deal with this. That wasn't the case. The court has had to, as a last resort, step in. The problem, historically, has been the resistance to that, leading to an absence of leadership at the State level to lead everything forward.

So what's the answer to closing this gap? It's simple. We have an enormous opportunity, unlike any state in the nation. No other state has *Abbott*. And so the answer is full, effective, and timely implementation of the *Abbott* programs and reforms, because *Abbott* has solved the funding problem that bedevils other urban districts throughout the country. One need look at Philadelphia and New York as examples of districts that, in some sense, are kind of dead in the water, because the resource levels are so low and the needs are so great. We've solved that to a large extent with parity level funding for standards

based education. Again, it's just happened, but now it's in place. It's augmented by needs based funding. There's been some additional appropriations for supplemental programs based on need. That process is very problematic, as you all know, and needs to be fixed. But that process has been ordered by the Court.

And now we have the school construction program. If we can get it on track and get it really moving forward, it will deal with one of the problems we face in our urban districts, which is very poor working conditions and facilities that are incapable of housing the educational programs that you would typically find in suburban schools, and that urban children desperately need. So, the school facilities program is important for a whole variety of reasons. But to get that program moving is essential, and *Abbott* provides it. The framework is in place.

The other thing about implementation -- *Abbott* -- opportunity that *Abbott* creates is that it lifts attention from crisis management with mandates for comprehensive standards based reform of instructional programs, integrated and needs driven supplemental programs to deal with student disadvantage, and school reform at the school level.

So we've now moved to a new phase of *Abbott*, if you will, which is implementation, now that the funding for standards based education is in place. The facilities will be coming. We've got some supplemental programs, although preschool is very problematic, in place, and we need to deepen that. The point, though, is that we can now turn our attention to the Court's directive for standards based reform through a school level process called Whole School Reform.

The Court has ordered the State to become the active insurer of all this. The State can't just delegate this down to the local districts and wash its hands and say, "Well, it's a district problem." The State-- The Court has made clear that the State has to become the active insurer of these changes.

Abbott has a heavy emphasis on intensive, ongoing, high-quality, professional development. I listened with interest to Dr. Duroy's comment and response to your question, Senator, which was a great question, which was, did the Whole School Reform models lead to the increases that he's talking about? And his answer was -- I think it was -- he didn't say, and I understand why he may not want to have said. But we need to be able to talk about this. No, it was intensive focus on professional development. And I could add some things that I'd also like to see to that list, but that's another story.

What are the problems we face now? And we have problems with implementation. We have to really be talking about these. This really, I think, has to be a key focus of this Subcommittee and its work.

And let's be honest. We've had leadership at the State level that has not been up to the task -- has been engaged in the resistance of *Abbott* rather than the acceptance of it -- the recognition it's the right thing to do for these kids and for the entire state. And let's get on with it and start to work in a collaborative manner with us, who represent the children, with the districts, with the Legislature, and with others, to do very difficult and complicated work.

We have very poor regulations that were adopted to implement *Abbott*. They need to be totally overhauled. And there is no real collaboration going on -- I would say deep collaboration between the State and the districts that we need -- and higher education and community providers and others.

Another problem is the Whole School Reform design, which was presented to the Supreme Court by Dr. Klagholz. We oppose that approach, which was the imposition of national models on schools. The Court, nonetheless, accepted it. It is very problematic and needs to be carefully, carefully altered and only with Court approval, because the Court would have to sign off on any changes.

We need to go back to a focus. We've lost focus. We've gotten so caught up. And if the principal, or vice principal, were still here, she would probably tell you that she spends most of her time trying to comply with implementing the model and the school based budget components of the model rather than be engaged in what Dr. Duroy was talking about, which is curriculum and instructional improvement to implement the content standards. We've got to get back to-- We've got to de-emphasize models -- national models off the shelf -- SFA, Comer -- not that they can't be helpful to schools if they choose them, but we've got to go back to the basics, which is standards based reform, curriculum improvement, and so forth and so on, under the standards. Accountability at the State and local level is a problem. No evaluation of State and local implementation -- the Court mandated -- an evaluation of school reform hasn't even been started. And the lack of capacity to help principals and districts to assess need and assess and evaluate programs and move them forward.

Okay. I would add to that, I think, is the issue of State takeover, which I think is problematic and conflicts with *Abbott*. We need to move to a different approach.

What are the solutions? Let me be quick. I can spend a lot of time, and we could -- but let me try to be quick. Critical, I think, is going to be the next administration. Whether we have a governor, a commissioner, an attorney general who accept *Abbott*, embrace it, recognize that they have to comply with it, and begin making it a top priority for the State, that's essential. If we don't have that leadership at the very top, we are going to continue to flounder around here reinventing the wheel and wasting more time, so forth and so on.

We have to rebuild the capacity of the Department of Education. It's essential. The Department still operates in a compliance mode. It really lacks the-- It has reorganized itself to become -- to lead a school reform and improvement effort in 450 schools and 30 districts, which is an extraordinary responsibility. No other state department in the nation has tried to take it on. The State people have to be humbled by that, and they have to say, "We don't know how to do all of this." They have to be honest about it, and they have to recognize that it's going to require a whole change in the culture of the Department, one from a kind of got-you approach with the districts and the schools to one of compliance or fill out the boxes and put the report on the shelf -- that's the end of the day -- one of collaboration and working together with us, with districts, and with higher education, and others.

The regulations have to be overhauled. We have to have ongoing statewide collaborations between the Department and statewide groups, districts, municipalities, higher ed, parents. Business and industry has to be at the table, as well. The Legislature needs to be at the table. We have to have local collaborations, too, that replicate that at the local level. I think we have to end takeover and replace it with new governing structures that brings higher

ed representation onto each local board to increase capacity, reduce local political interference, and build a foundation for local pre-K to 16 collaborations. We've got to start thinking about education now.

The Court has started education -- public education now, at the *Abbott* districts, at age three. That's when kids become public school students in these communities. So we have to recognize that we're talking about three-- And then we have to extend it beyond 12 to K-16. We have to have pre-K to 16 collaborations in each *Abbott* district.

I wanted to talk about-- The Whole School Reform design has to be altered, again, carefully, in a collaborative way so that we come up with a new design that again emphasizes standards, not models, and professional development -- ongoing professional development, the use of diagnostic data, and so forth and so on.

Higher ed's got to be in-- We've got to-- This is why we need the-- *Abbott's* not going to work if we get substantially increased involvement in resources and focus of the higher ed community, both in teacher preparation, so forth and so on.

I also think that the Legislature has to start to think about expanding your own mechanisms for holding the executive branch and for the commissioner -- working to hold the State -- State education officials accountable for full, effective, and timely implementation of the *Abbott* programs and reforms. And also, one thing I would urge is that the Legislature really has to build its capacity of funding and maybe start to engage foundations to support this in an effort to implement some evaluations -- meaningful,

independent evaluations. We need lots of independent evaluations of school reform in the *Abbott* districts, whether it's making a difference.

We do have Dr. Erlichson's work, which I commend to you to read. I know Melanie is aware of her work. I hope she comes here and talks to you. She's the only independent person that we have that's looked at Whole School Reform. Her work is enlightening.

We need a deeper level of evaluation. That's an area where, I think, the Legislature can play a critical role to start to authorizing very careful, important evaluations independent -- so that you all begin to get information on a continuous basis to perform your job now, which is to both appropriate the money every year as you do, but also to make sure that the State is accountable.

We cannot expect-- And I'll close with this. We cannot expect local districts to be accountable for implementation of *Abbott* unless the State is accountable first. Accountability starts at the top. And the Court has said it over and over again.

If you were at the argument in front of the Supreme Court over preschool a week and a half ago, the whole conversation was -- that the Court was having with us and with the Attorney General -- was about how is the State going to be held accountable for performance, rather than simply what it has done in the past, which is to wash its hands, throw it onto the districts, and say, "If there's failure, it's their problem."

We've talked about this, Senator. The new paradigm starts at the top, which is an acceptance of responsibility at the State level. This is Court ordered for the benefit of these 300,000 kids and now, 55,000 preschoolers, we now know, who have to be brought in, as well.

How does the State communicate with the public, communicate with these communities, communicate with you in a way that's about accountability for performance and that's honest and open and candid, where you can have a commissioner of education come in here and say, "You know, we've got a lot of problems with this program. Let me put up some data. Let me show you what we're working on," instead of the kind of -- what we've had, which is denial, and then if there's a problem, it's local districts. We've got to shift that in a major way.

So with that, I want to stop. I know I took too long. I apologize. It's hard to talk about this in a short period of time. I'd be happy to come back, happy to assist the Committee, as you know, in any way that we can.

If you want additional data, we do have probably the best source of data that's out there, independent of the Department. I wish it were greater, but we try. So if there are needs that you have as you move forward--

And the last thing I would just say is keep going. Just keep going. Don't stop after the election. Keep holding hearings. Keep asking questions. And keep deepening your own understanding, both of *Abbott* -- what the problems are and what the solutions are.

Again, I go back to my initial point. We have to start a very deepening conversation in this state about these issues, about how difficult it is, about how no other state has tried to do what *Abbott* -- the Court has now asked the State to do, and how, at the end of the day if we do this, New Jersey will become the best educated state in the nation, because this is the bottom quarter of our kids. Its economy will be in tremendous shape, because we'll have the

workforce that we need and that how this is a statewide issue, not just an issue involving our urban communities.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: David, let me first say thank you for your presentation.

When I was talking about that statistic about the non-*Abbott* district--

MR. SCIARRA: Yes.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: The reason I said that is because there is sort of an intuitive sense that everybody should be at least at the State average, when, in fact, the State average is being depressed by the under performance in the special needs districts.

MR. SCIARRA: And others. There are others, too.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yes. But at least if you're outside of the special needs district, you would get a better average at which you really should hold as a mark rather than the one that's being dragged down by the performance.

MR. SCIARRA: I think we have to have multiple benchmarks, Senator, of comparison. I don't put these up lightly, but I do think we-- I think the time has come to start looking at various benchmarks on which to gauge progress. And there should be lots of benchmarks.

One of the things that *Abbott* requires that upsets me the most, and we argued about this in front of the the Appellate Division last week, is that we had pushed the Court very-- We felt that the State tests are insufficient.

Well, let me back up. Our view is that accountability-- The discussion of accountability itself has to change. It has to be less about the

student performance and more about school, district, and State performance over time. And it has to start from the moment children enter the system, and it has to be gauged in a whole variety of ways, if that data is going to be useful in the kind of diagnostic ways that Dr. Duroy was talking about. So the Court required a district level accountability system in the *Abbott* districts, different from these fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade tests, in which districts would have to establish base line data and progress benchmarks on a whole variety of indicators from early literacy. I'd love to see -- be able to come back here two years from now and put up some early literacy data that looks at performance in reading in the early grades, which is a big part of *Abbott* by the way.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And why is there resistance to that on the State level?

MR. SCIARRA: Ask him. I don't want to get in-- I've given up talking about motivations and-- I don't want to talk about that. You have to bring these people here and ask them why haven't we set that up. We have urged the Department to do that. It hasn't been done. It would help give us some much more -- a variety of data.

You need to do your job, all of you. You need a whole variety of data -- content-specific, grade-by-grade, as Dr. Duroy was talking. He called it off grade. It's got to start-- Early achievement gaps--

We're going to invest an enormous amount in the *Abbott* preschool program. We know from Dr. Barnett's work that kids in the *Abbott* districts typically start kindergarten a year and a half behind suburban kids, typically, in language and development skills.

I would say-- If I were in your shoes and I was making this investment in this -- big investment in this program, I'd want to know how we're doing, district by district. Programs need that information. Districts need that information. How are we going to do all that?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Let me ask you-- I'm going to ask you two questions. One is sort of the flip side of what I was asking the Superintendent.

But the first question is, you've had a chance to get a feel for the parity issue. Let's talk about the funding for a second. Theoretically, is that enough money, in your opinion, to be able to get the job done if we were spending it correctly? I know it's a bit of a loaded question.

MR. SCIARRA: Let me answer you this way. No, it's actually a pretty easy one. There's absolutely no question that parity level funding is adequate to deliver the regular education program, which is now defined by the core curriculum content standards to all students in the *Abbott* districts. There's no question about that. The parity level amount-- Remember, what is it? What is parity? We have to kind of remind ourselves of what it is.

The Court used that as a benchmark for funding adequacy to assure that kids in Newark and Paterson and Jersey City had behind him or her an adequate amount of resources to deliver the basic instructional program, which is now defined by the core content standards: math, science, health and physical education, visual and the performing arts. You know the content standards. I don't have to go -- and have enough money for the bands and the clubs and the football team and the basketball team -- extracurricular and co-curricular activities, so forth and so on.

That number is the number that's spent, on average, on the kids in the 120 I and J districts. That number's over \$9000 now. That's an adequate amount.

Now, there are two more issues I'm going to say. One is, because of Whole School Reform -- the models, we haven't been working over the last-- One of my disappointments is we haven't been working to make sure that that \$9000-plus has put in place in all of the schools in this district and the other schools that we have a curriculum aligned in all schools on the core curriculum content standards that's comparable to what you would typically see educationally when you walked into successful suburban schools -- the math program, the science program -- not the same, but typically-- So you had some sense of that, and that we had assurance now, through reporting, that that \$9000 was supporting that program. And that's what I think--

When we go back to rethinking Whole School Reform, we've got to start to step back and start to talk about how do we make sure that that \$9000--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, that's precisely my point.

MR. SCIARRA: --is delivering a rigorous curriculum and instructional program under the content standards to all kids.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, let me ask you the flip side of the question I was asking the Superintendent. If, for instance -- and I don't want to use School 28 as the example, but let's talk for a second about some of the things that he described without asking you to comment specifically on whether or not School 28 is doing the right thing or not doing the right thing.

But when you see the description of what's being done, and you see movement in test scores, is it possible for you to tell -- not you, but -- is it possible for one to tell whether or not that school is now heading in a direction which is consistent with the constitutional mandate?

MR. SCIARRA: Given -- and I haven't looked at Dr. Duroy's--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Right. That's why I say I can't--

MR. SCIARRA: And I don't want to pick-- But I'm familiar with the *Abbott* districts across the board. We don't have in place an assessment system that looks at content area education across the board, looks at performance -- student performance on a continuing and ongoing basis in different content areas over time to answer that question. So I don't know.

I can tell you that--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But it could be done.

MR. SCIARRA: Oh, it can be done.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: The reason I ask that is because one of the problems that I see as an attorney, and even as *Abbott* has given us a tremendous opportunity to achieve a fuller funding than has historically been the case in special needs districts, it also, because of the fact that it's an adversarial proceeding, has a tendency to throw stumbling blocks in the way of developing some things. The thing that intuitively strikes me is, why isn't it possible for the two sides to get together on a school-by-school basis and say, "This is what they're planning. This plan satisfies us now. You seem to be hitting on the right themes." Whether it's staff development -- that's really what I meant when I asked that question -- whether it's staff development or this.

And rather than worry about whether or not we test compliance based upon the extent to which we've put into place models of Whole School Reform that may or may not, ultimately, work.

MR. SCIARRA: Right. Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Why isn't it that the two sides aren't getting together, almost in a consent order basis, and saying, "All right, the 28 elementary schools in Paterson-- All right. They're going where they're supposed to go. Maybe they'll make it. Maybe they won't. Maybe there are other things we need to do. But right now, we're satisfied that they're directing their resources in the proper way," and district by district be able to do that? Or is that just too massive a task for the plaintiffs' side, for instance?

MR. SCIARRA: I can talk from one side, which is, we've made every effort to sit down with the State over these -- particularly since '98, because that's the benchmark year. That's when we got the sort of framework put in place by the Court for standards based education, school reform, supplemental programs. And we've said to them, "Look. You can't do this without us. We have to work together." There has to be a collaborative relationship between the parties and between us, but then, between lots of others, too.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And then all the other stakeholders.

MR. SCIARRA: So we're there. Now, you'll have to ask the Attorney General or the Commissioner or whomever why -- the same question.

What I will say needs to happen first is what I talked about, which is, we have to work on the entire-- The State has to put in place a kind of very coherent, commonsense, educationally driven framework that's consistent with

the Court decree for the implementation of standards based education in the *Abbott* districts, then for the implementation of school reform and improvement, then for accountability measures and evaluation measures so that-- What we do need to have at the end of the day, school by school, is we need to be at a point where there's serious evaluation going on, of schools, of both the curriculum -- content-based curriculum in the instruction. And there has to be lots of disaggregated data that the schools get so they know, for example, who the problem kids are, because you're not going to--

You might get to 30 percent, but unless you deal with the mobility problem, for example, or you might have lots of limited English proficient kids, for example, or you might have kids with discipline problems, or you might have kids -- you might have a group of kids who are having problems in math that you can identify. Unless you get to that kind of level and then funnel that data back to the staff -- because ultimately, we've got to get to a point where what the framework does at the State and district level is feeds back to the school community here in School 28, on a continuous basis, diagnostic information about their curriculum and instructional program and the performance of their students -- content area, grade by grade starting at three, so they can work with that. And then the question of--

Assemblyman Stanley's question was right on. "Is your staff development program adequate," he asked. The answer was, we send the people out to the three-day thing.

Okay. His next question was, is that enough. Well, to answer that, you need to know more. It's not a knock on-- This is not about that. It's just I'm talking in general. You need to know what teachers need help in what.

Then you can start to design professional development programs or bring in Whole School Reform models. That might be the thing you need to do. If it's a reading problem, SFA does work in reading if it's implemented well. But the staff has to accept it as the way to get at that problem.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because the thing that strikes me is that what the State appears to be doing is trying to do its best to satisfy the Court when, in fact, they should be doing their best to satisfy us, to satisfy you guys, to satisfy the parents of children who don't want to live in neighborhoods where the chances are 95 percent that their child will not be educated to proficiency. That's one of the reasons we started this.

Senator, do you have anything?

SENATOR RICE: I hate to bust everybody's bubble, particularly my colleague, Assemblyman Stanley, who's working hand and hand with David and believes that the implementation of Whole School Reform is almost the cure for education deficiencies.

First of all, I think this whole notion of Whole School Reform is a misnomer, if you will. I think we should be talking about whole community reforms.

MR. SCIARRA: Whole?

SENATOR RICE: Community reforms. We can put all the money we want into new construction, which we are trying to do. And there's no doubt in my mind in the Patersons and Newarks and Irvingtons, etc., when we put that brand-new school up, next to it there will still be that three-family or multifamily abandoned building that our kids have to walk through every day. We're going to still see those same old drug addicts and derelicts hanging on the

street corners that have problems that we don't want to address and, to be quite frank, some that we just need to maybe round up and just isolate them, period. But to have somebody demonstrate--

So I think the leadership, particularly the African-American leadership and our minority communities and Latinos stand up with one message that we're going to attack this education problem from looking at what we know are some of the causes of the deficiency in education.

We know that parents aren't working, and many of them have dropped out of school. And when a youngster comes to a school, and he or she is committed to learning, and the teacher's committed to teaching, once they get home, no one can help them, even if they want to, because they can't read and write and do math.

And I will go as far as to say that most of the people sitting here, and I may be going way out, but I'm using my own experience-- If you tell me to help a five or six or whatever grade they're in now with all kinds of fractional problems, I'm not going to be able to help them. I have not multiplied five and seven-eighths, plus one and one-fourth divided by three and such and such in so long, I would have to go back and do some review myself. And then we can get all of our students who want to learn into these after-school "mentoring and tutorial programs."

So we've got to work through all those things that we know are real and stop putting them aside and saying, "We don't have time for this. It's too much money for that, etc."

And then, we go to takeover budgets. First of all, I don't think the State should take over anything. That's clear to me. But when we at least

monitor budgets. We can't look at an education budget without taking a good look at the municipal budget. It's the same base, the same cities. That's the problem I have in Irvington. And I'm fighting over \$3.9 million that's got to come from the taxpayers' side on the municipal side, or the municipality keep -- and it comes from the board side. It's the same base. How do we balance that? It's a no win.

And so, I think that we've spent a lot of time, and I guess rightfully so to some degree, in our urgency to react and respond to something without properly thinking it through. And we've got the courts on a roll. And so we think it's good, but no one is really talking or marching against these communities and letting people know that it's a hand in glove fit. And that's why I want to see the numbers coming out.

This will get us Whole School Reform, if fully implemented, to a level of improvement, if you will. But it's going to stop. Just like politics, you reach that level. You just can't go anymore. That's it. So then you have to start to suppress things in order to win. Then we don't talk about school drop out. We've been talking about it for years.

We've got to look long-term. We've got to look at expectation, because I really believe in my heart that if young people understand down here -- and now is the right time, since we're talking early childhood education, full-day, etc. -- three to four years old getting involved. If everybody grew up-- Forget about the ones that understand now and that you've got these things like drop out that you can do, even though you understand their parent has to sign -- the parents don't. They just drop out anyway. And we say, "The hell with them."

But if we start to raise generations' understanding that everybody goes to school until they at least turn 18 or graduate, and even make them start to think that everybody after high school goes to vocational school or college or does something else-- If we start to do this "conditioning process" at those ages while the other generation of drop outs and others start to fade away, and we set rules to help with those expectations long-term, we're going to see a change in attitude about the numbers who actually stay in school and learn. If we start cleaning up communities, we're going to see people feeling a lot better about themselves, because I really believe that when you come to a suburban borderline district on an urban setting, that the real difference is the quality of life in that community and the job set -- the middle class, blue-collar worker still seems to have more education or appears to be more active with their youngsters in terms of participation than an urban, low-income wage earner. When you go to the table in those communities, and I know I represent them in Maplewood and South Orange -- I've seen the transition of Newark residents, etc., with the same backgrounds-- Education worked for them. And the reason being is that it's language that you hear around the house all the time. People coming in from construction talk about how many yards of concrete was poured that day. Lawyers come in and talk about the case in court. Accountants come in and talk about the debit and the crediting. We don't even get language in our homes.

And so, I just want to say that Whole School Reform, to me, is a very bad word -- maybe for a good cause as it relates to one part of the problem, but I can see long-term where we're going to do ourselves more detriment if we don't put on brakes and start to force mayors of cities, who are receiving Federal and State dollars for demolition and all these other things, to direct those dollars

to inner city communities; that arena people and other people come up with their own demolition moneys or we find another way or just have to part.

But we've got to manage local government. When I ride through these cities, all I see is filth. And it's interesting, and I'm going to shut up on this, because you can ride one block -- and I'll take my city -- into South Orange -- not one barrier up, and the block is clean. But there's nothing to stop folks from going up a block and littering. We don't realize those things.

And so, in essence, Senator, I think what is going to have to happen is we're going to have to go back and maybe legislate and compel some folks to get together and work together. There's too much independence in government at the expense of paying people nice salaries at the expense of taxpayers.

And it seems to me until we put together -- call it what you want -- a task force or what have you, that compel Human Services to sit down at the same table with Health, to sit down at the same table with Criminal Justice, to sit down at the same table with Education and Human Services and Community Affairs to talk about this whole issue of quality of life and the relationship to education. What you're going to have educators doing what we're doing, trying to figure out how to make them learn better. And meanwhile, cities are still rebuilding the wrong way or not putting enough priority on where people live, regardless of income, or we rebuild and we talk about education, but we're not putting enough focus on health, because once you get in here-- It took us years to realize you drink the water, you got a lead problem. They thought everybody was special education. They didn't realize the lead was making us slow. Things like that--

And that's my recommendation that I put on the table for us to consider -- is to bring all of those folks together, with a couple of legislators from both houses, so -- as they deliberate and talk about elements and differences and variables. We'll be prepared to move forward with the legislation to try to correct the other side of what the Education Law Center and parents are trying to do on this side. They need help on this side. If not, all that good effort we're going to reward you for when it's over with and say how wonderful you are, and you're going to make a lot of money as a consultant if you ever leave what you're doing. But the kids' background is going to start to demise again.

MR. SCIARRA: Getting too old for that.

Can I comment quickly, Senator, on this?

First of all, I don't want to leave this Committee with the impression that we support-- We supported the adoption of Whole School Reform models. There's a difference between kind of a Whole School Reform process where staff are working together versus a model, which is something that comes in from the outside as a way to kind of-- That has to be rethought. It's not a panacea. I just want to make that clear.

Let me just touch on your point. I can't agree with you more, but let me just say to you, Senator, there was a lot in *Abbott* that dealt with the question. Now, obviously there are community issues that are beyond schools. But the Court, because of the way *Abbott* was presented, the Court grappled with the issue of the impact of social and health -- early development and so forth -- conditions of children and how it effects their readiness to learn when they get

to school and, also, what impact that has upon the school itself in terms of its ability to stay focused on instruction and not get sidetracked on the other issues.

So, in Justice Wilentz's great words-- I always like to repeat it. The Court directed, in addition to school reform and improvement -- instructional improvement, a kind of another set of initiatives called supplemental programs that were intended to, in the Court's words, wipe out the disadvantages that children bring with them to school through poverty and all of the things that you talked about as much as a school can, which is, obviously, a term of art but an important one.

So, when we got to *Abbott IV* in 1998, the Commissioner had to come forward and present the series of initiatives that need to be in every school to begin to get at -- and I say begin to get at -- those problems that kids -- social and health and other problems kids bring with them to school. So they directed that every elementary school -- it would be nice to know whether this one has it -- has a full-time family support team, which consists of a full-time parent liaison to work with parents, full-time guidance counselor, full-time social worker, full-time school nurse, and a full-time instructional facilitator working together to assess the social and health needs of kids and begin to connect kids to those services outside in the community.

But then the Court said something more. The Court said, "Well, if those services aren't available in the community" -- health services, as whatever -- "schools, you have the right to come forward, and based on a showing of need, put a clinic in your school. Establish a clinic so that services--" The Court recognized, if we don't -- if kids aren't -- if kids are

hungry, if kids are not healthy, if kids have asthma, if kids don't have glasses, forget about it. You're right. We're dead in the water.

My point to you, and I can go into more detail, and I don't-- But my point to you is there is a component of *Abbott* that's designed to help the school, as much as it can, get at the program -- things you're talking about. But that's not been implemented. That's part of what we need to focus on when we talk about full -- which is, in other words, giving the school the tools to connect to the community and deal with those issues as much as it can.

Now, one other point in terms of school district collaboration. I'll challenge you. Here's an area where, right away, we need to be working to connect cities and school districts together. And that's the school construction program. And right now, it's not.

This school construction program has an enormous economic development potential for our cities. Think about it. We're going to rebuild, renovate, or replace with new construction, every single school. The State's going to pay for it.

Well, how do we engage the mayors and the community organizations -- the community development agencies with the school districts and the State to assure that when we build and rebuild these schools, they don't just serve the kids in the schools, but they serve the parents, they serve the community, and they serve the larger goal of economic development. We have a golden opportunity.

So if you want to-- I would amend -- sort of suggest -- respectfully suggest that one area where we can start right away to work on what you talked about -- connecting the dots -- city, district, State -- is around the school

construction program, because it's not connected right now, and it absolutely needs to be, or we're going to miss out on not just an enormous opportunity to improve the educational facilities for the kids in school, but facilities that could serve larger community needs and the ultimate goal of neighborhood revitalization.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Senator.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yes, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: First, let me thank David Sciarra, from the Education Law Center, for his information and also for kind of clearing up, I think, what's probably a misunderstanding in terms of what it is we feel that *Abbott* implementation will do. And *Abbott* implementation should not be confused with Whole School Reform. *Abbott* implementation is so much greater than Whole School Reform. But *Abbott* implementation could really transcend so many different issues, many of which Senator Rice spoke of: economic development issues, issues that deal with students who don't hear the language in the home, don't hear about the yards and the gallons and the cubic centimeters, etc. But what they would get is two years of early childhood education when that program is implemented correctly -- Court-ordered *Abbott* program.

So I've never been just a Whole School Reform person. I've been an education reform person. And I think that's what *Abbott* is all about, and not only just for *Abbott* districts, but what would happen. And I expect what the Court feels what would happen once we implemented *Abbott* correct -- that those lessons learned and those programs would not just be applied to *Abbott* districts,

but to every district and every child who needed those types of programs who fit the needs test for those programs. So I think this is a great forum.

Thank you, David, for getting us on the right track here.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman, let me just, right quickly--

My last statement is very simple. And I hear what the Assemblyman is saying. And it's nice. And I understand *Abbott* program as well as everybody. I just don't have to come to your office to do that. I can read.

But my point is simple. We're not going to reform education and urban cities unless we reform urban cities. And we're not going to reform urban cities unless we reform education in the urban cities.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: That's true.

SENATOR RICE: That's real. And regardless of what the courts are saying, unless someone-- The mayor of Paterson, my good friend, Marty Barnes, may have a different scenario and thinking of his relationship with this whole process -- mayor of Newark, Sharpe, or the mayor of Irvington or both, etc. -- some kind of way--

And that's where you and I agree -- where to connect those dots, because the courts have set the basis in the State and alluded to some of those things. The courts did not compel those things to happen, even if we implement the whole piece at an insignificant level. That's number one.

Number two, school construction is a big part of it. First of all, we're trying to get basic things done, and we can't do it. And we've got to go back and compel EDA to come meet with us because the politics of our school construction happen to be the unions right now. And I support labor. But the issue is that there is supposed to be some job training opportunities. There's

supposed to be minority contractors -- priorities given to urbans, and they got all kinds of criteria as to how to eliminate the various people that they are talking about, etc. in these programs.

So I'm looking at this thing and I'm saying we did a great job of educating the folks about the needs in education, Whole School Reform and some of the things there. Now, how do we assure that they can connect those dots?

But I will rest my case on the fact that no one's ever told me that you don't do -- reform education first and think about cities later or rebuild cities and think about education later. It's not going to work. That's a parallel process that must take place simultaneously. And this whole notion must be one of an egalitarian process if, in fact, it's going to work. So this wheel can go this way, and this wheel can go this way, and this one is going this way. Any misdirection of one of those wheels means that it's rhetoric and a lot of money wasted.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you very much.

We just have two more groups to add to this.

The first that is with us is Arthur Andersen, Peter Sorbera, and Manny Axelrod.

I'm going to ask you to come forward and just explain who you are and how you fit into this whole scheme of things.

MANNY AXELROD: Thank you very much.

We're from the Arthur Andersen Company. We've been working for approximately nine years on evaluating the State takeover of Newark, Jersey

City, and Paterson school districts, but we haven't been doing it for the last year or so.

I welcome the opportunity to address the Joint Education Committee this morning concerning the achievement gap that exists between white and Asian-American students and African-American and Latino students. The enormous personal, political, economic, and social implications of our chronic and persistent failure to reduce this gap gives great urgency to your current efforts.

I will not tell you that in this world economy, an educated workforce is definitely essential. Population indicators confirm that the African-American and Latino populations of this state are growing rapidly. If we continue to permit children of color to be left behind, we are not only failing them as individuals, but we're failing our state and nation, as well. We, therefore, must ensure that every child in New Jersey is given the best educational opportunities, and that no child is left behind because of race or national origin.

To ensure change, it is important to begin to understand the multifaceted causes of this achievement gap. Of course, poverty plays a role. But I've got to tell you something. I'm sick and tired of looking at charts that show poverty -- and that's the reason why kids can't learn. That's not true. And I want you to know that. It is not true.

Research shows that academic performance is negatively impacted, even in schools with poverty rates as low as 25 percent. But the achievement gap we are speaking of cuts across socioeconomic lines. It also widens as students progress through school.

Meredith Phillips's research in "The Black-White Test Score Gap" suggests that one-half of the twelfth grade reading and math test score gap was present in first grade, but the other half is due to factors that occur during the 12 years of schooling that the kids go through.

The causes of this gap need to be considered in order to devise effective strategies for overcoming the gap. Continued research in this area is essential. However, some causes have been identified by reliable researchers. Several relate to social and cultural factors. Some kids believe it's uncool to be smart in school. Other kids feel that, "Even if I have academic success, it doesn't lead to success in my later life." In addition, many students of color have low-income parents with little formal schooling themselves. These parents are often unable to provide the extensive educational supports that enhance their children's ability to succeed.

Having cited the above causes, I must say, and research consistently backs me up, that the most significant causes of the achievement gap are institutional. It's not the others. It is your job as legislators, and our job as educators-- And I have to say, I still consider myself an educator, even though I haven't been in public education for the last eight years. I was for 34 years prior to that. I think we have to acknowledge that institutional problems are there, and we have to fix them.

Research tells us that students of color will not succeed when teachers have weak academic skills, little passion for teaching, a limited understanding of cultural differences, and low expectations for children of color. That's the biggest factor there. And I think Mr. Smith talked about that -- his expectations of teachers. Teachers have to expect that kids will succeed.

The Tennessee class size study indicated that when average class size in grades one through three is reduced by approximately one-third, from 23 to 16, the achievement gap narrows in both reading and math. A third cause is the traditional lack of consistent articulation between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In schools where teachers have traditionally been considered autonomous, the standards based curriculum that is necessary to attack the achievement gap is not being done. I'm talking about where schools just really do what they want, and they're not being, supposedly, supervised by the superintendent and his or her offices.

What does this mean in concrete terms? Perhaps the most important thing I can point to is leadership. It will take strong leadership at the State, district, and school level to transform the belief system of staff members. Changing teacher expectations about achievement is the key to success. Teachers must be convinced of the power of expectations.

Consider the example of the Buraku, an indigenous Japanese minority group. They perform poorly in schools in Japan, but when they come to the United States, where we tend to view all Japanese as academic achievers, the Buraku excel in school.

Teacher education needs to be transformed so that the best and the brightest and most committed young people are attracted to the profession and retained. Young teachers need to be supported with mentoring programs and with continuous development programs sponsored by the school district or a college or university. In-service programs must be provided to assist experienced teachers to renew their understandings and skills. Their assumptions about inclusiveness must also change from a belief that becoming inclusive equates to

lowering of standards to recognizing that raising standards in a democracy is inclusive.

Such systemic change requires committed leadership over time. Teachers who are successful and have demonstrated their ability to influence others need to be encouraged to become school principals. In order for teachers to be willing to assume leadership responsibilities for others, the State should pay. If you're going to try to attract teachers to go into principal positions, the State should pay for graduate courses leading to a principal's certificate, pay for full-time internships, and enhance retirement benefits for those principals who work a minimum of 220 days per year. I think you could attract people to become principals -- quality people.

Another facet of systemic change that must be undertaken by each district is the rigorous alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments at all levels of the system. It is the building principal's job to continuously monitor the instructional practices and to ensure that teachers' instructional practices are consistent with the demands of the assessments and the aligned curriculum. The principal needs to be skillful in interpreting assessment data to assist staff members by modifying instruction.

In one school evaluated by Arthur Andersen, we found that a principal, after assessing scores on the math portion of the eighth grade EWT -- when they were given the EWT -- discovered that consistently, each year, the kids were doing poorly on that math portion.

She decided to find out how much the teachers knew. She asked the teachers if they would be willing to take the EWT test. They did. They did it anonymously. They didn't put their name on the paper. And after they took

the test-- They failed the test. She knew then that there was a great need to help the teachers. She didn't -- so that she would admonish them. She wanted to help them. She personally provided in-service to those teachers to improve their math skills. Remember, these are K-8 teachers. They're not math teachers. And they didn't have the kind of training needed to really provide that kind of instruction. All teachers agreed to participate. Student test scores improved dramatically in the following year.

Another principal in a takeover school that was consistently successful inspects report cards quarterly, prior to their distribution to students. When she identifies students with specific academic problems: science, math, etc., she requires that their teachers develop an individual education plan that will address student deficiencies. In this school, the principal is acting as the child's advocate, assuring that all resources are utilized to improve performance.

All students, and particularly students of color, need to be encouraged to put maximum effort into academics and to be rewarded for that effort.

One principal has initiated an individual reading program to encourage students to read independently. And you know that reading is the key to success. There is a library in each classroom. The books each child has read are identified on a chart outside of each classroom. It has the kids' names. It has the books that they've read. Competition is encouraged among the classes within that grade. At the end of each quarter, the winning classes are honored by each kid getting a certificate to go to Pizza Hut to get pizza. It is the building principal's job to inspire high expectations for teachers, students, and parents, and to lead by example.

You know, when we look at the schools and we look at the test results, we found that some schools were very, very low; some schools were at the top of the chart. You would never know they were in Jersey City. You would never know they were in Newark or Paterson. You just wouldn't know. They were so high.

We looked at their mobility rates. We looked at their poverty rates. They were the same as the others. Did the sun come up differently? Was there different air somewhere? No, it wasn't that. It was the leadership in the building. That's the key. It's the leadership -- the high expectations that the principal has that all children will succeed -- not can succeed, might succeed -- should succeed, will succeed. And you've got to have that culture change that everyone from the staff, to the kids, to the parents, to the community truly believe in order for it to happen.

You can see that it is essential for principals to be instructional leaders. In an article in *Education Week* dated September 12, 2001, Superintendent of Schools, Paul Vance, of the Washington, D.C. public school district, following visitations to schools in the district, said, "What I've found was principals doing the usual pablum. It was how to understand the community, how to understand the politics. They were business managers. They were community outreach advisors. They were running six different union contracts, if you can believe it. But they were not instructional leaders."

Following these observations, the district engaged the Basic Education Council, a nationally known, nonprofit educational organization to run a principal's academy focussing on instructional leadership. Principals of failing and low-performing schools were mandated to participate in the

leadership program. Developing programs such as these will prove to be a vital ingredient in school transformation.

One district administrator in a New Jersey city school district has instituted a process that includes unannounced school visits by central office administrators that include the assistant superintendent for instruction and directors of math, science, and English. They observe classes, meet with teachers and building administrators, and write a written report based on their observations. Recommendations are made that must be implemented within a specific time frame by the principal and his or her staff. This process increases oversight and accountability.

A greater effort must also be made to provide students of color with supplemental educational opportunities. Many parents in New Jersey are providing their children with a broad range of educational supports from birth through college, for example: reading aloud, tutors, summer camps, college visits, and advocacy with school officials. However, many are not.

In the absence of this kind of parallel support structure for many children of color, schools need to create this scaffolding for them. Preschool programs are one example. The New Jersey Legislature has clearly evidenced their support of preschool programs by financing these programs. And you're great for doing that. That really counts.

Other examples of support programs are mentoring programs, after school, weekend, and vacation academic and recreational programs. One takeover school district ran a summer residential program on a nearby college campus to improve students' academic performance. This program created a

positive feeling towards school, and enabled students to have a taste of college life. Such programs need to be replicated.

Career academies in secondary schools are another example. They link academics to career exploration, making academics more meaningful, while exposing young people to the range of job opportunities in a field they may be interested in. Mentors from each field help provide students with realistic work and life goals. Linkages with businesses enable the academies to offer work experiences to young people. Career academies need to be expanded. Academics also need to be integrated with occupational education programs so that students are prepared to enter today's more demanding skilled workforce.

Although issues of poverty, race, and ethnicity have long been used as excuses for low academic achievement, there is no doubt in my mind that all students will succeed if schools commit themselves over the long term to eliminating the achievement gap. Some schools have already done so, and they are beacons for the rest of us who are still trying.

In closing, let me say that there are many examples of best practices in school districts throughout New Jersey where school staffs are working and succeeding in narrowing the achievement gap. The State Education Department, through the offices of county superintendents, should identify these practices and disseminate them for replication.

I thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Let me start with -- and thank you very much -- start with what you were just saying about identifying best practices and disseminating them. We've heard some discussion today about Whole School Reform versus homegrown remedies.

What is your sense, from what you've seen, about the utility of Whole School Reform by designating models from which to choose, versus homegrown remedies of the sort that we're describing today?

MR. AXELROD: I have a combination answer to that. I think Whole School Reform is good, but I think you need to have home school remedies to also implement them and to, maybe, vary a little bit from the specific model.

I'm not sure that every model meets the need of every child. So there has to be some ability to move that around a little bit.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, in the-- You've had an opportunity to view urban schools that have succeeded?

MR. AXELROD: Absolutely. Right here in New Jersey.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, this is what I'm talking about, the school takeover districts, because you folks have been involved in that.

MR. AXELROD: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I guess I have two questions. How do those districts or those schools distinguish themselves from the pack? And number two, what was your sense about the extent to which the school takeover had been successful? I don't mean as a concept, but-- Had it been successful on the ground as a practical matter over the-- For instance, we're in the tenth year or the eleventh year here in Paterson.

MR. AXELROD: In '89-- Oh, in Paterson.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I think they started around 1990 or 1991, somewhere in there. And yet we're hearing some of the -- that the lightbulb sort of went on pretty well here in School 28 in the last year or so.

What is your sense about the degree to which the State was learning these lessons that don't seem as much like rocket science as some people would have us believe?

MR. AXELROD: I'd like to see more replication. I have to tell you, in this one school -- one particular school, and I can mention others -- that I went-- The reason that I went to this school to look at it is I looked at the test results. I looked at this one year, and I see they're 99 and 100 percent above MLP in the different subject areas across the whole school. I said it had to be a blip on the map. It didn't happen before. I looked at five years of test results exactly the same. I said their kids have to be different. Maybe there's no poverty -- low poverty. Maybe there's low mobility. There were the same factors as compared to schools that were totally failing.

I called the principal. She said, "Do you want to find out why it's this way here? You spend three days with me." And I did. I spent three days with her. You want to see high expectations? I'm telling you, this principal-- There were no ifs, ands, or buts about it. She expected every child to succeed and did everything she could. And if you're a teacher in that school and you don't want to go along with that, you better get yourself another job, because she's going to be on your back.

It was that strong leadership, Senator, that in other schools that I saw were really the real factors that made a difference that won't let kids fail, that keep pushing and making available the right things for those kids.

It's too easy to say-- We go into schools. And Peter would know, including the rest of the people that came with me. I'd go into a school where it had low achievement, low test scores. You walk in. And I start talking about-

- And the principal says to me, “Well, what do you expect? Look at the kids we have. I want to strangle them. “What do you mean, look at the kids we have?” These are the best kids the parents have to send.” These kids have to succeed -- as compared to a principal that says, “They’re all going to make it. They’re going to be great.” That’s the key.

I think your Committee has to expect high expectations from all the schools. I don’t want to know about the poverty rates, the mobility rates, and so forth. You’ve got to expect that they’re all going to succeed. You’ve got to make sure that it’s impressed upon everyone that you expect it, and it’s not a reason for kids to fail.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, I take it you also did financial analyses throughout this period of time.

MR. AXELROD: Actually, we didn’t. We were really looking at the student test scores and the impact of poverty, mobility. We had great information from Paterson. We also looked at the makeup of the family and its impact on test scores.

In addition to poverty and mobility, there were some other factors that we looked at that were really great. They gave us outstanding information. This was the best, in terms of information, from the school district for us to develop our report. And our conclusions were that it wasn’t the poverty and mobility, that it was the school building. It was what’s happening in the school. That’s what does it.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Let me ask you a question, then, that I asked David Sciarra.

The Court has now ordered parity funding. So getting away from the notion of parity for a moment to the notion of funding and using that as a number, should, in your opinion, from what you've seen, should the job be able to be done for the amount of money that's being spent?

MR. AXELROD: Absolutely. Absolutely. It should be done. You need the right people doing it.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: That's all the questions I have.

SENATOR RICE: I don't really disagree with the money factor, provided the money is going directly to what it's allocated for and not set up a whole new budget need for things that's not been allocated. So that takes me back to the other issue again. Those dollars are not used for demolition. Those dollars are not used for other things. So that's why we can't look at one part without looking at the other.

And let me tell you something. Even the new construction -- should build a new school. I guarantee you if you give it a couple of years, it's not going to be new anymore if the neighborhood is not really kind of rehabed.

I suspect after all these years we've been talking-- You know how I am about Arthur Andersen. You know we had the Paterson review years ago. And even you were concerned. We were raising questions about why your charts were doing this, which didn't make any sense. And I raised the question, "Are you using the right variable? Are you measuring these things?" You weren't sure. And you went back. So I suspect you're on track with what should be looked at now. Is that right?

MR. AXELROD: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: All right. Then I will take your information as being somewhat valued in terms of your reputation.

MR. AXELROD: Please do.

SENATOR RICE: That's before you came over. I had this time to straighten them out.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: See. You can be a substitute teacher.

SENATOR RICE: I don't want to do that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Consultant.

MR. AXELROD: He asked the right questions.

SENATOR RICE: I do agree, and I always argue that if a student is supposed to learn, and the teacher is willing to teach -- and it comes from our slave history. That's how I know it's true. We're going to educate folks. In our history, we've been in dungeons and holes, and people lit the candlelight. They didn't want us to learn. I agree with that.

I also agree, and this is my problem with this Whole School choice piece, because I'm saying, "If I'm taking the same students from this school and putting them around the corner in another building, and all of a sudden they start to learn -- everything is equal except for the building, etc., maybe some of the teachers are even the same. All of a sudden, there's a difference in learning." And I think goes about the class size, new facilities, feeling good about yourself, and more parental involvement, because the parents feel they have something to get involved with.

MR. AXELROD: But you know, what it also goes back to -- adding to what you just said, it's accountability. It's holding people

accountable for what they do. The principal has to hold those teachers accountable.

SENATOR RICE: That was the point I was getting to. I just want to caution you. When you speak to those of us in the Legislature, there's strong leadership. Some strong leadership is only strong because they intimidate folks, and they abuse them, which means morale is down, and we have real problems. The government runs that way. Good leadership is really the proper term -- good leadership that has a firm grip on things that can motivate these teachers and the folks to get the job done. I think that's what's making the difference.

That's the only point I want to make -- is that when you talk -- because I know Trenton. When you start talking to us and talking to other folk-- They are a strong leadership. Meanwhile, half of our folks are in handcuffs in school and not free to be flexible to teach and do things they want to do.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Chairman.

Sorry I had to go out and take care of something. We're running a little behind today.

But I wanted to ask, have you looked at, and I'm sure you have, differences among maybe black and Hispanic performance and white and Asian performance in the same school settings?

MR. AXELROD: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: What kind of education needs to be done to prevent -- because I-- Just as recently as the day before yesterday, I was

at Bloomfield High School. And I was the-- I talked to two classes about government and different things.

The first class I spoke to was basically all white. And then the second class I spoke to had about 50 percent minority in the class. And I asked the teacher. She said, "Well, the first class was mostly college-bound students." And the second class was students that they considered a regular track type students. She told me she didn't agree with that concept or philosophy. But that's, in fact, what I was seeing.

I was wondering, have you seen that throughout the state?

MR. AXELROD: Well, may I suggest that you look at our last report? I remember now what I forgot to say. It was on ethnicity and on race. We looked at the test results. It's the Jersey City, Paterson final report '97-'98 -- I think that's when it was -- '97-'98. And it breaks it down. And we comment on that.

I urge you to-- I'm sure Melanie has copies of it. If not, we'll get you a copy. We evaluate it, and we look at it, and we make comment to it on achievement of the breakouts of kids within schools. It was specifically in the Paterson one that was wherever we generate the information from here. They really have a great information system for us to use. So I urge you to look at that. It will really give you a lot of good information.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Do you know whether -- and I guess maybe you're not the best person to ask-- Do teachers get this -- get all of the information back with respect to the studies that are done and what's happening in their classrooms?

MR. AXELROD: Well, we-- Of course, our client is the Joint Committee. But we also provide it to the districts. It's up to them to-- I can't answer the question is what I'm saying to you. It's up to them to provide the information. We chart it. We graph it. We show it in different ways. We make conclusions about it. I don't know if the information is passed on, truthfully. We do it by school.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Is any information done on a classroom-by-classroom level? Is it broken down to that degree?

MR. AXELROD: I shouldn't say that. You asked by classroom within a grade level. The answer is no. We have not done that.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Just an effort to get information with respect to performance and what impacts performance. We know there are a lot of variables involved. But clearly, I think we need to look at it on a classroom-by-classroom basis in terms of what's going on.

MR. AXELROD: Well, that should be available to you to get from the Department.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: And the last thing, in terms of information, do we-- Is there any way that we have to identify performance of individual students without making public their scores -- but identifying progress of individual students from grade to grade over a period of time, and has that been done?

MR. AXELROD: I don't know if it's been done. The answer is, yes. You should be able to get that information. The schools certainly have that. They have the information by student and can track it through the course of the grades.

I know I sound like a broken record, but I have to tell you that I have a lot of experience in this, and I really feel that you need to look at leadership. You need to look at the person who heads the district, the person who is the head of the building, who will not accept failure.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Well, I tend to agree with you to some extent. I think you can have a great teacher without a great principal. But you could have a bad teacher with a bad principal.

MR. AXELROD: With a great principal.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: But if you have a great principal, they won't tolerate a bad teacher.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me. I don't mean to cut you off. A great teacher will tolerate a bad principal.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Well, sometimes, for a certain--

SENATOR RICE: The politics may interfere with it. And that's where we have to work closely with our organizational folks, whether it's the educational -- principal associations, etc. to make sure that it is not done, because it is done too much. And I think that anyone who represents a school -- I don't care if it's a wealthy district -- that says it's not happening, it is not true.

MR. AXELROD: You're absolutely right.

SENATOR RICE: So I still have to concur with the Assemblyman on that.

MR. AXELROD: Can I pick up on that, please? (affirmative response)

The politics are so important about who gets appointed, who gets the jobs, who gets the key leadership jobs. Right now, I'm working with New York State trying to get similar legislation passed for takeover of the Roosevelt school district in Nassau County. It has to do with the way the state wants to remove the board of education, have the commissioner hire the superintendent and report directly to the commission because of what you said, because of the politics, because of the appointments that were made that were just unbelievable. And you find relatives-- I don't have to draw a picture for you. You know what I'm talking about.

So they're trying to get the same leadership -- the same legislation I mean -- that you have here in New Jersey. And I don't think it's that bad, the legislation.

SENATOR RICE: Well, I do. But that's a different matter.

MR. AXELROD: I understand.

SENATOR RICE: Tell them to call me, because--

MR. AXELROD: No, I don't want them to call you. (laughter)

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Anything else for the witness?

SENATOR RICE: No, I just-- If I can--

My concern is one that the Assemblyman raised, as well. I've always, and this goes back from personal experience -- and you've got to start to pick this up, regardless of what it implies and what direction it's given.

I just don't believe we can continue to build special schools for those who "aren't doing academically the best." To me, that's discriminatory, and it's isolating leadership. When I went to South Side, which is now Shabazz, those of us who were "doing academically better" never left the school.

What they did was, because there was a need to maybe give us some more competition, put us in what they called advanced classes -- reading classes. It might have been first year college math or English.

But I've identified, during that period of time, my peers who were good academic students who decided they were going to mess around a little bit and kind of drop one cycle here or there every grade -- recognize all of us that went to this class -- they were no longer with us. So all of a sudden, they decided to get serious. So the next time they'd come to class with us.

My point is that I guess sometimes peers can-- And that commitment to leadership and relationships make a difference on how well people do -- then we can place students who are doing very well into a building without excluding someone.

And I've had the experience, going back a few years ago, where students thought there was something wrong with them. They were basically A and B students, but there was no room left in science. That's the only reason they couldn't go. But yet their friends went. And they kept thinking. And that attitude caused them to diminish in their participation. So they were no longer an A.

I don't think, on a conscious level, they recognized themselves that they were diminishing in a grade just because of their own psychological blockage, if you will.

That's something that needs to be looked at as to school management, leadership, and how things are done relating to the particular urban school districts, etc. The smaller districts -- maybe they have that luxury, but I know the big districts just don't have the luxury, etc.

So I wanted to at least put that on -- and there are some that maybe you want to look at a little bit more as you continue to look at numbers for us.

I think that's about all I had, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Gentlemen, thank you very much.

MR. AXELROD: Thank you for this opportunity.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Finally, Dr. Jacqueline Jones from the Educational Testing Service.

We appreciate your patience. I'm sure you've heard some interesting things this morning.

JACQUELINE JONES, Ph.D.: My name is Jacqueline Jones. I'm a Senior Research Scientist at the Educational Testing Service, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Senators Robertson and Rice, and Assemblyman Stanley, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Achievement differences, as well as the gap in the nature and quality of resources among schools and districts, are well documented in New Jersey and across the country. There is also increasing evidence underscoring the need for quality early childhood education in all our communities. Given that backdrop, today I will be talking about the role of testing, the role of teachers, and I'd like to present what we know from research about some of the essential elements that contribute to successful school districts. So if we can talk a little bit about what makes success, that might be helpful.

My testimony is based on over 10 years of ETS research on classroom based assessment of young children's reading and science learning. During this period, we worked directly with teachers and administrators in New

York's South Bronx and East Harlem and in the school districts of Trenton, Rahway, Linden, and South Brunswick, New Jersey.

As we look at testing, we're moving forward toward quality early childhood education. And it's essential that we're able to monitor children's progress. This often results in a desire to test. However, tests by themselves cannot improve educational outcomes. They can lead to improvement only if they become a stimulus to change in the educational system, a basis for improved curricula, upgraded instruction, better professional development for teachers, and better distribution of resources.

In early childhood education, we've taken the position that the primary purpose of assessment is not to classify or rank children, but rather provide educators with useful evidence about children's learning so that they can use that evidence to plan appropriate instruction.

In order to understand what and how young children are learning, we need more classroom based assessment systems that are specifically designed to inform the planning and implementation of appropriate instructional programs. We also need to be able to aggregate this data for accountability purposes.

If we look at successful school districts across the country, research tells us that those districts that have been most successful in educating all of its children share some things in common. You can look to my written remarks for elaboration, but in the interest of time, I'm going to go through a list, because some of them have been mentioned already.

What successful districts have in common are always a set of very clearly defined, challenging, and public standards that are focusing -- there's a

focus on these standards. Through their public policy, through their institutional structures, through their activities, these districts focus constantly on the standards that they've defined. Parents, teachers, everyone knows what those standards are. They're challenging, and they become the driving force for a district.

There's also, in these successful districts, two kinds of shared beliefs. There's a belief that all children will learn, and there's also a belief that everything will be done to give teachers the knowledge, skills, and resources to be able to teach those children.

Successful districts also have high-quality instructional programs. The instructional program that will allow the district to meet the children's learning goals is critical.

Throughout the years, I've come to believe that the most precious commodity in school districts is really not money. I think it's time. It's the time to do the work. It's the time for teachers to think about what they're doing, to plan, to do the teaching itself, to reflect, to collaborate with their colleagues. And across successful districts, we see innovative ways in which superintendents and principals have provided the time that they need and that their teachers need to plan programs to teach and to think about what they're doing. That time has to be provided, and it has to be protected.

There is always, in these successful districts, a monitoring system; a system that gives feedback about student progress, looks towards the specific goals, how they're used, what's understood. It's assessment information that's used to tell educators and parents how children are progressing towards those goals without that kind of monitoring system. It's not a punitive system, but

it's an information gathering device that is then used to provide, modify, reflect on programs. Without that kind of system, you don't know where you are, and there's no way to know if you're succeeding.

There's always, in these districts, a coherent system of professional development activities that enable teachers to carry out their instructional responsibilities, gather evidence, apply what they've learned. It can be a series of activities. It needn't be just a-- It shouldn't be just the speaker of the month. We see that very often. You've got to develop the time. And let's get a different speaker to come in every month. That's not a coherent professional development system.

It can be something institutionalized. There are cross-grade meetings. There are same-content area meetings. There are ways in which teachers have to start to fine-tune their skills, increase their instructional content knowledge, and increase their ability to teach better.

There is, also, what I think is one of the most critical factors -- we've just heard some talk about this -- a stable district administration that really provides instructional leadership. You've heard a lot about that from the last presenter, but I think that that is absolutely critical. Very often, you have strong leaders, and I do mean instructional leaders, but they have to be there to keep everyone focused on the goals and, I think, sometimes to maintain the institutional memory -- to know why we're doing what we're doing, to know who we are and where we're going, and to maintain a coherent system of policies and procedures.

The last element of a successful district I'm going to present is that of an educational partnership between the home and the school. This is not

simply having parents come in and listen to how their children are doing, but it's really having parents become part of the data gathering business of how children are doing, having parents understand what the goals are, how they can be a part of helping their children learn, how they can support their children's growth, and having them have a respectful way to participate with teachers and administrators in the schools.

Those we see as critical factors that are common in successful districts. And these are districts that are rural, urban, minority, money, no money. It is the hallmark. These factors have become the hallmark of how districts succeed in teaching all children.

There's also the role of teachers. And it is clear that teachers are the key. But the preparation and ongoing development of well-trained teachers and administrators is a key, we think, to closing the achievement gap. Over the past 10 years, we've been pleased to count Trenton, an *Abbott* district, among those districts in which we've worked on classroom based research assessment projects focusing primarily on early science learning.

We have found teachers eager to form assessment study groups to learn new techniques for documenting the evidence of children's learning and to improve their own practice. We've also found in these districts, children that are as curious and energetic and eager to learn about the world around them as their more advantaged contemporaries.

Without consistent programs, consistent leadership, a consistent curriculum, and a sensible monitoring program, these teachers can't perform their jobs. What you see is an anticipation that things will change. Teachers

will tell you, “I don’t know if I should really commit to this particular approach, because it will be gone next year.” And I don’t know that they’re wrong.

No matter how dedicated teachers are, they can’t effect lasting, systemic change alone. Good teaching and good teachers need to be valued and supported by a rational system.

As an organization, ETS is committed to supporting learning and advancing good teaching through research and a coherent approach to the licensing, advanced certification, and professional development.

In New Jersey, we have a new pre-K to third grade teachers’ certification system, and a State mandate that preschool teachers be certified. It is our hope that this process will help to produce a cadre of teachers who possess a deep understanding of human development, the tools to gather evidence of children’s learning, and the skills to use that information to implement effective instructional programs.

However, in many of *the Abbott* districts, we have another gap to confront, and that is the very wide gap between the current level of training and preparation of many preschool teachers and the State’s professional standards for the P-3 educators.

If our early childhood teachers and administrators are to meet the rigorous new certification standards, they will need sustained support from State and local leaders.

We strongly encourage State, district, and school leaders to look to the research on what we know about successful districts and to work together to ensure the implementation of a coherent, coordinated plan of standards,

monitoring, and ongoing professional development focused on improving teaching and learning.

I look forward to your questions.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Let me start with a couple of -- two of the same questions I've asked everybody, really.

I guess you're familiar with the New Jersey system in *Abbott v. Burke* and all of the challenges that we're meeting or that we're dealing with.

Parity funding has dictated that a certain amount be spent in *Abbott* districts. From what you've been able to gather -- and I realize you might not have done any study directly on this question -- but from what you've seen, is that an adequate amount of money in order to be able to deliver the product that we're talking about?

DR. JONES: You're right. I haven't done direct studies on this. What we've seen is that the issue is much more how the resources are spent. Are they spent within a coherent system? Are they spent in a system that really has clear goals and is focusing on getting everyone on the same page and making sure that children learn.

I feel very uncomfortable saying yes or no to your question. I don't know. What we do believe is that the resources are probably better than they've ever been -- getting better. And yet it's how you spend the human capital, how you cultivate that human capital that is the critical piece.

So you can buy lots of computers. We've done lots of studies on technology. So you've got lots of computers. They're just not being used. So what you spend your money on and how people are really going about the business of teaching, I think, is the important issue.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And the other question had to do with the notion of Whole School Reform versus what we heard this morning about a more homegrown approach. What is your sense, from your own studies and from your own experience, about the utility of -- if statewide dictates to follow one of several Whole School Reform models versus a more homegrown approach within a school building?

DR. JONES: As we look at the research on successful schools, the key factor has been that everyone understands the clear set of goals. How they get there, as long as they get there through a quality instructional program-- It's knowing where you're going. What kind of car are you going to drive? You need to know where you're going.

We find we are asked in many districts to come and design a series of assessment instruments. We can help districts answer the question of how well are children learning. But our job is not to design the question or design the answer to what are they-- So when we ask, what is it you want children to learn, it's not always a clear answer. It's a difficult moment in some places to really try to articulate a common set of values that people have and understand about what they want children to learn. And that makes it very difficult to design an assessment system. It's very difficult to figure out what kind of instructional program you want. You have to have an instructional program that matches your standards and your values.

And we've seen a mismatch in that in lots of places. People want certain kinds of goals, but the program they have doesn't really do that. Or, in worse cases, the assessments that they've decided to use don't match the instructional program. So there's coherence and a rational program. If it's

Whole School Reform or if it's a model-- But are there goals that people understand? Do they understand what children are supposed to learn? That seems to be the critical question.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, the State Department of Education, evidently, has indicated there were several models from which to choose to go forward. But do they have, from what you've seen, an adequate predicate to that in the vein of what you're speaking of?

DR. JONES: They seem adequate. But you see, they have to be implemented, and so you can--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, I don't mean the programs. I'm saying, is there an adequate predicate? In other words, is there a clear enough vision about where they want to go so that we can make a determination as to whether or not the Whole School Reform models are appropriate?

DR. JONES: I can't say that in every school district we've been in, people are very clear about what the standards are. That is--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Is the State unclear, however, to them?

DR. JONES: You know--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Or is that part of the problem?

DR. JONES: That may be part of the problem. And I think people wait for those standards to change, because there is, again, this lack of belief that something will remain constant.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, you made a point before about how your monitoring process is -- need not to be punitive as much as to be constructive. And yet, we've also heard testimony today that pointed to, if I can paraphrase the bottom line of the previous witness-- Sometimes it gets down to

not accepting any excuses for doing something, assuming that you didn't provide any sort of support that would be adequate.

In terms of policy makers, to DOE, to superintendents, to principals, how valid is it to say, "Just don't take any excuses?"

DR. JONES: I think leadership is critical. Leadership does not have to be punitive. I think we do not have a cadre of principals who are instructional leaders. They're managers. They manage the building. Nothing terrible happens. It's okay. It's not okay.

What needs to happen is that children need to learn, and teachers need to be constantly perfecting their skills as teachers. But I don't see that we have that kind of cadre of instructional leaders. And if you don't have an instructional leader, you don't have clearer goals, then I don't know how you can lead. And when you get a strong leader who is not talking about instruction, then you are talking about a kind of rule of force. And that is the most difficult thing for teachers to live in that kind of context, in which they're being forced to do something, but they don't know what it is, and they're not clear about what their real job is, that's teaching.

So I think it's possible to have very clear standards, to have monitoring systems that can really be helpful. And a good instructional leader wants them, because you need feedback that tells the State how things are going; the district, how schools are going; the school, how classrooms are doing. You need to be able to give that feedback to teachers. And teachers need that feedback in order to plan for kids.

So you can have a system that works well with a good instructional leader who understands how to interpret that data, because it's just numbers

until they come back to somebody who understands how they relate to the instruction. Then they become information.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. Thank you.

Senator.

SENATOR RICE: Yes. I think the Doctor's correct, basically.

It wasn't clear to me in your presentation where, and I suspect you would agree -- and--

We hear this thing about leadership, which I think is very important. You always have to have that. We certainly have to have standards and expectations, but standards that are clearly defined, and certainly ones on the same page.

And I also believe that the education system was lacking in many of the schools that I participated in. It's not the relationship-- "We all get along. We know each other. You have your class. I have my class." But the understanding of team concept has to relate to the mission of that institution under this "leadership" we keep talking about. And I don't think we have really defined, or at least implied or mandated from the education system -- start to move into this role of team leadership where even the secretary understands that his or her role is very crucial to the overall goal -- or the maintenance person understands that his role or her role is very crucial, so people can feel good as a team about results.

I don't hear enough of that, not even from the professionals that come before us. I kind of hear it implied, but I just-- And I read-- I say, "Well, maybe it's an oversight or something."

But I would like to ask, do you think-- I mean, leadership, to me, won't do it alone, even with the standards, because of the makeup of the system.

DR. JONES: Then you're right. I have implied it and not directly stated this. I think that leadership creates an atmosphere where everyone knows what those goals are, and everyone feels accountable and responsible for making sure that children learn.

We've seen, internationally, wonderful early childhood program in Reggio-Amelia in Italy. And we've sent lots of educators over there to see how we can replicate this. And I think one of the reasons we haven't been able to replicate it is because in this town of Reggio, everybody is responsible. The janitors -- everybody is responsible for making sure that kids get the very best that they can get. Everybody understands what needs to be done.

In good successful schools, the secretaries understand what the goals are. Everybody understands what the goals are. Everybody understands that there's a way we are here. We are here to do important things. The kids know they're here to do important things. And I think a good leader can create that without a sense of intimidation, but with a sense of importance. The kids know, "This is an important place I come."

We've worked with schools in New York where there are kids who haven't been able to make it in the regular schools in New York, so they go to these special schools. And yet, when you go into some of them, the very best ones, these are the kids who are doing all kinds of exciting things. They're off to interview politicians. They're off to do the fun things. Kids come to school because that's where their friends are.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Those are the wayward ones who are interviewing politicians. (laughter)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

DR. JONES: But if you can create that kind of atmosphere in a school where what the kids do is important and it's challenging-- Kids know when you're not creating an atmosphere that's important for them. They know when you're just letting them slide. And they'll do it. They'll slide. But they won't be happy. They aren't happy. And they know it.

But when you create a challenging, respectful atmosphere, and everybody's part of that, you get extraordinary kinds of things. Kids love to come to school. That's where their friends are.

SENATOR RICE: Just listening to you, I'm not sure we're defining the team concept the same. Clearly, there are teachers and institutions and principals and department heads and others who understand, and they work very hard, and they're good at understanding, "My job is to teach English. I'm the best at it, and I'm getting it done. Her job is teaching math." Team concept, to me, is understanding, yes, but understanding the relationship over here and the relationship over here and in relation to those other elements. And I think that's what the notion of team concept, even when it's being taught by consulting professionals in corporate America -- getting lost. And I think that's why corporate America kind of shies away, at least the leadership, from trying to implement that, because it may very well be that the instructor or the persons never connect what a person downtown at the board of education -- is part of that team because of the way it's set up. But you have to understand that there

is a team member there who is dependent upon what they do, or vice versa and how that--

And that's what I'm looking at, because I don't -- I'm not sure we've done enough studies on that or have enough information on just how the system, overall in New Jersey, is functioning, relating to those particular things. Leadership -- we keep looking at. Team concepts -- understanding team concept the way that it can be defined in our system we're not looking at.

I don't want people to make a mistake and say, "Yeah, let's take this word and define it," because that's like people saying from the accounting perspective, we're doing a cost-benefit analysis -- that \$2 million is cheaper than \$1 million. And I say you're wrong. Two million is more than one. I said, "No, you're wrong, \$2 million is less than \$1 million" -- on the true cost-benefit analysis, when you plug in those other variables.

So maybe we need to make a note to maybe have more discussion with the educators and the accounting folks about this whole notion of leadership and team concept not wanting a vacuum, because it's not going to work that way, even if everybody was doing their job. It's like psychiatrists working with criminal justice people. Everybody have their own shingle. They're independent. They're almost the same theories, but refuse to come and accept it. And it's that independence that I'm worried about in the institutional -- education institutions that I think maybe also have an impact on the effective for that school -- after we put the resources there and after we identify that we have probably the best human resource piece there with the financial piece, things still are falling apart and why. And I think that's the element, not the leadership.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay.

If there's nothing further--

Thank you very much, Doctor.

We will pick up this discussion again on the 22nd in Newark. I should mention that we actually do have some food if anybody is interested.

MS. SCHULZ: In the multipurpose room, there's a tray of sandwiches and some soda. Please help yourself.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: There are smiles all around on that happy note. (laughter)

Thank you all very much for coming and helping us. It's been very instructive.

SENATOR RICE: Good job, Mr. Chairman.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)