
Public Hearing

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

“Testimony from the education field on the achievement gap”

LOCATION: Dayton Street School of Science and
Global Technology
Newark, New Jersey

DATE: October 22, 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 of the Public Schools
Abbott Subcommittee



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SENATOR NORMAN M. ROBERTSON (Co-Chairman):

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. (audience responds) There we go. That's great. Thank you all for coming out.

My name is Senator Norm Robertson. I represent the 34th Legislative District, which is currently -- consists of Clifton, Wayne, Totowa, Little Falls, Bloomfield, and Glen Ridge -- will be consisting of Clifton, Montclair, East Orange, Glen Ridge, and West Paterson. I'm joined by my colleagues, Senator Rice and Assemblyman Stanley, both of whom, I guess, represent the 28th District. Both of our districts have *Abbott* school districts in them.

One of the things I wanted to do was to just give you an introduction as to how these hearings came about. These hearings really are the result of conversations that I've had with Senator Rice over a period of time. All three of us serve on the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. That's why there are Assembly people and Senators both on that committee. We all belong to a subcommittee of that committee, which is the *Abbott v. Burke* Subcommittee. One of the important educational issues, I think, that has come about in recent years has been something that has been loosely termed an achievement gap between the achievement in urban areas and suburban areas. We felt that it was important for us to stimulate a dialogue and take a look at some of the issues that revolve around that. A number of people have agreed to testify. That's one of the reasons that we're taking these hearings.

This is the second in a series of three hearings. The first one was in Paterson a couple of weeks ago; we're having this one in Newark today; and

we're going to have a third one in Camden, at a location to be announced. We're still making those physical arrangements. But the purpose of this really is to shed light on what I think is a critical need, and that is the need for us to take a look at the *Abbott* districts. And instead of worrying about all the, I guess, logistical *T*'s that we're crossing and *I*'s that we're dotting, is to take a step back and approach the issue in the way that it is approached to us when we see people on the street.

For instance, I had an interesting exchange with an East Orange board member about a year or two ago, where they were saying, "Well, gee, we have to worry about class size, and we have to bring down the class size." And I said, that's correct. Every time I talk to a teacher, for instance, from the city of Newark -- and I have on many occasions -- what's the one thing that we can do to help educate children? And they said, "Reduce our class size so that we can pay attention more closely." And yet I will be on the street, and I will run into a senior citizen who will say, "Well, gee, I really don't understand. How is it possible to spend whatever it might be -- \$11,000 or \$12,000 or \$13,000 per year per student -- and still have to put up with a class size of 35?" These are the sorts of fundamental questions that we want to take a step back and begin to take a look at, as well.

We've seen a variety of input from the standardized tests that were done. We are at a bit of a handicap, and we'll be discussing this with the Department of Education in our final hearing. We are at a bit of a handicap in that we do not have the absolute latest test scores. We have the test scores from 2000, which are significantly different, as we learned from some of the test scores from 2001. So, as we take a take a look at these issues, it would be

helpful to us if there are questions that you feel we should be, in turn, posing to the Commissioner of Education or to the Department of Education.

So, with that, let me ask Senator Rice if he has any opening comments. Oh, let me, by the way, point out, parenthetically, even though I represent a district that's Passaic and Essex County and relatively suburban, I grew up in the city of Paterson, went to the Paterson Public School, School Number 9, and Kennedy High School. This is an area that I promised myself, when I ran four years ago, that I would make sure I got into, because I saw what was happening in the Paterson school system, and I am extremely concerned for parents of students in urban, inner-city neighborhoods, and as to whether or not they feel they're going to be able to get the education that their children need from their neighborhood schools. We want to either be able to assure them that that is true, or we need to be able to assure them that something is being done to make it true.

With that, let me ask Senator Rice if he has any comments.

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

First of all, good morning. (audience responds) I want to thank all of you for coming to participate, and those who -- I see some of our parents back there and PTA people -- for listening to understand that there's a very serious problem in New Jersey that we believe that not one that's related directly to the money as related per pupil spending for school construction. And we're looking at schools, yes, but we're looking at improvement, but there's still this unknown about this thing called achievement gap. We believe that it is where we're going to have to be very vigilant, if you will, in the future

in the State House, identifying causation and the problem in closing that gap.

This morning, at this hearing, I understand that we did invite both the governor candidates to discuss their perceptions, their notions, their understanding of the achievement gap. We think that that is very important, because after November the 6th, some of us are going to be in the State House, some of us will not be in the State House. We will have a governor, regardless of who that governor is. And if, in fact, they do not understand that in the education arena, as we talk about *Abbott v. Burke*, we talk about school construction, that there is such a thing known as an achievement gap that needs substantial improvement. But we cannot improve anything without information and data.

Also, I wanted to just indicate that the hearing in Paterson was very interesting, and that's why we're really pleased to be at Dayton Street this morning, because I raised some questions at that hearing. Some very positive things came out, but School Number 28 in Paterson is located in a neighborhood that almost mirrors this neighborhood. Right across the street is public housing. Some of us come down -- so down the street, they're building new townhouses. Yet, they seem to have the worse, some of the worst, problems with school, as in testing and achievement out of the school system. But when I lay that down next to Dayton Street, I see a whole different picture. And it started to dawn on me that, well, if we have public housing at Dayton Street and we're turning them down, that means we still have a similar transition to factor. We have a similar crime rate, I believe, and we certainly have the same basic diverse population. Why is Dayton Street looking a little bit different than School Number 28? And so, these are the

kinds of questions that we have to raise, because we have to identify the variables that we need to be looking at in order to address this achievement gap solution from a holistic approach, and hopefully we would have data in from both these districts, the Dayton Street area geographically and Paterson, so we could see just what that picture looks like, etc.

So I'm very happy to be here. I'm also very happy to see our principal is doing a great job here and our superintendent. And I want to say this for the public record with my colleagues here, is that Newark has been undergoing a tremendous change over the years and a lot of difficulty. We're improving, but we've been blessed because we happen to have the best superintendent in the state, particularly when it comes to the past problems that have to be addressed in a larger school system in the takeover district.

So, I want to commend you also, Marion, on the job that you are doing. I also want to acknowledge the superintendent from our other school district, the Township of Irvington, who Assemblyman Stanley and I represent, who is also recently new. It is interesting because Mr. Smith and Marion came about the same time, and the new commissioner came here the same time, so I knew we could take advantage of that and enjoy a good relationship. We're doing good in Newark and Irvington, as we see it, but we know we need a lot of improvement. We've got to close that gap. We've got to get answers to questions, and that's what this forum is all about.

And I believe when we leave here, we'll be in Camden. Is that correct, Senator?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: That's correct.

SENATOR RICE: Okay. Thank you very much, and let's enjoy the day.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay.
Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Senator.

I'd just like to echo Senator Rice's remarks with respect to the superintendents. Of course, the superintendent of Newark, who has done a, I guess -- Is there such a thing as a yeowoman? -- but has done a terrific job and under some rather interesting circumstances.

I think it's important that we have these hearings. As a matter of fact, I had called for hearings almost a year and a half ago when first assigned to the Joint Committee, because in order for us to work through the issues that we need to work through to ensure that all the children in the State of New Jersey get the constitutionally promised, constitutionally required and mandated education to which they're entitled, is to get information from the superintendents directly to the Legislature, in terms of exactly what is going on in the districts and the relationship between the Department of Education and the districts. In some cases, we're going to have to allow the superintendents the almost-- I guess you might even call it to testify without -- what do you call that -- with immunity, to get to the facts in terms of things like Whole School Reform, in terms of the school construction project, in terms of all of the issues that relate to delivering a quality education in the urban areas.

So I think this is a tremendous opportunity for us to gather information. I think probably more important than what the governors purport to do, whether the potential governors purport to do, and I think

that's good for us to get an idea of what their intentions are, but to see exactly how the bureaucracy and the role of bureaucracy, the current bureaucracy, is playing in the delivery of education.

But again, Senator, it's -- as I said a year and a half ago, I was clamoring for this -- better late than never. I look forward to the testimony today.

Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you, Assemblyman.

With that, I should also note, that we're going to make transcripts of these hearings, and we'll make those transcripts available to both candidates for governor, and that way at least they'll have a bit of a basis that they can start on.

But in having said that, let me call upon the Newark Superintendent, Marion Bolden, who has had such a difficult task assigned to her and has done yeoman work. And we also have Susan Kandell, who is the principal of Dayton School, I believe.

Is Ms. Kandell here also? Oh, if you could just come up to the witness table, we'd appreciate it, and we'd appreciate hearing from you.

MARION A. BOLDEN: Good morning.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Good morning.

MS. BOLDEN: Let me also welcome you to the Newark Public School district and particularly Dayton Street School. We do refer to ourselves as the ever-improving Newark Public Schools. At some point in the future, we will not say that, but right now, that's what we choose to identify ourselves.

What I'd like to do is to allow Ms. Kandell to come up and bring greetings and also say some things about her school. And then, if I could come back-- I know that Assemblyman Stanley asked if I would be willing to testify or answer some questions, and I was somewhat reluctant. But when I just listened to what it is in terms of your mission, I would be more than glad to do that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, you certainly can share the table actually.

MS. BOLDEN: Okay. I think she wants me to be here with her.

S U S A N E. K A N D E L L: Always.

Good morning.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Good morning.

MS. KANDELL: On behalf of the students and the staff and the parents of Dayton Street School, I welcome you to Dayton Street School. I do see some familiar faces, some old friends, on the stage. I also see some former students of Dayton Street School on the stage. And anybody who has walked through the doors and as visitors today, we welcome you now as friends to Dayton Street School. And if I might indulge the Committee for about five minutes of your time, I would like to tell you a little bit about myself and this school that I represent.

I have been at Dayton Street School for 31 years. I started as a teacher in 1971. Dayton Street School certainly is a home for me. And we at Dayton Street School believe that all children can and will learn. To that very end, we try to provide the children with as many resources, activities, and collaborations as we can to support us in our efforts. We take a lot of pride

here at Dayton Street School in the fact that we have so many programs that keep the children on track and provide opportunities for the students. I'd like to take a moment to highlight them.

Dayton Street School is one of the four schools in Newark that has a school-based health clinic. That clinic is funded by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, and 99.9 percent of the students at Dayton Street School receive free medical and dental care on site. Dayton Street School has a full robotics program. The children work in a computer lab, and they build robots. That is in conjunction also with a grant that we have from the-- It's a multimillion dollar grant to the district, and we participate in the Stevens Institute of Technology Workforce Grant that is an attempt to integrate science and technology into turnkey training to the teachers, who have to then turnkey that to the students.

Dayton Street School is a VH1 Save the Music School. We were one of the first here. Actually, I think we are the first to have had that. We have a wonderful musical program, both vocal and instrumental. Dayton Street School is rich in a lot of other programs. We have a parent volunteer program. We have a GED program. We also have numerous recreational activities, boys and girls basketball teams, and then we collaborate with some of the other universities. We are the only school in Newark right now that sends students out for on-site tutoring at Rutgers University.

We believe that we have a large mission ahead of us, but we continue to work towards our goals, which is in collaboration with the district in which we have received a huge amount of support from the superintendent and her central office staff. We look forward to our future ventures, and we

look forward to having you visit with us to see some of these programs actually taking place. It's something wonderful to see.

I thank you for your time.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And thank you for your hospitality.

MS. KANDELL: You're very welcome.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But don't go away either, please.

MS. KANDELL: Don't go away, okay.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Superintendent, anything you'd like to--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Before that, I just want to confess that I was one of the people she was speaking of when she mentioned some of us have gone and graduated from Dayton Street School. As a matter of fact, I lived in those projects they blew up about four or five years ago, Senator. But it's certainly great to be back. The school looks as great as it did when I went here. And that's really saying something, because it's a beautiful school. I had a tremendous experience here.

Thank you.

MS. KANDELL: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And how long have you been principal?

MS. KANDELL: I've been principal for six-and-a-half years, and prior to that I was a vice-principal here for eight and a half. That's a long time.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, okay. That's a veteran.

Superintendent, is there anything you'd like to add in terms of overview, generally, before we have questions?

MS. BOLDEN: Yes. I also would like to commend Ms. Kandell. She has done a very, very good job.

Also, I just want to remind folks that Senator Rice and I both graduated from the same high school at the same time, because the mayor makes a point of saying that I graduated long before he did. (laughter)

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now you're straining your own credibility. I would assume that he graduated long before you. (laughter)

SENATOR RICE: That's because I didn't shave.

MS. BOLDEN: No. In prior to, I guess, asking questions, let me just say that in the two years that I have been superintendent, I think that we have been successful in doing a number of things that have moved the district forward. But I am also a product of the Newark Public Schools. I have been in this district, by choice, my entire career. I look at what I am charged with doing as an opportunity to help our youngsters and to make opportunities available to them. I was very hopeful that with the *Abbott* ruling that much of what we had hoped to see would certainly come to pass. And I think that done the right way, *Abbott* can make all the difference in the world for urban youngsters. And I will testify and I will answer questions.

I think the early childhood program, perhaps, when it is implemented, when it is high quality in terms of the instruction, will make the biggest impact. I know that facilities are very critical, but they are not necessarily what makes the difference in terms of closing the achievement gap. In fact, my highest two achieving schools in the district are the oldest. The schools in Newark average 85 years. And the next district that comes close to us is a school district that has, on average, schools that are 35 years. So it costs

an awful lot of money just to maintain schools that are as elderly as ours are. So having \$1.6 billion to help construct new schools is very important, as well.

The issue, I think, that has probably frustrated most of the *Abbott* superintendents is timing in terms of how much you're being asked to do and how much time you have to implement quality. And certainly we need to be reflective. You know, you have a set of regulations, and sometimes they work, and sometimes they need to be adjusted. But just in general, in terms of the things that *Abbott* affords school districts, we need to be allowed quality time to make it happen.

Because I just came back from the Council of the Great City Schools, a conference, and there are urban districts that are fairing very, very well -- five or six of them, in fact, one of which is Houston. And you know, you do talk to your colleagues to see what it is that they're doing, and it's not much different than the ingredients that we know it takes to change school districts. But opportunity is one. And anybody who suggests that resources do not make a difference, I would like to sit down and have a one-on-one challenge with them, because resources do make a difference. Certainly, quality teachers make a difference, but to suggest that you can do all that you need to do without resources, to me, defies logic. So, I think that if you look at some of the things that Newark has done, we feel not even close to what we really want to do, but we're very focused. And I do have teachers in this district who believe that they can move mountains, and that's the beginning.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I'll mention, parenthetically, that even as I go back to my own high school, I still see many of the teachers that were there when I was there, and I can only applaud their dedication.

Let me ask you this. I'll ask you one question that we have asked absolutely every witness that's come forward. In light of the mandate from *Abbott v. Burke*, which is essentially that at least the same amount of money be spent in the special needs districts as is spent per pupil in the most successful districts, usually thought of as the most affluent districts, the INJ districts, what is your budget currently, and is that enough money for you to do the job?

MS. BOLDEN: We haven't gotten an approved budget. We are asking for \$79 million in supplemental funding. If we were to get that approved, I would say, yes, it would be enough to get the job done. Understand that last year we had \$650 million as a budget, and that's a fairly large budget, but this is a very large district as well. But when you have Whole School Reform and you have models and you have required additional positions, it is why our budget has increased.

Let me give you an example. With the required positions that the developers, through their illustrative budgets, require of the schools, we had to hire about 600 additional staff folks. So that is an added expense. Also, there are positions -- every school has a social worker. Every school has truancy/task force officers and the like. And part of what we're charged to do is to make better use of the money that's there. So part of it is reallocation. And I agree. I think that's fair. I think districts have to be accountable. There's no open checkbook, that what you're putting in place needs to make a difference.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, a \$650 million budget, how does that come out to the per pupil figure? What does that come out to?

MS. BOLDEN: We're at 11,100, I think.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Eleven, one.

MS. BOLDEN: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because I remember a couple of years -- I guess it was four years ago, when the parity decision came down, Newark was only about \$400 per pupil less than the IJ mark. So, is that 11,100 at the IJ mark or a little above it, or how does that compare?

MS. BOLDEN: It's a little above it.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: It's a little above that.

Now, taking a look -- you'd mentioned that some of your higher achieving schools are--

MS. BOLDEN: All right. But could I respond before you pass that?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Sure.

MS. BOLDEN: Because one of the things that bothers me is that someone will look at Newark's per pupil allocation, and they will say, "Well, here's another school district that gets somewhat less." There are different circumstances in Newark that contribute to that per pupil allocation, one of which-- And let me use Jersey City as an example, because it's a very large district as well. Jersey City has 34,000 youngsters, but they have 42 schools. Newark has 43,000 youngsters, but we have 80 buildings. And if you look at what it takes to maintain 80 buildings, then your per pupil necessarily is going

to go up -- that includes administrative costs, that includes security guards, and that's a situation that can't be rectified very quickly.

This school is, perhaps, typical of what a school enrollment should be. I have schools that have 150 kids. I have schools that have 200 youngsters. And certainly, I can't close them, because I have no place to deposit them. So, with our facility plan, at least some of our schools will be consolidated, but everyone wants to paint a brush that all school districts are the same. Newark is uniquely different and has a whole set of circumstances that are costly at this point in time.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What were those numbers again? Jersey City had 34,000 youngsters, did you say?

MS. BOLDEN: Right. And I believe they have 42 school buildings.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And 42 buildings.

MS. BOLDEN: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And you have 43, did you say?

MS. BOLDEN: We have 43,000 youngsters--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Right.

MS. BOLDEN: --and I have--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Eighty buildings?

MS. BOLDEN: --80 facilities, with my annexes.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay.

MS. BOLDEN: And we also, when we looked at Newark-- Because, you know, it bothered me. It bothered me that part of what I was being charged with, you have a high per pupil. And so the more we delved into

the whys of it, there are reasons that explained it. It doesn't mean that the kids are necessarily getting that much above everyone else. The other is the age of our staff. Sixty percent of our staff almost have been with the district 25- to 30-some-odd years. And so there's an issue that everybody is on the top of the scale, so to speak. And when you look at the next five or six years, all of our folks will be retiring, and certainly you do get some benefit from breakage in terms of age. But there are so many things contributing to that that, I said, I just want to go on record to say that it's not all what it appears when you first look at just bottom-line numbers

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Sure. And when you're done with your facilities plans, how many buildings will you have?

MS. BOLDEN: We'll have seven less.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: You'll have seven less.

MS. BOLDEN: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And you had mentioned before that some of your higher performing schools are in older facilities. Taking a look at -- and by the way, this is one of the reasons for the hearing is--

Don't go too far, though, okay, Principal, if that's all right?

MS. KANDELL: If you want me to stay, I will.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yes, if you could. Yes. Because I do have a couple of questions regarding test scores, because we'll need to be updated, because we only have 2000 information.

One of the things that a lot of people don't realize is that even within a school district there are higher performing schools. So that if you have a school that has a pass rate, for instance, of 60 percent or 70 percent, in

order to hit a certain district-wide average, it means that there are other schools that are at the low end of the scale. This is one of the things that we found at School 28. For instance, in the year 2000, their pass rate for fourth graders -- and there were 89 fourth graders tested -- was 1.8 percent, I believe. In other words, 1 child out of 89 had a combined total of -- proficient in all three areas. That's really one of the primary reasons for this hearing, for these hearings, is to really get at that question -- what is happening in those schools or in those neighborhoods or in those economic circumstances that are producing that type of failure, for lack of a better word, and I don't think there is a better word?

So, let me ask you, what do you see to be the primary difference -- if you can assess that -- between your highest performing schools and your lowest performing schools?

MS. BOLDEN: I think the administration and the focus on instruction is very critical. I think the climate of the school, I think the engagement of community and support have made a difference. If I were to profile each of those two schools, you would find a school that everybody feels they're part of the mission and that goes from security guards to cafeteria staff. And you would also find that the immediate community is very much involved with the school, but they are primarily focused on student achievement. They are not distracted by other issues and putting out brush fires. They deal with professional development, and they give the teachers the kind of support that they need.

Leadership is critical in school districts. Now that's irrespective of what model they're using, because I'm one who is of the opinion that you can

either make any of these models work, or they can all fail, depending on the buy-in and how prepared your teachers are. I think that in our-- And they've done it over time. It's not like two years ago they were at the very bottom and then they have moved up. It's been incremental, sustained growth. Now Ann Street might be the exception. They've been a high achieving school for a very long time.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What do their test scores look like, if you can recall?

MS. BOLDEN: Their test scores in terms of the ESPA and the GEPA -- 85 percent and 90 percent. When I talk about Abington Avenue School, I can tell you that it's probably -- and I would have to see what other districts in the state -- it's probably the highest achieving school in the state. They got 100 percent. On their fourth grade language arts, science, and mathematics, I think it was 95. And in GEPA, on two components, they also got 100 percent.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And again, if you recall, when I talked about how we were going to approach these issues, it was going to be in the way that people approach us. So let me ask this question in a very straightforward way. Why can't that experience be replicated in other inner city schools?

MS. BOLDEN: We're attempting to do that. The one piece that I did underscore, which is also critically important, is the parental involvement. We are looking to attempt to do that to provide the principals with the kind of support that they need, making the schools parent friendly. I wish I could tell you that it's in a bottle somewhere, and I could make this the model for

every single school, but it is what we intend to do. If a school is poorly performing over the course of four, five-- You need to do something. You do need to look to see what is going on there that needs to either be changed or perhaps reconstituted, as we did with one of our high schools.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, okay. The Newark School District, for instance, has been under State takeover for how long now?

SENATOR RICE: Too long.

MS. BOLDEN: He says, "Too long." Six years.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I was actually looking for a number.
(laughter)

MS. BOLDEN: For six years.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: For six years. Okay. Now, do you have testing information that ranges throughout the six years from which to draw those sorts of conclusions?

MS. BOLDEN: Yes, we have testing information that would show that there has been growth over five years, but nothing significant with the exception of--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I don't mean to interrupt, but I'm not asking for an overall characterization. What you had just said is that, "Well, our highest performing schools have qualities such as administration, climate, instructional focus, leadership, community buy-in and involvement." And that when you have a situation where you have a lower performing school, if you notice that over a period of years, then something has to be done. I guess my question is, if the State has been in there for six years and these lower

performing schools are still not performing, what do you have available to you to remedy that situation?

MS. BOLDEN: I think that's what the *Abbott* ruling spoke to. That if you were to take and invest in quality instruction, provide the kind of resources, provide tutoring, if in fact that's what a youngster needs, you can have a youngster in one part of town come to school on grade level. You can have another youngster in another part of town who comes to school in kindergarten already two years behind. So there are different interventions that are needed in different situations. If a youngster doesn't get quality help at home, what do we do as a school administration? We do as much as we can during the course of the time that we have there, which includes one-on-one tutors, which includes an extended day, which in cases-- An example would be evident here, that we have Saturday academies, because youngsters need to be propped up by an assortment of different ways.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I understand that, and I agree with that, and that's one of the reasons I generally support these programs. But I guess my question is, and the question that people come up to me -- because I live right next to Paterson, and we get the same question there. The fourth graders that we're testing now have been in the school system the entire time. For the entire time they've been in the school system, the State has been running the system and has pumped in enormous amounts of money in order to move those children from point *A* to point *B* -- those children you had since they started school.

MS. BOLDEN: You're saying the State has pumped in enormous amounts of money in the districts that they're running, or in all of the districts? I don't understand.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, I can only ask about Newark. What was the Newark budget, for instance, five, six years ago, if it's \$650 million last year?

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman, if I may interject, before the superintendent responds. Let me clarify some things. The State pumped in a lot of money, but they pumped out a lot of money. You see, this is the takeover district, unlike Paterson and Jersey City where 70 million-plus-- If we compute those numbers, it may come to \$100-plus million. But we also made some mistakes in identifying who should run the district from a State perspective. When this superintendent came on board, which is really recently, not only did we have the traditional deficit that was alleged to be there when Ms. Hall came in, it got compounded when the 70 million-plus was taken out. So the State tried to not put in all new money, but tried to take what was already there and infuse it a lot quicker to look as though we were getting those dollars back. I think that's why this supplemental piece giving *Abbott* becomes very important, because the numbers are almost about where we started, etc. So I think that's important to put things in perspective--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, absolutely.

SENATOR RICE: --prior to being answered. That's the only-- Because my feeling is that had that "70 million" stayed intact and been accounted for, because that was used, the State in time was accounted for, you

may see some different things happen even now with this superintendent, even though you see a lot of good things happen.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, the reason I asked the question is because I had conversations with the Education Law Center and others, four or five years ago, when the parity decision was coming down and the Newark system was said to be within \$400 of the INJ school districts. Now, they're even a little ahead of the INJ school districts. Even with all the caveats there, every witness that we've had said that that should be enough money to do the job. I guess what I'm getting to is, at what point, as a superintendent, do you say the numbers just don't justify us staying with the same team that we have in a particular school? I mean, how many years have to go by with children not being educated to proficiency to the tune of four out of five, five out of six, nine out of ten, who aren't educated to proficiency? At what point do we make personnel changes or do something other than try to get additional resources being put in there, if at all?

MS. BOLDEN: Well, because -- see, I'm going to be careful when I answer questions here. It's not all about resources, and I never said that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Nor did we say you did.

MS. BOLDEN: Okay. But in terms of -- at some point in time, you do have to look at a school and reconstitute it. I would have to give a team the kind of support that they need. I'd have to give them the kind of professional development, and also intercede at the same time in terms of helping youngsters. I would think, two or three years, I'd like to see some kind of growth. I say the same thing in terms of the superintendent. I mean, I'm here for a purpose, and it is to improve the quality of life and the test scores

in this district. And at some point in time if that doesn't begin to happen, somebody needs to hold me accountable. We in this district -- because you're asking me to go-- I can't address everything that happened prior to my becoming superintendent. But for example, I have goals and guiding principles and an accountability system that's somewhat different than anybody has had before.

The way that we're writing our principal's evaluation is different, because it has to be tied to some accountability. And so I would, first and foremost, make sure that the folks that we're asking to pick up and do the job are given the kind of resources that they need. I also have to look at each case individually, but I would not let a school perpetually be underachieving and not do something about it.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, just as an example-- By the way, one of the things that we said, and even at our first hearing, is that we're not looking to blame any sector or factor, because I come into this with the assumption that there are 30 different reasons for an achievement gap or more.

MS. BOLDEN: I truly believe you, but I know that this is a public hearing, and sometimes what you say gets misinterpreted, and so--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, absolutely.

MS. BOLDEN: --I have to be--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because we are asking the questions as they are asked of us.

MS. BOLDEN: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because I don't have an answer to a question like that. When somebody says to me, "Well, if we're spending this

much money, how come we still have test scores where nine out of ten children aren't educated to proficiency?" But the point is that while on one level we say, all right, we have to make sure that we give the resources in the micro sense to the buildings that are involved and to the staff that we're holding accountable, and yet we know that the resources seem to be, at least according to general reasons, although you gave some interesting data with respect to the number of schools, and so forth-- When it's being given to the school district as a whole, why don't those resources get down into the classroom?

MS. BOLDEN: And you know why I think that's-- If we're talking about *Abbott*, I'm going to tell you why I think that's not a fair question. I would almost cite quotations from Paul Tractenburg's article that he recently wrote. We've only been in the throes of Whole School Reform for, in terms of the Whole School Reform model, three years. In fact, we don't even have it right in terms of how do we support school districts? Rather than our focusing on student achievement and the implementation of Whole School Reform, we've been distracted.

I mean, do you know why she wants to leave? Because she's got to go do her budget. If I have my principals spending three months writing a 300-page budget, that takes them off task. So, I said, until it's implemented in a way that it is supporting schools and not distracting them from the mission, you're not going to see-- We said, we're not going to let anything distract us this year. But bottom line is, you still have to -- we have to figure out the early childhood-- I've got 64 providers that work with us. So you know what we're doing? We're trying to put together the infrastructure that's going to support all of this.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Do you have any schools in the district -- because I think there were a couple in Paterson -- schools in the district where the turnaround has been dramatic, the scores have been low and now they're a lot higher.

MS. BOLDEN: Well, let me ask, because she's been in Whole School Reform longer than anyone else, because some of our efforts with SFA started before--

MS. KANDELL: Three years ago.

MS. BOLDEN: --three years ago.

Do you want to respond to that?

MS. KANDELL: Sure. Dayton Street School has been in Whole School Reform. We're in our third year, and Success For All is our model. And, yes, we, in the past, have exhibited this roller-coaster result in terms of our data. However, we're beginning to see some sort of stabilization -- as a matter of fact, some positive increases, huge increases -- and we attribute it to the Whole School Reform model.

Let me give you an example, sir. The past ESPA scores, for the past year in Grade 4, we increased almost 20 percent in reading. This population of students have been in Whole School Reform for three years. As you know, SFA is purely a reading program. We also are able to say proudly that, as a result of Success For All, at the end of last year 89 percent of Dayton students are reading in second grade at or above grade level.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Like what are your scores, for instance? Because we don't have the 2001 scores, which is part of the problem

statewide. What are your 2001 scores for your fourth grade test, for instance, if you know them?

MS. KANDELL: In science, it's stabilized. For two consecutive years, 47 percent of the students are at proficient or advanced proficient levels. Off the top of my head, approximately -- around 35 percent of the students are at or above proficient levels in reading. That is the area that has made substantial growth.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because the year before, it was just under 16 percent.

MS. KANDELL: Right. That is correct, sir. And we do contribute that growth to the implementation of Success For All, because the goal of Success For All is to have students reading at or above grade level within a three-year period. That is the goal. We're doing a cohort analysis now with that second grade class, at the end of last year, that is 89 percent at or above grade level. Hopefully, and we're certain, sir, that at the end of the school year, we will have every student reading at or above grade level. That is the grade that we're tracking. They were the first grade that has the full benefit of Success For All for three years.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And how about math?

MS. KANDELL: Off the top of my head, sir, I can't remember that information right now.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: How about the combined rate? Because if I'm a parent, and I'm a parent of a three-and-a-half year old, and so we'd be taking a look at schools and a preschool, and so you ask them what your scores are and you want to send your child-- Every parent does, wants to

send their child to a school that has the greatest likelihood of giving them a well-rounded and efficient education.

So, for instance, two years ago, in the year 2000, the summary statistics in your general education part were 13.2 percent, as proficient. Of course, there were only 38 students tested, so that would mean 5 out of 38. Do you know what that combination score is now?

MS. KANDELL: I don't understand the question, sir, but I--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, there are four--

MS. KANDELL: You mean you want the average of the three subtests?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, yes. The way it's reported on the--

MS. KANDELL: I can't give that to you, sir, but I'd be more than happy to provide you with that information.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, okay. All right. Because the reason I ask these questions is because one of the things that we found from the last hearing is that, in those cases where schools have dramatic turnarounds, it was usually not particularly as a result of a model Whole School Reform. It was usually as a result of folks getting together within that school and having a more homegrown approach that just moved them from point A to point B. I was curious if there were any examples of that. That's why I asked about that.

MS. KANDELL: Well, let me just add something. I think 20 percent is a very significant growth. Part of it is, I feel, due to a reading

program. We desperately needed a reading program, but there are other aspects that come into play.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Oh, you've doubled it and not just 20 percent.

MS. KANDELL: I mean, you know--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: That's 20 percentage points. You've actually doubled it, which is even better.

MS. KANDELL: Great. And I think it's quite an accomplishment.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: That is.

MS. KANDELL: And I do think Success For All has been a factor in terms of getting an organized, consistent reading program. I am fully aware that there are other factors that come into play including teachers and parents, and it has to be a team effect. Whole School Reform does require us to bring parents in. Our model itself requires that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And let me ask the superintendent then, just sort of as a final line of questioning, and then I'll pass to my colleagues. I guess there are two major areas that one can focus on when it comes to trying to remedy a situation; one is resources and the other one is personnel. We've talked about how we have to get resources down to the school level, but has there been any personnel action that's been taken? And I don't know the answer to this question, so I violate my own rules as a lawyer. If you took the bottom half dozen schools in terms of performance, have there been any personnel changes at those schools, either at the principal level,

administration level, teacher level, or whatever? And if not, why not? If so, why? That sort of thing.

MS. BOLDEN: Since I've been superintendent, and again I remind you that I've been superintendent for two years, yes, I have moved three principals. This is not the place for me to have a public-- I'm not going to say any more than I will move people when there is a need to do it.

You were talking about test scores. I think that what really validates a school district is the graduation test. I mean, the other tests are used as a barometer, or what do you need to do to get your youngsters ready? And this year with our writing scores, 71 percent of our youngsters passed writing, and that went up 12 points. It was 58. Because as a school district, we focused on one major initiative and that initiative is writing. If you go to any school in Newark, you're going to find evidence that everybody's engaged in improving students' ability to write. And after having done that for two years, because that's what our focus has been, not to say that we didn't deal with other things, for us, that's breaking the glass ceiling. We had never had that. In the city, in terms of our high school youngsters getting to a certain threshold, I can tell you that we're not happy with the reading and the math, where 56 percent of our youngsters passed the math, but then they take the SRA, and then they take it again, and they take it again, and they have been somewhat successful. But you're saying, what contributes to student achievement? And I think that--

Here Ms. Kandell says that SFA has made a big difference in her school. I can take you to two other schools that have SFA, and they're not doing much of anything. So there is an issue of buy-in. There is an issue, does

it fit, has the staff embraced it, are they doing all that they can to ensure? Those are illustrations to me of school leadership that if you haven't sold the model, we perhaps are doing more damage than we're doing good.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, and as a matter of fact, when you ticked off those elements that represent a good school, you were very consistent with other testimony that we've received -- administration, climate, instructional focus, leadership, community buy-in, and so forth.

MS. BOLDEN: And parental involvement.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And parental involvement.

Now the question I have, though, is, for instance, you say for remedial purposes or recognizing that there is a need to do so, you've moved three principals. Does that mean that they've been put in charge of other schools, or that they've been given alternative assignments?

MS. BOLDEN: It varies. Right. Personnel issues, I don't want to do that. I really don't want to do that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I don't mean to get into personnel. Okay. I understand.

MS. BOLDEN: If you want to call me on the phone and talk, then we'll do that.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. Well, I was really getting at what you have available to you as an alternative. I'm not that concerned with individual folks, but if there is something structural that prohibits you from being able to act more forcibly, that's something we should know about.

Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: Yes. First of all, let me just say to everyone that's here, believe me -- and all of you know me from this district -- the Committee is not here to intimidate anybody. We're not here to take away anything. We're not here to do harm, because I can see some frustration brewing. We're here to help. We are the State, but I'm here. So, just remember, I'm here, okay. We've got to have clarity on the answers -- not personnel stuff -- because I'm telling you, I have a problem with things that happen throughout the state of New Jersey.

One example: every time I look at math scores and see math scores going up tremendously in a lot of these districts, but reading scores aren't, that problems me. And I'll tell you why. Because unless something changed since I went to school, in order to do math, you have to read and understand the problem. So how can we do so well?

When my daughter went to school, she was a good student. All of a sudden she wasn't doing well in reading, but she was doing good in math. What I found out was that she decided she was going to play around. She didn't stop reading, she just didn't do anything. We know that all things aren't equal. That if you put a program in one school in the same city and put a program in another school in the same -- the same program, it's not necessarily going to work. Regardless of how many times you change the human resource factors over there, it's not going to work, because minorities live in this city and majority, and the language of the different ethnic groups are pretty much the same does not mean that the value systems and the home settings and other things are the same. So, we're looking for variables that can say, okay, some things we can't change. They're going to have to happen

somewhat naturally without our leadership, meaning educators and others, working with folks. But I do believe that there's a baseline some place, there's a floor some place of variables that can make a difference.

And I've always said, for example, I don't need a charter school. If you tell me I'm taking the same student population, basically, set that in a charter school using the public school's money, some of the same teachers, and I'm getting parental involvement and other things, then something is wrong in terms of the way that maybe we'll communicate from the State or locally or whatever. Because to me, I don't see that difference.

If you tell me that Ann Street School and Abington is doing so well -- and I know the actors over there -- then it says to me, like Paterson-- They told us, at one school-- They said, "Well, they have more resources." The superintendents indicated we put more resources over there -- and I'll mention about a couple of programs in a moment -- and we think that's what's making that difference. Then the attitude that I have is fine. Then, if that can be transferred to another level, another school, even though it may be costing you more and it works, then that may be kind of the cookie cutter we need for some of those schools, okay. So we're not here to hurt.

One of the things I would like to ask is in terms of some of the programs. One of the things that was brought to our attention in Paterson -- where there was improvement, the superintendent had instituted certain types of teacher development programs that they have kind of modeled, that they said that really improved their students, gave them a better understanding of knowing what the mission was and what they had to do, but how to get it done. That was one thing. And just to add to that, so you can respond at all

the same time, the other thing I found unique-- In fact, I'm doing legislation. Because I raised a question, even though I knew the answer, how do you go about getting substitutes, because there was discussion on substitute teachers. They go through the same basic process that all school districts go through. You have to have certain credits, and you go and you apply and you get checked. But he said that in his substitute program he has a special pool of substitutes, because there's something about the résumé that makes the superintendent sit down and start to talk and get to know them better. And these are folks who get special development or additional development, because they're going to be used, as we said in the police department, as our attack force, or the military, our special unit, because they are of a different quality, if you will. So, that person is going to always teach science, going to always teach special ed, if that's the person, but they take from this pool. So they're modeling that piece -- I understand that that's been locked into development in other programs and is making a difference in some of the a c h i e v i n g s c h o o l s .

What are we doing, or how are we doing with any of the programs that you may have instituted or you're thinking about instituting to try to maybe get the in-house development piece, whereas not tying up teachers and people of that nature or staffing? And the other part of it is, we always talk about teachers. But superintendent, you said something that's close to my heart, and I know you said it because it's close to yours. We know that teachers are not going to get the job done in any of these school systems, particularly the Newark school system. We know the teachers are going to get the job done when the service workers understand their connection to the

overall mission, and that's what you're working on. But from this development piece, the State always talks about money for teacher development, enhancement, which is very important, and we have to do that. But I never hear us talk about resources for service workers, enhancement, if you will, even how do you talk to people or some of the basic things you do. How do you interact with students? How do you manage your stress? Are we doing any of that?

MS. BOLDEN: Okay, because you asked a lot. What I should do, though, is try to-- Maybe I should have done this in my overview. I didn't know where the conversation -- where it was going to take us. Yes, you have to look at your entire school district. There are different levels that each of us are, and we do need to grow. There are different needs, even with the staff development that you're talking about. Staff development had been very problematic in the district. We do have a newly negotiated contract that I think makes a difference, too, in terms of tuition reimbursement. Newark had never done that. So, in terms of professional growth, there are things that we have embedded in our contract too. I think that makes a difference.

We have additional staff development days. Our principals, last year, were 10 months, two weeks. They are now 12-month principals. I think that's critical. I mean, there are a whole lot of things that you have to take on. The tenor of the times doesn't allow us to have principals that are 10 months. It doesn't mean that everybody necessarily agreed with that position, but that's the reality of the world. When you have a climate that supports the things that we're talking about, it makes a difference. If there were a single ingredient that made the difference, then somebody would have canned it, and we all

would have high-achieving schools in urban districts. But climate and tone and belief makes all the difference in the world. Having people believe in your youngsters makes a big difference.

Now I said to you that we had 700 vacancies. I do still have vacancies, but I've got 28. I have teachers that leave other districts now to come to Newark, because they think that perhaps there are some good things that are going on. When you look at the secondary school, because to me, again, it is the barometer of whether or not you're serving youngsters, we have to reform our secondary schools. We know that with the alternative programs, and they will all be soon schools of choice in terms of -- if kids don't care about the curriculum, then it is very difficult for you to engage them in anything meaningful. And that's why many of the urban districts have school-to-career/college initiative. Because if a youngster has a certain aspiration to do something, there ought to be someplace in this district that has 13 high schools where he can develop his talents. If it's TV, radio broadcasting, if it's health or allied sciences -- we haven't had that, Ron, in this district. You go to one high school, the curriculum is very much the same. It is very static. Whether you want this, that, or the other, it doesn't matter. That's our prescribed curriculum. It doesn't work today.

I think that when we are able and given some time to put those things in place, you're going to see big differences in test scores, because kids are there because they want to be. Do we invest in professional development? Yes, but you still have to have the folks who believe this is what I need. There's 100 hours that are now required. I can tell you that some teachers

balk at it. And until they say, “Hey, this is where I need to go to become a better instructional person,” then a lot of it is not going to stick.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you.

Assemblyman, I know you have a question.

Then we want to get to Mayor Schundler, who only has until 12:15.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I’m glad you came before us--

MS. BOLDEN: And I’m here at half-hour past, so--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: I think the information you gave us regarding the school buildings, the administrative costs associated with the Newark school district, a lot of times people look at it and they say it’s out of whack. But then when you look at the detail-- You know, it’s always in the details, and we have to be very conscious of that and make sure that we understand that, that we can’t just have a dollar-per-pupil amount. And that’s one of the things that the Court said. You can’t just have a dollar-per-pupil amount. They said the INJ average was just the starting point. Because you’re not comparing apples to apples, you’re not comparing students of similar starting points, so you’re going to have to have additional resources beyond INJ averages, and you also have to take into consideration the district-by-district, the school-by-school needs. Because that’s what *Abbott* is, it’s a needs-based decision. It’s a needs-based prescription for success and for improving schools.

You raised a point about the budget. You said you don’t have a budget yet. I’m a little concerned about that. If you don’t have a budget now

and you're already starting the school year, how is that affecting operations? Also -- and I see your principal getting real antsy, and I'm just making her more antsy, because she wants to leave, because she's got to run and do something. And my question is, Mr. Chairman, what percentage of time does a principal have to actually -- the running of the school, to doing the things that are going to improve outcomes, as opposed to chasing papers and these things that we're putting upon them.

MS. KANDELL: Well, if you want to use me as an example, the amount of time that it does take -- this principal is in every single day at 7:00 in the morning. Most days I do not leave this building until 7:00, 8:00 at night, and it is not uncommon for me to be in my building on a Saturday or a Sunday. Yesterday is a fine example of that.

MS. BOLDEN: Well, that speaks to the preparation of the budget. And remember, I did say that with Whole School Reform being new, everybody is trying to get it-- There are mountains and mountains of paper. It gets to be very frustrating. Certainly over time, you hope that the process is streamlined. We don't have an approved budget, and it is October. And you have to understand that everybody in the district is frustrated by that. Typically, budgets are approved in March. With Whole School Reform, with the addition of additional positions, checking to make sure that there's a reconciliation that makes sense -- but to be at a place where you don't have a budget is something, I hope, that does not continue -- not this way.

I think that listening to the way that the questions are coming-- It is important for *Abbott* superintendents and school districts to be responsible in how they use resources that they're given. I would be the last person to say

anything other than that. I've given the Commissioner a five-year cost saving analysis, because it bothers me when someone says, "Well, look at your per pupil, look at this, look at that."

For example, even with our cafeteria services, there are ways that we can become more cost effective. I have written a corrective action plan to do that. When you look at Newark's budget, I want to be able to say, what you give us, we use the way that we should. It doesn't help me by saying that here is money over here and could you do it better? If we can do it better, we're going to do it better.

I started out by saying tomorrow we're going to have the first unqualified audit that we ever had. My objective is to get a certificate of excellence, so that people know that what we're doing is the right thing. But, you know, I got to get past that. But when I ask for a science lab because my school needs it, I expect to be able to get it. It has been very frustrating. There's money for facilities, but I've got schools that have leaky roofs. So, at some point in time, somebody needs to say, "What is taking so long to get things done?" Before *Abbott*, we would have had the wherewithal to fix that roof ourselves. I can't fix it, because I don't have money on a budget to do it. So there are issues--

If you want to put the facts on the table, it's not all about what we're doing. It's in some cases what are we being prohibited from doing because of the way that things are happening.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And I'll just say that that response is the reason we ask the questions that we did, because we were trying to goad you into telling us the sorts of things you need, because we want the dollars to

go into instructional services for students. So, if there are all sorts of other bureaucratic reasons why dollars be siphoned off and going someplace other than that primary objective, we want to shed some light on that.

I will thank both of you, if I may, because--

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Could you do me a favor? And this goes for Superintendent Smith, too, because this is not the first time I heard about the roof problem, the same problem in Irvington. If you have any recommendations as to how we should be streamlining, one of the best business administrators in the school system is Mike Steele, whether people like that or not, and he's been around a long time, a board member, as superintendents come and go. But when he had a problem, it became clear to me there's a problem. We got to get with BDA and work out those problems. We know we want accountability, and we don't want a bunch of gangsters coming in, a bunch of riffraff developers. But in the meanwhile, it cannot be something to hold them back.

So, if you have any recommendations as to where those barriers are when it comes to paperwork and budgets, where we need to come up with a different system to help you streamline it, we really need to know that. Get it to us, to this Committee, because once again, we're here to help. See, we want you to be honest with us about where your pain is. We don't want you to say that you got more than enough money, you really don't, regardless of what it's at per pupil, or you have too much and that's not true. We just want to know where the pains are. We want to close your gap. Because by closing

your gap throughout the state, we believe we're going to close the achievement gap.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Superintendent, thank you.

Principal, thank you.

MS. BOLDEN: Thank you. You're welcome.

MS. KANDELL: Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I appreciate it.

Mayor Bret Schundler.

I'll point out again, Senator Rice mentioned it earlier, that we extended invitations to both major party candidates for governor so that we could have an opportunity to put something in their head and for them to see a little of this, and also to give them an opportunity to talk a little bit about things that I know they are both -- have passionate feelings about. We will continue to extend that opportunity to Mayor McGreevey for the next hearing.

Mayor Schundler.

BRET SCHUNDLER: Thank you for allowing me to say hello today. I want to start by complimenting my two predecessors here at the table, the superintendent and principal.

I think it's wrong for people to think that the problem we have in education in our cities is that there is corruption, or, in some way, that people aren't doing what they're supposed to be doing. I think the problem is that they're spending too much time doing what they're supposed to be doing. And it's because the system asked them to do things which really don't help educate children. We talked about all that time putting together the budget and the enormous hours involved there. And all of that is putting together paper for

someone else, to review to create accountability, to make sure that you've put together your paperwork properly. Now that time could have been used directing childrens' education. If we decrease the paperwork burden and, if you will, the wasted bureaucracy, we'd have a better system. But our educators have to do what they're supposed to do instead of doing what they ought to be doing to actually educate children.

I want to point out that my purpose here is not to criticize but to lay out a specific solution that I am convinced will work. In fact, I would say that it has already been proven to work. You all know that I founded a new public school myself, known as the Golden Door Charter School. I think you know that we got about half as much money as other public schools in Jersey City. We get about \$8500 per student. In Jersey City, even before you take into account capital subsidies for local district schools, they're operating at about \$15,000 per child. So we're spending approximately 50 percent as much money.

The children who came to us were not those who were getting all As. The idea that schools of choice cream children is just contrary to all empirical data. What happened in our experience has been found to happen all across the county are those -- the children who are not doing well, whose parents sought to move them from where they were. The children coming into the Golden Door came in with the lowest reading scores of any public school in the city of Jersey City. In short, rather than creaming, we have the children who are struggling the most. So it's an empirical fact we have the lowest reading scores of over 40 public schools as they came to us. Now their reading scores are higher than the district average. In fact, last year the reading scores

went up by 40 percent in one year. So, we're spending half as much money, and we're getting dramatically better results with the children who were struggling the most.

Now I point this out to say that my proposals for educating children more successfully and more efficiently are not theoretical. They are proven. I think all of you noted the Commission of Education's report that children in charter schools are outperforming their peers in the other host district schools. I would argue also that, if you looked at the empirical data from across the nation, by their third year of operation, charter school children all throughout the nation are outperforming children in their host districts. And it's important to say that the causality isn't that their parents are not active. Again, it's children who are struggling the most who came into these charter schools. The reason they're doing better is because, among other things, choice makes parents more active. It's not that the activist parents get involved, but it's the fact that these schools make parents more active. That's part of the solution.

Now the Urban League has also created a brand-new public school in Jersey City. It also is getting dramatic improvements. It's not just my school which is doing better. All of our charter schools are doing better. The children in them are succeeding. I want to point out that they are public schools with all the same regulations pertaining to other public schools.

The question I'm always asked is can we take what is working in these charter schools and can we adapt it to all of our district schools so that all of our public school children are benefitting? And the answer is, yes, we can do that. We have to understand what the key dynamic is, and that is

accountability to parents. What happens in charter schools, what chiefly defines them is that no child gets assigned to a charter school. Parents have to choose to enroll their child in that school, and the money follows the parents' choice. That is the key thing that makes charter schools unique.

The result of this accountability to parents is that all the decision making in the school as to how money will be spent, as to how teachers should spend their time, as to where resources will be allocated -- all that decision-making focuses in on what will keep parents happy. There are no parents who will tell you that what they want to see is more money spent on bureaucracy, but they'll all tell you if they want small class sizes, but they'll all tell you that they want great teachers who really care about their children, teachers who, in fact, have to be paid well if you're going to get the very best. What they'll tell you is that they want equipment in the classroom that will actually help children learn, and good books and materials, that they want bright, new school buildings. And so, the point I'm making is that by putting the parents in charge, by having the entire system be accountable to them, you have the system work.

I always point out that it doesn't matter what kind of car you have and how expensive it is. You can't take it to Boston if the person in the driver's seat wants to go to Florida. If you want to get to Boston, you've got to be in the driver's seat. When you put parents in the driver's seat of controlling the money, they become the boss, because who pays you is the boss. And those who actually love their children the most are the ones calling the shots. Everything in a system changes. That's why our free enterprise system works in this country. It is because customers are in charge.

In socialist countries, politicians are in charge, and you get poor services and high cost and failing economies. In this market system of ours, what makes it free enterprise is the freedom of the customer to be able to go and get what's best for themselves for the money that they have. But for the money that we're allocating, once we have fulfilled the, let's say, responsibilities of equitable funding, which I think we have with our *Abbott* districts now spending at a higher average than other public schools in New Jersey, we have fulfilled, I think, our responsibilities for equitable funding. But we have to make sure that parents control that money, because that is what will cause all the decision making to be made in the best interest of the children.

I want to point out that there are organizations like the Education Commission of the State, which have laid out in, I think, extremely good detail how we can apply this dynamic to our existing public schools and get from here to there. Charter schools have shown that we can create great public schools from scratch, but it's sometimes more challenging to get from one corporate culture to another than it is to create a new school from scratch. But we can take our existing schools and move them towards being schools of choice that are accountable to parents.

The East Harlem Public School district showed that that could be done within a traditional public district. We've seen that happening in Florida, I might add, where districts that are involved with a voucher program there have gotten dramatically better. We've seen that in Milwaukee where it even included private school options. But even within the public sector, we

can see that there are ways to get from where we are to where we want to go, and I would highlight some of my own proposals in this regard.

I have said that the best way to get someone to do what is right is to reward them for it. And so I have said that the State should pay 20 percent of the operating cost for every child in a charter school or a charter-like school within our public school districts. We ought to allow teachers in our regular district schools, like this one, to be able to go to their local Board of Education and make a proposal to run a program. Just like they can now go to the State Board of Education with a charter application, they ought to be allowed at the local district level to get the Board of Education, if it likes their application, to be able to get it approved and to be able to set up a charter-like school within a district school and get the full-based student amount, 100 percent, given to them. But 20 percent should come from the State, 80 percent from the district. If a charter school gets its approval from the State Board, again they should get 80 percent from the host district, 20 percent from the State. They'd be getting the full-based student amount, not the 90 percent they're getting today. That would help with the cost of facilities, but they would still do it out of their operating budget.

Now that would cost the State -- if it took 10 years to phase this in -- it would cost the State \$1.4 billion to assume this 20 percent of operating costs for all schools. That would be equal to about \$140 million infusion per year from the State, but you'd be able to save the 8.5 billion that we're planning on new school construction right now, because these schools fund their buildings out of their operating budgets. You wouldn't have to do any State borrowing or local borrowing. You wouldn't have to increase income and

sales taxes or property taxes. You would have the State reducing property taxes by assuming more of the operating budget, and the efficiencies of having a less bureaucratic system would allow you to take money out of your operating budget and pay for the cost of your brand-new buildings.

I can take you and show you in Jersey City, brand-new buildings that were built -- that the Urban League Charter School is in, that mine is in -- beautiful buildings. They were built in incredibly little time and are housing these schools today, public schools in brand-new buildings, with great education taking place within them for a lot less money than we're proposing to spend throughout our system as is.

I would highlight that it makes a lot more sense, from any way you look at it, to build buildings this way. With the Urban League, you have a developer who built the building and is leasing that building to the Urban League. When the mortgage is paid off, they'll transfer it for a dollar.

But, Senator, one of the things that make this interesting is the developer gets to depreciate the building. So they get a Federal tax benefit by owning it under this lease arrangement. That allows them to charge less in the lease than the school district would actually be paying if they were having to cover these costs through a traditional bond debt service. So there are all sorts of ways to save money.

One of the other things I would point out is that if you look at these schools, they traditionally have not just smaller class sizes, but they're paying the teachers more than the district is for teachers of a similar number of years in the system. It is true that the average in the districts is higher, but that's because you have teachers who have been in the district schools for a lot

longer and have that longevity benefit. But if you look at the actual teachers coming in the first year, typically, in these new charter-like schools or charter schools, you have teachers making more than the district.

As you go forward and the charter schools no longer have to cover so much money for getting up and running, money like buying books -- because when you start a school from scratch, everything has to be purchased anew. As you go forward, you have more money freed up in their budget that has been used for first-time acquisition of fixed assets, like books and computers and what have you, and that will be available for increasing teacher salaries along the way.

These are all ways that we can do more, I would argue, while spending less by putting parents in charge so the decision making in the school system is always focused on doing absolutely what is best for the children.

Thank you very much for allowing me to say hello. (applause)

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you.

One question, as you were speaking, you talked about the money following the decisions of the parents.

MR. SCHUNDLER: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I know that it's typical with charter schools that there are many more people who are applying to go into charter schools than there are spots available. But it's also important to note that the charter schools are very much the exception to the rule, and what you're talking about is to change the rule a little bit.

MR. SCHUNDLER: That's right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I guess the question I have is, how do you envision the percentage of parents who genuinely wish to assume that consumer role? Is it 10 percent, and that's why you have more people than you have applications, or do you see that as being much broader?

MR. SCHUNDLER: Well, what happened in East Harlem-- Again, when we talk about how do we do this within our existing district schools, how do we move towards this model, they didn't do it through mandates in East Harlem. They had a new superintendent come in, named Carlos Medina (phonetic spelling), who said to his teachers, "If you want to do something creative, make a proposal to me, and I'll back you up." So, you didn't have all the educators in the first year say they wanted to run new alternative programs, but you did have some. He approved those proposals. They started operating. They did fill up. Because parents saw how much better the children in those program did, the next year there was an avalanche of interest by parents for programs like that, but there were also a lot more educators who wanted to create programs like that.

In the first year, a lot of the educators couldn't imagine themselves in that entrepreneur's role. They were used to being treated as wage labor that was told what to do. There were more imaginative or visionary educators who took initiative on -- the moment it was offered. But other educators, who didn't take it the moment it was offered, over the course of that first year, they could always go up to the third floor and see these alternative programs operating. They didn't have to imagine what it would be like. They can actually see it. And because you could actually pay teachers more, when you get rid of all the bureaucracy, again, I'm proposing the full-based student

amount goes into the program. If you've got 20 kids in your class times 10,000 a child as a base student amount, that's \$200,000. If you pay your rent at \$2000 a month for the classroom, you cover all your incidental costs, you still have the teacher able to make \$100,000 plus. So there's a lot of interest on the part of teachers to make more money and actually be able to do programs that they are convinced would better help children learn. You don't have a shortage of teachers once they see what this means in the concrete wanting to do it. The issue becomes how do you make sure that the board is willing to say yes.

The parents will like it because they'll apply when they see how much better children are doing. The teachers will like it because they'd like to make more money and to have more freedom and respect. But how do you get the board to say yes? Because they're then moving from a position of managing schools, to simply one where they're providing oversight to make sure that the law is being fulfilled, and that all the goals of public education are being fulfilled. Well, the way you do that, again, is by the reward for reform, where the State comes in and says, "We'll pay 20 percent of the cost for every child in this kind of a reformed program where you cut out the bureaucracy and you give the dollars to the teachers in the classroom." That financial reward will make those board members very popular with their local property taxpayers. I would also like to move school board elections to May or November so that you have the board being more responsive to the broader interest of the community, not have the elections so easily dominated by a narrow special interest.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: Yes. I won't debate choice and charter schools with you, because I know the negative side of it that's not coming out of this hearing and won't come out, that I don't intend for it to happen. I know who applies to run some of those schools and why and who are running them. I know that many that never open and left the burden on our school system, but I do agree that in which you were looking for variables and elements, that what you are really saying is really what we're starting to hear from most superintendents, including the previous superintendent who just left here, is that you can't have 43 schools in your district and expect each one to operate the same way with the same program, the same model. There has to be, in turn, an input from parents and from the educators to come up with a plan that's going to meet the mission and the goals as required by the State. Then something tells me, and always told me, we didn't need charter schools. If that's the case, we can argue for years. I think the good thing about the *Abbott* decision is giving people like myself and Senator Robertson, who co-chairs this subcommittee, and Assemblyman Craig Stanley an opportunity to go back to the State and say, "Look, what we've been saying for years people are finally starting to wake up to, whether it's politics, whether it's money, or whatever it is. They're waking up to it. Now how do we get this done?"

So I agree. I don't think that building more schools with private owners is really the answer. Plus, some of these folks that I know can't build anyway. Ten years from now, the thing is going to fall apart, but they're gone. And then there's the additional dollars for the district to come back and try to fix that up. But I do hear what you were saying, and I want to thank you for that.

I think it's important for this Committee to note in the record that, some kind of way, there has to be a greater internal relationship. I'd rather see money go to folks in the district when they do staff development for team leadership, where you're not just having a teacher in the classroom, but you have service providers there, too, interacting, and go through some more things. You know, how do you work with folks? You know, well, what happens when a budget is tight? What happens when I can't get to a classroom quick enough to scrape their paint, etc? There's got to be some understanding of each person's role and each person's frustrations. I think that should include the parents, too. So I think when people have that kind of understanding-- But then at the same time on enhancing the academic skills in terms of what has to be taught and enhancing now their people managing skills, I think then we're going to really accelerate the enhancement of education a lot better than we're doing right now. We're on the right track, so I just want to thank you for appearing.

MR. SCHUNDLER: Senator, I do want to agree with you. I think there is no argument over the things we have to do. I just want to emphasize that the way you get to where you're making the decisions, the right way, is when you have the right people in charge. I have constantly asked voters-- Now, I'm an elected official. Some people would call me a politician, therefore. I have gone to voters and I have said, how many of you believe that politicians always do what's right and never put their own political interest first? I've never found anybody raising their hand when I ask that question. Now I always respond, well, that means then that you should agree with me, that what we have to do to make sure the right decisions are being made,

because we know what to do. There's no disagreement that we can fix the problem and that we know what we have to do. But the way to make the decisions-- The way to ensure the decisions are made the right way is to ensure the people who love the children, period, are in charge. I believe that as long as politicians are in charge they're going to be making decisions that are taken into account and very powerful interest groups that will make their life very miserable if they don't do what those interest groups want.

I can testify from firsthand experience that there are some very powerful interest groups that are not supportive of me and that are going to do everything they can to defeat me in this next election. If I were one to be concerned with that, I wouldn't be proposing the reforms I'm proposing. It's the fact that I'm willing to lose this election to do the right thing that allows me to propose these things. But it shouldn't be that politicians have to worry about losing an election for doing the right thing. I would argue, why don't we just change the system so we're out of the loop, and we actually have the system be accountable to parents, because I don't think they're going to be so easily threatened by these different interest groups.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I just have one question before I ask the Assemblyman, if I can ask you to comment on something that the Newark Superintendent had said. She cited statistics, when we were talking about the per pupil cost, and she said, "Well, that's a little misleading in a way, because sometimes the overhead is quite different." For instance, in the Jersey City school system, she said, "There were 34,000 youngsters in 42 buildings, whereas in Newark there were 43,000 youngsters in 80 buildings, and that that had a great impact on the amount of money that could actually go into

instructional work.” Do you have any comment on that? Does that sound like it’s accurate to you?

MR. SCHUNDLER: I think actually there would be some impact at the margins, but I don’t think what you’re talking about here is -- does that make us 50 percent more efficient? I think it might make us slightly more efficient. But here is the important thing, the most important thing of all, we know from all empirical research on schooling -- and this is not debated by anybody I know -- that small school size is even more important for successfully educating children than small class size. So, even while it might be more efficient to have big buildings than small buildings, there’s a tradeoff, unless we change the way we define schools. If what you build are big buildings with many small schools sharing space within them, you can have the economy of scale that comes with having a single building. You can match that with small schools that are actually intimate learning communities, where there are relationships developing in the child and every adult in that school. That’s what my model leads towards. It leads towards buildings that have many schools operating in a singular building, where you don’t have to trade off the economy that comes with a more efficient plant against disserving a child from an educational perspective.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Thank you.

Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just had one comment and question with respect to Whole School Reform. The Superintendent admitted that we haven’t gotten it right yet.

MR. SCHUNDLER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Hopefully we will.

MR. SCHUNDLER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: When implemented and implemented correctly, we would, in fact, see a transformation of schools that are instead of being a lot of top-down type management, you would see a school management team that's inclusive. We would begin to realize the kinds of things that you're speaking of with respect to your charter school. That's something, I think, we ought to be working toward. I think *Abbott* gives a tremendous opportunity to do that. What's your comments with respect to that?

MR. SCHUNDLER: I agree with you 100 percent. Whole School Reform is what happens when parents are in power. The issue is -- what we're saying is that our model, our goal, is the same. The question we have to ask of ourselves, how do we get there? We're trying to get there by having elected officials mandate that we go there, but there is a whole series of incentives that work against us actually getting there. Now, when you take control of the money, you have taken control of fundamental power. I've got to lay it out straight -- I think money is power. Whoever controls that money is the boss. When parents control it, you get the reform you're looking for, because they want it and they'll be the boss.

Right now we've got a whole bunch of other people having control of those dollars. They, frankly, are the boss. They don't want to go there. They don't want to go to Whole School Reform. It's not the Republican Legislature which is standing in the way. It's not the individual superintendent

who is standing in the way. What you have is a system where all the incentives work totally contrary to the end goal of Whole School Reform, where you have parents involved with teachers in a more intimate, collegial way, planning and operating the school.

But everything you're looking for in Whole School Reform you can see in any Catholic school, and you can see in any charter school. The dynamics of power in those schools lead towards a Whole School Reform type of situation, where you have educators working with parents in a more collegial way, planning out the operations of the school. We can't get there if we don't change who is in the decision-making role in public education. We have to change who has the power to get the result that we all want.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: I agree with you. We have to change the decision makers, but I just disagree with you whether it's a result of who is in charge as opposed to the system itself.

MR. SCHUNDLER: I think we've tried that, though. I think your belief is we have to change decision makers, not what office has power, but who is filling the office. You would say we've got to get rid of Republicans and put in Democrats.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Well, I think it's a leadership issue.

MR. SCHUNDLER: The point I'm making is that we've tried that. We've had Democrats in power. We've had Republicans in power. We've had African-Americans in power. We had whites in power. We've got suburbanites in power. We've got urban people in power. The problem is we kept on having human beings in power, and they always had the wrong self-interest first. They always did what was best for themselves given the

incentive world that they worked within and because they weren't parents who loved the children first and foremost. Because they had their own self-interest, they responded to political pressure that would have hurt them if they did the right thing.

Now, if we go and we want to actually have the right thing get done, we have to put people in charge who aren't going to respond to that political pressure. Parents don't run for election. You can't throw them out of office. They love their children. They're do what's right. And here's the best part of all, they work for free, so you don't have to have any cost for that accountability mechanism. It's absolutely free. The highest form of accountability for no spending whatsoever. It leaves the educators in control of the dollars in the classroom, so you can have smaller class sizes, higher teacher pay, better equipment with the money we're already spending.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Mayor, thank you very much.

MR. SCHUNDLER: Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: In the absence of any other questions, we're going to take a five-minute break so we can line up who else might be giving us some input.

Thank you.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

SENATOR ROBERTSON: We'll start.

We had two folks who were going to testify. And I think Mr. Marino, who I don't believe is still here, the Essex County Superintendent, but

Joe Del Grosso, the Newark AFT President, is here from the Newark Teachers Union, and we've spoken on many occasions. I welcome you here.

JOSEPH DEL GROSSO: Absolutely. Thank you, Senator. It's a pleasure to be here today.

I want to say that both the superintendent and Mr. Schundler both made interesting points. Certainly, what Mr. Schundler said about improving public education certainly has to be a concern of all of us.

What I see as some of the problems, and I believe the superintendent may have alluded to some of them, are that I think we need to collectively make a bigger -- involve ourselves to a greater degree in the preschool initiative. Where we see children going to preschool, we see an appreciable difference in how they come into kindergarten and into the public schools. I think we can attract more children into preschool, but I haven't seen the type of advertising or what we really need to get into to make people aware of that particular initiative.

Those teachers in the private preschool do not belong to a teachers' union. They don't pay dues or anything of that nature, but yet we spent a considerable amount of money publicizing preschool in every single ward and every single community place in Newark, and we tried to involve people in it. We also created our own preschool, in a partnership with the West Ward Center that Senator Rice was very instrumental in, where we have 40 children now going to preschool in a neighborhood where children didn't go to preschool. Our Union funded it. Senator Rice helped with that. We went out and solicited money. We were looking for corporate sponsors. We also created a computer lab in that particular school, in that cultural center --

a state-of-the-art computer lab -- better than anyone at the district has, probably better than anyone in the state.

It's a science computer lab and the children from the public school -- the Roseville Avenue Public School -- get to go across the street and utilize that particular facility with the teachers from the district. Those are the kinds of initiatives and partnerships that I think can begin to process a change in urban education. I'm not a big proponent of charter schools. I understand that they are there, and there are some that work. That's not arguable. I'm certainly not a proponent of vouchers, but I do believe that we do need more partnerships of that particular nature.

In this district, we still suffer from some great financial problems. Those financial problems, I think, are that -- how can we run a school district if we don't know what the allocation would be for supplemental aid? It was on August the 9th that the superintendent wrote to Commissioner Gagliardi with her plan asking for \$79 million in supplemental aid funding. We still don't know what the budget is. I mean, how can you really put things together in any appreciable manner if you don't know how much money you have to spend?

SENATOR ROBERTSON: What is the fiscal year? What is the fiscal year for the budget?

MR. DEL GROSSO: That is for Fiscal Year 2002.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And that starts when?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Well, really--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: July 1?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes, exactly.

So, I mean, that is a problem that we really need to address. We still also suffer from a lot of internal problems when it comes to payroll, etc., which have improved from the past, but we still have a number of errors that occur every single payday. That's the kind of thing I think that hurts morale and lets people not be in the best frame of mind.

One of the things that I disagree with also is the decentralization that we have here in Newark. I think if someone looked at the audit and did an analysis of how much the decentralization of Newark cost, you would see that it is an inordinate amount of money. What has happened is, you have five different SLTs, school leadership teams, all operating almost independently of the central office. They each have their own budgets. They each have their own different styles, managerial styles. Each of them are involved in a variety of models. It just does not seem to bring any continuity to education here.

I think that, when we look back to the reasons that the district came into State takeover, it may have been because it needed more organization, that it needed to go in maybe a more fixed direction. I think what the decentralization actually does is the opposite and sends Newark into different directions at the same time.

And again, if you look at the cost analysis of what the decentralization actually costs, you will see that it does cost a great deal of money. I think it could be handled from the central office to where there would be divisions between an elementary education and secondary education and maybe special education, but I don't think that you need five different assistant superintendents, who have four or five different assistants, who have

an entire staff of people and, in fact, are running five different boards of education at the same time. I don't find that is an efficient way of running a business, much less an education.

I take note of what you said, Senator Robertson, about the difference between well-performing schools and schools that seem to be performing. As the Superintendent said, we have quite a few schools that have reached a very successful mark when it comes to test scores and parental involvement -- all the necessary ingredients that aid a school in performing, but we are not replicating success. I think that is a big problem.

I think under the current regulations and the *Abbott* regulations with the models, why should a school that is succeeding at a very good level of achievement have to, in effect, write documents that would be at least a foot high to try to defend why they don't want to be in that particular model? If a school is working and it has success, we should replicate what is going on in that particular building, find what are the ingredients that are working in that particular building and build from there. I think if you looked at it -- some of the things that we spoke about before, about morale, leadership, staffing, the community and creating partnerships -- I think those are the ingredients that we see in very high-performing schools, the schools that are able to overcome all the obstacles. In low-performing schools, we see low morale. We don't see invisible leadership. Staffing may not be particularly right.

Years ago, when the Ridgefield Park decision gave management the prerogative of sending people to any school -- there's no such thing as an involuntary transfer. If management wants to send someone somewhere, they send them. What occurred with that was, where there were low-performing

schools, they sent teachers to those particular schools that were not performing that well, that principals wanted to get rid of and out of their building, they sent to another building that really was not doing that well to begin with. I think we have to look at staffing and see good ways of staffing buildings, and there are ways when we create programs. People should want to be part of that program. And if they don't, there should be opt-out provisions for where a person would like to leave that particular building and go into a building where they feel they can function better.

If a principal doesn't have the staff that is in agreement with a particular model, for instance, if Success For All is in one school, and I prefer Accelerated Schools and feel I can do a better job in an Accelerated School atmosphere, I think we need to look at that to see where staffing can be set to where people are in a different position where they can function successfully.

I know we talked about, in some of the remarks -- about that Newark's expenditures are about \$11,500. What bothers me is that when we take the \$11,500 and break it down and see how much money actually goes into the classroom, we are behind many districts, including some of the other *Abbott* districts. If that is the case again, I look at some of the decentralization problems and the administrative costs that are associated with this district and say that we need to function more in the realm of getting more money directly into a classroom, so that things can change inside that particular classroom.

I think I've touched on most of them. I did send to both of your offices and also to Assemblyman Stanley's and to all the members of the Joint Committee some information regarding special education, which is a great source of noncompliance in this particular district. I hope you read through

it. It's a rather lengthy document, but it contains all the different complaints that we have instituted and some of the results that have transpired, and in some cases, some of the lack of results that transpired with that particular problem.

I thank all of you. If you have questions, I would like to answer them.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Yes, I do, actually. In another life, one of the things that I used to do, I was Chairman of the Board of the United Way. One of the things that we tried to do at the United Way -- with any charitable organization is the perennial question -- how much of the money that you're taking in actually gets to do the service. They would say, all right, well, only 10 percent goes toward fund-raising and administrative overhead. The balance goes directly to agencies. Is there any sort of guide that you know of at the State level that tries to get their arms around that question?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes. I believe the information that we have -- I believe that we took off the State Department of Education's Web page, which delineates, I think, on school report cards, and then we integrated them to find out the average amount that was going into instruction in the various districts. We were about -- still getting about 10 percent to 12 percent less into classrooms, as opposed to some of the other districts.

I think part of that problem is that we don't look at education sometimes as the two very distinct things that they are: one, running the business of having to heat a building, buy supplies, run a custodial operation, and then separate it into the instructional part. A principal then is asked to be a good business manager and a good educator at the same time. That's pretty

tricky. There's some that can do that, that have the ability to be both a good business manager and a good educator, but it's not the norm that occurs. Something sometimes lacks in the way that that's looked at. I think that districts that spend \$600 million in the budget need help with the business end of running the district. That's important, because money shouldn't be squandered. Money should be directed more into classrooms and more into those particular schools where the resources are needed. If we did that, I think we'd start seeing that we would see more successes, rather than the failures.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now, and you're familiar with those schools within the district that are high-performing schools, test score wise, and those that are low. Let me ask you the same question I asked the superintendent, which is basically, what do you see as being the difference in those schools? What makes the difference?

MR. DEL GROSSO: We did a little study on something. We looked at how many grievances that we get from different schools. We noticed that in the schools where we get an inordinate amount of grievances they're low-performing schools. In the schools where we get relatively zero in grievances, they're high-performing schools. The lesson I think that we learned from it is that where there is cooperation between the staff, the union, and the central office, things begin to work. Where there is that certain dichotomy, that doesn't work. Whether it be for staffing reasons we do not see progress in those particular buildings.

I think the point that you made that staffing is -- certainly is something that has to be looked at. The administrator has to be an administrator that, under the Whole School Reform model if they're

school-based management, should not be dictatorial in essence. They should be there to sit around a table and discuss what can work in that particular building. In the schools where we see high performances and where test scores have radically changed -- I mean to a point of, like, Abington Avenue, where there was 100 percent success rate -- that's kind of remarkable in and of itself, where Ann Street, being one of the only urban schools in America to get a blue ribbon -- that's a pretty remarkable achievement. But when you look at those particular schools, and you break down the staffing, and you really get into the staffing patterns that are in those buildings, and you talk to the principal and the vice-principals in that building, it's a working relationship. It's a working relationship with staff, and it's a working relationship with the community. That's a good ingredient -- a good recipe for success.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And what do you attribute that to, the nature of the leadership in those buildings?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes, definitely, the nature of the leadership. In the union, we have tried to create an atmosphere of collegiality. At the next advisory board meeting, the superintendent and myself are going to receive an award from Saturn on joint cooperation between management and the district. That's a pretty prestigious award not given to many school districts in the United States. It's about the types of partnerships that we're beginning to construct as we did at the West Ward Center.

One of the things that we're interested in, that we're in conversation with the superintendent, is taking over a low-performing school and doing exactly what I said, that the union and the district would sit down and construct a good staff, from the principal to the teachers on down. We

would ask to bring in different programs in that particular school, programs that we've seen success with -- reading programs that we've seen success with, math programs and computer programs -- and create that partnership between the district and the union to where the employees and the principal in the district are working cooperatively together on only one objective -- success for children. That's something--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And concentrating on the instructional end of the job.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes. We want to do that. I say openly that there is a selfish reason also behind it, because a union needs to have a response to some of the things that Mr. Schundler brought up. My response to charter schools and vouchers is that -- let's create partnerships that work within the public frame, within the public schools. If we become successful at creating those partnerships, then Mr. Schundler's argument will become null and void.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, one of the things that we're hearing, and consistent with all of the witnesses that we've had, when we asked what's the difference between a good school and a school that isn't performing as highly, they all keep pointing to leadership, administration, the climate, the instructional focus, the community buy-in. All of those things which again point back to leadership.

Let me ask you a question that may be a bit unfair, but we'll do it anyway, because it's only us here in the room.

MR. DEL GROSSO: It's okay.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: It's a question I could have asked the superintendent, but I was asking it wrong. The question is this. If we're looking at resources and personnel as two important elements-- We talked about resources quite a bit, and how they're going in other places and whatnot, and more needs to be brought down into the instructional level. But on the personnel side, looking at the administration, not with your members necessarily, but administration, what sort of tools does a central office have to have in order to deal with personnel challenges in schools that are not performing?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Well, I think the necessary tools are in place, but they may be underutilized. I don't think that we need more regulation or more laws or to strip people of due process or anything like that, but I do think that we need to look at principals, and we need to say now here's a principal that may be in a high school that may be better able to function in an elementary school. Here we have a teacher in an elementary school -- a principal -- that may be able to function better in a high school. It seems to me that change doesn't happen rapidly, that we look at it and we see the failure and we even document it. But then when it comes to analyzing the failure and making some type of a change in it, we're reluctant -- reluctant to make those changes.

Now just because principal A can't function that well in the high school doesn't make him a bad principal or a bad educator. It means that he could go somewhere and maybe do a better job in another school and in another mode of the educational system. So we're--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But how do you avoid-- I don't mean to interrupt, but how do you avoid a situation like the one you described, where you-- Let's say you have an elementary school principal in a school that's historically underachieving or not achieving, where it has a lot of grievances, where you may be dealing with this sort of dictatorial rule that you're talking about. And by the way, I come from the city of Paterson, where we had a high school principal on the cover of *Time Magazine*.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes, you did.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: I know about that. But the way that it is dealt with is to move that person somewhere else. That's what I was starting to get to, when the central office is uncomfortable to talk about personnel, which I totally understand, but it feeds back into what you were saying before.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: You're taking the problem and you're moving it to another school, usually one that's even worse off, and consigning it to no improvement if, in fact, it can't have the leadership, which is the fundamental building block upon which schools are built.

MR. DEL GROSSO: I think that--

SENATOR RICE: I think you all are saying two things here, if I can cut in. You're talking two different situations. This happens not only in the educational arena. This happens in government. This happens in corporate America. Regardless of how I get to where I am, sometimes it's not in my ability to get the job done to perform -- I'm in the wrong arena. I'll do better, at least, with my experience. I went to law school. I'm no attorney. So

I'll do better being a cop than I would being your paralegal -- arguing a case that they legally let me argue in, okay. Maybe I'll learn, but I don't have a luxury of learning for the guy that's sitting here and his life's hanging out there. So, my point is, is that with Joe-- I hear Joe saying, "Is there maybe a principal who is really quality principal 'material', but in a different type of school environment, different grade, for whatever reasons."

Now, the argument against that is that I've always felt, Joe -- and here's my problem with that argument. I'm an old former Marine. I was always told, when I became a squad leader and a platoon leader, the numbers got bigger. I remember my CO telling us that if you can run a squad, you can run a platoon. If you can run a platoon, you can run a company. If you can run a company, you can run a battalion. If you can run a battalion, you can run the whole goddamn Marine corps. The only thing changes are the numbers. The principal managing and administrating remains the same. But if, in fact, you have one who can manage but for some reasons have to do small management and maybe feel whatever. But my point is, that's one shifting. So, he's still a good leader and he works well in that setting, but the question becomes what if you don't have any place to place him?

On the reverse of that, I think what I hear Senator Robertson saying--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Or what if they don't fall into that category?

SENATOR RICE: Yes. On the reverse side of the thing, and Senator Robertson is saying, is to hold it. What if I'm just a bad administrator, period -- principal, if you will? Why take me out of here and

put me over there? Nothing is going to change. In fact, it may get worse over there. So you have two different scenarios that we have to look at, etc. I don't have the answers to that.

MR. DEL GROSSO: I think that part of it though-- I don't view education differently than I view corporate America. In corporate America, statistics tell us that 10 percent of any given work force is not that great -- 70 percent, 75 percent is really good and competent and will do their job to the best of their ability, and the rest fall in between. I don't think that the school system is any different. I don't think that we have come to grips with -- as I said, there were a number of instances where I had a dialogue with the superintendent about principals and about trying to move teachers. If you really get into knowing people in the district, you do see people that can function somewhere else. There are some that can't function. We have our share of problems with that internally in our own union.

We try to address it, but I think that we don't do enough. I think the superintendent said -- she said two or three principals were removed or something like that. Well, there's 80 schools. Ten percent would be 8, if it reached the average of what would have to be shifted.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Although I did ask her, that was in the context of saying, if you took your worst half dozen schools, what have you done? So maybe that's district wide. I don't know.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes. And I don't blame the principal all the time. Because like I said, there are teachers in buildings today that don't necessarily want to be in those buildings, so I don't look at them as being the high performers, because they're doing a job that they really don't want to do.

I've always said to the superintendent, "Let's find where that person wants to be and put that person into where that person's expertise is."

That's another thing. I mean, in a company-- If you were running a company, you might ask your employees, what are some of your special skills? Can you do *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*? Do you have this skill? Do you have that skill? We really don't do that much in education, to where you have teachers sitting inside a regular classroom today that are probably better than some of the people running some of our computer labs. What do we do about that, where we have people with skill levels that are entirely different?

We seem to not run education, the business part of education, like a business, and what happens because of it is that the educational part of education begins to suffer. There are two different things--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But I guess the thing that I'm trying to get at, and it's easier to a certain degree when you're talking about resources -- we always seem to have trouble when we start talking about people. If we were in the private sector, and I've been in the private sector, and I've been in as a manager in the private sector, and if I'm running an operation that can't meet its goals, I won't be running that operation for long.

MR. DEL GROSSO: That's true.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: They're not going to take me from one department and move me to another department, so I can screw up that department, if I can't perform. While I agree it's good to try to take your human capital and develop it as much as possible, at what point do we say -- I mean, this is what we're asked -- this is flat out unacceptable, and we have to

make a change in the leadership, whatever that leadership is, and at what level is that, that we have to make changes in leadership?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Well, I don't think it's a secret that I certainly wanted to see a change in leadership with the last superintendent. It just took too long. We wanted to see a change. I agree with that, that sometimes there is a need for a change in leadership. But I do believe that, again, going back-- Part of the problem, too, is we talk in terms of charter schools and other things, and we talk about that charter schools in actuality have a lot more flexibility in the way they operate than the public schools.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Do you see that as an advantage?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes. A great advantage.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, then maybe we should be giving the public school more flexibility.

MR. DEL GROSSO: You're right. Exactly. I think what should happen is that public schools have been constrained, I think, where we overregulate them to a point that to understand some of the different statutes in school, I need more than one lawyer. It's humongous.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Now let's not start taking jobs away from lawyers.

MR. DEL GROSSO: No, we're not going to take jobs away from lawyers, though, Senator. (laughter) Charter schools don't conform to any of the models. They come up with their own type of program. I think the *Abbott* decision was a great decision. I think the Court did the best they could do with it, but I still see that what they ask you to do is to constrain yourself to

these particular models. I sometimes wonder if the model makers themselves are succeeding financially more than the students are educationally.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, I think that's part of it-- Here's the frustration I have as I look at this as an outsider, even though I'm involved, obviously, as a legislator, I mean, I've heard what everybody has had to say, and it's also a pretty consistent theme among people who are testifying that, "Well, yes, that's nice to say Whole School Reform, but we're filling out tons of paperwork to try to fit a model into our school. All right, yes, we have a choice as between models, but to tell you the truth, the best work is done where there's a homegrown solution that everybody buys into." Everybody is telling us the same thing. And yet we look at scores, and we see that there are some neighborhoods where a mother or a grandmother has to send their children to a school where they know there's a 95 percent chance that that child will not be educated to proficiency. And my question is, I know it has to do with the resources, but I also know it has to do with personnel. Does a superintendent have the tools they need to replace leadership in the building when that leadership needs to be replaced?

MR. DEL GROSSO: No. They don't. They don't have the resources to be able to do it. I think that's part of the problem. The AFT, I think, took a bold step in New York when it came up with suggestions on how to reconstitute a failing school. I know the president there was criticized by other unions and everything for her stance on that, but there does come a time when a school has to be reconstituted to where we see something that over the years is failing. Why are we going to keep a system of failure in place and not try to make some type of an innovative way to where -- if I think union and

management sat down together and said, “Let’s find a way to restructure this building, and let’s try to do it right. Let’s try to do it with the children in mind. We’re not looking to hurt people. We’re not looking for anyone to lose their job. What we want to do is create a school that works.”

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, to tell you the truth, because I’ve talked to many, many people about these subjects, the observations you’re making now are the same ones that are made by the School Choice people. They’re saying that that’s the sort of thing that needs to be done, but that is done as a result of parents being the ones who keep a sharp eye on things, because there’s an incentive for them to make sure they perform, because if they don’t, the school will close. They will be out of a job. Parents won’t go there. But parents who live in neighborhoods don’t have that same alternative when it comes to their neighborhoods schools. So we have to find something in place of that. I guess what I’m trying to piece together in my own mind is, how do we build the sort of accountability, job accountability, into building administration and the delivery of services within a building? One thing would be, what do we do with principals, and maybe we’ll have to get the principal association in here to tell me otherwise. Maybe there should be more leeway given to administration to deal with principals who aren’t performing, because then, of course, you’d realize the next question. The next question is, what tools does a principal need in order to deal with teachers who are not performing up to speed?

MR. DEL GROSSO: I think that they are good questions, but I see that as part of the problem of why the School Choice people are saying there’s a choice. There should be a choice in public education. The choice

should be that we reconstitute schools and create the type of partnerships that I said within the framework of public schools.

We had an interesting debate at--

SENATOR ROBERTSON: But whose choice is that?

MR. DEL GROSSO: I think it should be our choice to do.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Our being who?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Yes. Our being collectively.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Because it's not the parents choice.

MR. DEL GROSSO: It should be.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: If I live on Dayton Street, I'm going to go to Dayton Street School. If I live in another part of town, I'm going to go to that school. I mean, if-- A parent asked me recently about whether or not it's possible, because of the childcare arrangements, to move from one school to a different school, because it made more sense within that family. Because what you said sounds so much like the School Choice people, because what they say is, and I've heard Bret Schundler say -- he said, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over again and expecting a different result."

MR. DEL GROSSO: Well, then I agree. You see, like I said before, I don't disagree with everything Bret Schundler says. I disagree with his solutions to the problem.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: No, I understand.

MR. DEL GROSSO: I don't disagree with the part where he says what he says. I could debate about his charter school and on probation and financial problems. I could debate all those things with Bret, but what point

is there in it? The point should be, to me, is that public education should be preserved, that we cannot have a system where we just blankly begin charter schools.

The birth place of charter schools is Arizona. Now, I think there's people who have charter schools in their basements. If you go out there, they're in disarray. Why? Because charter schools -- are they regulated? Who regulates them? If we're giving the test to the children in the charter school, who regulates it, who monitors it? We have monitors that come in from the State during our testing procedures to make sure that we are, in effect, giving a fair test, etc. Charter schools are not that regulated. Some charter schools are doing well, others have failed. When they close their doors, as one did here in Newark, we had to take the children back.

In one school I was in last week, in the nurse's office, five children were coming back from a charter school that were thrown out for discipline. I want to see Mr. Schundler, or anyone, start a charter school that says, "We'll take the children you can't handle." I don't see that charter school, and we'll never see it, because that's not what it's about. Public schools take everyone.

I think the superintendent spoke about the twilight program that we have with our high school children that takes in children that are having problems in the regular setting. They go to school from 1:00 to 7:00, not during the main part of the day. So they're taken out of the population. I'd like to see that expanded to an elementary level, to where disruptive children are brought into a setting where you can diagnose why the child is being disruptive and make some changes in that child's behavior and put them back into their regular setting.

Parochial schools, charters schools sometimes are a revolving door. A child has a problem in public school, goes to religious school or charter school, doesn't work out there, they're back to the public schools. Not everybody gets into a private school or a charter school. There isn't enough room. If we set up that everybody could go to a charter school right now, the seats are pretty well taken. The solution has to lie within public education. So, the solution means that we're going to have to look at it and make some tough choices, choices that mean the difference between children succeeding and learning or children continuing to fail.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Senator.

SENATOR RICE: Yes. I'll pick up on that. Unfortunately, that's the only way it can be. This whole notion has been misperceived by those who live in different types of districts -- smaller districts, older population in terms of the people who reside there with less children. This is Dayton Street. We can't have people have choice to leave Dayton Street to go to Bergen Street, even if they could get there, because schools are built within communities to make it, number one, more accessible to the community, and number two, to keep all the costs down -- busing and things like that. But the fallacy is that if one-third of the population here decides they want to go to Bergen Street -- and I'll just pick another one, McGraw -- the classroom space is not going to be there. The assumption is -- that means that one-third up there is going to have to come to Dayton Street. It ain't going to happen. There's no way to have a balanced percentage in terms of movement nor ratio without even building excess classroom space that's on reserve. So that when they do come,

we can dust the seesaw, get the lights on, zone the heat in, and then take our list and start calling in teachers who are the reserve reactionary force.

That's what people aren't talking about. That's why I don't get into debates with anyone about choice or charter schools, per se, until you get me hot, because then I bring them to the real world, etc. It's easy to sell if you can put these schools in other communities. But if you really look where charter schools are going and where you're talking school choice, you're really only talking putting charter schools basically in the *Abbott* districts because there is money. It's a money-making thing. Choice is intra, because as soon as we say inter, people say, "They are coming." They who? Well, you know, Ron, "I want to send this kid to high school. We can't have him up here. We don't care how smart he is. Nothing personal, but you know you may attract some of that other bad crowd, and they are going to be stealing our cars." So, I don't even get into that, because there are connotations about some of this debate with these folks I don't like.

But what I do know, and I'm hearing it, because I know we're going to end this, is that this whole notion-- And it's interesting what you are doing, because I don't know what's happening in Jersey City or Paterson, but I like this union/administrative relationship. It doesn't mean you're always going to agree or disagree -- recognize you still have to protect the workers' rights and the safety and the benefits and those kinds of things. But just to come to the table and get realization that the mission is to educate, and you'll put those things over here until you know that the district's able to do better. That makes sense to me. The form a partnership with preschool and early childhood education that you don't have to form, that makes sense to me. To

hear a superintendent and you and your personnel saying that we need to take a look at, number one, who we're hiring, what functions we're providing to them and what they have to perform, and to do the development of those who can perform and maybe haven't reached a level yet, that's impressive.

Those may be the kinds of things we need, but I do have a question before we end, okay. The preschool piece interests me because I'm starting to believe that -- like in a criminal justice perspective, I start to tell people now, I'm a little tired, but what I have to do is corral all these folks on the street corner that are bad folks, manage them as best I can for the next ten years, and they're gone -- someplace or another. They just all want to be doing what they want to do, or they want to shift it, okay? My greatest hope is to look long-term. So, I looked down here, and down here preschool tells me I must save a lot of money. Because if I can make this work, I don't have to worry about the criminal justice sized budget. I don't have to worry about other things.

But for that to work, we're right back to where we started with parental involvement in the public schools versus the charter schools. Does there seem to be a difference in the parental involvement and the early childhood education piece once these students drop out? And if so, if that number seems to be greater and it seems like that is where they really pay attention, how can we make sure that, long term, we keep them buying into the process as they go to first, second, third, fourth, going through the process. Because one of the things, and I'll end on this, that I said at these hearings going back, even when Jack Ewing was chairing, is that my concern is that preschool gets the job done. The breakdown is when they get to first grade,

because there was no real connection with what happened in the day care. Well, actually not day care, but preschool, you know, or one of those cognitive education learnings. It seems like everything is going right, and then something winds up over here, because there is no connection. By us putting early childhood education in school, tells me there's got to be a connection. At least, I hope there's one.

How do we keep the parents moving through the process? This is wonderful. I'm with my kids all the time here. Now I'm with my kids in the first. And then in graduation, we can say, you know, Norm, you and I, we've had the kids 12 years, you know. How do we do that?

MR. DEL GROSSO: I think to answer the question in my view, and I take it by some of the different events that I've attended -- last Sunday, I think, was the Pride Bowl in Newark, where Navy played Cornell. The public schools came and were represented. So did the charter schools. So they had a banner contest, as a matter of fact, and the public schools won, not the charter schools. There were more children and parents from the public schools, percentage wise, than there were from the charter schools. But I think that's the basis of it. In talking to some of the parents that were here before, they were making the same point. Where parents are interested and come in to schools and participate, their children succeed. Where the parents don't, I don't care where you send them. I really don't care where you send them, it doesn't work, because there's some void. There's a void in education, because you're only in school five-and-a-half, six hours per day. That is not enough to educate you. If there is nothing else, you're not going to be educated.

I mean, all of you know-- I know you know, and I know Senator Robertson does. How much time did you spend in libraries and places like that after school? How much time did you spend reading or studying or doing all those other things to become successful? A lot of time. If we don't motivate students to be able to do that and motivate parents to be able to understand that, we will fail. It's as simple as that, because they're not ever going to learn enough in this building. It's not going to happen. I don't care that -- what educator you get. It's not good enough.

We have to encourage parents and we have to encourage students to understand something -- that education doesn't end when the bell rings and you exit the building. There is more to education than just what goes on here.

SENATOR RICE: Final question on that note -- when the bell rings. One of the problems we're having is that you have within your organization teachers who -- some of the best in the country -- committed to teaching, will teach. Within the classroom, you have students who can be, but are not, some of the best in the country that's committed to learning. Within the classroom structure, there seems to be a relationship that develops comprehension and learning, but it needs to be reinforced in the home setting.

Now I've got a problem. I've got parents and family members and others who really don't understand what is being taught. Now, traditionally, I would say, well, here's a person who did not do as well academically or didn't complete it. But there are other problems, and I said this in Paterson. If you were to tell me now -- and I got a feeling if I took some of the other people sitting in here -- if my kid came home today and said, "I've got to get this problem done. I don't understand it. Could you please tell me what seven and

a quarter plus two and three-eighths times five-sixteenths, divided by such and such?" I'm not sure if I'm going to even start that thing.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Well, I'm sure I would not. (laughter)

SENATOR RICE: Yes. The thing is, is like -- let's give an example. You have an attorney here. You have a person here that's got one, two, three degrees, and almost a fourth. We manage numbers and people. I mean, but I'm telling you, that does not mean that I can't pick the book up and read, but it's probably I've got to find time to read it. I may have to read it again. What can we best do for the reinforcement, where a youngster doesn't feel: Well, I'm in a school all day; I'm tired of looking at books and blackboards; I only want to spend enough time with my work so I can go out and play? How do we deal with that?

MR. DEL GROSSO: Well, I grew up here in Newark. I came from a broken home when it wasn't very fashionable to come from a broken home. I was the only one in the neighborhood. I was a pretty wild kid. I think what helped me was that the schools had recreational programs, where you went into playgrounds and where you sat with teachers where you learned a sport, where you learned arts and crafts where you learn things, and you developed peers who are doing the same thing, spending their time in a good way instead of out on the street in a bad way. I think we need more programs that extend themselves in that manner. I think that is crucial in Newark to where children have limited resources. Where do they go?

I talk to children almost every day. I ask children, did you go anywhere on vacation? "No." Have you ever been down the shore? "No." They have limited experiences. So, if we don't provide anything for them-- As

I said, when this bell rings at the end of the day, if education is over, we lost. There has to be a part of education that extends itself. I look at things a long way in the future. I see schools that will go into session until 5:00. I don't want to be union president then. I see schools that may go into session 11 months or almost year-round. I see those things as part of what is going to occur, because they have to. If we're going to do anything about saving generations of children, then you're going to have to take the bull by the horns, and you're going to have to take the bitter with the sweet. That's going to occur.

What are charter schools hanging their hat on? We go to school longer. We're in session another month. That's going to happen. That's going to happen in public schools. We need those type of programs, really, to educate the children that come from families that are disenfranchised. You almost need 10, 11 hours with them to make a difference in their lives. That has to be done, because we're fooling ourselves. The more students we lose, the more go into a criminal justice system, the more can't make it in life. If we don't realize that that makes the whole of society suffer, then there is something really radically wrong with our thinking.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: And I agree with everything you just said, but one parenthetical notation I'll make is that we need to be a little careful about the way we look at charter schools or other school choice programs, only because that's very much the tail of the tail of the dog. That's not the dog.

Even in Milwaukee, which is always looked to as having the broadest based program, is only about 8 percent to 10 percent of the children who are involved in a voucher program there.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Correct.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: So I'm really more concerned about the 95 percent of children who are going to be in the public school system. I'll mention one last thing, not necessarily on an optimistic note, but it's something that we should take note of, because we're always talking about the proficiency level. When we're talking about the doctors and lawyers and scientists and teachers and those who excel in life, we're talking about those group of people or those groups of students who are the advanced proficient. In the city of Newark in the year 2000, because we don't have later test scores, out of the fourth graders that have 3176 students tested, 0.3 percent were advanced proficient. This is about 10 kids.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Right.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: In Irvington, with 629 children tested, there were zero advanced proficient students at the fourth grade level. That is a scary, scary thought to me, because when we take a look at the social divides within our society, whether it's racial, economic, urban, suburban, and so forth, and the need for role models and the need for something to aspire to, it concerns me deeply that we're only dealing with trying to get ourselves up to a minimal speed and finding it really hard to do that. That's one of the reasons we're having this hearing, so we can talk about the things that we could do for you to give you the tools that you need to do the job. That ultimately will be my goal, I think, as we talk to superintendents and principals and

teachers on the front line. What is it that you need -- the resources, tools, but also the personnel tools? I think that's what we have to look at.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEL GROSSO: Thank you. I appreciate it, Senator Robertson, and I appreciate it, Senator Rice. Thank you.

SENATOR ROBERTSON: Okay. And we will stand adjourned.

Thank you.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)