
Committee Meeting

before

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

*"Issues pertaining to early childhood teacher preparation
and professional development systems"*

LOCATION: Hudson County Community College
25 Journal Square
Jersey City, New Jersey

DATE: June 17, 2005
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:

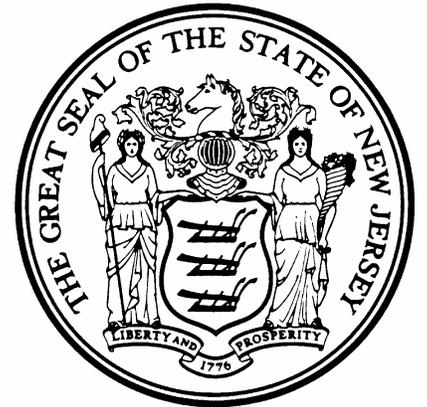
Assemblyman Joseph Vas, Co-Chair
Senator Joseph V. Doria Jr.
Senator Ronald L. Rice

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Joan M. Voss

Melanie M. Schulz
Executive Director

Sharon Benesta
Chief of Staff



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ASSEMBLYMAN JOSEPH VAS (Co-Chair): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you all for joining us today at the Joint Committee for Public Schools.

I am Assemblyman Joe Vas, and I am the Co-Chair of the Abbott Subcommittee.

And today, along with me here, are other members of the Joint Committee and also members of the Committee for Education from the General Assembly. And others will be joining us later on.

I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Senator Ron Rice, who Chairs the Department of Community Affairs Committee for the Senate and also Chairs the Joint Committee. And Assemblywoman Joan Voss, who is a member of the Education Assembly Committee and has joined us today on this Committee.

To welcome us here at the Hudson County Community College, I'd like to ask President Dr. Glen Gabert to come to the podium and extend us a warm welcome.

G L E N G A B E R T, Ph.D.: Senator Rice, Assemblyman Vas, we are really honored to have you come to the Hudson County Community College.

Adriana Flores Kuhn, our Education Programs Coordinator, whom you know, is one of our superstars. And we're so proud of the work she does. And we were so pleased when she told us that you had accepted an invitation she had extended on our behalf.

I'd also like to introduce Dr. Abegail Douglas-Johnson, our Academic Vice President and Dean of Faculties.

I don't know if you know it or not -- Hudson County Community College is the fastest growing college in New Jersey. We've had a 122 percent increase in enrollments in the last 12 years. And we project another 50 percent enrollment increase in the next five or so years.

But more important to us than the growth of our numbers coming in are our students coming out. And our completion rate -- our student retention rate exceeds the national average, which we are especially proud of as an urban institution, when the majority of our students enter with underprepared issues. And over 25 percent of our students enter this college through the portal of ESL. So we're really proud of that and glad to have you here.

And before I sit down, I would also be remiss if I did not thank you, Assemblyman, and you, Senator, for two things you did last year that had a historic impact upon community colleges and this one.

You approved the New Jersey STARS program. This year, 26 Hudson County residents came to this college free because of that New Jersey STARS scholarship program. But what's important, I think, for everyone to understand -- that the impact of the STARS program goes beyond the number of students that come here. What it will do over a period of time is, it will change the image of community colleges in this state. I think, currently, too many students view them as institutions of second choice, and they really shouldn't be. They should be institutions of first choice. So the impact--

We had, this year-- This college is 31 years old. And for this last year we had, for the first time -- we had students coming in from McNair Academic High School, honor students from McNair. And the fact

that New Jersey STARS focuses on community colleges -- that's one of the things you did.

And the other thing that you did was to increase the legislation for Chapter 12, for capital projects. This college had one building in 1992. We currently have eight. We are engaged in what will be, over the next four years, the completion of a \$147 million capital program. Fifty-five million dollars is coming to this college over the next three years because of Chapter 12, which you passed. A new campus in Union City, a new science building will be coming up, and so many other things. And it makes a tremendous difference. And I'm not sure all the--

As Edna Ferber said, the cabbages come very easily and not always the orchids. So, please, let me give you this orchid. We're glad you're here. And thanks for all the good things you do for community colleges. We appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much, Dr. Gabert. And we want to thank you for the contributions you make, not only to Jersey City, but to Hudson County and to the entire educational community. If it were not for many of the community colleges, including the Hudson County Community College, many students would not have the opportunity to continue their education.

We're happy to thank, especially, Joan Voss, who was the prime sponsor of New Jersey STARS. And we believe it's an outstanding program and one that, hopefully, will be extended beyond the two-year colleges, soon as money avails itself -- perhaps even this year.

So I want to thank you very much for your contributions, as well.

Thank you.

DR. GABERT: Assemblywoman Voss, welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: At this time, I'd like to ask Senator Rice, the Chairman of the Joint Committee, if he'd like to make some opening remarks.

SENATOR RICE: Let me just say that it's good being here. Education is a priority to us in New Jersey.

I want to thank Assemblyman Joe Vas for continuing to move out in the community with these meetings, to make sure we get the input of the public, and the academicians, and all the special interests so we can continue to refine and make better our processes, as well as our system of providing the quality and affordable education, which is very important.

It's also very important that we recognize that you don't get to community colleges or four-year colleges without going through the public school system, or even the private schools in the lower ages. And so early childhood education becomes very important. We've never, over the years, paid enough attention to early childhood education, except for maybe the last eight to 10 years. And so this is a very important Subcommittee.

For those of you who don't know it, the Joint Committee on Public Schools happens to be the statutory oversight committee for the Abbott districts. But we're also a bipartisan group of elected officials, legislators, from both the Assembly and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats alike. We stay very busy, as you know, with school construction.

And so as a result of that, as Chair, we broke down the -- we set up subcommittees and subcommittee chairs. And this is one of the

subcommittees -- probably along with the School Construction Committee -- the two most active subcommittees right now. And I think you can understand why that is.

So, once again, we're happy to be here to listen to you.

And, once again, let me thank the Chair of this Subcommittee for the fine job he's doing as an Assemblyperson.

And I also welcome my colleague, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Senator.

I'd like to welcome, to our commission today, Assemblywoman Joan Voss, who is a career educator. She tells me she's been teaching for 41 years. It's hard for me to believe.

I'd like to ask her to say a few remarks also.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOAN M. VOSS: It's my pleasure.

As you can see, Joe Vas and Joan Voss -- we kid around that we're twins, but we're really not. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: She's much prettier than I am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: And he's much taller than I am.

We kind of kid around.

But education is my passion. As Joe said, I was an educator for 41 years. And anything to do with education, I am there. I have my doctorate from Fordham, primarily in curriculum development. And as I said, this is my passion.

I said, "Any time there's a meeting on education, I will be there no matter what," because I think this is the most important thing. We spend so much of our money on education, but my job and Joe's job is to see that it is spent wisely and well.

Every time we talk about education, I say there are five components that really make a good education system: a good plant, a good administration, a good financial director. But, to me, the most important things are curriculum and excellent teachers. So that is where I am focused.

And I'm very pleased that Joe asked me to be part of this Committee. And as I said, anything to do with education, I'm there like butter on bread.

Thank you very much for having me today.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Assemblywoman.

We have a lengthy agenda today. We're going to look to cover some critical issues that were brought up at our last meeting, specifically dealing with articulation barriers, also dealing with certification and licensing of school teachers, and obviously the whole issue of preparing early childhood education teachers and making sure that everyone's on the same page, both at the educational -- public school educational level, as well as the collegiate level -- making sure that there is articulation between the two-year and the four-year colleges.

So we're going to begin today. I'd like to ask Cynthia Rice, from the Association for Children of New Jersey, to make her remarks. I understand she'll be speaking, again, on content gaps in early education and also some of the articulation barriers.

C Y N T H I A C. R I C E, ESQ.: Thank you, Assemblyman Vas, Assemblywoman Voss, and Senator Rice. That's a hard one to do.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Vas, Voss, and Rice.

MS. RICE: Vas, Voss, and Rice, yes -- and Rice. So we're keeping it just one syllable last names today.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to continue our discussion on the early childhood teacher preparation and professional development system in New Jersey.

We formally began this conversation on June 1, with Assemblyman Vas and Senator Rice attending at, really, a beautiful preschool in Elizabeth. But for many of us, the conversation has been going on, on some of the issues, for quite some time with, really, not much success. And the problem has been that there has never been a champion for many of the issues that we're going to talk about today.

So beginning this substantive conversation with all of you really comes at a perfect time. Nationally, the demand for highly qualified teachers is only going to increase. In a recent paper from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Jersey's own Dr. Anna Maria Schumann -- who is the Dean of Education at Kean -- reported that, nationally, the high teacher attrition rate, which -- 29 percent in the first year for teachers -- teachers will leave -- and growing teacher retirements will mean that our country will need two million new teachers just this decade, and another 450,000 additional teachers for the growing -- for the growth of the system to accommodate population growth and the reduction of class size. So the need is only going to grow -- for teachers of color and for teachers who will continue to work in high-need areas.

So what about preschool? Well, in New Jersey, since 1998, when the Abbott V decision required that high quality, intensive preschool be implemented in the State's poorest districts, New Jersey has been on the cutting edge, nationally, of what high quality preschool should look like. And the State, fortunately, hasn't just stopped with those districts to ensure

quality. It's extended itself in early childhood program aid districts and, this year, to the Early Launch to Learning Initiative districts.

So as New Jersey continues to expand State-supported preschool, the need for highly qualified preschool teachers is only going to grow. If New Jersey is to truly leave no child left behind, we have to make sure that the system that trains our preschool teachers, to become and remain highly qualified, is really up to the challenge.

So at the June 1 hearing, three issues were identified that continued to be barriers to ensuring a qualified preschool teaching workforce. The first one is the content gaps in early childhood teacher education. The second is barriers that continue to exist in the area of successful articulation. And articulation is the seamless student transfer between the two sectors of higher education -- that is, community colleges and the four-year universities. And the preschool through third grade certificate, which was developed after the Abbott VI decision in 2000 to ensure specialized training for early childhood teachers-- Preschool teachers have to teach differently than fifth grade teachers. It's a different style.

And this P through third grade certification, frankly, is treated differently than the other certifications. Thus, it marginalizes the effectiveness of that certification.

We are very fortunate. This is a great audience filled with a lot of experts. We have experts who are going to talk about each of these three issues. But fortunately, because we kind of wanted this to be a conversation also, we have experts who are in the audience who may be able -- who will add in, whenever you would like them to.

So I'd like to introduce my colleague, Dr. Carrie Lobman, from the Graduate School of Education, who's going to talk about the first issue on content gaps in early childhood teacher education.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

Dr. Lobman, before you begin, I'd like to welcome Senator Joe Doria to our Committee. He has, obviously, been very active in the educational community throughout his life.

Senator Doria, welcome to our Committee. Would you like to make some remarks.

SENATOR DORIA: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much -- Assemblyman Vas.

I'm just looking forward to hearing the testimony. Obviously, the issues that are being discussed today, as it relates to early childhood education, are extremely important, as we all know. Most of the research shows that if we don't begin early to prepare students for education, they will not be successful. The Head Start research really has been proving that over the years.

So I'm looking forward to hearing testimony and participating.

Thank you for having this hearing.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

Dr. Lobman.

CARRIE L. LOBMAN, Ed.D.: Hello.

Thank you, again.

I appreciate, having been at the June 1 hearing, the speed and seriousness with which the Committee is taking these issues. As a longtime

early childhood educator and a researcher, I was just commenting yesterday to several colleagues that it's very rare, in the area of research, to have your results responded to in years, let alone in several weeks. So it's quite a pleasure to come back again and reiterate some of the findings that my colleague Sharon Ryan and myself have discovered in our three-year study, now, of early childhood teacher preparation and professional development in New Jersey.

If I move this, does something bad happen? (laughter)
(referring to PA microphone)

I'm here today-- I'm going to discuss very briefly, and hopefully succinctly, some of the findings of the content of the early childhood teacher preparation programs here in New Jersey. And I want to frame this by reminding both the Committee and the audience that this is in the context of a great deal of success; of having, in a very short period of time, created what, when compared to programs nationwide, are actually excellent programs of teacher preparation that have many of the attributes that the National Association for the Education of Young Children and other organizations say we want in teacher preparation.

So I want to frame it within that, because there are also some strong areas of concern that we found in looking at these programs, none of which are particularly surprising given (1) the speed with which these programs were put together; and (2) the context of -- that early childhood has changed dramatically in the last 10 years. And, therefore, what teachers need has changed dramatically. So it's not surprising that in creating programs, there would be some areas that would take both more time and -- I want to emphasize -- more resources in order to do successfully.

So there are three main content areas that the research has shown early childhood teachers need in order to be prepared to go out into the field. One is the area that we, sort of, call *foundational knowledge*. It is what has historically been known in early childhood -- is in the areas of child development, curriculum. They're things that have historically been what you get if you're preparing to be an early childhood teacher, whether that's at the community college level or at the four-year schools. Those are the topics that have always been part of teacher preparation. *Always* is always a strange word -- but always in -- certainly in the last 75 to 100 years.

But the two other areas are much more in flux and have received much more attention recently. One is content area knowledge. Early childhood teachers are now needing to respond to much more of the standards that used to only be considered the standards of elementary schools and secondary schools.

So in the areas of math, and science, and social studies, and the arts, early childhood teachers need not just content area knowledge, but pedagogical knowledge. How do you work with young children in these areas? How do you take information about math that you might have learned in a college-level course and make that applicable to working with 3- and 4-year-olds? And included in that is also the area of literacy, which receives a great deal of attention and, as you'll see when I talk about our findings, is an area that we've responded to very well, here in New Jersey, in terms of preparing teachers.

The third is in the area of diversity, and includes course work in working with English-language learners, children with special needs,

children from diverse cultural backgrounds. And included in that is an overall framework of how do you work with families -- key issues when talking about early childhood, key issues when talking about teachers in general.

So what we've found is that--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Dr. Lobman, if I may.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Just on the issue-- It would seem to me that that would be the central issue, since what we're really talking about in New Jersey are the 31 Abbott school districts.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And the majority of them, obviously, in the poorest areas of the state, in the most diverse areas of our state. So if we could really just focus specifically on that, I'd really like to hear about that.

DR. LOBMAN: I agree.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay.

DR. LOBMAN: And that's about what I was going to do.

In the first area of foundations, we didn't find a lot of concerns.

If I could just touch briefly-- In the area of content knowledge, we did find some issues, again not surprisingly, in areas -- science, and math, and social studies. Teachers are receiving, certainly, some course work in those things, but not necessarily enough to meet the standards.

But our biggest concern did fall under the area of diversity. We found there are several colleges and universities not offering course work in

special education or offering course work in English-language learners and multiculturalism as part of a required class, and not a full required class.

Again, I just want to emphasize, particularly as a teacher educator, that's not necessarily a problem if something is a part of every class you get. Ideally, that's what we want. If you're learning how to work with English-language learners in every single class you get in your program, that would be the ideal. That rarely is what happens in the real world. So we did feel concerned that there were -- that it was very rare for there to be a full course in those things, and that there were some schools not offering course work in that at all, or at least not requiring it.

To touch briefly, we also did a comparison of the community colleges and the four-year schools. It's almost impossible to compare those directly, as I'm sure we'll talk some about when we talk about articulation, because both the requirements are different and the course work is very different. And we weren't looking at syllabi, we were only looking at what's required on the books.

But what we did find is that, not surprisingly again, the community colleges had some real areas of strength that did not necessarily exist in the four-year schools, to the same amount. In particular, the four-year colleges (*sic*) were much more likely to require a full class in special education than the four-year schools, and had a higher proportion of their schools offering course work in math, and music, and the arts, all very important areas for early childhood teachers to know.

In the areas of multiculturalism and English-language learners, there were very similar concerns at both the two- and the four-year schools. Again, as I think we'll get to later -- which, to me, points to a need to really

help our faculties retool, to bring new resources to the faculties at all of our higher education institutions to help them develop the skills they need to develop the courses to prepare teachers to go out and work with the children.

And just on a final note -- and I know it's not the main topic -- when we talked to teachers who were coming out of these programs -- teachers in the Abbott districts -- again, not surprisingly, but of concern -- the areas they felt least prepared to work with children in are these same areas that they were not receiving course work in. So in the areas of English-language learners, working with children with special needs, and areas of diversity, teachers said that they wished they were receiving more preparation and training in those areas.

And when we looked at the professional development being provided, those were not the areas being stressed by the districts. While there was a minimal amount of training in addressing those things, the majority of the training in the districts matched what people were getting in their four-year programs. It didn't supplement it. It, kind of -- it duplicated it.

So what we-- Those are our concerns in going forward -- is that we take these programs that have done a wonderful job and make them even more state-of-the-art, cutting edge, so that we can prepare teachers to move forward into the future.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Dr. Lobman.

Any questions by any members? (no response)

Thank you.

MS. RICE: The next topic is articulation issues. And I'm looking for Adriana Flores Kuhn. There she is.

I'm going to have her, kind of, be the moderator for the next few speakers.

ADRIANA FLORES KUHN: Good morning, and welcome to my college.

I appreciate you -- each of you, sitting at the front tables here, taking time out from your busy schedule to put this on your heavy agenda.

Since I am an educator, I appreciate it, Assemblywoman Voss, when you say that this is your agenda, as well, too. As a taxpayer and a voter in this state, I take comfort in knowing that my State representatives think similarly.

What I'm going to do today is to address the issue of how students move from a two-year college to a four-year college. And I'm going to put a face on those students who are doing that, who are coming through the community colleges, particularly those in urban areas and those that are heavily impacted by the Abbott mandate, and who are preparing themselves to be teachers.

I wanted to get students here in front of you to tell their stories. However, it is not easy to get a student to come to school during the summer and on a Friday. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: We're going to have a meeting on that next time, I think. (laughter)

MS. FLORES KUHN: Great. Let's make it in September, when they come back, though. I'm sure that they would be very

entertaining and very informative. I've certainly learned so much from my students.

Most of the students at Hudson County Community College who come through the teacher education programs are non-traditional students. Their average age is closer to 27 rather than 18 to 21. They are returning to school after starting a family. They hold at least one job, many times in early childhood education, and sometimes two jobs. And they are probably the most responsible person in their extended family, which puts additional demands on their time.

Ninety-two percent of our students are women, in the education programs -- early childhood education. And as of Fall 2004, 49 percent are Latino, 23 percent African-American, 14 percent white, 9 percent Asian. And 85 percent are on some form of financial aid, grants, or scholarship. At Hudson County Community College, nearly \$3 million in tuition aid grants were given to our students during Fiscal Year 2003.

Beginning in 1999, we enrolled 48 community childcare teachers employed in centers holding Abbott contracts with the public school district. These teachers were informed that they would have to earn a bachelor's degree by Fall 2004 in order to keep their jobs. They came to school. They did not see themselves as students. They had never planned to be students. That's why they had the job they did in childcare centers. They are wonderfully nurturing, largely a body of women, and they were interested in what they did and very concerned about making sure that they did a good job with the children that they worked with. We hooked them and kept them by putting them in our early childhood education classes. They did well in those classes, because that's what they were doing. That's

what made them a better worker. We worked hard at also keeping them in English, and in math, and in all of the other courses that they had to take.

The next wave, which continues today, comes from Head Start teachers, who also must upgrade their academic credentials in order to keep their jobs. And I'm very glad that Ms. Carol Harris, who is the Assistant Director in Jersey City, has joined us today. Because she has also a keen interest in keeping her staff in school.

In January of 2003, we enrolled over 400 teacher aides from Title I schools throughout this county, to assist them in meeting the No Child Left Behind provision of highly qualified paraprofessionals. All of these are non-traditional students. All of these followed the same pattern as our entering Abbott teachers. They were women in mid-life, who never saw themselves as being students. The first few classes oftentimes were therapy sessions to get them through the shock of having to come to school, to read books, to do assignments, and so on. We've kept many of these students here as students. And the first ones have already graduated and gone on to a four-year college.

As of Fall 2004, we had over 600 students enrolled in the early childhood majors. Three weeks ago, 88 students graduated from Hudson with a liberal arts with early childhood degree option. That's the transfer major. And 99 percent -- 90 percent will go on to New Jersey City University.

These are the lucky ones, because we have a dual admission agreement with New Jersey City University -- a model articulation program that guarantees admission to the P-3 teacher certification program for those students who meet the grade point average of 2.75 of literacy requirements

and curriculum requirements. Not all students are so lucky. There are barriers to articulation from the community college to the four-year colleges.

Now, the goal of articulation agreements is to provide seamless student transfer between the two sectors of higher education. Frequently, this goal is not met. Imprecise, capriciously applied articulation policies harm community college students who are not only early childhood teacher education candidates, but all students who want to transfer to a bachelor's degree program.

Students often find not all courses transfer because of problems with course equivalencies, different general education requirements. Credits are lost. Classes have to be repeated, and it takes longer to graduate. You add these conditions to the additional barriers our students face who enter Hudson County Community College. Because our typical students may have been out of high school for a number of years, they may have not done well academically in high school, or they may have immigrated from a foreign country.

Before taking college-level courses, they must first register for two or more semesters of developmental studies in learning English as a Second Language and/or skills development in reading, writing, and math, in order to achieve the status of being college-ready. This means that they cannot take college-level courses until they have exited via assessment exams from the developmental courses, adding at least one to two years, and sometimes more, to their college experience.

What are the implications of this? You, as State policy makers, are looking to the colleges to provide access to increasing numbers of

students -- for retraining them, for displaced workers, for leaving the welfare roles, and as support for the K-12 reform efforts in assuring equitable access to jobs and professions for traditionally undereducated and underserved citizens. The community college plays a vital role in this process.

But articulation can work. Many states have agreements among its institutions of higher education that make the transfer process risk-free for students, while protecting the quality and autonomy of the academic departments at the receiving colleges and universities. We do have a model here in this county between Hudson County and New Jersey City University.

There are other models in teacher education. They come in several forms. The most notable and effective of the agreements have occurred because of a strong voice or a champion who have initiated the collaboration.

In Maryland, the governor initiated the change by convening the two- and four-year institutions to address the teacher shortage problem and charging them with doing more to address articulation. The North Carolina General Assembly allocated \$2 million to help the community colleges and the University of North Carolina develop a statewide, two-plus-two program. In New Mexico, via statute, they established a common core of lower division general education. The common core of 35 credits is the base around which most degree programs are built. And the courses are guaranteed to transfer between all New Mexico campuses and apply towards graduation credits.

But simply changing State policies cannot improve articulation. Faculty members must support and be involved in the development of the

articulation agreements. That's why the agreement between New Jersey City University and Hudson works so well. It was the faculty that was the integral part of working together to do this.

But an example also comes from the state of Illinois' articulation agreement, because it also emphasizes two- and four-year faculty as equal partners, not something we have always enjoyed with our four-year counterparts.

This State can provide the leadership and the funds to bring the appropriate academic groups together to develop programs that facilitate the transfer of students, while meeting the requirements for high-quality education programs. But without State leadership, these results will be fragmentary and uneven. We need you as our advocates.

SENATOR DORIA: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR DORIA: I'd like to ask some questions, as it relates to the articulation agreement.

My understanding is that most of the schools have articulation agreements -- the State colleges with the community colleges. I'm trying to understand what the problem is that you're stating here, as it relates to the acceptance of credits through the articulation agreements.

MS. FLORES KUHN: We will have two more colleagues who can respond to that. But very quickly, what I can say is that courses do transfer. Oftentimes the receiving college will say, "Yes, we'll take your course. However, we're going to put it into the elective category." So the student will graduate with a four-year degree that may have 130, 140

credits. But they're elective credits. They do not apply to the program that they are entering into.

SENATOR DORIA: As I understand how the articulation agreements work, is that there will be full acceptance of the credits from the community college to the four-year college. Am I -- I'm correct on that?

MS. FLORES KUHN: Yes, sir, they are accepted. But they're put into the elective category. And in the receiving school, there is no application of the elective to the program that they are majoring in.

SENATOR DORIA: So they're put into the elective. Most schools provide-- Most higher education institutions provide for -- four-year colleges -- free electives. I don't understand why, then, the number of credits goes up if they're considered to be free electives.

MS. FLORES KUHN: Let's give-- I'll give you a for-instance. At this school, we also have an associate of applied science degree. We call this the *career degree*. Our students take 27 credits in early childhood education. Our liberal arts students who are planning to transfer only take 12 credits. And not all those credits will transfer to all schools, only New Jersey City University. Other schools will take even fewer than that.

So when our--

SENATOR DORIA: It depends on the articulation agreement, which is negotiated.

MS. FLORES KUHN: Well, the articulation agreement says, "We'll accept your credits." They don't guarantee where they apply the credits.

SENATOR DORIA: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: If I may, because I've taught classes--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Assemblywoman Voss, yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I'm sorry.

I've taught classes that were given for college credit. And the name of the course that I taught was called The Humanities. And when the student would go to a college, although they would accept the credits, it wouldn't necessarily be, say, in the western civilization, which was a required course. And so depending on the name of the course, the college can say, "Well, this doesn't conform to our core curriculum, and therefore it's going to be an elective." So it's very important what you call the course in order to get the credits given where they are needed.

SENATOR DORIA: You're absolutely right.

Assemblywoman Voss is right. But what I'm saying is, why doesn't the community college, during the time that the articulation agreements are put together, make sure that their courses conform to what the required courses might be at the schools they have articulation agreements with?

MS. FLORES KUHN: We try to do that. However, when students enter, they need to declare their -- they need to tell us--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: If I may, doctor--

Doctor, just one second.

MS. FLORES KUHN: I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: It would seem to me that that articulation agreement should specify that.

SENATOR DORIA: Right. Exactly.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: I mean, it should be specified in the agreement so that both parties that are entering into the agreement know what is expected of one another. That would simplify it.

SENATOR DORIA: You're absolutely right.

That is really the crux of the issue. The Chairman has it.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Who establishes the form of the agreement? Is it a State-created document?

MS. FLORES KUHN: May I turn this over to Dr. Muriel Rand, who is Dean of the College of Education at New Jersey City University? I think she can bring more insight.

SENATOR DORIA: It's negotiated between the institutions and -- the two institutions -- between the college and the community college. It's a negotiated agreement. There is no State format for the creation of an articulation agreement. And there is no-- Without a department of higher education -- which we don't have -- there is no set system, other than the negotiations. Am I correct?

MURIEL K. RAND, Ed.D.: Yes, absolutely.

The issue-- Actually, I see two issues. The first one that you've mentioned is the articulation agreement itself. They are all locally defined in New Jersey. So while Hudson County Community College and New Jersey City University, I'd say, have the most seamless system you could hope for, if a Hudson County Community College student wants to go to Montclair State, or to William Paterson University, the courses will not be aligned. Because we don't have a statewide system, a local agreement works only in the local area.

In Hudson County that works pretty well, because most of our students stay in Hudson County. For most of the other schools, who have dormitories and draw from a much larger geographic area, it's a huge problem.

The other issue is State schools that just do not accept a large number of transfer students. So we have some areas of our state in which community college students do not have a four-year school in their area that articulates with their community college.

SENATOR DORIA: Such as the College of New Jersey--

DR. RAND: Such as the College of New Jersey.

SENATOR DORIA: --Ramapo. Those two I can name immediately.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And that gap's actually going to grow, because the College of New Jersey -- that is particularly focused on a four-credit curriculum now.

SENATOR DORIA: They changed their curriculum. You're absolutely right.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: They now have gone from a three-credit curriculum to a four-credit curriculum. But even beyond that, is the course content similar when the name of the course is the same between the two-year colleges and the four-year?

MS. FLORES KUHN: Well, I have a solution to that, if you're interested. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Sure, that's what we're here for.

MS. FLORES KUHN: You're right.

Let me just talk a little bit more about the problem. In early childhood education, we have a defined set of standards that teachers need to meet, that has been defined both by the State of New Jersey and by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

New Jersey City University is nationally accredited, and our program is nationally approved by NAEYC. So we've paid a lot of attention to quality. And one of the ways we've done that is by moving away from course-to-course equivalencies and to move towards what we call *competency-based* equivalencies. We've got to get away from the idea that you match up one course to another course. It does not work. If it worked, we'd have a system. It doesn't work.

What does work is standards-based teacher preparation. The State of New Jersey has mandated standards-based teacher preparation programs for all of the 21 schools that prepare teachers. We have been reviewed in the last year to make sure that all of our programs are aligned with national standards. What this allows us to do is to take the next step and to have standards-based articulation agreements.

Let me explain what I think this would look like.

A teacher preparation program includes three areas. This is related to Dr. Lobman's work. Most of us think that teacher preparation is just the courses you take in teacher ed. It's not. It's much broader than that. There are approximately 45 to 65 credits worth of general education knowledge. This is critically important for an early childhood teacher. This is the content piece that Dr. Lobman says is uneven in New Jersey right now. That is the gen-ed piece of our higher ed curriculum that is usually covered in the first two years -- not always, but typically covered in the first

two years. The second part of the teacher preparation curriculum is the major.

All candidates in New Jersey have to have a full and complete major in an arts and sciences subject like English, or math, or science, or social studies. That's the second part.

The third part are the professional education courses. The professional ed courses are only a quarter of a bachelor's degree, just to give a perspective. So when we talk about the community college's role in preparing teachers, their role could fall into any one of those three areas. And we can play around with what is the best possibility in articulating those three areas.

What I propose needs to happen is that a group of educators in New Jersey needs to get together and identify the abilities that teachers need to have to be early childhood teachers, and then sequence them in three levels.

The first level would be what is now the CDA level. That allows someone to be a teacher assistant in an early childhood class and is usually a few college credits or non-credit. It's often offered as a non-credit. So the first sequence would be -- let's call it a Level I -- would be a CDA.

The Level II abilities could be sequenced into an associate's degree sequence. So they would be the equivalent of the first two years of a program, which would, in my view, include content preparation, as well as professional education. It is critically important that we pay attention to the general education, to the content preparation, as well as the professional ed.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: If I may, would you suggest that that associate's degree be the requirement for the teacher aides that are required in the classroom, as well?

DR. RAND: Yes, absolutely.

So that would be a Level II.

And then a Level III would be the content end, major course and professional education course preparation that would happen at four-year schools. And I see this Level III as being different from the community college preparation in the scholastic and the scholarly infrastructure that is needed in a four-year school, such as faculty with doctorates and research capabilities, a research-oriented library. If we want to have the early childhood profession be seen a professionals, we need to recognize that that's an important component of their preparation. So we would have three levels identified and sequenced.

One of the problems we have in New Jersey, right now, is that my curriculum at New Jersey City University looks very different than the curriculum at William Paterson University, or at the College of New Jersey, or at Kean. We have the same-- We build to the same competencies, but we arrange them in different ways. For example, I have a literacy education course early in my program. William Paterson may or may not. They might put it a little bit later in the program. So when a community college is trying to align -- and I think they have made a genuine effort to do that -- the four-year schools don't have a leveled sequence that they can align to that is uniform across the state. We need to develop that system of competencies at levels that are uniform across all of the four-year schools.

Then the community colleges would be able to decide where they fit into that scheme.

I think that we know what to do. I think that we know how to do this. We have been talking about articulation for at least 10 years, in New Jersey, very seriously. I think what we need is leadership. We need somebody to make this happen.

The reason why we were able to do it at New Jersey City University and Hudson County Community College is because, when I was a faculty member I was very involved in articulation issues throughout the state. And when I became a Dean, I then had the leverage to make things happen that a faculty member would not have had. I had the leadership capability to change things. So I changed the institutional policies at New Jersey City University. And I was able to collaborate with the upper administration at Hudson County Community College to make the structural changes that needed to happen so that articulation could work. We know that we can do it. It's a matter of will.

In my mind, this is about who we want our teachers to be. When we've identified issues of diversity as primary in our state, we have to move away from allowing only white, middle-class women who have easy access to higher ed to become our state's teachers. If we are truly committed to diversity, the community colleges need to play a role in preparing new teachers. We know that having teachers from our community makes a difference in the education of our young children. The way that we are going to get teachers from our communities to teach in their communities is through the community college system. So it's critically important that we pay a lot of attention to this, especially in the

areas where community colleges don't have a four-year sending school to work with. And that might be a whole other meeting as to how we brainstorm that.

So my recommendation to you is that we form a commission that would identify these competencies at levels and assign them to different degree status, and then work towards making the structural changes in the State that could make that happen.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I just have a question about the curriculum, because it seems to me, from what you said, that different State colleges or different State universities have different programs preparing people.

DR. RAND: Yes, we do.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: My question is, why are they not standard? I mean, if somebody's going to come out--

DR. RAND: Because nobody has forced us to do it. We have worked in isolation from one another. And that's what I talk about -- leadership. We are all well-meaning. I think our programs are very good. They are aligned to NAYC standards, but there's a lot of ways that you can cut up that pie and put them into three-credit chunks. And we have done it differently in every school.

When we developed--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Dr. Rand, who should be the State arm? What State arm would require you to do that?

DR. RAND: There is none. Because we don't have a department of higher education, there is none.

The other problem with our field is that the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education both had oversight over preschool and early education, for years.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: So there's overlapping--

DR. RAND: There's overlapping responsibilities.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: --responsibilities instead of singular authority.

DR. RAND: And the Commission on Higher Ed has not really had the mandate to be able to ask us to do this.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Should there be regulatory requirements or statutory requirements? That's the issue here.

DR. RAND: Yes. (laughter) I think that that is the issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: If you're going to ask us, we're willing to shoot for statutory authority.

DR. RAND: I think that you all, sitting at that table today, have the political knowledge that we, out here in the audience, need to help us. That's why we are coming to you.

I agree with Cynthia Rice that what we have done so far has not worked. We have worked very hard at this. We have many documents. We have wonderful publications. We know what needs to be done. But we don't know the mechanism of how to get it done. And we think that you can help us with that.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Dr. Rand.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: Let me say to the good doctor, as the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Schools, I'm going to be talking to the Chair of this Subcommittee. But I'm also going to be directing the Executive Director to work with this Committee. If we have to legislate, we'll legislate. But I don't need legislation to establish my own advisory group or my own commission.

So I'm asking this Chair to work with this staff to establish your own subcommittee "commissioned to you." And it could be members of the Committee, if they want to participate, but certainly some of the people here would have an interest.

Hopefully, from that, we'll come up with a mechanism to get us from point A to point B that-- The Chair and I have always argued that these meetings are very necessary. I think every day that we delay -- and putting the information in perspective -- it's doing a detriment to our student population. I don't have time for the politics of bickering right now in Trenton. So I want to pull this together.

And if that means that once we pull it together-- If it means that we're going to be crafting some legislation that some of us are willing to sponsor, we would do that. But the debate needs to be started now on this issue. It needs to be aired so there could be additional input from those who may be anti or confused. But we need to let the public know.

So if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman-- And I want to give that direction to you, and to the staff; and also as you said, we'll get together afterwards. I know you have some good ideas about where we should be going.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Senator.

I would take it one step further, because not only as a member of the budget -- Education Committee, but the Budget Committee-- We have a \$15 million budget appropriation for New Jersey STARS. And we should look to have the most efficient use of those dollars. And if we're going to be scholarshipping students through the two-year college, we should make sure that they get the most, not only financially out of it, but educationally, academically out of it, so that when they move on to the four-year university, we've maximized the most efficient use of those dollars. I think that's critically important, as well, because we often talk about how much money we're spending in education. And I'm not adverse to spending the money. What I'm concerned about is getting the most out of the money and making sure that there is the highest level of accountability as to how we're investing that money in our students in New Jersey, both at the public school level and at the collegiate level.

SENATOR DORIA: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR DORIA: Just to give a little historical perspective on this, having been hanging around for a long time.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And I'm sure you can give us that, Senator. (laughter)

SENATOR DORIA: The certification programs in the State of New Jersey went through major changes in the 1980s under Commissioner Cooperman. At one time, they were divided between the Department of Higher Education and the Department of Education.

During the time the consolidation took place, and we moved to a certification that, number one, was not an immediate certification but --

not with the present system where you graduate, and your first year you're really just preparing to get certified, then you're certified. And you go through the testing process.

A lot of what's happened over the years -- and the movement towards a major. I mean, prior to the middle of the 1980s, there was no requirement that you have an academic major in order to be a teacher. Those requirements went in in the 1980s. And that's when the alternate route also went in.

The difficulty we have today, and the highest -- most difficult part of what's being proposed is the coordination amongst all the institutions of higher education -- both the community and four-year colleges. There is no one entity in the State that has the authority -- even when the Department of Higher Education did exist -- that has the authority to establish curriculum.

The faculties of colleges take a very, very dim view of anybody dictating to them. The politics of higher education is more complicated and more convoluted than our politics is, to be very honest. (laughter) Actually, as I always point out--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: It's hard to believe, Senator.

SENATOR DORIA: No, it is much more convoluted and much more vicious also.

I always point out, the less you have to fight about, the more you fight. So we're dealing with a vested interest, turf battles. And we understand turf battles from the Legislature. But we're dealing with turf at each of the colleges. And the perception that some college faculty have, that they're better than other college faculty because they teach at a private

institution, or they teach at a four-year institution, or the two-year institution isn't the same-- "I have a doctorate from an ivy league school, and you have a doctorate from a State college." It's all bullshit. (laughter) But higher ed likes to deal in bullshit.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Please strike that from the record. (laughter)

SENATOR DORIA: No, you don't have to strike it, you can leave it, because I'm very blunt. I'm very blunt, and I'm very honest.

What we're dealing with here is a very practical problem that impacts upon the children of the State of New Jersey. And we have to cut through the red tape, we have to cut through all this and try to come up-- And I think the Chairman's recommendation -- Chairman of the Joint Committee -- is a proper recommendation.

We have to understand, this is not a simple task. This will not happen quickly, and there is no way, other than through legislation-- Regulations will not do this. I don't know who would promulgate the regulations. There is no way, other than through legislation -- which will be fought tooth and nail by the faculty, because they would perceive it as us interfering in academics, and we're interfering with academic freedom, and the determination of what should or should not be taught.

This is not an easy task. It is not a simple task. It is not a task that is going to occur quickly. The first thing is, obviously, to study the issue and determine exactly how it's going to take place. The wars of the 1980s, over certification, will show you -- and I was involved intimately in them on both sides -- that this is something that will take some time and will take some very deft political maneuvering and discussions.

The most difficult part of this process is to create any conformity amongst the colleges in the State of New Jersey, as it relates to curriculum, and the implementation of curriculum, and the implementation of the transfer of credits. At the present time -- and I think the College of New Jersey is an excellent school, and I think Barbara Gitenstein does a great job. But at the present time, it's almost impossible to transfer credits into the College of New Jersey from anywhere, because of the system that you pointed out with the four credits. It doesn't matter what grade you got. It doesn't matter what school they come from. You're almost impossible.

Now, that would make sense in a private school because there they're all about making money on credits and tuition. And we understand that. And we understand that they're concerned about their bottom line because they have to pay their bills. And I'm not disparaging that at all.

But at a State college, it makes no sense, because there is no need for them to increase their bottom line by charging the tuition so that you would have to take the course. However, it makes sense when you decide that you have a better quality than anybody else, and you need to maintain that quality, and the way you're going to maintain it is make sure everybody just takes your courses because your faculty is better than everybody else's faculty.

And I hate to be acidic, and I hate to really tell the truth, but that's the truth of the situation, and that's the difficulty you're dealing with, and that's the reason why it will be extremely difficult to implement a total articulation agreement unless the State imposes it by legislation, which would be a very controversial and difficult process.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: If I may just interject. A few years ago, the State of New Jersey was one of the few states that mandate that Holocaust studies be infused into the social studies curriculum, K-12. But they did not articulate how, where, when, and whatever. So when you have a law, but it's not structured so that you know exactly what the teachers are supposed to do-- Again, as Senator Doria pointed out, teachers are very proprietary. And college professors are even more proprietary about what they're teaching, and how dare we interfere in trying to develop a curriculum.

So I just reinforce -- because that is one example of the problems that we have in the statute. We have a law. But to implement it-- And you go to a teacher-- I supervised K-12. And I'd go to a teacher, "Have you done Holocaust studies?" "Oh, yes. I showed a film." That's really not enough. So one person's interpretation of how the law has to be implemented is going to be totally different from someone else's. And so that's a mountain we have to climb.

SENATOR DORIA: And let me just point out, in the original legislation there was methodology established, but it was taken out as a compromise to prevent it from having real difficulty from passing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: And the compromises always add up to a watered down version, which makes it totally impotent, as far as I'm concerned. So that's another thing we have to deal with.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR RICE: Just real quickly, I've been in the Legislature since 1986, and I know that life is a rollercoaster. It's up, and down, and

levels off. Times change, and people change. The time is here for us to create this debate. I think it's this Committee's responsibility -- meaning the Joint Committee on the Public Schools' responsibility to create that debate, because when Abbott came about, it came about for a reason. There's a whole history leading up to Abbott. And so you can't do one thing without doing the other. If you want Abbotts to work, then it means that you have to look at changing some other things. It's not just school construction. You understand?

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Structural changes.

SENATOR RICE: It's not just public schools. It's really education. The ideas go from year to year, which means some things have to change out there. There cannot be a ceiling there. So this Committee needs to force those debates.

The other issue is that it's not as much as telling people what curriculum-- Because I think people can agree on the needs when we start working with folks. It's the alignment that we are talking about.

I had a real serious problem. I'll give you a good example. Before we even did-- I went to community college when I came out of the service. And it's interesting. That's when they mandated statistics and probability. I think I got an A at it. I went to John Jay, because there was some type of agreement to go over there, and they told me I had to take it again. I said, "Why do I have to take it again?" They said, "Well, you know, some people treat it as a math, some people treat it as a social science. We'll give you credit for a math, but you've got to take it again." No problem. I think I got a B+. (laughter)

I go to Rutgers Graduate School. You needed a research method course. I knew I needed a method course. No problem. I go in and say, research method and statistics. Dr. Barry -- God bless him. He's still around some place. He'd laugh at me if he saw me talking statistics on T.V.

I hated the stuff. I got it all and got all those grades.

Anyway, we did two weeks in methods, and another whole semester -- the whole thing became statistics again.

Then they started the grad school. And Dr. Adler said, "We'd like to have you be one of the 15 members. You're an honor student," etc. I said, "Do I have to take statistics again?" (laughter) I said, "I want to go law school." But I didn't finish law school (indiscernible). But the point is that, to me, that was wasting my time. But I couldn't get credit for it. I had math credits; I didn't need any math credits.

And so I have a problem when you say I can't align something, to make it fixed, after we agree on what it is we need. See, that's the problem I'm having.

But I also know something else. We control dollars in this State. And I found out, since 1986, if you understand the value of those dollars, particularly in tough times, you can strike compromise. And I also understand that presidents of colleges come and go, too. And they have their share of problems. I read the newspaper. And I also understand that the population we're talking about happens to be a student population that votes, as well, who want these things to happen.

And so if it comes down to a real nitty gritty street political fight, I really believe, in the times we're in now -- this millennium -- we're

going to win. I don't think university presidents want those kinds of fights from those of us who understand the needs of these communities, particularly since Abbott came.

And the reason I say I want this Committee to do it, through the Subcommittee, is because this is a very capable Committee. There's a lot of respect for the membership of this Committee. There's a lot of experience in this Committee. And I think if we do it, folks are going to listen. If not, then we'll compel them to listen.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Senator.

Professor Stein.

L I S A S T E I N: Well, I'm very impressed with your understanding of the issues that we are facing, especially from the community college arena.

This is something I have dedicated a lot of time and effort -- especially on a Friday, coming from the southern part of the state, when we all know what traffic is like. So this is a high priority in what I'm doing -- and representing my students.

In addition to being a professor at Atlantic Cape Community College, which is in Atlantic City, Cape May, and Mays Landing, I also am the incoming chair for the Policy Advisory Board of the New Jersey Professional Development Center. And I'm also on the slate for the president-elect position for a national organization called Access that represents community college educators and early childhood. So I wear many hats coming to this issue.

My students that I work with-- We just graduated Atlantic Cape Community College. We had 49 different countries represented in our graduating class. So we have a very diverse group. In my early

childhood students, I have graduated seven students. Out of those seven students, I have one student continuing on to a four-year school, but will not stay in early childhood. The reason being is, there is nowhere for her to go. She is working in early childhood. She has two children. And she has nowhere to transfer. She cannot afford to take more than a 15, 20 minute commute, given her responsibilities.

As part of my role at the college, I have tried to work with other -- with four-year schools to develop some type of articulation agreement. At this point, I have not been successful. Neither local school has been able to accommodate my students' needs. As a result, we are losing many students to go into early childhood and not to pursue their career in early childhood.

I currently have approximately -- about 15 students who work in Head Start, approximately five to seven will work in Abbott. I have approximately 18 to 20 percent of my students identified as minority students. Most of my students -- I would say about 50 percent -- are non-traditional students. I spend a lot of time encouraging my students to continue their education. I spend a lot of time helping them to develop their skills so that they can move on in their education. And then, when it comes time, they have nowhere to go. It is a very frustrating issue for us in the southern part of the state.

We also find that our students are dropping out and not continuing because of how we've set up -- because there's the lack of the articulation. I had one student call me up and, literally -- who was a very dedicated -- and left an Abbott school, because she could not continue in her education.

So that is what we're facing in the southern part of the state. And I thank you, and I appreciate that you understand what we need.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Professor Stein.

Any questions? (no response)

Richard Strada.

RICHARD P. STRADA: Yes.

Assemblyman Wolfe sends his regards.

And I was sorry to hear when Senator Doria didn't become the President, because I've come up through the ranks of the -- teaching in the community college. I've been at Ocean County College -- I'm getting very close to being there 40 years -- spent a lot of time in turf battles, so I understand the concerns.

I would like to point out a few things. First of all, you do have the dollars. If you look at articulation agreements that fail, you look at courses that don't transfer, you look at the State paying twice for the same thing.

You do have a mechanism, if you don't want to go in that direction. The mechanism involves getting the presidents of the two different institutions together. There exists, in education, a national set of standards known as the--

I have to apologize. I was-- I became a Dean two years ago, when the Dean who had the job left to become a teacher because it was too difficult. And the first thing I found out was that there was a program called Early Childhood Certification that was underenrolled. And it became a priority. And that's how I met Cynthia. That's how I got involved with

Adriana. And I'm looking around here, and I'm wondering why I'm the only guy in early childhood education. That was the punch line.

So I've been on a very, very, very, very fast learning curve to find out about why. My background is political science. My background is actually studying what you guys do in the State Legislature, before I became a full-time Dean.

But I got connected with a group of teachers at community colleges who teach education courses, where I met Adriana. And it's called the New Jersey Community College Teacher Education Council. We have a big, long name. But one of the things we found out by working together is that all of the community colleges had different problems in transferring their education courses.

And so we set out to find a universal way by which we could go to X or Y. And they said, "Well, the name of your course doesn't match ours." I just-- I left a meeting, from Georgian Court University, two days ago. They want-- We matched our syllabi up, and they were the same. But because ours didn't say "Introduction to Inclusion" -- so we're going to change it. I mean, right now, our concern is two-fold: getting the biggest bang you can get for our dollar. Two, having seamless transition from the community colleges, regardless, to the four-year schools. Early childhood education is on the front burner right now.

But it's more than that. It's not a special interest group for the Abbott school districts or early childhood. It is every community college's students wanting to transfer to a four-year school.

I'm going to ramble on, just picking up what I've heard. There's a business practice called *bait and switch*. That's what four-year

colleges do. They said, "We'll take all your credits. Thank you." Go look at New Jersey transfer. They will take a bunch of Ocean's courses and call them general electives. And there's only so much room for general electives. And so they have lived up to their State mandate. "We take everything." And they've done it their way.

But what I'm thinking of is a way by which you could get the four-year and two-year presidents together to agree on a set of national standards by which they evaluate what courses, what programs go. We've done it in this group. We've taken the national standards, and we've asked everybody who teaches an education course in the community colleges to prove that their course meets any of the national standards. And we've done it.

We've also matched the national standards to the New Jersey Professional Teachers Standards. We see where they overlap. It's a lot of work, I agree with you. Besides the turf battles, there's a lot of work getting this done. But there is a way.

I've been working with this group -- the academic officers association, which is a meeting of all the academic vice presidents of all the community colleges, with Larry Nespoli. We're going to propose to the four-year schools that we get together.

What I know from firsthand evidence is that it is not the presidents. It is, as Senator Doria talks about, the people below. It is turf battles.

And we do need your clout. You may not want to put it as a piece of legislation. We need your clout. We need you to get the presidents together. We need you to push. We need you to tie it to

money. I'm here to tell you that the teachers of education courses and the teachers in general community colleges will work very hard with you to get it done. We are not here asking for something for nothing. We're here asking for your help. And we'll give you everything we've got to make you do it. Because we believe that it's worthwhile, economically effective, and very important that every student who goes to a community college, for whatever reason, can transfer all of his legitimate credits to any of the four-year schools.

And I'd like to make one note about the crack about private schools. We have the greatest transfer ability to private schools. The private schools take everything we give them, and they don't lose that much money. Our biggest battle happens to be with the State universities.

So thank you very much for listening to the ramblings.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Richard Strada.

Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Let me assure the speaker, as Chair, we're going to do everything we can to bring all the presidents together. In fact, I just told Melanie I want a list of all of them. Now, we can't compel them to come but, like I said, we're going to be working through this. And there are a lot of components that have to be done. Hopefully, as cooperation -- it may not be. But, once again, the Chair is going to be-- He's heavy-shouldered. He can handle this.

SENATOR DORIA: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes.

SENATOR DORIA: Senator Rice, and Assemblyman Vas, there is a methodology already. There is the Council of State College -- Presidents (*sic*) -- exists. Frank Mertz, who is the former president of Fairleigh Dickinson -- who was my mentor for many years -- is the Chair. He's somebody we can talk to. We don't have to reinvent it. We can just go to them and talk to them about how we get together to do that.

MS. SCHULZ (Executive Director): You said Fairleigh Dickinson?

SENATOR DORIA: He was the president of Fairleigh Dickinson. He's now retired. But he's presently -- took over for Al Cade as the Chair the Council of State Colleges -- of the Commission. And under the Commission is the Council of State College Presidents. George Pruitt is the President of the Presidents, and Frank Mertz is the President of the Commission. The two of them are the two areas you have to speak with.

And, again, President Pruitt is also a very reasonable, very competent individual. He was a senior public president -- public college president of the state. So we have the mechanism. We just need to sit down with the Commission and with the Council of Presidents.

MR. STRADA: By the way, I have to cover one of Professor Wolfe's classes on Monday so he can meet in the Legislature.

SENATOR DORIA: You better do that. (laughter) We need David there.

MR. STRADA: We need the money.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: We're going to move, now, from the articulation issue to the licensing and certification issue. And we're going to

ask that Professor Liz Kendall, from Montclair State University, come forward, please.

ELIZABETH M. KENDALL: Hi.

I'm a little nervous. I'm taking Nancy Lauter's place. She is the Chairperson of the Early Childhood Elementary Literacy Department at Montclair. And she is in China at the moment. So Nancy asked me to speak a little bit about what she had spoken about at the last meeting, which was the marginalization of the P-3 certification.

When I was thinking about this-- Somebody told me, when I came in, just speak from your heart. So I'm going to try to do that, as well as shed a little bit of light on how I feel, as the Director of the P-3 Modified Alternate Route Program at Montclair.

The P-3 Modified Alternate Route Program -- I believe it's called the Alternate Route Program -- it depends on which college your in -- is a program for teachers who have B.A.s and who are currently teaching in the preschools or K, 1, 2, 3 grades in New Jersey. But I would say -- and I don't know about the other colleges -- but I would say 99 percent of our students -- all not traditional students.

We have students probably beginning in their late 20s, to one woman who was 71. Amazing.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: God bless her.

MS. KENDALL: God bless her is right. She's a real character too. And she's working with young children, which is amazing, because I can't sit down and get up any more. (laughter)

These are all what you would call non-traditional students. They are all coming back because they -- and I'm going to read some of the

words I've heard today, because they have heart, passion; they are champions, they want to be qualified, and they want to become quality teachers. They support children, and families, and the whole world of early childhood. They want to be prepared. That's what these people want.

Now, in terms of the marginalization of P-3 -- and this is, kind of, my own opinion from my own experience. But, really, the people who are being marginalized are those people who are teaching our very youngest citizens. And those are the 3- and 4-year-old children. Therein, I believe, lies the gap. And the gap, really, is bigger than that. It's really zero to four.

Everything that you look at that's provided by the State, by the government, by the testing agencies, by everybody is really K -- it's K-5, K-8, K-12. You don't see a lot of pre-K in there. I mean, certainly, Abbott has done that. And I really applaud-- I mean, I started teaching early childhood in 1980, after teaching high school for 13 years. It was, kind of, the same thing. (laughter) I was a drama teacher, so working with 3- and 4-year-olds was wonderful, because I was really in my element.

But I believe what's happening is, the pre-Kindergarten teachers -- and if we're going to talk about No Child Left Behind, and highly qualified teachers, and people needing to take that content knowledge practice exam, and special education -- I'm going to get to that in a minute.

I think the pre-Kindergarten teachers are, kind of, being-- We recognize them -- and certainly through Abbott and the millions of dollars that have been put into Abbott. Boy, it's really come a long way. But there's still such a long way to go.

According to NCLB, I believe that a highly qualified teacher needs to take a State content exam. I have several articles here, which I'd

be happy to give up to you, about the difference between content knowledge and pedagogy. How many of you have been in an early childhood classroom? (affirmative responses) You usually don't see the teacher standing up in front of 15 children and lecturing. When we think of content-- Although no teacher should really do that (laughter) -- not even college professors should just get up there and lecture for two hours, I don't think.

But you don't see that happening in an early childhood classroom. What you see happening in an early childhood classroom is the development of social skills, is the development of becoming good relaters to each other, self-help skills, self-management skills. Those are not content areas. Those are methodologies.

Now, Muriel Rand said and Cynthia Rice said that we really need those liberal arts courses, and GERs are really, really important, because what we want our pre-K teachers to do is to know how to know the content involved in science, in math, and literacy, and language, and helping children to develop a sense of a love for learning -- that's the most important thing, as far as I'm concerned -- but also to help them develop those--

Is that my time? (referring to cellular phone ringing)

Oh, that's your phone.

Ding.

--to develop a sense of pre-math skills, pre-reading skills, pre-writing skills, pre-social studies and what's-my-community-about skills. But that's not content.

So I challenge-- And I know that it's being worked on. From the beginning of the P-3 Abbott preschool decision -- "When is a test going to be identified for P-3?" "Oh, we're working on it." And I know it's being worked on. But there is that edge between pedagogy and content. That has to be solved.

All preschool teachers need to be highly qualified. Can you tell a highly qualified teacher by a score on a test? No. People can get wonderful scores on tests and not be able to go in there and relate to children. And that's critical.

And Senator (*sic*) Voss, you know that. Congresswoman (*sic*) Voss, I should say. Did I promote you or demote you?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: You just promoted me.

MS. KENDALL: There's my social studies knowledge.
(laughter)

So I think that's really critical. And that piece of the highly qualified NCLB needs to be worked on.

Another issue that's critically important is the issue of special education. Right now, there is a new certificate -- the teachers of students with disabilities. I actually messed that one up, and I'm really sorry to admit it. But I called it an STD at one point. (laughter) That was really-- And I was in the front of these really high people, and I was like, "Oh, God. I can't believe I said that." But anyway, it's the teacher of students with disabilities.

There was a wonderful article in the paper a couple of weeks ago that talked about a school in Newark, and teachers working with preschool children. If you walk into any preschool classroom, especially

those in Abbott districts, not only do you see diversity, in terms of culture, in terms of color, in terms of -- there's just all kinds of diversity. But you're also going to see children included -- children who have special needs. Mainly behavioral, emotional, and learning disabilities.

There is not enough education for our preschool teachers who are not special education teachers. They are the teachers of all. There's not enough resource and support.

And I'm just going to end with an anecdote.

So those are, really, the two most important things I want to talk about -- is the identification of a pedagogy and content test to help our teachers be seen, and those preschool teachers be seen as highly qualified; and the special ed component. Our teachers need to be included in that. And I know that's being worked on also.

And a little story, and then I'll stop. I was in a preschool classroom about four years ago. I don't remember what town it's in, because I'm in a lot of them. There were 15 children, wonderful teacher, wonderful assistant teacher. And there was one child who was pretty severely autistic. Wonderful little boy, great personality, smart little boy.

I was in that classroom for about two-and-a-half hours. And that teacher spent most of that two-and-a-half hours with that child, as she needed to. And I said, "Don't you have any support? Don't you have any resources?" And she said, "Yes. We have a resource from the public schools. He came in once, patted the kid on the head, and left."

Now, that's probably a little tiny story that doesn't happen all the time, but I bet you it happens a lot.

So we really need something to include -- and this is licensing -- something to include that teacher of students with disabilities certification for our preschool teachers, very specifically.

That's all I have to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Can I say something.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I can't tell you how much I agree with whatever you said. Having supervised teachers for a long time, I'm of the opinion that teachers are born, and then we hone their skills.

MS. KENDALL: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I mean, I have seen people with all kinds of advanced degrees that couldn't teach their way out of a paper bag. And one of the things that we-- And I also believe that some of us are destined to teach at a certain level. There's a special personality for pre-K, there's a special personality for elementary, there's a special personality -- to me, middle school's tantamount to hell.

MS. KENDALL: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: So there's a special personality.

And then you have higher education.

So when I observe teachers, I can tell, from the minute I watch them, who is going to be an effective teacher. And it has nothing to do with content and things of this sort. It's so much more important to involve the child and to make what he's learning relevant. And these social skills-- The most important, I think -- the most important teachers are pre-K and elementary, because most children learn about 90 percent of what they

need to know at that age. I mean, the content later is icing on the cake. But the interpersonal skills, getting along with people, and--

I always said to my kids, who were seniors in high school, "The only lesson you really need to know is, never do to somebody else what you don't want done to you." And that's what you learned before you went to Kindergarten. So you need people who can relate to children.

And I think, sometimes -- about the practice-- I've seen people who are wonderful teachers not do well, or have to take the practice maybe seven or eight times before they pass it, because that was not the level -- the area that they were -- where their expertise. And they were never going to use it.

And I have to agree with Senator Rice. They make us take courses. For my bachelor's, I had to take statistics. For my master's, I had to take statistics. For my doctorate, I had to take statistics. I've never used statistics in my life. So we have to reevaluate what we're going to judge teachers on when they're going to go into a certain level of education.

You can't tell I'm passionate about this. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Senator Voss. (laughter)

Okay, we're going to hear from the Department of Education.

Michael Klavon is here, of the Office of Licensing.

MICHAEL K. KLAVON: Thank you.

And I also have my security blanket with me, Peggy Smith, who is the Coordinator of Examiners in our office. And so when it comes to the hard part, I'll defer to her to answer the questions.

I'm just kidding, I'll answer some, as well, of course. (laughter)

Thank you, Assemblyman, and Senators, and Assemblywoman for this opportunity to speak before you.

I gave you -- and I'm only going to spend a couple of minutes on that, but I do want to make sure that the public is aware of this. I did give you a handout. And I'm only going to refer to a couple parts of it, because you can read this and look at it at your leisure. And I have some copies, but not enough. I didn't expect this large of an audience. I will, at the end, give my e-mail address. And anybody who wants to e-mail me, I'll make sure they get an e-mailed copy of the presentation if they want one.

First, let me start by saying I'm a former superintendent of schools, prior to becoming a State bureaucrat. And we did have a pre-K through 12th grade program, and also an adult high school. And whenever I wanted to get away from the hard issues that were facing us, I would go to the preschool and walk around in the classroom. And it was truly enjoyable, because that would make my day for the rest of the day, in terms of smiling and so on.

Let me walk you, but not page by page, through this document. Just indicating, on Page 3 of the document -- and the audience, I'll make this so you can follow with me. But on Page 3 is just a quick schematic that indicates what we had, unfortunately, in the Office of Licensing. And that was a truly dilapidated system, with regard to how people became certified.

The Governor, as you all know, had to pass an executive order, because people were being hired as substitutes, awaiting their certification. And they weren't being paid. And so what the executive order did was two things. One, it provided additional time for those people to work as substitutes in the area that they were hired for. And in addition to that, it

put a lot of requirements on the Department to improve what we were doing in the Department.

At the same time that this was happening, we had new technology that was being implemented. And we also had new State regulations, some of the regulations that are referred to here. So far, we've had three phases to revising those regulations, taking into account the NCLB and taking into account some of the groups that we had pulled together to write the regulations -- help us write the regulations.

The good news is, we have two additional phases where we're going to the State Board of Education with regard to those regulations. One is coming up in August, so it's going to be too late to make changes that this group here might want to look at for August. But we are going to have one additional phase after that. And the reason for that-- We have a math task force, that I'm sure you're familiar with, that's meeting. And that task force is looking at the requirements that teachers would have to have in whatever level they were teaching.

So, as you know, right now it's just an accumulation of credits if you want to be a math teacher at the high school, or a math teacher at the middle school. But there's no specificity to the types of courses you actually had to have taken in college to be able to impart that knowledge. And so that math task force is looking at that as one of the areas. So we will be entertaining some additional suggestions for changes to the regulations in the future.

If you would turn, momentarily, to Page 6, what I want to just make sure is that everyone understands the complexity of what was involved here. We had to look at the professional standards, the core

standards, and we had to work those into the regulations. We had to look at the college programs. And the college programs had to be reapproved. They had to be NK or TX certified. And we wanted to make sure that the No Child Left Behind legislation was looked at, as well.

If you turn to Page 13 -- again, you can look at this at your leisure -- I wanted to talk a little bit about the teacher certification system, because what we did was, we implemented a technology system that allows someone to apply online. In addition to doing that, they can check the status of their application online, they can view past and current credentials, they can check for the test scores -- the practice -- and they can also input their educational history and their experience history, all online. In addition to that, they can pay online for the certification.

Highlighting just a couple other parts of that-- In the middle of this presentation, which you can look at at your leisure, there are screen shots demonstrating how an applicant would, in fact, apply online. And what's important there is, we try to make it a foolproof system. When somebody wants to apply for a certificate, there are a series of screening questions that then make it almost impossible to make a mistake. Once you indicate which specific certificate you're looking for, it tells you exactly what the fee is. And then you can either pay by check or by credit card, and it completes that transaction. And it tells you that the transaction has been completed.

From an examiner point of view, what happens -- and it's explained again in this document-- When mail is received, it is now opened within 24 hours and distributed within 24 hours. It goes to one of two locations. The check, by the way -- if there's a check -- is removed

immediately, deposited immediately. But the material would either go to an examiner directly, if an examiner requested the information, or it goes to our imaging department, and they image the documents in. So within 48 hours, the documents are imaged in.

What this means -- if you turn to Page 34 -- from the back is probably the easiest way to find it. I apologize. Some of these pages, because they were screen shots, were not numbered. So if you go from the back, and you go to Page 34-- Actually, to make it faster, if you go past Page 36 -- the chart -- the page after Page 36, which again is not numbered, because it's a screen shot of a chart.

We had a backlog of some 11,000 applications. What's important to see is that, as of April 11, that original backlog was totally and completely eliminated. In order to do that, what we had to do was create an artificial backlog. And so if you go to the next page, Page 38, what we did is, we created a new backlog on December 7. No correlation meant there by that date. But what happened was, we wanted to make sure that those people who applied first were looked at first. And then, by creating that second backlog -- as you see from that chart -- we then created, finally, a third and last backlog date of April 11. And by the end of this month, we will have completed all of the backlogs, not only the original one, but the one that we created on December 7, and the one that we created on April 11.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And those are artificial, those two?

MR. KLAVON: Yes, sir.

And what's important-- Let me emphasize that we also have a process called *expedites*, so that, throughout this entire time period, if

somebody had a job pending, they weren't in a backlog. They were dealt with immediately. And an expedite can come to us from any number of sources. It could come from the Legislature, they could come from the Governor's Office, they could come from the superintendents of schools, they could come from associations. And we would make sure that anything that was indicated to us that had to be looked at as an expedite was, in fact, processed.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Mike, just a question.

MR. KLAVON: Surely.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: So when you say you had 600 applications in April--

MR. KLAVON: A thousand.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Well, according to the chart, I believe it said 600 in April. That would be the total number of applications past and artificial in the backlog? You had a chart there with the April numbers.

MR. KLAVON: Okay. I'm sorry. That's the number--

Thank you for asking the question.

That's showing the decrease of the original 11,000. And so we had closer to about 5,000 with each one of the new backlogs that we created. And we've completed those, as I've indicated. So, in reality, you're looking at 11,000, plus another 10,000 that have been completed over the last number of months.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: But the 600 number is the total number, between the backlog and the current, in the pipeline.

MR. KLAVON: It's the number subtracted-- It's the 11,000 brought down to 600 as of April 6, and then zero as of April 11.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I just have to say that my office gets calls every single day about people who haven't received their certification. I made a call just a day before yesterday. A young lady had FedExed it down to your office two months ago, and they hadn't received it. Now, I don't know why. So we had to go through the process again.

And I also had to introduce a piece of legislation, because people who hadn't received their certification were being hired at substitute salary. And so we had a piece of legislation that said that their 10-year period would begin the day they were hired, even though they didn't have the certification.

MR. KLAVON: Correct.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: But, I mean, as a teacher, I am quite concerned about the fact that people come to me, as a colleague, and say, "What's going on in the Department of Education?"

And so I understand you're supposed to have everything finished by June 30, but I'm still getting a lot of calls.

MR. KLAVON: I think the number of calls-- And please continue to forward anything and everything that goes to anyone in the room -- to us. Because we now have a call center that has hours. We have, again, a procedure with receiving e-mails that are responded to immediately. And, again, if it comes from a legislator, the Governor, or superintendents of schools, it rises to the top, because there's a job pending. If there's not a job pending, then, again, it will be addressed, but not as quickly. But we anticipate that by the end of June, almost everyone will have an eight-week turn around time, unless there is a job pending. Then it will be less.

So please keep our feet to the fire and make sure we're doing--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Oh, I will.

MR. KLAVON: Please do that.

Let me switch over to some of the concerns of the group. One thing I would ask because, again, I don't have a -- I'm relatively new to the office -- since October -- I don't know the leadership of the group that's presenting here today. And what I would like to do is extend an invitation to a delegation of four, five, six people to come to my office and to discuss code issues and any other issues. Because in having read the paper that was presented on June 1, there are some inaccuracies in that document that we think we can clear up very quickly with a meeting. And then there are others in there that may require additional code changes.

But let me highlight a couple of things that I heard here today. And they're not as easy as one may think to remedy. Let me explain, first, for example, the issue of the test. As was well pointed out by some of the speakers, you have pedagogy knowledge and you have content knowledge. But in the area of preschool, the content knowledge and the pedagogy knowledge kind of blur together. And it's hard to separate one from the other. When you're looking at a straight practice test, for example, for mathematics, it's very simple.

Because of the alternate route procedure, if you were to have a test of pedagogical knowledge, the alternate route candidate, obviously, couldn't pass that test, because they received the pedagogical knowledge while they're teaching. And so, therefore, to have that kind of an assessment would preclude people from actually coming into the program with an alternate education background. So we have to be very careful of when a particular test becomes a requirement so that it doesn't become a

gatekeeper, if you will, and keep people out who might be very good teachers. So that's important and why I think we'd want to have that dialogue.

In addition to that, let me just point out that the colleges, right now, are also undergoing, as I mentioned earlier, approval of their programs. We are very cognizant in our code to have included not only knowledge skills but also dispositions, as was pointed out, with regard to diversity issues and making sure that people understand the cultural differences that everyone has.

So let me just stop there in order to open it up for any questions or comments that anyone may have. And if I need to, I'll ask Peggy Smith to jump in.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Anyone on the panel?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I just would like to know, what is the logic behind having alternate route people who are put into a classroom with really no educational background, and then having them go two nights a week to take the courses, to teach them how to teach, when they're already teaching? Where's the logic there? Because as having had a few alternate route teachers in my lifetime-- They were in tears every day because they, honest to God, didn't have the skills that you need to run a classroom. They may have had the academic knowledge.

So I think it's a disservice to the teacher and to the students to put these people into -- especially on the high school level. I mean, even on-- You can be a wonderful mother, but you still need to know how to take care of pre-K.

MR. KLAVON: Let me address that this way. And it's not going to be the best answer possible, I assure you. But you have people on both sides of this issue who, if you will -- to use an analogy -- may be to the right of Attila the Hun and to the left of Lenin, with regard to their attitude about that.

Nationally, there are those, I will say, so called experts who believe that anyone with a degree can walk into a classroom, without any pedagogical knowledge whatsoever. That's not the case in New Jersey. And the alternate route, however, was designed a number of years ago. And since then, the new Pathways program, for example, and some of the center-based programs that we have established -- there are four of them right now -- that do require a summer component, a classroom teaching component. And the alternate route itself, although -- again I'll be very candid -- is not followed by all districts, requires a 20-day period -- 20-working day period where there is a regular teacher in the room, along with the alternate route candidate.

To be sure, there are improvements that can and should be made to the alternate route program. Currently, we're living with the regulations that are in place. And we're attempting to make the modifications to make it as best as possible. Not to be redundant, but this has a tremendous impact on if there's an assessment, and if that assessment, then, were also to exclude people who otherwise already have skills but now, because they don't have the pedagogical background and knowledge, can't pass that test, and ergo, can't go in the classroom.

You're hitting a very sensitive and very important issue.

SENATOR RICE: Let me--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: If you eliminated that route, what would happen to the teacher population?

MR. KLAVON: Oh, my God.

SENATOR RICE: It's going to drop, real below. See, it's like a necessary evil in the times when one of the greatest demands out there is for teachers today, unfortunately. The other side of it -- we may not be getting all we should be getting from the individual because of that.

So I don't really know how to get around it. You may change the regs, but in the meanwhile, I can't help a teacher sitting there-- I can't have a classroom without a teacher. And by the same token, I can't have someone, "the subs that we get," coming off of the, maybe, associate program or just a credit piece. So it's a necessary evil. We have to figure out how to maybe make it better or expedite what they learn. I just don't know.

I just wanted to at least put that on the record.

MR. KLAVON: Well, if I could make just one comment. I don't have the exact statistic, but I'm probably pretty close. I think 42 percent -- around that number -- of the new teachers coming into the classroom are alternate route teachers. And so it's a huge number. And so, therefore, as the Senator pointed out, if we were to eliminate that path, we would be exacerbating the teacher shortage and crisis that we have. So it is a complex issue. It's one that requires a lot of study.

And, in fact, we have commissioned a study with the College of New Jersey to look at the alternate route program, because there are about six different variations of the alternate route program in New Jersey. We

have the Pathways programs through Jersey City University, we have the center-based program, and then we have individual programs at different colleges in the state that also had received grants from the Federal government and other sources to implement their own version of an alternate route program. Obviously, they have to meet the regulations. But we're studying all of those to come up with suggestions on how to improve the program.

And the Assemblywoman hit the nail on the head with regard to what's the right balance, and when does someone first walk into the classroom and take over that classroom. Those are, obviously, very critical issues.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much, Michael.

MR. KLAVON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: We're going to hear from Ellen Wolock.

Ellen.

E L L E N W O L O C K: I'm Ellen Wolock. I'm from the Office of Early Childhood Education, Department of Ed. And I oversee the professional development activities for the Abbott preschool program. And I'm very pleased to have a chance to tell you about some of our professional development initiatives.

The focus of today's discussion has been the challenges of college and university articulation, and other issues associated with the P-3 certification. Our office does not have jurisdiction over how this occurs, but we really are concerned with it and understand the critical role that teacher preparation plays in creating a preschool program that works.

To this end, we have many professional development activities in place. These are all designed to improve the quality of preschool experiences for every individual child in each of the Abbott districts.

Our professional development system is derived from two main sources -- evaluation sources. One of these is called the self-assessment and validation system. This is a district self-appraisal with an outside validation component. Districts rate themselves in 17 areas and 158 indicators of quality in areas such as curriculum, parent involvement, supports for English-language learners, professional development, and inclusion of children with special needs. The districts use this system to try to improve -- identify what to improve in their program.

We also look closely at the results of classroom evaluations that are conducted each year by a group called the Early Learning Improvement Consortium. This is a group of universities. Each year, we select, randomly, about 300 of the 2,800 or so Abbott preschool classrooms and conduct classroom observations to see how they look. The evaluations look at key classroom components such as -- and these are all things associated with quality and child outcome. We look at things like teacher-child interaction, activities, the types of materials provided, the way in which the room is set up, parent involvement, program structure, and importantly -- specifically, math and language arts practices.

These evaluations for this year showed us that professional development was needed in several important areas. I'm going to go over some of the biggies. Curriculum -- preschool curriculum; accommodating children who speak other languages; identifying and supporting children who need special education; improving the coaching of teachers in the

classroom; helping children with challenging behaviors, and of course helping their teachers, more importantly; enhancing language arts literacy, math, and science practices; and using developmentally appropriate assessments to inform teaching.

We wanted a system that would reach all levels of staff. So with that in mind, we developed professional development in three ways. The first is on-site. Districts carried out individualized professional development plans through workshops for teachers, directors, principals, special services personnel, and master teachers or teacher coaches. A big focus for this year was fine-tuning curriculum. And a curriculum can take three to five years to effectively implement. Ongoing assessment was another area, and providing more in-class teacher support.

The second is role-specific meetings and workshops. We targeted the needs of Abbott preschool staff with similar needs. For example, for master teachers that were new, we had a year-long course. Supervisors had monthly meetings. Community parent involvement, specialists, preschool special services staff, bilingual master teachers, and fiscal personnel all met regularly.

The third is through state conferences. Teachers and center directors were brought together around topics such as observing in classrooms, leadership, and the preschool teaching and learning expectations, which are the core standards for Abbott preschool classrooms.

The school year is over, and now we're taking stock of our growth in program quality. This fall, the cycle of program improvement and evaluation will begin again, hopefully raising the bar each year, better meeting the needs of each individual child.

Thank you.

And I do have some handouts that summarize the activities of our office, and also the latest results of our evaluation.

SENATOR RICE: Okay. Are there any questions from anyone? (no response)

The Chair should be back in a moment, but Ms. Cynthia Rice is going to come back.

Do you want to wait?

Dr. Holly Seplocha, from William Paterson University, the Assistant Professor.

Is that correct?

H O L L Y S E P L O C H A, Ed.D.: Seplocha. (indicating pronunciation)

I'm Dr. Holly Seplocha, and I'm from the William Paterson University. I also serve as the P-3 coordinator of our undergraduate program, as well as our modified alternate route program. I also am the Secretary of the New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children, for the teacher educator group for early childhood teacher educators.

I guess I get to serve as the close up batter or whatever. So I want to, kind of, address a little bit of each one of the things that have been talked about today to, kind of, bring the focus back to where we've been.

SENATOR RICE: It's cleanup batter -- cleanup hitter.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Cleanup hitter, right. You can tell how much baseball I do, right? Although I did get my husband some Yankee

tickets for Father's Day. (laughter) So he's going to be very happy on Friday -- on Sunday.

Carrie talked about the areas that are important, in terms of professional development and in terms of what's happening in the higher education institutions. And I think that's important research that was done at Rutgers. And I think that that kind of research needs to continue.

With the new code that's out, and the fact that most of the universities have revised all of our programs, some of the issues that came up as needs that weren't happening at higher education have, in fact, have already been addressed through the programs having to be revised to meet the standards. And so I think that it's important that we continue that kind of research, and that kind of research be sponsored and supported, so that we can see growth and see what's happening as teachers come out with having gone through different kinds of programs, meeting the new New Jersey standards.

The issue of articulation is a large issue. I've been involved with the Professional Development Center for many years and have been observing and working with -- our university has been working with community colleges in our area to try to establish articulation agreements with them. Our President has been very supportive of that kind of activity -- has actually told us, "Do something with these people." So it's a two-fold issue, though, that still is a concerning problem.

Because of the fact that when people finish the university -- and they go for a job in Jersey City, or in Paterson, or applying for a job -- William Paterson's name is the name that's on the university. William Paterson is the one that goes in, that says how many people passed this

practice and didn't pass the practice. And so there's required general education things that we have, and the academic majors, and that kind of thing, as well as, certainly, our education course work.

We have put together required other courses that we have, just for education majors, where we direct electives for them. So they're required to take general psychology and developmental psychology. We require that they take extra math classes than simply a normal William Paterson student would do. So each of our programs has those kinds of things.

The New Jersey transfer piece works when there is good advisement. When there's not advisement, then that system fails down. When a student goes into a community college, and signs up for courses, and takes whatever they feel like taking, and then gets advisement later, those classes aren't going to come in. When they take classes that are on the approved list, it works. When they take classes that aren't on the approved list, it doesn't work. So how that's going to be fixed or remedied-- I'm not really sure where that's going to happen.

There are issues in terms of the alignment with other courses, with other universities. I know at William Paterson, what we do is, we articulate with Passaic Community College for certain credits that we will accept into our program; with Morris, and with Sussex County for certain other courses from their education program that we'll accept into our program.

The issue becomes, really, one of looking at how -- what students need to know, and when they need to know it. Our students don't take education classes until they're juniors and seniors. We think that it's

important that they have the foundational content knowledge. To come in to take the teaching math class when they don't know math is a real hard class for them to do. When they're still having difficulty figuring fractions and knowing how to do the basic math kinds of skills, that's a problem. So we make sure that those courses are done earlier in their career. So we start our education courses in our junior and seniors years, when students complete their program with education pieces.

Lastly, I wanted to talk to the marginalization.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Doctor, just a moment on that issue.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: That statement speaks volumes.
(laughter) The statement about having to have college students -- a huge percentage. I believe we were reported that there were 65 percent of the community college students who are actually taking remedial classes.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And at the--

DR. SEPLOCHA: At four-year schools they have the same thing.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: --four-year institutions, it's about 40 percent.

DR. SEPLOCHA: We have students that apply-- To get into the education program is separate from being admitted into the college. One of the admission criteria is a writing assessment. For the writing assessment, they have to do an on-demand writing -- sit down, in a blue book and, longhand, write something out. And we give them a prompt, and they have to respond to the prompt, which is a generic prompt, like

something about: “What would you miss if you lost it?” or something like that. Something that has no content knowledge required for it. It’s just a general -- “Can you put together a few paragraphs that make sense and do that?”

We assess it using the GEPA assessment for the writing. So eighth grade writing is how we’re assessing this test (indiscernible). We have students that flunk that don’t get admitted into our program. Some of those students have passed basic skills. They maybe even took an English class someplace. And so we have to send them back for remediation before they can even come into the program. And that’s not just whether they come from a community college or through our own university. But there are students that don’t have those skills, or don’t have the English writing skills to be able to pass a basic eighth grade test. That’s not somebody I want teaching my children.

SENATOR RICE: Well, you know what--

Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Senator, just a moment.

Richard had his hand up. I just want to give him an opportunity, if we could.

MR. STRADA: I don’t want to interrupt.

Everyone of the county college--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: You need to come up to the microphone, please.

MR. STRADA: Oh, okay.

Each one of the county colleges -- and I presume every one of the State colleges -- set their own level at which a test score gets you in

remediation or gets you in college level. I think that most of the county colleges do not agree on what that cut level is. So at one school, you might be in regular college-level English. But that same score at another place, you would be in remediation. I don't think there's any universal-- And that might-- I don't know if that would attribute to the numbers.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay.

Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: I was going to kind of indicate that. And, unfortunately, whether people like it or not, that's the bias in the system. I don't have a problem with Brookdale Community College saying I'm going to assess this one way. But coming from Essex or Hudson County Community College, there's the stereotypical thing -- how many minorities or women I really want. And that's the fallacy, and that's why there has to be a process.

And let me tell you something else. I'm not sure if I could pass the eighth grade test right now. I'm going to say it again. I have an associate's, bachelor's, master's, 20 credits away from a law degree, a lot of life experience. I'm not sure I could pass it. It doesn't mean if I go back and start reviewing it, I can't pass it.

And I've seen those fallacies in school. I've seen people in law school who were A students and had to take the Bar a hundred thousand times. I've seen folks that they try to put on probation at the end, and we forced -- they want to put them on, and we said no, as "minority students." They kept them, they come out of school, and they pass the Bar the first time and wind up being good lawyers.

I have a problem with assessments. And I have a problem with four-year institutions being a barrier, saying, "I got from point A to point B." If you come into a community college and you can point out where -- what the scores -- that the academic scores that students are getting are not valid scores, that's one thing. But it's valid across the board, then you give them a chance.

And let me tell you something else. The one thing in the '60s -- blacks basically couldn't go to any other school but black colleges. What was great about them -- the Howard Universities -- and some of the finest physicians and everything else come out of -- was that they had an open-door policy. Do you know what that was? "If you finished high school, you're carrying this grade C or better, come on down. You've got a semester to prove yourself. We'll tell you what to do, we'll shape you up, etc."

So my point is that--

DR. SEPLOCHA: Senator Rice, perhaps you misunderstood--

SENATOR RICE: I'm not going to allow the four-year-- That's why I'm going to have this meeting for the public. I'm not going to allow people who make big salaries think that God gave them a monopoly on brains, because we appoint them, or the faculty or somebody appoints them as the leaders of our institutions -- in this case, I'm talking education -- and use that with the people under them -- who are making the big salaries, and say that, "We are the educational gurus, and the rest of you, because you don't teach in the system (indiscernible), know nothing."

I'm not going to allow that. Someone is going to say, "Look, we understand where you're coming from. But there's a middle ground

here. And we represent the majority of people that need what you're supposed to be offering. And you can no longer be a barrier to it." We can give you bad tools, if you will, or bad people. But you're not going to tell me the majority of the people applying are from two-year colleges into four-year colleges -- are not worthy and can't make it through there. So you make your system work right. We connect these systems. And where the community colleges are failing with the pieces you need, we need to force those pieces in place. That's what I call alignment and cooperation. And that's going to have to happen sooner or later, because we're going to carry that message.

I mean, it's not a scolding. I just want to be clear, because some of this stuff comes out, and it bothers me. And you said something very important. What we should know-- You're talking counseling. But what you're saying is that, at the community college level, the people aren't getting the right kind of counseling. Therefore, when they get here, they're lacking. Well, you know what? That's not hard to fix. First of all, I can hire a counselor today.

Melanie, you're my counselor in my community college. You know what? You are required to go up to William Paterson and get with that counselor. And when you come back, you will know how to align with that college.

See, my point is, we make excuses for not doing simple things. If need be, I will say, "You know what, William Paterson, since we're paying your counselors, when we get ready to recruit, we're going to compel your counselor to go down there and teach." See, some kind of way, that's a

human fallacy. That's not a hard piece. That's not an expensive piece for us to fix.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Right.

SENATOR RICE: So I just want to go on the record with that.

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to get off on it, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: No, thank you, Senator.

SENATOR RICE: But that bothers me, because I'm a product of a community college. And Rutgers would not have had me, nor would John Jay, and saw these wonderful things, and the honor student-- That's why I don't acknowledge the four-year college. I say I went to Essex. You never hear me say I went to Rutgers, or John Jay, or law school.

And the President got angry one time. He came to Appropriations. "Oh, you're alumni." I said, "No, I'm not. I don't recognize you." I mean, you start to address community colleges and create that alignment, that relationship-- Because I know who pass through community colleges. And they're a majority in this state. And I have a real problem with that. There's a bias in this system.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Doctor, if you could wrap up, please.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Sure.

I don't want you to walk away, Senator Rice, thinking that our university does not accept community college students. We have lots of community college students. And, actually, a majority of our students are coming in through community college. I'm just saying, when the process breaks down, it's because of individual courses that students took that don't articulate in. And that happens whether they went to Princeton or any place, if it's not in the thing.

SENATOR RICE: And, through the Chair, I hear that, but what I also heard earlier was that -- from Senator Doria -- is that these "presidents" -- it's turf battle. Well, if you know that at your level, and we know it -- or we hear it at our level -- then there should be no turf battle. That's easy to fix. That's my point. And that's why I want to get all these presidents in the room and tell them where they can go, and what they can do. (laughter) And tell them how they get their dollars.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I want to be a fly on the wall at that one. (laughter)

DR. SEPLOCHA: The last piece I wanted to address is the P-3 marginalization. And that-- What happens with P-3 students is, P-3 students come out with certifications in -- and are able to apply for jobs in preschool to grade 3. And they get jobs in preschools, in Kindergartens, in first grades, second grades, and third grades. If they want to pick up additional certification, the code doesn't allow that to happen. They can't simply take the math test, even if they were a math major, and become certified. If they want to become an elementary school teacher, they can't pass practice and become certified. And that is a piece that is a concern across -- from all of our universities for our graduates.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Perhaps we can have that addressed.

Peg, would you like to respond to that? At the microphone, please. We tape it.

We did hear this at the last meeting, as well.

MARGARET SMITH: I think it's a misunderstanding, in terms of our regulations.

Because we have standards-based preparation that teachers need to have to get additional certificates, and our modified alternate route people take just the P-3 pedagogy -- they don't have across-the-board standards based that all other teachers need to have. Those that have done the alternate route, where they've taken 13 to 15 credits in pedagogy, have to go back and take a larger program. But at most of the colleges that are offering an entire teacher prep program for our early childhood educators that include the standards based requirements, those people can move to other areas just as easily as anyone else. The ones who can't are those who have done the modified alternate route, who don't have the broad-based background that the college educator -- the teacher prep people have when they come out.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Perhaps the problem is that that's just not being communicated. Because that's not the impression that we've received from the two meetings that we've had.

DR. SEPLOCHA: What it says in the code-- I mean, I don't need to tell you what the code says.

MS. SMITH: I know what the code says.

DR. SEPLOCHA: The code says you can do this if you pass the test, except for--

MS. SMITH: Except for--

DR. SEPLOCHA: --the P-3.

MS. SMITH: Right.

DR. SEPLOCHA: It doesn't say P-3 alternate route. It says except for P-3.

MS. SMITH: And it also says except for special ed, except for vocational educators, except for military science teachers--

DR. SEPLOCHA: So it under--

MS. SMITH: --and except for -- I think there's one other -- ESL bilingual.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Right.

MS. SMITH: And the reason is that many of those teachers have only the subject-specific pedagogy, modified alternate route for P-3.

DR. SEPLOCHA: What about undergraduate P-3?

MS. SMITH: We're not talking-- What we're talking about is--

DR. SEPLOCHA: It doesn't say modified alternate route.

MS. SMITH: No, it doesn't say that. But when the person applies, we look to see that they've-- Well, we've--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Peg, is there some way to get a notice out from your Department to clarify that point so that we don't have to debate that here?

MS. SMITH: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: So that it's just clear.

MS. SMITH: Okay.

DR. SEPLOCHA: What -- an elementary person who went alternate route--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Doctor, I've asked Peg to issue a notice on it. If she issues a notice on it that clarifies it, I think that would be satisfactory.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Okay.

But an elementary person who goes alternate route, and takes the test to become a math major -- I mean to become a math test (*sic*), they get certified.

MS. SMITH: Because their pedagogy -- their regional training pedagogy is generic. It covers the standards based. It's not specific to elementary. It's not specific to special ed. We have people applying for special ed, and we're looking for the standards based pedagogy for their other certificates.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Okay.

MS. SMITH: But we will get something out.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay. If that can be clarified-- If not, what we're going to do-- I think we're going to have a special hearing to hear that issue, because that's an issue that we can go on for an hour-and-a-half. And I don't want to rush into it at the end of the day.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Yes.

Okay, great.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: That would be a disservice to that issue.

DR. SEPLOCHA: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much.

Would you like to be heard? Please come to the microphone.

A B E G A I L A. D O U G L A S - J O H N S O N: My name is Abegail Douglas-Johnson. I'm the Vice President for Academic Affairs here at Hudson County Community College.

And I think Mr. Rice, Senator Rice, you eloquently spoke something about articulation. And I really feel I needed to say something here about that.

I constantly say that our community colleges provide access. But it's not entitlement to a degree. Our students must demonstrate proficiency so when we graduate them, they demonstrate proficiency. When they come in, there is a placement test. And while there may be some slight differences in the discrepancies, in the cut scores of placement tests, those discrepancies are at the high end. If you look at the tables, you'll see that most all of the colleges pretty much have a seven -- and I don't have time to explain what that means -- as a cut score. Some may have a slightly higher number, but there is a level -- a high-end level where they all are.

So at all of the community colleges, there is a placement exam. And at the end of the semester, there is an exit exam. And they have to demonstrate proficiency. At Hudson, when they exit, both math, algebra, and writing, they go to College Composition I. We also have a writing proficiency test at the end of College Composition I. And our records show that about 74 percent of the students pass that writing proficiency after College Composition I. I don't know how many four-year schools have a writing proficiency test after College Composition I.

Each year -- or not every year-- But we also receive reports from Montclair, from NJIT, from schools where our students are graduates and transfer. And they tell us that our students perform as well as or better than the native students. So I really felt I needed to make that point.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much, Abigail.

We're going to wrap up with Cynthia Rice.

Cynthia, you've got two minutes to wrap up, because we're going to have another meeting pretty quickly. And I think we're going to try to keep the momentum that we've created on these very important topics today.

MS. RICE: I'm just going to mention the first two issues. The first is the content.

Part of this is, maybe it is retooling of the faculty. We have-- We know, from studies done, that we have a very, very qualified State faculty in our higher ed. The problem is that so much has changed in so many years and that maybe there needs to be additional professional development, which is good for all of us. It's not just for -- not to pick on college professors.

And we already have the New Jersey Project on inclusive scholarship curriculum and pedagogy at William Paterson. This is a program that's not really specific for this group, but they deal with professional development for faculty in such issues as multiculturalism. Maybe that's an area that we can look at and expand -- or a model program like that. So that's a step in making sure that the faculty can meet these needs that teachers have identified they have.

The other thing is articulation.

Assemblyman Vas, the answer is legislation. I am so happy to hear what Senator Doria said. You are not the first people that we've come to. We have tried-- When Dr. Lobman, Dr. Ryan, Jill McLaughlin, and I did the work with Rutgers and ACNJ saying, "Here's the data, and this is

the policy recommendations,” we went and presented before the New Jersey President’s Council. There was a very, very big interest from the articulation committee. And the response was, when we met with the then-chair was, “What are you guys hearing from the four-years, because we’re not getting very far with them.”

The other thing is, we also wrote a letter and said we’d like to present to the Commission of Higher Education. And we were told -- this was back in October -- we were told, “I’m sorry. Our agendas are filled to July.” Now, this is important stuff, and it just--

And so what we saw was, this approach is not going to happen voluntarily. And so what we’re looking to -- is to be the champion, is to say, “You know what? All of these issues are critical.” From what Dr. Seplocha said, to what all the people from the community colleges said -- Dr. Rand. But the problem is, this is State dollars, and why should it be so difficult? Other states have been better at it, and it’s not going to happen voluntarily unless someone says to do it. And this-- And what we recommend is for there to be a legislation for a commission.

I looked at Assemblyman Stanley’s legislation for the Schools Construction Review Commission. Something like that, where you’re bringing the experts together and saying, “These problems -- they’re all legitimate problems, but there’s got to be a better way to spend--” Not to mention, a lot of this is State dollars through tuition, through the scholarship. We are wasting money. We are wasting money.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Cynthia, I’m inclined to agree with you at a certain point. I just think that it’s difficult for us, as a fact-finding body, and a body that’s -- whose purpose is to create dialogue about

important issues as they affect education -- for us to take that as our first step.

MS. RICE: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: I think, for us, it's important that -- because the people, the facts, and the politics of this issue have changed over 20 years. And I think that's what Senator Doria really has said -- and Senator Rice have said. And they're my seniors on this issue. I'm the new kid on the block, as Dr. Voss is. We have to create a new dialogue about this. We have to assess the facts, as they exist today. And we've got to look at the politics of this issue, both at our end and the educational community. And we have to make it clear to everyone that we intend to do something about it. And if we can get the people who are involved to do it on their own, it's a heck of a lot better than us to force it upon them. Because there's going to be resentment. And when there's resentment, then there's a trial period in there where nothing gets done. I would prefer to see that happen.

I'm going to take the advice of the Chairman, and see if we can have a series of meetings, perhaps during the course of a day or two, in the form of a conference, where we would conclude, hopefully, with an operating document that would create a statewide articulation model that would give college presidents some flexibility, and would give community colleges some sense of direction.

Because what I'm hearing today are a couple of things. And that is that both groups believe they have a certain independence and a license to do what they choose to do. And I think we have to have a meeting of the minds there and, hopefully, create a more systematic

program that works 90 percent of the time. I don't think we're ever going to make it happen 100 percent of the time. That would take away some of the creative ability of the State universities, some of the creative opportunities that are offered at the county college level. And that's not what we want to do. I don't think that we want to create that kind of an educational system for New Jersey.

The reason we're at the cutting edge, the reason we're even having this discussion is because we set such high standards, and we have such high achievement in this state. We shouldn't be looking at this as a problem, but rather a problem that's come about as a result of our success. It's a product of our success. It really, truly is. And we're the only state in the nation that's mandating early childhood education. That's a success. It truly is. Now, let's see how we make it the best early childhood education program.

MS. RICE: Well, whatever we can do to support this -- because this is--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: We appreciate what you've done.

MS. RICE: And I know, for so many organizations, this is a longtime battle. So we appreciate your time for listening.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: I'd like to stay on a very aggressive schedule, even throughout the summer. Hopefully, we don't lose some of the educators that are involved over the summer. I know that all of us, since we are in recess, can really focus all of our time and energy on this issue, with the hopes that we can come back after Labor Day. (laughter)

I intend to do that. And hopefully come back after Labor Day -- even if it's every three weeks, with some kind of a white paper, or a

blueprint as to how we're going to deal with this issue, if we need to, with legislation.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you for taking time out.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman, before you do that--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Senator Rice, yes.

SENATOR RICE: Before you do that, let me go on record and be clear, the Task Force that's dealing with school construction-- I'm the Senate sponsor.

MS. RICE: Right.

SENATOR RICE: That bill was intended to go into perpetuity. I cut the bill to a year. That was just a--

I don't need that Task Force. This is the Committee that has statutory -- to do what we want to do. So I'm going to let them work a little bit, so we can get a break and be able to get the information we can get anyway.

I don't want to put together legislation to require the Governor to appoint a task force. I don't like those political appointment task forces that we say -- are you going to be a legislator, the Governor, everybody else. I want this Committee's Chair, meaning the Subcommittee Chair, to have the ability to reach out to everybody in the world who wants to be a part of it -- the right people -- and have his own advisory committee. I don't need the Governor or my colleagues for that. And that's what we want, because we are charged with the responsibility.

And the buck stops with me, the Chair. And so that's how we're going to do it. So we're not doing the Commissioner. Yes, we have

the ability-- Individually, I can call the presidents together by myself. I'm a Senator. I'm going to come find them. We have to deal with that.

So we have the ability here through, number one, the fact that we are elected representatives of the people. Through that influence, there's a relationship of respect by some folks.

On the other side, we have the ability to control, through our collective efforts, where the dollars and cents go. That gets attention. We also have the collective ability to change legislation if we get enough votes. And that gives us attention.

Statutorily, the Committee itself has a lot more authority than people think. And I would like to see legislation -- if there's going to be legislation -- derived from this body, which goes to the Education Committees of each body, because here you have real (indiscernible) in terms of both houses and both parties.

So you're "commission" you'd like to see-- The chair is right there.

MS. RICE: You know what? I think I speak for all of the advocates out here. We don't care how it happens, we just want it to happen. (laughter) It shouldn't be so hard for a student to say, "It's easier to go to one school than another." And at the end of the day, this is all about ensuring that there's quality preschool. And that directly is connected to the teachers and the quality of their education.

So whatever you want to call it-- And we will be happy to help in however it develops. But we just want it to happen. It's a longtime coming.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: You can expect to hear from us.

MS. RICE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, all, for joining us.

And I want to just thank all the members for coming. And expect to hear from Melanie Schulz on a follow-up meeting very shortly.

Thank you.

And I want to thank Melanie and Sharon, both, for their help in setting up these meetings.

Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)