

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, May 2, 2023
10:15 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILWOMAN SHARON VAUGHN

BILLS: 230144, 230145, 230146, 230147,
230148, 230149
RESOLUTION: 230162, 181014

1 THE CLERK: Councilmember
2 Bass.

3 (No response.)

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember
5 Brooks.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
7 Present.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Driscoll.

10 (No response.)

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Gauthier.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
14 Present. Good morning.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Good morning.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Gilmore Richardson.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
20 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Council
21 President. Good morning, colleagues.
22 I am present.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Good morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 Harrity.

2 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Morning,
3 colleagues. Good morning, Council
4 President. Good morning, Mr. Mayor.
5 I am present.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 Good morning.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Johnson.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
11 morning, Council President. Good
12 morning, colleagues. Welcome,
13 Mr. Mayor.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Good morning.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember
17 Jones.

18 (No response.)

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 Lozada.

21 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good
22 morning. I am present.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Good morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 O'Neill.

2 (No response.)

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember
4 Phillips.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Good
6 morning, Mr. Mayor. Good morning,
7 Council President. Good morning,
8 viewing public. Good morning,
9 colleagues. Good to see everyone.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Good morning.

12 THE CLERK: Councilmember
13 Squilla.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
15 morning, Mr. President, colleagues.
16 Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Present.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Good morning.

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 Thomas.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
22 morning, Council President. Good
23 morning, colleagues. Good morning,
24 Mr. Mayor. I'm present.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 Good morning.

2 THE CLERK: And,
3 Councilmember Vaughn.

4 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Good
5 morning, Mr. Mayor, Council President
6 and the entire City of Philadelphia.
7 I am present.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
9 Good morning. Thank you very much.
10 A quorum of the Committee is present
11 and the hearing is now called to
12 order. This is the continued public
13 hearing of the Committee of the Whole
14 regarding Bill Nos. 230144, 230145,
15 230146, 230147, 230148, 230149 and
16 Resolution No. 230162 and 181014.

17 Mr. McDermott, please read
18 the titles of the bills and
19 resolutions.

20

21 THE CLERK: Bill No. 230144,
22 an ordinance to adopt a Capital
23 Program for the six Fiscal Years
24 2024-2029 inclusive.

25 Bill No. 230145, an ordinance

1 to adopt a Fiscal 2024 Capital
2 Budget.

3 Bill No. 230146, an ordinance
4 adopting the operating budget for
5 Fiscal Year 2024.

6 Bill No. 230147, an ordinance
7 amending Chapter 19-1500 of The
8 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and
9 Net Profits Taxes," by revising
10 certain tax rates, under certain
11 terms and conditions.

12 Bill No. 230148, an ordinance
13 amending Chapter 19-2800 of The
14 Philadelphia Code, entitled
15 "Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
16 Cooperation Authority Tax on Wages
17 and Net Profits," to provide for the
18 continuation of the tax and to make
19 other conforming changes, all under
20 certain terms and conditions.

21 Bill No. 230149, an ordinance
22 amending Chapter 19-2600 of The
23 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business
24 Income and Receipts Tax," by revising
25 certain tax rates, under certain

1 terms and conditions.

2 Bill No. 230162, providing
3 for the approval of the Council of
4 the City of Philadelphia revised Five
5 Year Financial Plan for the City of
6 Philadelphia, covering Fiscal Years
7 2024 through 2028 and incorporating
8 revised changes with respect to
9 Fiscal Year 2023, which is to be
10 submitted by the Mayor to the
11 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
12 Cooperation Authority, pursuant to
13 the Intergovernmental Operation
14 Agreement authorized by an ordinance
15 of this Council approved by the Mayor
16 on January 3, 1992, by and between
17 the City and the Authority.

18 Resolution 181014, calling
19 for the Council Committee of the
20 Whole to convene public meetings and
21 public hearings pursuant to the
22 Educational Supplement of the
23 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to
24 review the administration,
25 management, operations and finances

1 of the School District and adopt
2 plans to coordinate the activities of
3 the Board of Education, the Mayor and
4 City Council for the improvement and
5 benefit of public education in
6 Philadelphia.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you, Mr. McDermott.

9 Today we continue the public
10 hearing of the Committee of the Whole
11 to consider the bills read by the
12 Clerk that constitute proposed
13 operating and capital spending
14 measures for Fiscal Year 2024, a
15 Capital Program and a Forward-looking
16 Capital Plan for Fiscal 2024 through
17 2029.

18 Additionally, this meeting
19 meets the requirement of the
20 Educational Supplement of the
21 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to
22 review the administration, management
23 and operations and finances of the
24 School District of Philadelphia on a
25 bi-annual basis.

1 This morning we will hear
2 testimony from the School District of
3 Philadelphia, and this afternoon from
4 the Community College of
5 Philadelphia.

6 Mr. McDermott, the first
7 person to testify today is?

8 THE CLERK: The first person
9 to testify this morning is Mayor
10 James Kenney.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are
13 you?

14 MAYOR KENNEY: Good morning,
15 Mr. President. Good morning,
16 everyone and thank you, Council
17 President Clarke, Board President
18 Streater and Superintendent
19 Watlington, for having me here today.

20 I look forward to the
21 discussion that will take place today
22 regarding our collective
23 responsibility of ensuring that
24 Philadelphia children and youth have
25 access to quality educational

1 experiences. As we all know, quality
2 education is crucial to the future
3 and well-being of our City.

4 Several months ago we
5 celebrated the historic determination
6 by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth
7 Court that our state system of
8 funding public schools is
9 unconstitutional. The court rightly
10 recognized that there have been
11 generations of disinvestment in our
12 schools. In Philadelphia we have
13 tried to address this by increasing
14 our local support schools. We have
15 made the stark commitments to public
16 education over the last two terms of
17 our Administration and City Council's
18 help, total assistance totaling over
19 \$1.68 billion with a B.

20 We have aligned City services
21 to support our schools, resulting in
22 20 Community Schools offering
23 enhanced programming and community
24 partnerships for students and
25 families, increased mental health

1 supports and Out-of-School Time
2 programming and increased safe
3 passages to and from schools.

4 We have launched new
5 initiatives to ensure quality
6 education from birth through
7 adulthood such as PHLpreK,
8 PHLConnected and the Catto
9 Scholarship at Community College of
10 Philadelphia. We continue to do this
11 work because our children, youth and
12 families matter more than anything.

13 Our proposed budget for FY24
14 includes a \$282 million contribution
15 to the District. That's 171 percent
16 higher than it was the year before we
17 took office. I am proud of our
18 investments and the work we have done
19 over the nearly eight years for our
20 children and for our youth. And I'm
21 excited for the conversation today
22 about how we can continue to support
23 the District and advancing the key
24 priorities of safety, family and
25 community partnership and academic

1 excellence.

2 Our local contributions are
3 great and I am proud of our City's
4 commitment to its schools and
5 students, but we must also
6 collectively continue to put pressure
7 on Harrisburg to fix our inadequate
8 state funding education system. And
9 we must continue to grow our
10 partnerships and build trust. Local
11 control means all hands on deck for
12 our kids, it means breaking down
13 silos in the interest of our families
14 and it means moving our City to a
15 world-class education system that
16 prepares all residents for the
17 changing world.

18 We are here together for our
19 children, for our City and for our
20 future. I thank you and look forward
21 to this meeting. And I'm very
22 grateful for all the work that we've
23 all done together to do our best for
24 our children. They are our future
25 and they are the most important job

1 that we have to do.

2 So thank you again,
3 Mr. President. And thank you,
4 Council.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.
7 And, Mr. Mayor, thank you for your
8 continued focused commitment to the
9 children and the School District of
10 Philadelphia providing unprecedented
11 and out-of-the-box thinking in terms
12 of being able to support our young
13 people, particularly at the younger
14 ages when it's most critical with
15 Pre-K and day care and all the other
16 aspects of getting our kids on the
17 right track early on in the process.
18 We really appreciate it.

19 MAYOR KENNEY: Thank you, my
20 friend.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
22 elect at this time to recognize the
23 Chair of the City Council's Committee
24 on Schools, Councilman Thomas, to say
25 a few words before we get into the

1 testimony of the Board Chair and the
2 Superintendent.

3 Chair recognizes Councilman
4 Thomas.

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
6 morning, Council President. Good
7 morning, colleagues.

8 Again, I want to say thank
9 you to the Mayor as well as the
10 Superintendent and the entire
11 leadership team over at the School
12 District as well as the School Board.
13 I also want to say thank you to our
14 President Dr. Generals of CCP. And I
15 also want to just celebrate the
16 accomplishments that we've had thus
17 far as it relates to things that
18 we've done for our young people and
19 supporting families across the City
20 of Philadelphia.

21 But I also recognize that we
22 have a lot more challenges ahead as
23 it relates to what we must do. When
24 we're looking at our schools, I'm
25 looking forward to conversations

1 today around safe pathways to and
2 from school, looking at the weather
3 getting nice and us looking to assure
4 that we have the proper things in
5 place to make sure our young people
6 are safe.

7 We're listening to and
8 learning about concerns around Act
9 158, which is a new requirement put
10 in by the Commonwealth of
11 Pennsylvania, and we look forward to
12 continuing the conversation to make
13 sure all of our young people graduate
14 from high school. We do have
15 concerns about facilities.

16 My colleagues and I were in
17 Harrisburg yesterday and the
18 legislative branch of government is
19 going to do everything they can to
20 support the executive branch of
21 government to address issues around
22 facilities and space. We have issues
23 around our Special Admission Schools
24 and we look forward to coming up with
25 a solution that adequately serves our

1 families and our children across the
2 City of Philadelphia.

3 We're still waiting to hear
4 about the report as it relates to
5 Black Charters and Black
6 Institutions. That information was
7 supposed to be provided to us, and
8 we're hoping to have an update on
9 that. And last but not least, we
10 look forward to a conversation around
11 a coordinated effort as it relates to
12 our colleges and universities to
13 ensure that they are still a part of
14 the conversation.

15 Supporting CCP is a big part
16 of what we do and we're proud of the
17 Catto Scholarship and other work that
18 we've done to make sure young people
19 get in a position to have a quality
20 education. But at the same time, we
21 can't leave out our other
22 universities as we see them heading
23 to a fiscal cliff. And we know that
24 we're a city of eds, meds and beds,
25 but especially our eds.

1 So thank you, Council
2 President. Of course, thank you to
3 the Mayor for your leadership, for
4 your vision, your investment in Pre-K
5 and Community Schools and things that
6 Philadelphia has never seen before.
7 And we look forward to today's
8 conversation and continuing the great
9 work.

10 Thank you, Council President.
11 Thank you, colleagues.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.
14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 We're going to move towards
16 testimony from our next two witnesses
17 and then we'll do questions. I
18 believe there are some brief
19 presentations by both the
20 Superintendent and the Board Chair.

21 Mr. McDermott, our next
22 witness to testify is?

23 THE CLERK: Our next witness
24 is Board President Reginald Streater,
25 Esquire.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

2 Mr. President, I just wanted to say
3 that I'm present. This is
4 Councilwoman Bass.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Okay, Councilwoman Bass. Let the
7 record reflect Councilwoman Bass is
8 present.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
10 you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you, Councilwoman.

13 Mr. Chairman, good morning,
14 Mr. President.

15 MR. STREATER: (Muted).

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

17 Can't hear you. You're on mute.

18 MR. STREATER: Thank you.
19 Good morning.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 You're welcome.

22 MR. STREATER: Thank you for
23 having us here today to share updates
24 with you on the Board of Education's
25 work. I'm joined today by my

1 wonderful colleagues on the Board,
2 Vice-president Mallory Fix-Lopez,
3 Board member Sarah-Ashley Andrews,
4 Julia Danzy, Leticia Egea-Hinton,
5 Chau Wing Lam, Lisa Salley, Cecilia
6 Thompson, Joyce Wilkerson and I am
7 the Board President.

8 On behalf of the Board, I
9 would like to thank Mayor Kenney,
10 City Council President and each
11 member of City Council for the
12 opportunity to meet with you here
13 today and for your partnership and
14 service to the public school students
15 of Philadelphia.

16 Before we move forward, I
17 would like to take a moment to share
18 my gratitude to Mayor Kenney and
19 Council President Clarke in
20 acknowledgment of your last budget
21 season. On behalf of the Board, we
22 are deeply grateful for your
23 partnership and investment in the
24 School District of Philadelphia over
25 the years.

1 We thank you for your
2 leadership in bringing us back to
3 local control and in building a
4 stronger partnership between the
5 City, School District. These
6 partnerships are vital to supporting
7 our school communities and working
8 together in the best interest of our
9 learners.

10 We also greatly appreciate
11 and acknowledge the support that City
12 Councilmembers have provided to the
13 School District over the years. I
14 also want to say thank you to Chair
15 of Education Thomas and Co-Chair
16 Brooks and for welcoming Board
17 members on City Council's Day of
18 Advocacy yesterday to Harrisburg.

19 I truly believe that the
20 seeds of sustainable collaboration
21 have been planted, and I truly
22 believe we are on the beginning stage
23 of a public education renaissance in
24 the City of Philadelphia. The
25 village has come together and we are

1 primed to do our collective parts to
2 address our City's challenges, while
3 ensuring our students have what they
4 need and deserve to thrive. I see a
5 silver lining everywhere. I'm an
6 optimist by nature. Our collective
7 passion and energy to me is a good
8 sign.

9 Today we would like to use
10 this opportunity to provide some
11 framing and background to
12 Dr. Watlington's presentation before
13 turning to your questions. In our
14 presentation, we will share with you
15 once again the four priorities we
16 have identified as areas for
17 partnership with the City where we
18 need your support.

19 We will discuss the urgent
20 need for us to partner together
21 against the City's epidemic of gun
22 violence and request that you put in
23 place measures to decrease violence
24 and help us keep students safe when
25 they are not in school. We will

1 share details around the District's
2 funding needs and request your
3 support to advocate adequately and
4 fairly fund public education to
5 ensure that every student has access
6 to an education that allows them to
7 learn, thrive and succeed in a global
8 society.

9 Finally, we will focus on the
10 School District's facilities and
11 staffing needs, the investments and
12 progress we have made and the long-
13 term funding solutions we need to
14 provide 21st Century learning spaces
15 for our students and educators.

16 We will end our remarks by
17 asking Superintendent Watlington to
18 share his presentation immediately
19 following ours, and both the District
20 and the Board will be available and
21 happy to answer your questions after
22 the District's presentation is
23 concluded.

24 Please move to the next
25 slide. We came together earlier this

1 year in January. We shared with you
2 four key issues where we need your
3 support. Those areas are addressing
4 gun violence, having adequate and
5 equitable funding, investing in aging
6 facilities and recruiting and
7 retaining staff.

8 For nearly 20 years, the
9 District has been in system survival
10 mode, contending with state control
11 and financial instability. At the
12 Governor's level, this meant that the
13 focus had been on immediate issues,
14 often operational or management
15 concerns rather than a sustained
16 focus on investing in strategies and
17 policies that improve student
18 outcomes.

19 In one evaluation by the
20 Council of Great City Schools, it is
21 estimated that the School Reform
22 Commission (inaudible) eventually
23 this changed as the Board of
24 Education was re-established, thanks
25 to many of you and stakeholders who

1 worked hard to regain local control.

2 As new Board members we ask
3 ourselves the most basic question:
4 Why do our schools exist? The answer
5 was simple. Our schools exist to
6 provide every student with the tools
7 and experience they need to reach
8 their fullest potential. For this
9 reason as a Board, we are committed
10 to putting our students' success at
11 the center of our decision-making.
12 However, we recognize that this work
13 cannot happen in a vacuum without
14 also addressing the four key issues
15 we've discussed here.

16 Please move to the next
17 slide. Our focus -- I'm sorry, our
18 focus on student-centered governance
19 model led to the adoption of Goals
20 and Guardrails, our Five Year Plan to
21 raise student achievement across the
22 District and to provide the necessary
23 conditions to empower students to
24 learn and achieve.

25 For us, Goals and Guardrails

1 has become our North Star for all
2 decision-making. It provides a
3 framework for Board governance that
4 focuses on ensuring racial equity,
5 setting clear expectations for what
6 students must know and be able to do
7 and rigorously monitoring progress
8 toward achievement.

9 By establishing these goals
10 and guardrails, we have been able to
11 align priorities, policies and
12 budgets so that students have the
13 environment and resources they need
14 to learn, thrive, succeed and
15 eventually lead in a global society.
16 And later this month we will discuss
17 Dr. Watlington's strategic plan,
18 which will be the District's five-
19 year roadmap to achieving the Goals
20 and Guardrails.

21 Every month at our Board
22 meetings we monitor progress toward
23 our Goals and Guardrails by diving
24 deep into the metrics for one goal or
25 guardrail. Despite the challenges of

1 the pandemic, we saw the District
2 hold steady in academic performance
3 whereas other large districts across
4 the country saw declines. Yet we
5 know we have a long way to go to
6 ensure all students are succeeding
7 academically. Thus, we believe we
8 must be consistent in our messaging
9 and remain laser-focused on student
10 achievement.

11 Yet while we remain on
12 student outcomes, focused on student
13 outcomes, we know we cannot ignore
14 the other significant challenges that
15 impact our students' ability to
16 thrive and be successful.

17 Please move to the next
18 slide. Regrettably over the past few
19 months, I have begun each public
20 Board meeting with a moment of
21 silence to acknowledge and honor the
22 students in Philadelphia who have
23 tragically lost their lives to gun
24 violence this year. During the
25 school year, there have been 117

1 students who unfortunately have been
2 victims of violence.

3 Of this number, 26 students
4 currently enrolled have passed away.
5 Let me repeat that. 26 students have
6 been killed in violent acts of gun
7 violence this school year as recently
8 as last week. We cannot continue to
9 accept the gun violence that is
10 plaguing our City by taking lives,
11 traumatizing families and harming our
12 communities.

13 We appreciate your
14 partnership and recognize that there
15 is an urgent need to decrease levels
16 of gun violence -- decrease levels of
17 gun violence in the City to keep
18 everyone safe, including our
19 learners, wherever they are but
20 especially as they go to and from
21 school. While we applaud the work
22 that has been done thus far to
23 address this current crisis, more
24 needs to be done to protect our young
25 people.

1 The School District has put
2 in place a number of measures to
3 address safe passages to and from
4 school. However, addressing gun
5 violence requires a coordinated
6 comprehensive response. So we
7 continue to ask you to partner with
8 us to put programs in place that keep
9 students safe when they are not in
10 schools.

11 These measures must include
12 increasing the safe corridors around
13 all schools during travel times to
14 and from school, ensuring that young
15 people have safe places before and
16 after school, on weekends, during the
17 summer and other days when schools
18 are closed, creating safety zones
19 around schools and enforcing gun
20 laws, and expanding mental health
21 services for families and those
22 impacted by trauma.

23 Please move to the next
24 slide. At this time, I'd like to ask
25 Board Vice-president Mallory

1 Fix-Lopez to continue the
2 presentation.

3 MS. FIX-LOPEZ: Thank you,
4 President Streater. I'd like to
5 focus now on the current system of
6 funding public education in
7 Pennsylvania which shortchanges
8 school districts like Philadelphia.
9 The Board continues to see greater
10 collaboration with the City, state
11 and federal governments and continues
12 to advocate for adequate funding.

13 We shared with you previously
14 according to an analysis by the
15 Public Interest Law Center and the
16 Education Law Center, that the School
17 District of Philadelphia would need
18 an additional \$1.14 billion annually
19 to meet the educational needs of our
20 students. This includes an
21 additional 318 million in annual
22 funding from the City.

23 In a few moments you will
24 hear from Dr. Watlington, who will
25 share more detailed information on

1 the investments and strategies the
2 District could make if it was fully
3 funded. Over the past few years, we
4 have been able to make strategic
5 investments through the additional
6 federal funds we received to address
7 the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8 The District received \$1.1
9 billion in ARPA federal funding and
10 used the funds to safely reopen
11 schools and sustain inperson
12 learning, address students' social,
13 emotional, mental health and academic
14 needs resulting from the pandemic and
15 maintain operations and delivery of
16 services.

17 In addition, charter schools
18 in Philadelphia received \$770 million
19 in federal funds as well. Charter
20 schools are independent, so their
21 governing boards have the autonomy to
22 allocate funding toward their
23 individual programming needs. The
24 District has been transparent about
25 how we have spent federal dollars and

1 the investments we have made to
2 improve student learning. For those
3 listening, more detailed information
4 is available on the District's
5 website.

6 Moving forward, we are
7 optimistic about the state funding
8 changes school districts across the
9 Commonwealth can expect as a result
10 of the recent historic ruling in the
11 Fair Funding trial. In addition, we
12 are calling on you to balance the
13 needs of our students with the needs
14 of residents and to commit to fully
15 funding our schools by increasing the
16 annual appropriations by 318 million.

17 We need your support and
18 partnership to sustain the
19 investments the District has been
20 able to make over recent years due to
21 an increase in federal funding to
22 ensure every student has access to an
23 education that allows them to thrive
24 and succeed in a global society.

25 Please move to the next

1 slide. Next, I would like to focus
2 on the School District's facilities.
3 The District has an enormous
4 portfolio of facilities to manage
5 with more than 300 buildings,
6 including 215 schools. Some of the
7 District's oldest buildings are 120
8 years old. More than 200 were built
9 before 1978 with the average age of a
10 building being 73 years old.

11 In the current six-year
12 capital budget, the District is
13 investing \$2.7 billion which includes
14 Federal ARPA funding to develop safe,
15 healthy and welcoming learning
16 environments. Yet we know our needs
17 are much greater, as detailed in the
18 2017 Parsons Facilities Conditions
19 Assessment Report which identified
20 structural issues in each of our
21 buildings.

22 The report identified \$4.9
23 billion of deferred maintenance
24 across the District's facilities and
25 indicated that our funding needs over

1 the next 10 years or approximately
2 \$7.8 billion. We also know that
3 these costs have grown due to
4 inflation and the aging of
5 facilities. Of the \$4.9 billion
6 identified in 2017, 2.4 billion is
7 required to address building systems
8 that are either failing, damaged or
9 beyond their service life due to
10 deferred maintenance costs.

11 Another 430 million is
12 required to address health hazards,
13 risks and life safety deficiencies.
14 Every year the delta of needs and
15 funding grows by \$200-plus million
16 due to current bond limits. That is
17 not to say we haven't prioritized
18 this work. We have made significant
19 investments over the last two years
20 to address environmental conditions
21 in buildings, and we are in the first
22 year of a contract with a national
23 firm Tetra Tech with the aim of
24 achieving AHERA compliance.

25 The recent school closures

1 due to the demand of asbestos are a
2 direct result of this progress as we
3 move through our inspection process.
4 It is working. However, despite
5 these investments and the progress we
6 have made over the last two years,
7 we're still trying to overcome the
8 effects of decades of understaffing
9 and underfunding that have led us to
10 where we are today.

11 In order to move forward, we
12 know we must lean on our City and
13 state partners to provide us with
14 long-term funding solutions to
15 sustain the management of
16 environmental concerns and invest in
17 improving facilities because all
18 students and staff should have access
19 to 21st Century learning spaces.

20 Please move to the next
21 slide. In addition to facilities'
22 needs, the School District is at a
23 competitive staffing disadvantage due
24 to funding constraints. Our
25 financial position forces us to make

1 decisions based on revenue rather
2 than on need. Despite our funding
3 challenges, the School District has
4 worked hard to address these issues
5 and we are calling on you to partner
6 with us on recruitment and retention
7 to ensure our students have access to
8 high-quality educators.

9 The Board is looking forward
10 to the School District's new
11 Strategic Plan to be released on May
12 25th. The Strategic Plan is going to
13 be our five-year roadmap to achieving
14 our goals and guardrails and
15 transforming learning outcomes for
16 all students. However, we
17 acknowledge we cannot accomplish our
18 goals and guardrails without the
19 partnership of our educators.

20 Please move to the next
21 slide. I would like to conclude our
22 presentation by reiterating how
23 strongly we believe in the importance
24 of working together. We cannot do
25 this work without your support and

1 collaboration. We understand that it
2 is our collective responsibility to
3 come together and serve as a village
4 for our children to support, educate,
5 protect and inspire them to reach
6 their greatest potential, especially
7 when they are facing daunting
8 challenges to their success and well-
9 being.

10 On behalf of the Board, I
11 thank you for your continued
12 partnership and support of our
13 schools. Superintendent Watlington
14 will now share a presentation on
15 behalf of the School District, and we
16 will be available to answer any
17 questions at the conclusion of his
18 presentation. Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you. Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 We will now hear
23 Dr. Watlington. We believe there is
24 going to be some overlap both in
25 terms of questions and presentation,

1 so it's best that we hear both
2 presentations and then go directly to
3 questions.

4 Chair recognizes
5 Dr. Watlington. Good morning, sir.

6 DR. WATLINGTON: Good
7 morning, sir. Good morning, Mayor
8 Kenney, Council President Clarke,
9 Chair Thomas, other members of City
10 Council and certainly good morning to
11 President Streater, Vice-president
12 Fix-Lopez and members of the Board of
13 Education. I want to thank you very
14 much for this opportunity to present
15 the District's proposed budget for
16 Fiscal Year '23-24.

17 In today's presentation,
18 we'll share the budget priorities
19 which fit within the Board's four
20 priorities that President Streater
21 referenced earlier, and they are
22 entirely aligned with the Board's
23 focus on our goals and guardrails.
24 We'll provide some District updates
25 and a financial outlook.

1 Next slide please. I'll also
2 be joined by Chief Financial Officer
3 Mike Herbstman and I also have other
4 executive staff members present this
5 morning. Appreciate them being here.
6 You'll see the agenda here with our
7 budget priorities related to
8 strengthening school safety,
9 partnering with parents and community
10 members and accelerating academic
11 achievement, which is certainly our
12 core business.

13 Next slide please. For the
14 upcoming school year, our budgetary
15 decisions will focus again on these
16 three focus areas: Strengthening
17 school safety, partnering with
18 parents and community and
19 accelerating academic achievement.
20 We propose to improve school safety
21 by investing in physical safety,
22 social and emotional safety as well
23 as environmental safety in our
24 schools. This aligns with Guardrail
25 1, welcoming and supportive schools.

1 We seek to partner with
2 parents and our community by
3 investing in family and staff
4 resources to increase daily student
5 attendance and to reduce the number
6 of dropouts that we have in our City.
7 Additionally, we plan to invest in a
8 two-way communication system and
9 customer service training, something
10 I heard loud and clear during the
11 Listening and Learning Tour last
12 summer. This aligns with Guardrail
13 No. 1, welcoming and supportive
14 schools as well as Guardrail No. 3,
15 partnering with parents and family
16 members.

17 We intend to accelerate
18 academic achievement by investing in
19 research-based, standards-aligned
20 core curricula and high impact
21 tutoring with priority on
22 kindergarten readiness, kindergarten
23 through 3rd grade, science and
24 reading, kindergarten through 3rd
25 grade mathematics, and middle grades

1 math. Those are some of the focus
2 areas related to high impact
3 tutoring, although we'll be focusing
4 K-12 in the area of reading, math and
5 science. This aligns with Goal No.
6 1, improving Grades 3 through 8
7 English language arts performance;
8 Goal No. 2, improving the 3rd grade
9 English language arts proficiency;
10 and Goal 3, related to improving
11 Grades 3 through 8 math proficiency.

12 Accelerating academics also
13 involves increasing our students'
14 career readiness. So in an effort to
15 increase access to non-traditional
16 pathways, we will invest in increased
17 and equitable career and technical
18 education and dual enrollment
19 opportunities through partnerships
20 with the Community College of
21 Philadelphia, our local universities
22 that Chair Thomas referenced earlier
23 as well as our trade unions and local
24 business partners. This aligns with
25 Guardrail No. 4, addressing racist

1 practices as well as Goal 5, related
2 to career and technical education and
3 industry-based standards.

4 In addition to the focus
5 aiming to achieve the Board's Goals
6 and Guardrails, they also align to
7 the Board's priorities, which
8 President Streater referenced
9 earlier. And they also published --
10 the Board also published those
11 priorities in an op-ed piece earlier
12 this year.

13 Next slide please -- actually
14 I'll stay on that slide for just a
15 mo -- exactly, right there. So on
16 this slide, I want to spend a little
17 bit more -- go in a little bit more
18 detail with regard to Priority Area
19 1, Focus Area 1, strengthening school
20 safety. We will in this budget
21 address physical safety by expanding
22 police safety zones, expanding Safe
23 Path program to include an additional
24 12 schools and we want to increase
25 school safety officer allocations at

1 some of our most high-need schools.

2 We'll also address mental
3 health and wellness of our students,
4 that social and emotional health, if
5 you will, by providing additional
6 counselors to our highest needs
7 schools, and we will also continue to
8 invest in mental health and well-
9 being resources. As you may know,
10 we're using Kooth online mental
11 health resources for our secondary
12 students and Lyra Health provides
13 some care and wellness online
14 resources at no charge to our staff.

15 We will work to improve
16 environmental safety by hiring an
17 executive director to support the
18 work of Chief Operations Officer Oz
19 Hill and his team in the Office of
20 Environmental Management and
21 Services. We will invest in an
22 improved data management system to
23 support our environmental and data
24 processing needs and we will increase
25 contracting services to address some

1 of our staff shortages, relative to
2 the need to address environmental
3 issues in the schools.

4 Next slide please. Next
5 priority relates to partnering with
6 parents and community. As part of
7 this area, we will increase the
8 number of -- we want to focus very
9 intently on improving how we support
10 families and staff resources related
11 to increasing attendance and reducing
12 dropouts.

13 Accordingly, we will increase
14 the number of school improvements,
15 support liaisons or (inaudible) as we
16 call them in the School District, in
17 some of our most needy schools, our
18 offtrack schools. We can't afford to
19 do this across the entire District so
20 we're going to focus in the schools
21 that have the greatest needs.

22 We also intend to get some
23 external support with how to
24 significantly improve our daily
25 student attendance because we want to

1 make sure that we can get to a point
2 in the School District where our
3 attendance rate for students is 90
4 percent or higher, meaning that
5 students are in attendance 90 percent
6 of every month or higher.

7 We typically start the year
8 in the School District of
9 Philadelphia with a 90 percent
10 attendance rate for the first month
11 and it goes down from there, and it
12 ranges anywhere from 60th to the 80th
13 percentile, and we want that to be 90
14 percent across the year.

15 Finally, we want to invest in
16 a two-way communication system and
17 customer service training that will
18 give the public an opportunity to
19 give us a feedback score to tell us
20 how we're doing with regard to being
21 responsive, how helpful we've been
22 and if we are resolving their
23 questions and concerns and needs.

24 Next slide. As we move to
25 the next slide, Accelerating Academic

1 Achievement which is our core
2 business, in this budget year one of
3 our major investments will be to
4 invest in research-based, standards
5 aligned and culturally relevant
6 curriculum in reading, math and
7 science. We will also increase
8 opportunities for our students to be
9 college- and career-ready through
10 increased and more equitable access
11 to career and technical education
12 programs and dual enrollment by
13 accelerating a comprehensive audit of
14 all of our career and technical
15 education schools. That audit is
16 underway and being conducted by the
17 Southern Region Education Board, also
18 known as SREB.

19 We are currently renovating
20 and improving some of our CTE
21 facilities. We're focusing in on how
22 to increase investments, so we can
23 increase the number of students who
24 complete industry certifications
25 before they graduate. And we're

1 expanding professional development
2 and curriculum development in the
3 career and technical education area.

4 Next slide. I will now share
5 with you updates regarding the
6 District staffing numbers, our
7 criteria-based schools and I want to
8 give you an update on where we are
9 with our facilities and environmental
10 planning.

11 Next slide. This slide
12 provides an overview of budgetary
13 information. Chief Financial Officer
14 Mike Herbstman will be joining us
15 shortly, and we'll spend more time
16 talking through the school budget
17 when we get further along.

18 Each school in our District
19 recently completed their three-week
20 process to develop their budgets and
21 finalize their budgets and the
22 positions for next school year. I
23 want to note that all funding is
24 allocated to schools based on
25 formulas outlined in the

1 comprehensive 2023-24 Guide to School
2 Budgets.

3 Then principals with the
4 assistance of Central Office staff,
5 including their assistant
6 superintendents, annually go through
7 a three-week process to determine how
8 they will budget their allocated
9 funding in order to meet the
10 particular needs of their schools. I
11 think it's really important for
12 principals to have a certain level of
13 discretion because every school has
14 some unique circumstances that they
15 need to attend to.

16 As in prior years, school
17 leaders had the opportunity during
18 this process to request budget
19 adjustments for extraordinary
20 circumstances that could not be
21 addressed through their formulaic
22 budget allocations. Year-over-year
23 our District-operated school
24 enrollment is projected to decrease
25 slightly next year. We expect a

1 slight decrease of 0.5 percent.

2 However, school-based
3 resources will continue to increase,
4 and we think that makes sense because
5 where the need is greater, we have to
6 provide greater investment and then
7 we have to be accountable for the
8 return on the investment for that
9 additional investment. As you can
10 see on this chart, our overall
11 position counts have grown in each
12 category in Fiscal Year 2024. That's
13 the key take-away from this slide.
14 Our overall position counts have
15 grown in each category for Fiscal
16 Year 2023-24.

17 Total school budgets are at 4
18 percent overall and 4.5 percent per
19 pupil for next year, so we're making
20 greater investments in our students
21 and we should absolutely expect the
22 return on investment for that greater
23 investment. When we look at two-year
24 trends, per pupil budgets are up 19
25 percent since Fiscal Year 2022, so we

1 are certainly appreciative of that
2 key budgetary note.

3 Next slide please. We've
4 also experienced some success with
5 staffing critical positions relative
6 to other large school districts. I
7 do want to note that currently we
8 were in the recruiting phase for next
9 September, but we can share final
10 staffing numbers from the current
11 year. The two important elements of
12 teacher and school success are
13 effective teachers and principals.
14 In fact, we've studied this for 50
15 years in the United States and
16 although there are some people who
17 still dispute the research, it is
18 crystal clear the single most
19 important ingredient in improving
20 student academic attainment is a
21 highly-qualified, well-supported and
22 stable teachers over time.

23 The research says that the
24 second most important ingredient is a
25 highly-qualified, well-supported

1 stable principal over time. And when
2 you think about the fact that
3 principals actually hire, onboard,
4 recruit, develop and retain teachers,
5 principals are even more important.
6 So I just want to note that we've had
7 some success with both recruiting and
8 retaining as we end the school year
9 or run up to the end of the school
10 year.

11 School principal positions
12 are 99.5 percent staffed with just 1
13 vacancy District-wide at present.
14 Teacher positions are 98.5 percent
15 filled, which would equate to an
16 average vacancy rate of 1 per school,
17 although certainly there are some
18 schools that have a lot more than 1
19 vacancy, and there are schools that
20 will be higher and some that are
21 experiencing lower vacancies.

22 We recognize that teacher
23 staffing is not as high as the
24 average in specific schools and other
25 areas of the City. Very different

1 from the time when I became a teacher
2 where it was very difficult to get a
3 teaching job. Unfortunately, there's
4 more attrition than we would like.

5 I want to note that we're
6 keeping an eye on this concern about
7 the teacher pipeline in the
8 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania being
9 down by 66 percent and down by 50
10 percent nationally. We're continuing
11 to have to think about how do we grow
12 that pipeline of teachers. Also,
13 assistant principal and climate
14 manager positions are nearly 99
15 percent staffed.

16 Counselor positions are at 98
17 percent staffed and nursing positions
18 are at 94 percent staffing at
19 present, so we're working hard to
20 retain as many of these individuals
21 as possible, although we expect some
22 will retire. Some will make other
23 decisions. So we know we will have
24 vacancies for the upcoming school
25 year, so we're working hard to make

1 sure we're ahead of that curve.

2 Next slide please. I do want
3 to share an update on the criteria-
4 based schools given the significant
5 attention this issue has, rightfully
6 so, garnered in our City. Next slide
7 please. As this is my first year
8 going through the school selection
9 process in the School District of
10 Philadelphia, I took the time to
11 engage, to listen to lots of people,
12 particularly the experiences of
13 students, families, teachers,
14 principals, union leaders as well as
15 home and school associations.

16 And I heard a lot of feedback
17 of what is working and what they
18 think is quite frankly not working.
19 So whenever any organization
20 evaluates a policy decision, it's
21 imperative that we look at the data.
22 So on this line graph, you'll see
23 information on the internal
24 applicants current 8th graders going
25 to 9th grade who participated in the

1 school selection process.

2 I want to draw your attention
3 to two lines. The red line, which
4 represents the number of students who
5 have accepted a criteria-based school
6 offer and the light blue line, which
7 represents the number of students who
8 met the minimum criteria for a number
9 of criteria-based schools. The gap
10 between 2018-19, '19-20 and '20-21 in
11 terms of the difference between the
12 red line and the blue line represents
13 where school staff had an opportunity
14 to extend offers to students who
15 didn't meet the minimum criteria or
16 qualifications.

17 So we have to ask ourselves
18 who are those students, are they
19 representative of the entire City.
20 This line graph also shows -- and I
21 think this is a really important
22 point that I want to note. Line
23 graph also shows that more internal
24 applicants applied -- more internal
25 applicants in 2022-23, more internal

1 applicants met the criteria for
2 criteria-based schools than in the
3 years prior to the pandemic. Again,
4 more internal students in the School
5 District met the criteria this year
6 than in any of the three years before
7 the pandemic in the 2021-22 school
8 year.

9 Even though that is a fact,
10 for the first time schools were not
11 able to enroll students who did not
12 meet the qualifications and we're
13 continuing to talk about what that
14 means and we're hearing the feedback
15 from our community.

16 Next slide please. On this
17 slide, I want to note that there were
18 two major problems that we had to
19 think about at the end of the school
20 selection process: First, did the
21 lottery result in a lower number of
22 qualified students, securing
23 admission to criteria-based schools.
24 The answer to that question is no.
25 However, we did have more vacancies

1 than we want and that we're
2 comfortable with, nearly 800, which
3 brings us to Problem 2.

4 There's probably more
5 problems that we need to address, but
6 these are the first two we are
7 addressing. How did we understand
8 and how did we address the problem of
9 800 unfilled 9th grade seats at our
10 criteria-based schools after the
11 lottery was complete that could have
12 resulted in a reduction in school
13 staff?

14 So here's how we tried to
15 resolve or address that issue.
16 First, over 316 qualified students
17 who applied to attend a criteria-
18 based school but were not currently
19 enrolled in a criteria-based school,
20 we adjusted the allocations and the
21 new enrollment to try to accommodate
22 these 316 students. We re-allocated
23 \$6.1 million to stabilize all of our
24 District-operated schools that were
25 projected to lose significant

1 enrollment for the next year.

2 This provided a total of 25
3 schools in the District, including 12
4 schools that are criteria-based
5 schools with additional resources.

6 In essence, we sought to hold these
7 25 schools harmless so the enrollment
8 fluctuations would not affect their
9 budgets and their staffing levels.

10 In an effort to promote this
11 opportunity for students, the
12 District hosted four public
13 information sessions so that we could
14 address and talk directly to the 316
15 students who met the criteria at one
16 or more schools but were not offered
17 a seat in any of the schools.

18 At the conclusion of this
19 process, 54 of the 316 students did
20 indeed accept an offer and were
21 placed in a criteria-based school.
22 In addition to allowing the eligible
23 students to participate in an
24 extended opportunity to select a
25 school of their choice, as I shared

1 earlier we allocated \$6 million so
2 that schools could maintain positions
3 in a way that no school was likely to
4 lose more than two positions.

5 We also continue to work with
6 principals who determine budget
7 allocations and who rightfully so
8 make school staffing decisions. In
9 addition to enrollment projections,
10 school budgets and staffing decisions
11 can be influenced by external
12 sources, including grants, government
13 resources, et cetera.

14 Currently only three of the
15 criteria-based schools are projected
16 to have three or more position
17 reductions. So among those 25
18 schools I just referenced, there are
19 only three that are now projected to
20 lose three or more positions due to
21 the school's budget allocation.
22 Those three schools -- I want to be
23 very, very transparent about this --
24 those three schools are the Arts
25 Academy at Benjamin Rush, Hill

1 Freedman World Academy and Girls'
2 High, which will lose more than two
3 positions.

4 Next slide. I now want to,
5 as we go to the next slide, provide
6 an update on our facilities and
7 environmental planning. Next slide
8 please. As we continue to navigate
9 our facilities environmental issues,
10 we understand this has been a very
11 difficult time for students, staff
12 and families, and we certainly want
13 to thank all of them, all of us, for
14 working with the District, thank them
15 for their patience as we continue to
16 work to address our environmental and
17 maintenance issues at multiple
18 schools.

19 Vice-president Fix-Lopez
20 spoke a little bit about this
21 earlier. There are 295 buildings in
22 the District which have asbestos-
23 containing materials. Regular
24 inspections in each building are
25 critical to identifying damage so

1 that we can make appropriate plans
2 for repair.

3 With our new partner Tetra
4 Tech, the District's enhanced
5 inspection procedures have been
6 identifying needed abatement in more
7 places. So in the wake of recent
8 inspections that revealed incomplete
9 or inaccurate records about plaster-
10 containing asbestos at Building 21,
11 the District affirmed our commitment
12 to transparency and accountability
13 regarding the facts about our
14 buildings and what we are doing to
15 improve environmental conditions at
16 facilities across the District.

17 I'm very pleased that
18 Building 21 was returned -- the
19 students were able to return to the
20 school this morning and was very
21 pleased to join President Streater
22 and others at the school, and want to
23 say a very special thank you to
24 Reverend Alyn Waller and the Enon
25 Tabernacle Baptist Church for

1 providing our senior class at
2 Building 21 with a place to gather
3 during the time that they were
4 experiencing the remote learning.

5 I also want to note that
6 Mitchell, Frankford and C.W. Henry
7 are among two of the oldest buildings
8 in the District. And for decades
9 have had records that were labeled as
10 no asbestos detected based on tests
11 that were conducted back in the
12 1990s. Now, as a result of recent
13 sampling this year conducted at both
14 schools, it shows that certain
15 plaster walls and ceilings do, in
16 fact, contain asbestos.

17 Additional inspections
18 observed damaged asbestos which
19 required the District to close all
20 spaces occupied by students and
21 staff. So when asbestos is
22 discovered and remediation efforts
23 require closure of a school, the
24 District works with school leaders,
25 families and staff to create a plan

1 for virtual learning and possible
2 identification of swing space.

3 I want to be very transparent
4 and say that we learned a lot from
5 how we handled the initial closure at
6 Building 21. And we appreciate our
7 parents and the community giving us
8 the opportunity to make progress in
9 how we communicate with them and work
10 in partnership with them to make the
11 swing space decisions. Although
12 Building 21 and Mitchell were shifted
13 to virtual learning, both schools
14 have returned to inperson instruction
15 this week. And again, I was very
16 pleased to be at Building 21 this
17 morning to welcome students back.
18 Very happy, excited for students to
19 get back in their learning facility.

20 Frankford High remains in
21 virtual learning as the site
22 selection team works to identify
23 potential swing spaces for that
24 school. However, our swing space
25 options are limited due to the

1 condition of our buildings.
2 Sometimes people will say, well, why
3 don't you just put out a list of
4 everywhere we can send folks to or
5 our students to whenever we have a
6 closure. It's not quite that simple
7 because our swing space options are
8 limited due to the condition of our
9 buildings.

10 But I want to commend Chief
11 Operating Officer Oz Hill and his
12 team. They are working around the
13 clock, weekends, late evenings to
14 address these issues.

15 Next slide please. I want to
16 share one more slide before I turn it
17 over to CFO Herbstman. I want to
18 give you an update on the Facilities
19 Project team that we talked about,
20 that I shared with you last month at
21 a Council hearing. The recent
22 discovery of environmental hazards at
23 multiple school buildings underscore
24 the immediate need to develop a
25 comprehensive facilities plan. And

1 for that reason, we shared with the
2 Board -- I mean, we shared with the
3 Council last month a facilities plan
4 overview document, and we provided
5 you with the PowerPoint presentation
6 that outlined the scope of the
7 problem.

8 We gave you some context
9 about what's happened over the past
10 10 years. We shared with you the
11 five-year capital budget plan, which
12 includes the building of three new
13 schools in the District, and we
14 forecasted where we're going with the
15 Facilities Project team. We remain
16 committed to establishing and we're
17 currently working on finalizing a
18 Facilities Project team that includes
19 internal and external District
20 stakeholders to identify the
21 investments needed to significantly
22 improve academic achievement.

23 The Facilities Project team
24 framework is designed with two key
25 components. We will have a project

1 team, the overall project team which
2 includes internal and external people
3 to the School District and we're
4 staffing up some advisory committees
5 that will be composed of all external
6 stakeholders.

7 We've been meeting with lots
8 of individuals since the last Council
9 hearing last month, and we are
10 continuing to meet to finalize the
11 subject matter experts who have
12 agreed or finalizing their agreement
13 to serve on the team. We are
14 finalizing the faith-based leaders
15 who have agreed or are finalizing
16 this week, they will participate on
17 the team as well as our business and
18 nonprofit leaders who have already
19 agreed in finalizing -- we still have
20 a couple more who are finalizing
21 their membership on the team.

22 We look forward to keeping
23 Council as well as the Board of
24 Education updated as we finalize
25 these memberships on the team, and

1 then we'll have more to say about the
2 next steps, immediate next steps as
3 we finalize the membership of the
4 team.

5 At this time, Council
6 President Clarke, I'd like to turn it
7 over to our Chief Financial Officer
8 Chief Mike Herbstman, who will walk
9 you through the final parts of the
10 presentation. Thank you again.

11 MR. HERBSTMAN: Thank you,
12 Dr. --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Thank you, Dr. Watlington.

15 MR. HERBSTMAN: Good morning,
16 everyone. So now, I will briefly
17 provide our financial outlook
18 beginning with the School District's
19 FY2024 operating budget, then go into
20 the five-year plan through FY2028,
21 and finally discuss the future of
22 schools in this City.

23 Next slide please. The
24 School District of Philadelphia is
25 the only district in the state that

1 has no authority to generate revenue.
2 They're almost entirely dependent on
3 our local City revenues and state
4 sources. For next year FY2024, 88
5 percent of our operating federal
6 recovery money comes from the state
7 and City. However, that number is
8 misleading this year because it's
9 skewed by the federal funding.

10 Once the American Rescue Plan
11 Act funding ends in September of 2024
12 and that \$500 million annually goes
13 away, the School District will be
14 funded over 99 percent by City and
15 state sources. As we look at our
16 final FY2023 and FY2024 projections,
17 City sources are expected to increase
18 by 39.2 million or 2.1 percent from
19 the current year, and state revenues
20 are anticipated to grow by 92.2
21 million or 4.7 percent.

22 Next slide please. On the
23 expenditure side of the ledger, our
24 total expenditures at District-
25 operated schools will increase by 7.6

1 percent for next year. Charter
2 school expenditures are scheduled to
3 increase by 20 percent driven by
4 primarily rate changes and increases
5 in enrollment at state-approved cyber
6 charters. Finally, the total of our
7 administrative costs, that's services
8 and other expenses, are projected
9 down by about 1.1 percent for next
10 year.

11 Next slide. Dr. Watlington
12 mentioned earlier in this
13 presentation that this is an
14 incremental budget. It's not a
15 wishlist of the Board of Education or
16 the Administration. In fact, we are
17 prevented by law from passing that
18 kind of aspirational budget. Section
19 12-303 of the Home Rule Charter
20 states that the Board of Education
21 must base its budget on estimated
22 receipts and must balance
23 expenditures to that.

24 For this purpose and in the
25 budget that we built, we believe that

1 the best estimate of the current
2 receipts are what was outlined in the
3 Mayor's budget proposal for City
4 revenue and the Governor's budget
5 proposal for our state revenue.

6 Next slide please. At the
7 highest level, if we look at our
8 Operating Fund and federal recovery
9 grants, revenues are expected to
10 increase by about \$256 million.
11 Expenditures are expected to increase
12 for next year by \$279 million or 23
13 million more than revenues. As a
14 result, in FY2024 the remaining
15 balance will begin to move closer to
16 deficit spending.

17 When we talk about a budget
18 this large, \$4.4 billion on the
19 expenditure side, it's easy to think
20 that the School District has
21 limitless funding. On the right side
22 of this slide are charts displaying
23 our actual budgetary control. It's
24 important to note that by the time
25 that you consider employees'

1 salaries, retirement benefits,
2 medical benefits, transportation,
3 charter and nonpublic payments and
4 other areas of minimal budgetary
5 control, more than 90 percent of our
6 budget, more than \$4 billion is
7 already accounted for before we begin
8 the budget development process for
9 the following year.

10 Next slide. Now, we'll move
11 into our five-year plan on the next
12 slide. End the current year with a
13 fund balance, though it is lower than
14 the industry-recommended level. We
15 are still projected to achieve a
16 balanced budget for FY2024, the
17 upcoming school year. Then early in
18 FY2025 when the American Rescue Plan
19 Act funding ends, we will hit a true
20 fiscal cliff and we will begin to
21 experience a structural deficit.

22 Looking at the top line of
23 this chart between FY2024 and FY2025,
24 you can pretty clearly see that this
25 is driven from the revenue side.

1 Year-over-year we'll lose close to
2 \$500 million in federal relief
3 funding. It will once again be more
4 than 99 percent dependent on state
5 and City revenues for operations.
6 Absent significant revenue or
7 expenditure changes, our annual
8 deficit will continue to increase
9 each year, and our available fund
10 balance is projected to be fully
11 spent just after FY2027.

12 If we could move to the next
13 slide please. We'll speak to a
14 brighter future for Philadelphia
15 schools beginning on the next slide.
16 As the Councilmembers are aware, in
17 February the Commonwealth Court
18 President ruled that the current
19 statewide system does not adequately
20 or equitably fund schools. She
21 called on the State General Assembly,
22 an executive branch to address these
23 issues.

24 Recent research from the
25 Education Law Center PA and the

1 Public Interest Law Center indicate
2 that Fair Funding would require
3 \$4,976 per Philadelphia student in
4 additional state and City funding.
5 Unlike other districts in
6 Pennsylvania as mentioned, the School
7 District of Philadelphia does not
8 have taxing authority. We are
9 entirely dependent on state and City
10 revenue sources.

11 Based on expert testimony to
12 the Commonwealth Court, adequate
13 annual funding would be \$318.9
14 million more from the City of
15 Philadelphia and 823.7 million more
16 from the state. A total of more than
17 \$1.1 billion each year. This budget
18 before the console is an incremental
19 budget. It continues to invest along
20 the margins in the most critical and
21 emergent areas that will fulfill the
22 Board of Education's Goals and
23 Guardrails and execute the budget
24 priorities within a limited area
25 where we have budgetary control. But

1 with the additional \$1.1 billion per
2 year, the District could execute the
3 kind of transformational change that
4 could counteract more than a century
5 of school underfunding and finally
6 give our students the education that
7 they deserve.

8 Next slide. We did want to
9 briefly address the timeliness of
10 these numbers because we received
11 some questions on this. Because the
12 Fair Funding calculations were
13 originally presented based on FY2020
14 data for questions about how the
15 analysis has changed, we reached out
16 to Dr. Matt Kelly, the Penn State
17 professor that provided the expert
18 testimony, and he said that they are
19 not currently working on updating
20 these numbers as of yet. We do not
21 have access to all the statewide data
22 needed to complete the money
23 calculations needed for this
24 analysis.

25 We want to share we know

1 since that time City and state
2 revenues have increased as they do
3 each year. And as President
4 Streater, Vice-president Fix-Lopez
5 and Superintendent Watlington all
6 discussed earlier, we're very
7 grateful to the City for the recent
8 increase in investments in the School
9 District.

10 However, as we look at
11 expenditures in any way during this
12 high inflation period, it shows a
13 significantly larger increase over
14 time than the additional revenues.
15 To illustrate this in the most simple
16 way possible, we compared the actual
17 increase in the District, City and
18 state revenues of 12.7 percent since
19 the analysis period to CPI employee
20 inflation from the Bureau of Labor
21 Statistics of 17 percent.

22 While we can't fully do the
23 calculations, we can say that
24 expenditure costs are increasing
25 faster than revenues, leading to

1 lower District purchasing power. And
2 it's safe to say that the gap between
3 the current state of our funding and
4 Fair Funding has increased since the
5 original analysis.

6 Next slide. As the Board of
7 Education emphasized in their recent
8 open letter and earlier today, our
9 District continues to operate under
10 well-documented, long-standing
11 financial and staffing resource
12 constraints, we showed earlier that
13 in one year we'll be more than 99
14 percent dependent on City and state
15 revenues.

16 For years that funding has
17 failed to meet the needs of our young
18 people, and this is underscored by
19 the recent Commonwealth Court
20 decision. With an additional \$5,000
21 per student, the District would have
22 the resources to create
23 transformational change to develop
24 safe, healthy and welcoming learning
25 environments that lead to students'

1 academic growth.

2 Next slide. In our
3 presentations, we're only able to
4 present at a very high level. Our
5 team does provide a great deal of
6 data for anyone that's interested in
7 taking a deeper dive. All the
8 materials are currently published on
9 our website philasd.org/budget, and
10 these are of course available to the
11 public. That includes the FY2024
12 Consolidated Budget Book, which shows
13 District-wide information, key
14 investments and Department data,
15 including personnel and non-personnel
16 costs.

17 The FY2024 school budget,
18 that one shows all the positions and
19 other costs for each individual
20 school. It's also separated by
21 Council Districts, so District
22 members can easily view specific
23 schools within their District and a
24 guide to understanding the District
25 budget. This is for those that are

1 less familiar with the budget book or
2 budget books and want a brief course
3 on the information, how they can use
4 it to better understand their
5 District, their schools and the
6 overall budget.

7 After today's hearing, the
8 Board of Education is scheduled to
9 vote to adopt the final FY2024
10 operating budget on May 25th. Then
11 City Council will adopt tax measures
12 and the state will adopt its budget
13 in June.

14 Next slide. And that
15 concludes our presentation. We'll
16 turn it back to the President for
17 questions and comments.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
19 you. Council President had to step
20 away for a second, but I'll get us
21 started at least with questions. And
22 then I'll begin to pass it to some of
23 my colleagues.

24 First question, our
25 Superintendent talked about the

1 enrollment numbers looking at about
2 113,000 students, but the total
3 number was about 500 less than we
4 anticipate next school year than this
5 school year, but we've seen that
6 we're going to have growth as it
7 relates to staff positions down the
8 pipeline.

9 How is it that we're going to
10 be able to maintain growth in staff
11 positions while anticipating 500 less
12 students next year and where did the
13 500 number come from? How did you
14 come to that conclusion?

15 MR. HERBSTMAN: So first, I
16 could speak to where the numbers come
17 from, and this is part of a process
18 completed actually in our Information
19 Technology Office where they look at
20 what's called the cohort survival
21 method. They look grade-to-grade,
22 school-by-school at the trends for
23 each individual grade level at those
24 schools to see where we expect to end
25 up the next year based on those

1 trends. This is a standard method
2 used nationwide.

3 It also takes into account
4 birth rates within particular
5 catchment areas to get into where we
6 expect students to enter the system.
7 Overall when you combine all those
8 numbers together, there is that
9 decrease, about 0.5 percent. We look
10 at budgeting at the school level. We
11 provide additional funding each year
12 to help make up for the increasing
13 costs of employee salaries, as our
14 negotiated contracts go into effect
15 each year. And of the entire pot,
16 there's various formulas and they are
17 actually all publicly available and
18 outlined in our school budget
19 guidance to discuss exactly how
20 schools get those formulas based on
21 enrollment and equity measures at the
22 school.

23 And then once they get the
24 funding, a good portion of the money
25 is actually at the discretion of

1 schools and principals working with
2 Central Office and their assistant
3 superintendents. And it looks like
4 this year there was an emphasis on
5 maintaining positions and using
6 funding particularly for those
7 purposes. But that's how the full
8 process works.

9 DR. WATLINGTON: And, Chair
10 Thomas, Mr. Chairman, if I may just
11 add that although it may -- another
12 bit of context I would mention is
13 that a decade ago or so when the
14 District had significant financial
15 issues and staffing was literally cut
16 across the board, I'm told there were
17 schools that had a principal, maybe a
18 teacher for the classroom, maybe
19 somebody to help in the office but
20 not very much more. And it's just
21 absolutely amazing to see how the
22 District worked hard to try to
23 recover. And it has taken years to
24 get back to an acceptable level of
25 staffing.

1 So even though we have that
2 500-student reduction, I would just
3 remind us that the staffing was
4 reduced so low to just almost unsafe
5 levels years ago, and it's taken
6 years to build back up to even an
7 appropriate level of staffing and
8 some areas are still understaffed.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
10 you. Does the formula and the method
11 that you just recommended, does it
12 suggest that there has been any
13 impact on school closures and other
14 issues that we're facing in the City?
15 Do you see that having an impact on
16 the anticipated enrollment numbers?

17 DR. WATLINGTON: I will ask
18 Chief Herbstman for the financial
19 perspective. I think that relative
20 to a 500 -- a 0.5 percent decrease
21 that we expect next year, I've not
22 thought about it in terms of a school
23 closure. I've thought about it -- I
24 personally have thought about it in
25 terms of let's figure out what we

1 need to do to move the needle on
2 academic achievement in the near
3 term. And then let's pull all of our
4 data together as a part of the
5 project team and take a comprehensive
6 look with internal and external staff
7 under the leadership of the Board of
8 Education to determine where we need
9 to go in the future.

10 So in the near term, I've
11 interpreted those 500 students -- the
12 0.5 student loss in terms of what we
13 need to do right now to make sure
14 that we move the needle in academic
15 achievement. And then certainly, the
16 issue that you raised, take it up
17 with the project team at the
18 appropriate time.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So I mean
20 that's basically good to hear that we
21 don't anticipate some of the issues
22 that the facility crisis is creating
23 having an impact on either student
24 enrollment or teacher retention, so I
25 think that that's good news and

1 that's good to hear because that was
2 a concern of mine.

3 Speaking of the facilities
4 issue, you mentioned some schools are
5 returning pretty soon. But there are
6 a couple schools, I believe three,
7 where you didn't say what the plan
8 is. What is the plan for the three
9 schools that are still essentially
10 virtual? And I'm thinking especially
11 about a high school being virtual,
12 those kids probably spent a couple
13 years during the pandemic in their
14 high school career.

15 We also know that this is a
16 culmination time where it's a lot of
17 activities and fun things to close
18 your senior year out. What is the
19 plan with the other schools that are
20 still virtual?

21 DR. WATLINGTON: We're
22 meeting with about each of those
23 schools every single afternoon. We
24 were here last night meeting
25 specifically about Frankford and the

1 other schools. Chair Thomas, with
2 your permission I'd like to ask our
3 Chief Operations Officer Oz Hill if
4 he'll give you a quick update on
5 where we are with those schools, even
6 though we don't have definite
7 timelines for all of them just yet.

8 Chief Hill.

9 MR. HILL: Good afternoon,
10 Councilmembers, Mr. Mayor. Thank you
11 for the opportunity to provide this
12 update. We have three schools in
13 question. They are C.W. Henry
14 Elementary School, Mitchell
15 Elementary and Frankford High School.
16 Currently the Frankford High School
17 special needs students are projected
18 to return to inperson instruction
19 over at Olney High School.

20 Specifically, we are in the
21 process of preparing 10 classrooms
22 that will be occupied by those
23 students. Yesterday we completed an
24 environmental as well as a
25 maintenance assessment of those

1 spaces to be occupied by the
2 Frankford High School special needs
3 students. The projected completion
4 of all 61 of the identified punchlist
5 items is this Sunday on what would be
6 the 7th of May, with the faculty
7 returning or occupying the space on
8 Monday, the 8th of May, and the
9 special needs students actually
10 arriving on Wednesday, the 10th of
11 May.

12 We are in the process of
13 identifying suitable swing spaces for
14 the remainder of the student body and
15 school population. We have assembled
16 a team of subject matter experts as
17 well as identifying a school
18 community assessment team or
19 representatives from the school
20 community to participate in the
21 assessment team to go out and
22 actually verify the recommended and
23 suggested spaces that are a
24 composition District-owned facilities
25 as well as non-District-owned

1 facilities.

2 What I would like to offer as
3 a caveat to that, any space
4 identified whether it is District-
5 owned or non-District-owned will
6 require a rigorous inspection or
7 evaluation to ensure that it is
8 suitable for occupancy in terms of
9 the environmental disposition of the
10 facility as well as the overall
11 maintenance and support amenities
12 required in the facilities. That's
13 the update that I'd like to offer on
14 Frankford.

15 On Mitchell Elementary, we
16 are going through the process of a
17 full evaluation to define the scope
18 of work associated with that
19 facility. We expect that the scope
20 of work, which will result in a work
21 plan, will be completed no later than
22 this Friday, May 5th, close of
23 business.

24 Finally, the update on Henry
25 School we are awaiting the final

1 report from the Criterion Lab
2 concerning the testing and sampling
3 that was done as of last week. We
4 expect that that report will be
5 submitted at the very latest or
6 provided to us at the very latest by
7 close of business tomorrow. In turn
8 we will provide that information to
9 our partners, the PFT, Health and
10 Welfare Fund. And with their
11 concurrence, which we anticipate by
12 the end of the week, that facility
13 should be suitable for return of that
14 school population, sir.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
16 you. I apologize --

17 MR. HILL: Subject to any
18 other questions -- go ahead, sir.
19 I'm sorry.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I was
21 apologizing. I'm having a little
22 issue with my camera. I'm not quite
23 sure what's going on with that. But
24 I just wanted to get some clarity.
25 So Frankford, you said that Frankford

1 High School students are going to be
2 going to Olney? Did I hear that
3 correct?

4 MR. HILL: Just the special
5 education students, sir. The
6 priority was placed by Dr. Calderon,
7 placed inperson learning experience
8 for the special education students,
9 the seniors, English as a Second
10 Language students and then the larger
11 school population in terms of finding
12 suitable inperson education space.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
14 Just a couple things, then I got to
15 pass it to my colleagues and I'll
16 come back to a second round. In the
17 midst of the PowerPoint presentation,
18 you talked about a Facilities Project
19 team; is that correct?

20 MR. HILL: Yes, sir. Yes,
21 sir.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: In the
23 midst of creating a Facilities
24 Project team, have there been any
25 members of the legislative branches

1 of government on the City or state
2 side that's been invited to be a part
3 of the project team?

4 MR. HILL: We have -- and let
5 me be very specific. There have been
6 requests and offers from members of
7 the municipal legislative branch that
8 have offered to participate in the
9 project team, and we fully intend to
10 engage them in that process because
11 the insight and expertise of the
12 legislative body members is critical
13 to our process as well as a cross-
14 section of the community at large.

15 One of the things, and just
16 being completely transparent, we are
17 in the process also of defining the
18 roles and responsibilities as we look
19 to engage members from a cross-
20 section of the community that we
21 serve, the nonprofit face-based
22 business communities as well as our
23 elected officials. So as we're going
24 through, we fully intend to engage
25 those members and we want to make

1 sure that we have clarity around what
2 we are asking of all of the
3 participants to ensure that we're
4 respectful of the valuable time and
5 limited time that those key leaders
6 in our community will have to
7 participate on the project team.

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you
9 for that answer. I think and this is
10 just my opinion, based on your
11 projections in 2025, close to 99
12 percent of your funding will come
13 from City and state legislators along
14 with the executive branch of
15 government. I do think it would be a
16 good idea to extend that invitation,
17 at least the invitation to some of
18 the legislators to allow them to be a
19 part of this process.

20 The last thing, and then I'll
21 pass it to our Majority Leader Jones.
22 You just -- at least the last thing
23 for this round. You spoke about
24 200 -- well, the Mayor said that our
25 number for you is \$282 million.

1 Listening to today's proposal from
2 the School Board as well as the
3 School District, based on what you
4 will call adequate funding, what
5 would the dream number be that the
6 City of Philadelphia would give the
7 School District in this year's budget
8 to guarantee adequate funding?

9 MR. HERBSTMAN: The --

10 DR. WATLINGTON:

11 Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask that
12 we perhaps give President Streater
13 the opportunity to speak to that. I
14 know the Board has spoken to their
15 four priorities, so I think that
16 might be appropriate for Board
17 President to speak to first.

18 MR. STREATER: Yeah. I
19 think -- just to be brief, I think
20 318 million that we've asked for,
21 which isn't just a pie in the sky
22 number, which is based off of a study
23 done by a reputable third party as it
24 relates to what the City's portion of
25 I think 1.7 billion that we believe

1 that we need or that we know that we
2 need to fully educate children in the
3 City. But as you know, we can't
4 propose our lump sum budget based off
5 of receipts that we don't know that
6 are not intended, that are not going
7 to be forthcoming. So thank you for
8 the opportunity of just saying that,
9 \$318 million.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
11 you.

12 Chair recognizes Majority
13 Leader Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 And thank you,
17 Dr. Watlington, for your update and
18 clear vision. And I say that because
19 it often is difficult when you talk
20 about an organization as large as the
21 School District to kind of get those
22 guardrails, guidelines and goals and
23 visions for the -- but pretty much
24 you have done, you and your team have
25 done a good job of articulating a

1 larger review.

2 What I'd like to do with my
3 time is to go into some specifics of
4 what I get, questions from my
5 constituents and from advocates for
6 education. Clearly there are the
7 Girls' Highs, the Centrals, the
8 Mastermans and the Palumbos of the
9 world. How do we dissect how a
10 Special Admit School became so
11 proficient at education and put that
12 in a bottle that we can replicate in
13 every part of the City so that we
14 don't have these lotteries where
15 people come away from the lottery
16 dejected based on their life
17 trajectory. I get parents and
18 grandparents that literally view this
19 as life and death for their children.
20 And to a degree, they might be right.

21 So my first question is how
22 do we model what is done at those
23 Special Admit Schools and replicate
24 it to the Overbrook High Schools and
25 other schools in every neighborhood?

1 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you,
2 Leader Jones, Majority Leader Jones.
3 The first answer to your question is
4 that, one, we have an internal team
5 talking to students, parents,
6 teachers, principals and others to
7 get feedback about all of the things
8 they think we do well and all of the
9 things they think just are not
10 working well with the criteria-based
11 school selection process. Part of
12 that feedback is helping us to
13 understand perceptions about why
14 people think a certain way about some
15 schools that have a very fine
16 reputation that took decades to
17 develop.

18 One of the things that I'm
19 learning about, for example, is I
20 don't hear people talk as much about
21 a Paul Robeson High School in West
22 Philadelphia that is doing very well,
23 has a 95 percent graduation rate. I
24 was there when Former Governor Wolf
25 and Speaker McClinton came and

1 presented a proclamation to the
2 principal of that school, but it's
3 not one that gets a lot of attention
4 like some of the others, so we're
5 studying that, number one, as a part
6 of the strategic plan development.

7 Number two, we have an
8 external team performing an audit of
9 the criteria-based school selection
10 process to audit the process, both to
11 tell us, give us, just like a
12 financial audit, did we do what we
13 said we were going to do. And we've
14 also asked them to think through
15 recommendations since they don't have
16 a dog in the fight, give us some
17 recommendations about what you see
18 here.

19 And then third, I think that
20 we're taking time to understand why
21 people really have such a high regard
22 for some of those that just have a
23 reputation that's different from some
24 of our other schools. Fourth, as a
25 part of the strategic plan work, we

1 are identifying strategies to improve
2 non-criteria-based schools and
3 perhaps expand some of our criteria-
4 based schools so that they are in
5 other areas of the City versus just
6 having one Masterman or one Central
7 or one whatever other schools that
8 you referenced. I hope that
9 answered --

10 MR. STREATER: If I can add,
11 I went to Germantown High School,
12 which was a neighborhood
13 comprehensive high school. And I
14 think Dr. Watlington mentioned
15 earlier due to the fiscal crisis that
16 the public school sector in
17 Philadelphia was in, a lot of schools
18 had things ripped out that worked.

19 So, for example, you have
20 schools like Germantown that had
21 Junior Air Force ROTC, law and
22 government, all of these things that
23 Dr. Connie Clayton kind of really put
24 into the comprehensive neighborhood
25 high schools where a person like me

1 who actually got accepted to a
2 criteria-based school chose to go to
3 Germantown High School because it had
4 so much other offerings.

5 You can get law and
6 government there. You had AP
7 courses. You had CTS-type things
8 going on in the school. I think
9 that -- understanding the context how
10 we have to rebuild the District and
11 put things back that need to be put
12 back, for example -- well, I'm
13 standing preferably to my example. I
14 think that's kind of the context
15 we're in.

16 So I think now we're in the
17 space where we're trying to figure
18 out, well, why are criteria-based
19 schools I guess in some ways better-
20 equipped to deal with some of the
21 challenges or are able to kind of
22 keep some of their stature. And I
23 think that it has an impact -- I
24 think one of the impacts of being a
25 criteria-based school, sad to say, is

1 sometimes they have access to
2 external resources, people resources
3 and also economic resources that are
4 able to brunt some of the losses that
5 we had.

6 But what I'm very much
7 inspired about, and this is what I
8 mean by the educational renaissance,
9 is Dr. Watlington is taking a
10 strategic approach to say, hey, he
11 thinks that every school should have
12 an AP course, right. But also when
13 you think about AP courses in
14 science, for example, you got to
15 figure out how you're going to
16 retrofit your buildings for certain
17 infrastructure and things like that.

18 So I think a lot of good news
19 is on the way, and I think a lot of
20 your answers are going to be
21 answered. A lot of your questions
22 are going to be answered in May when
23 Dr. Watlington unveils the five year
24 strategic plan, of which I can't
25 think of the last time that this

1 District and this Board have tried to
2 think strategically and not just
3 whack-a-mole issues where they are,
4 but try to have a strategic plan for
5 how we look at our neighborhood high
6 schools. But I have a laser focus
7 myself for neighborhood high schools.
8 Many of the Board members went to
9 high schools in Philadelphia as well.
10 Two of our Board members went to
11 Girls' High. I went to Germantown.
12 I have children in the District right
13 now who will be in our high schools.
14 So I just want to put that context to
15 it as well.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I
17 appreciate that response. I guess
18 what I want to say is that we need to
19 bottle it, we need to engineer it and
20 be able to replicate it, that's
21 number one. But what do we track the
22 graduates of particular schools to
23 see the positive or negative outcomes
24 after five years.

25 So the question I would

1 have -- and I hear the bell. The
2 question I would have is what happens
3 to the average graduate of Overbrook
4 High School? Do they, A, get a job?
5 Do they go on, B, to higher
6 education? Do they wind up in the
7 military? And to be able to track
8 them to say that this fundamental
9 education provided this positive
10 outcome or not so positive outcome so
11 that we can then reverse engineer
12 what is missing at particular
13 schools. So do we keep track of
14 that?

15 DR. WATLINGTON: Leader
16 Jones, if I may just say really
17 quickly to your point about how do we
18 bottle engineer and replicate success
19 in some schools, at other schools,
20 President Streater just talked about
21 a deep data review that we're doing
22 and that we'll have more to say as we
23 launch the strategic plan. One of
24 the allocations that we do that is
25 absolutely not equitable in the

1 School District of Philadelphia, and
2 I don't think it's done purposely, is
3 just like a lot of districts has
4 happened over time but we've got to
5 unengineer some of the statistics we
6 have.

7 For example, if the number
8 one factor after 50 years of research
9 on schools to your point, sir, tells
10 us that teachers are the number one
11 factor influencing student academic
12 growth, then we have to make sure
13 that we're sharing that talent
14 equitably. And currently we do not.

15 Now, I'll give you two quick
16 points to demonstrate that. And I
17 was a very new teacher at one time.
18 And as a new teacher, I had to have
19 time to learn my craft. And quite
20 frankly, I was learning my first year
21 just like the students. So you
22 wouldn't want to have a school with
23 all brand new teachers and then you
24 have a school with an experienced
25 faculty. Ideally you wouldn't want

1 to have a school with all strong
2 teachers and all struggling teachers,
3 because we're all at different places
4 in our journey and working hard to do
5 good things for children.

6 Here's my point, I looked at
7 our data for National Board-Certified
8 teachers, for example, very rigorous,
9 prestigious certification that
10 teachers can get. And the research
11 says that National Board-certified
12 teachers are associated with improved
13 student outcomes nationally. We have
14 twice as many National Board-
15 certified teachers in our criteria-
16 based schools, almost twice as many
17 percentage-wise than in the
18 non-criteria-based schools. So we've
19 got to look at how do we develop
20 policies, how do we have incentives
21 that get more of these teachers where
22 we need them the most.

23 Second point I want to make
24 very quickly, if I may, if you look
25 at all of our learning networks, the

1 Acceleration Network, which serves
2 some of our most needy students has
3 significantly higher percentages of
4 emergency-licensed teachers. Now,
5 there's nothing inherently wrong with
6 the emergency-licensed teachers, but
7 they haven't had the benefit yet to
8 go through a school of education
9 program to become really as
10 proficient as they will over time and
11 how to teach the curriculum and the
12 and the content.

13 So one of the things we'll be
14 looking at in the strategic plan is
15 how do we incentivize people to be in
16 some of the higher need places in a
17 way that we just don't say, well, the
18 Superintendent is just going to
19 transfer you over here like in the
20 military, because nationally that has
21 not worked. That's when teachers
22 leave and they go other places.

23 So we're being thoughtful
24 about how we can incentivize to make
25 sure that talent resources in

1 addition to budget resources are more
2 equitably distributed throughout our
3 schools. That's a quick short answer
4 to get at how we, as you said,
5 bottle-engineer and replicate some of
6 the success.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Doctor,
8 thank you for that response. You
9 always have had your cards on the
10 table face up, to quote you. And I
11 appreciate that response.

12 Thank you, Mr. President --
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
16 you, Councilmember Jones.

17 Chair recognizes
18 Councilmember Brooks.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
20 you, Chair Thomas.

21 And good morning,
22 Dr. Watlington and President
23 Streater. I want to start by saying
24 yesterday members of the Council
25 Education Committee, we went to

1 Harrisburg to meet with the
2 legislators and members of the
3 Governor's Administration to advocate
4 for increased investment for school
5 facilities because we know this is a
6 crisis. And I was pleased that three
7 Board members were able to attend
8 with us, Wilkerson, Lam and Andrews
9 and were able to share their
10 expertise in Harrisburg. And we also
11 were joined with leaders from
12 Reading, Meadville, Spring Township
13 and Lancaster.

14 And I want to say that I am
15 committed to continue building a
16 statewide coalition to advocate for
17 Fair Funding for schools with a focus
18 on facilities, because across the
19 Commonwealth we have varying issues
20 and together we win. But my major
21 focus will always be Philadelphia.
22 So my office will be reaching out to
23 coordinate more meetings like this
24 for us to continue to have this
25 conversation together, because one

1 thing I took away from those
2 conversations is that leaders in
3 Harrisburg as well as with leaders of
4 the City and the School District have
5 a hunger for this collaboration
6 because we all want quality schools
7 and quality education for children in
8 Philadelphia. So I'm excited to
9 continue to work together.

10 My questions are -- I'm going
11 to have three and I'm going to kind
12 of say them real quick and then you
13 guys can come back and answer. And I
14 think we had some of these
15 conversations already. So I'm
16 excited about the City to increase
17 investments in counselors in this
18 year's proposed budget.

19 And I would like to hear more
20 about the schools that were selected
21 to receive these additional
22 counselors and is it any focus on the
23 57 blocks that have been most
24 affected by gun violence in the City?
25 The DA has been working on that. And

1 I'm interested to learn was the
2 District able to consider that
3 information in those staffing
4 decisions?

5 As a parent activist myself,
6 my second question is about a
7 Parental Ombudsman Program that was
8 back out when Superintendent Arlene
9 Ackerman was in place, and it was
10 very successful. And you talked
11 about partnering with parents and
12 community as one of your priorities
13 for this year, and I agree that's
14 important. That's how I got involved
15 in politics. So along those lines,
16 would the District consider bringing
17 back the Parental Ombudsman Program?

18 And my third question is
19 around hiring status. We know
20 there's a shortage of teachers in
21 general, not just in Philly. But we
22 realize this is across the
23 Commonwealth. And can you talk a
24 little bit about what your hiring
25 looks like for all school positions,

1 not just teachers? And I'm very
2 interested to hear about pipelines
3 for school staff to become teachers.
4 So those are my three questions.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. STREATER: Before the
7 Superintendent responds, I just want
8 to say thank you, Co-Chair Brooks.
9 We really appreciate the request and
10 accepting us to come to the state
11 with you. And I think it's brilliant
12 and genius to continue the fight by
13 doing what we did in the beginning,
14 which is collaborating with people
15 across the state who have some of the
16 same exact issues that we have.

17 So we look forward to
18 partnering with you and being a
19 collaborative partner, so thank you
20 again. I just want to say thank you.
21 And I'm sorry I couldn't be there. I
22 had to do some lawyering. Sorry.

23 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you.
24 Good afternoon -- good morning still,
25 I think, Councilmember Brooks. To

1 the first question which schools will
2 be slated to have the increase in
3 guidance counselors and do they
4 reflect the 57 blocks most affected
5 by gun violence, Chief Herbstman, can
6 we speak to whether we finalized
7 those final school identifications
8 just yet?

9 MR. HERBSTMAN: Yes, I
10 believe they have been finalized and
11 schools are aware of them. I know
12 this is a deep dive by our team into
13 the data really looking specifically
14 at schools that are impacted by
15 violence of trauma as well as
16 specific social, emotional and mental
17 health needs at those schools. Some
18 proximity to the opioid corridor was
19 considered in the decisions.

20 I believe those are the main
21 criteria that were looked at. I
22 don't have the list in front of me of
23 all of the 15 schools, but they have
24 been notified and we can provide
25 that.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
2 you. That will be helpful.

3 DR. WATLINGTON: We can
4 certainly do that. And then second
5 question related to parent
6 partnerships, Councilmember Brooks, I
7 also heard a lot about parent
8 engagement and some of the
9 initiatives done in Dr. Ackerman's
10 Administration, and all of those
11 options quite frankly are on the
12 table.

13 We're continuing to review
14 those as a part of the strategic plan
15 development around this priority. As
16 we flush that out more, we'll have
17 more to say about what that
18 specifically will look like. But we
19 hear you loud and clear and we heard
20 it loud and clear from many parents
21 across the District.

22 And then third, relative to
23 the question for hiring for all
24 school positions, we're happy to
25 share the hiring data as a follow-up

1 to the Council hearing. And if there
2 are any areas that we've not noted,
3 we're happy to share that
4 information.

5 You asked about how we're
6 doing with the pipelines and what are
7 we specifically doing. One thing I
8 want to lift up is the
9 paraprofessional initiative, where we
10 have people who are working in our
11 schools right now. We have two
12 cohorts. I think the first cohort
13 were 80 paraprofessionals in the
14 District last year who we are
15 arranging to get their teaching
16 licenses debt-free at Temple
17 University, Drexel, La Salle College
18 Inbound and Cheyney University.

19 And what's unique,
20 Councilmember Brooks, even though our
21 teaching population is heavily female
22 and White, our paraprofessional
23 groups that we are having Cohort 1, I
24 think about 80, Cohort 2 is about 75
25 or 80, we can get you the exact

1 numbers, these individuals are
2 majority people of color, African
3 American and Latino.

4 And so, I think that it's a
5 promising first step toward as we
6 have these vacancies getting more
7 diversity and more teachers of color
8 in the School District. It's a small
9 percent compared to the big size of
10 the District, but it is one step in
11 the right direction. And I'm very
12 pleased that we've got all those
13 University partners. We need to do a
14 lot more and we will.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
16 you so much. And I am excited to see
17 the District moving in the right
18 direction. And once again, I am
19 committed to making sure we get as
20 much money to support these
21 initiatives and let's continue to
22 stay in conversation and in
23 partnership. Thank you so much.

24 Mr. Chair, that ends my
25 questions.

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
2 you, Councilmember Brooks.

3 Chair recognizes
4 Councilmember Johnson.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
6 you very much, Mr. Chair.

7 Dr. Watlington, first and
8 foremost as always, thank you for
9 your advocacy, your leadership as you
10 work to move the City of Philadelphia
11 School District forward. I just want
12 to thank you for being here today.

13 Just a couple questions
14 around these support systems for
15 trauma-informed support for our young
16 people. I know you talked about
17 expanding counselors, but I want to
18 talk about efforts around behavioral
19 health counselors. I have a Save Our
20 Youth Budget initiative I'm going to
21 be advocating for. And so, I want to
22 talk about trauma-support services
23 for our young people, one, behavioral
24 health counselors.

25 Do we provide behavioral

1 health counselors? If we do, how
2 many and how schools are picked to
3 actually distribute the resources for
4 behavioral health counselors, which
5 is totally separate from guidance
6 counselors? And also, two, I want to
7 take a look at trauma-informed
8 support that we're providing to our
9 young people as it relates to gun
10 violence and what type of initiatives
11 that we have on the agenda to address
12 this issue because obviously this is
13 the number one issue that we're
14 dealing with as it relates to our
15 young people being shot and murdered
16 day-in and day-out, which I believe
17 has an impact on their psyche when
18 they go to and from school.

19 And then the last part of my
20 question is around the issue of the
21 expansion of CTE programs. I know
22 you did a presentation with the
23 Building Trades. And I wanted to see
24 what are our efforts to bring back
25 schools like Edward Bok, bring back

1 schools or expand on schools like
2 Dobbins to provide our young people
3 with another alternative to
4 traditional career opportunities?

5 And I grew up going to Edward
6 Bok High school. I'm a machinist by
7 trade before I decided to go to the
8 University of Pennsylvania as well as
9 Mansfield, but I always have the
10 skills being a tradesman forever.

11 And so, as we look at thinking
12 outside the box for our young people
13 I think that was a great avenue for
14 our young people, but obviously for
15 some apparent reason the District in
16 the past prior to you coming on board
17 decided to get rid a lot of different
18 trade schools here in Philadelphia,
19 which limited the options of our
20 young people on having a pathway out
21 of poverty.

22 And so, those are the three
23 parts of my questions, behavioral
24 health counselors; two, trauma-
25 informed support for our young people

1 who have experienced or impacted by
2 gun violence and; three, how are we
3 expanding trades and community
4 learning opportunities for our young
5 people as well in our school system.

6 DR. WATLINGTON: All right.

7 Thank you, Councilmember Johnson.

8 Really quick I forgot to mention
9 earlier to Councilmember Brooks that
10 one other thing we're doing to try to
11 build that pipeline to get more
12 diverse teachers. I met recently
13 with Lincoln University's President
14 and although they don't have an
15 undergraduate education program, they
16 are open to sitting down with us and
17 figuring out how we get more teachers
18 through their Master of Arts and
19 teaching program.

20 So I'm really excited that
21 Lincoln University wants to get in a
22 partnership since the two first
23 Historically Black Colleges and
24 Universities are here in the state of
25 Pennsylvania, and we absolutely need

1 to get more African American
2 teachers.

3 To your question, Councilman
4 Johnson --

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can I
6 get a point of --

7 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

9 Dr. Watlington, real quick can I just
10 get a point of information for
11 clarity just for members of this
12 Committee, maybe you can help us out,
13 right. And obviously it's tough
14 recruiting teachers to teach in our
15 public school system, but who sets
16 the rates of how much teachers are
17 paid?

18 Obviously, that's beyond your
19 purview. But how does that work if
20 you don't mind me sliding that in
21 there as a point of information as
22 well? Because I believe that goes a
23 long way to -- teaching is a noble
24 profession. But obviously a lot of
25 young people want to make a few

1 dollars and may have to make a
2 decision between becoming a teacher
3 or becoming an entrepreneur. And so,
4 it may make things a little difficult
5 for them to become a teacher. So who
6 sets the actual rate of how much
7 teachers get paid?

8 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll just
9 take a quick stab at that. Then I'll
10 ask Chief Herbstman, who's our
11 financial expert here. In the state
12 where I came from, the state had a
13 state-funded teacher salary and the
14 local school districts could add a
15 supplement on top of it. And so,
16 districts were very competitive in
17 terms of how they competed with each
18 other.

19 I do know that here in the
20 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
21 certainly in Philadelphia, a lot of
22 our salaries are a result of
23 bargaining. And so, Chief Herbstman,
24 can you speak to that?

25 MR. HERBSTMAN: Yes. So all

1 of the rates are set by our
2 negotiated agreement with PFT. Each
3 rate is negotiated as we do those
4 annual -- sorry, not annual, multi-
5 year negotiations. The current
6 contract goes through the end of next
7 year FY2024. So around this time or
8 a little earlier next year, we will
9 be negotiating between the Board of
10 Education and PFT to develop a new
11 multi-year contract with new rates.

12 MR. STREATER: And if I could
13 just add briefly, in addition to the
14 teachers are paid, the District, the
15 Board, Vice-president Mallory
16 Fix-Lopez kind of heads our kind of
17 policy work with the state, has
18 suggested that we can do something to
19 make it easier for teachers to come
20 from out of state to in-state as
21 well.

22 There's very -- I think
23 Dr. Watlington said it's easier for a
24 teacher to become a teacher in North
25 Carolina than it is for a North

1 Carolina-educated teacher or licensed
2 teacher to matriculate into
3 Pennsylvania. And also, things such
4 as the \$2500 tax deductible that the
5 Governor is suggesting -- is putting
6 forth as a potential in this year's
7 budget.

8 And things like subsidized
9 housing, right, as we think about
10 what we're going to do with our
11 facilities, maybe that could be
12 something on the table as well. But
13 anyway, I just wanted to kind of put
14 those extra context of things that we
15 can do to try to bring in more talent
16 as it relates to teachers. But,
17 yeah, the teacher pay is very
18 important.

19 DR. WATLINGTON: And,
20 Councilmember Johnson, to your
21 question about career and technical
22 education, in this strategic plan we
23 will clearly recognize that all
24 students will not go to a four-year
25 college or to a two-year or to the

1 community college. And so, we'll
2 have something to say about
3 innovative ways to get more of our
4 children involved in career technical
5 education opportunities, not limited
6 to what we're doing at Strawberry
7 Mansion High School, that pilot
8 initiative that we kicked off this
9 year.

10 We hear you loud and clear.
11 Just know it's a big huge priority
12 for us and we're working closely with
13 Community College President Dr. Guy
14 Generals, and we will publicly share
15 the audit findings that will help us
16 determine how we get better with
17 providing more opportunities there.

18 Regarding the trauma-informed
19 support -- I've been trained by
20 President Streater when I hear the
21 bell at the Board meeting time's up,
22 so I'm going to stop and wait for
23 Chair Thomas to tell me what to do.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Feel free
25 to answer the question. Sorry about

1 that.

2 DR. WATLINGTON: Okay. No
3 problem. Regarding your two
4 questions, Councilmember Johnson,
5 about trauma-informed supports,
6 specifically how we're dealing with
7 behavioral health counselors who are
8 different than traditional guidance
9 counselors and what we're doing for
10 trauma-informed support for victims
11 of gun violence, I'm going to ask
12 Chief of Student Support Services
13 Karyn Lynch if she will come on and
14 give you the response to that
15 question.

16 Chief Lynch, good morning.

17 MS. LYNCH: Thank you,
18 Councilman and Dr. Watlington. We
19 can give you, Councilman Johnson, the
20 numbers. I don't want to give an
21 exact number of how many behavioral
22 counselors we have right now, but we
23 can give you that number moving
24 forward as well as the number of
25 positions that are behavioral health

1 counselors that are actually filled.

2 In addition to -- is he still
3 there? He just disappeared from my
4 screen. In addition -- I'm presuming
5 he's still there. In addition to
6 what Dr. Watlington just shared about
7 the online program that we have for
8 students and the services that we
9 have in our schools, including our
10 STEP services and our Intensive
11 Behavioral Health Services that are
12 in every single one of our schools,
13 we are also starting an initiative
14 moving forward.

15 We kicked it off a few weeks
16 ago with a very innovative doctor
17 who's practicing behavioral health
18 and social services particularly
19 geared toward children who have
20 experienced trauma. I think we
21 shared with you at the hearing that
22 was held several weeks ago that
23 Dr. Shawn Ginwright has come to
24 Philadelphia. It's one of the sole
25 locations outside of (inaudible)

1 where he lives and works to implement
2 his services.

3 He's going to provide
4 training to our students, to our
5 teachers and school-based staff. And
6 also, we shared with you that there
7 is a camp that is coming this summer
8 that will be attended by those
9 students and the children in the City
10 who have experienced trauma and who
11 are in great need of uplifting and
12 support.

13 And so, that initiative is
14 well under way. We had an
15 opportunity when Dr. Ginwright came
16 to Philadelphia to meet with the
17 Foundation Community and potential
18 funders. And so, we're really
19 looking forward to getting our
20 principals involved. We had a
21 convening with our principals.
22 There's going to be probably about 20
23 schools that have high needs selected
24 for this effort.

25 DR. WATLINGTON: And I just

1 might add to what Chief Lynch said, I
2 was so pleased that she invited me to
3 attend a recent dinner meeting when
4 he was in Philadelphia since he's
5 going to be doing work here next
6 year. The key question I remember he
7 talked to us about in the
8 presentation is we have to stop
9 asking what's wrong with you and
10 change the question to what happened
11 to you. But just remember that name,
12 Dr. Ginwright. He's going to be a
13 great partner to the District and the
14 student support staff in all of our
15 schools. So thank you. Thank you,
16 Chief Lynch.

17 MS. LYNCH: Thank you so
18 much.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you
20 for your response everybody. And
21 thank you, Councilmember Johnson, for
22 your line of questioning.

23 Chair recognizes
24 Councilmember Harrity.

25 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank

1 you, Chairman Thomas.

2 Thank you, Dr. Watlington.

3 Mine is pretty simple. I know a
4 couple weeks with you on another
5 hearing, you could see the concern
6 about the Fair Funding and the fact
7 of having a plan in case we do get
8 this money from the state government.
9 Just wanted to know if now that you
10 know that the unfair funding was
11 ruled on, are you now in the process
12 of planning what we would do if we
13 get money to rebuild some of these
14 schools?

15 Is there a plan that we would
16 have ready to go or are you in the
17 midst of making a plan? And if so,
18 what will we do with the children
19 from the facilities that we are
20 redoing or rebuilding in the interim?

21 DR. WATLINGTON: Good
22 afternoon, Councilmember Harrity.
23 Absolutely, we're in a position to be
24 fully prepared to make good decisions
25 with additional funding as and when

1 it comes our way. And the specifics
2 of the question you asked are the
3 topics of the project team
4 membership. We want to get a few
5 more people around the table with us
6 so we just don't make all those
7 decisions by ourselves, but include
8 our community and to Chair Thomas'
9 point, some of our elected officials
10 so they can have a role in this at
11 the table with us and do this
12 together.

13 President Streater has been
14 adamant that he wants us to do this
15 work together and not just work in an
16 isolated way in the District and we
17 are ready to do that, roll up our
18 sleeves and do that work together so
19 that we can have good decisions,
20 shovel-ready to improve our school
21 facilities as more dollars continue
22 to eventually flow to the District.

23 MR. STREATER: And I just
24 want to add briefly that the
25 presentation that we gave a few weeks

1 ago, we've done a lion's share of the
2 work. So while we may not have a go
3 outside, pick a school and there's a
4 plan for this school or renderings of
5 what this next school is going to
6 look like in this neighborhood or
7 this, than and the other. But we do
8 know what the state of our buildings
9 are.

10 We do have a price, even
11 though it's probably changed because
12 inflation occurred, as to what it
13 will cost to rebuild, retrofit the
14 District as is. I think there may be
15 room for a discussion about
16 utilization and utilization of
17 spaces, shared spaces or whether a
18 school needs to be re-imagined and
19 torn down, things of that nature, but
20 a lot of the work is done.

21 But I do want to say finally
22 because we're in the business of
23 educating children -- not business
24 because that's probably the worst
25 term to use. But as we're educating

1 children, we do believe that the
2 strategic plan that Dr. Watlington
3 has spent a year planning on, which
4 is going to be implemented, should
5 inform what we do with our buildings.

6 The strategic plan in theory,
7 I think it's going to be all of our
8 legacies. It could be the thing that
9 springboards our City for the next
10 hundred years. To have not just an
11 academic program that takes us into
12 the 22nd century, but also for us to
13 be able to have the buildings that
14 support that. And we believe that
15 instead of rushing into having a
16 Master Facilities Plan without having
17 a strategic plan, that Dr. Watlington
18 has done a lot of legwork getting
19 buy-in, doing listening and learning
20 sessions, engaging with the Board,
21 engaging with the City, I think that
22 that piece has to be done first and
23 then we can layer on the other things
24 such as shared spaces.

25 So for example, we have

1 schools now that have dentists in
2 them, right. Should Pre-K be infused
3 completely in the public school
4 system, like it's actually housed in
5 our schools, these are questions that
6 can be answered and will be answered
7 very soon. But I will say the lion's
8 share of the work of what the
9 buildings look like, what should it
10 cost to get them fixed, that stuff
11 has been done already. I just wanted
12 to give you that context, Councilman
13 Harrity.

14 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: That's
15 good to know. I like it. I like
16 being prepared. Especially if we get
17 a boatload of money, I'd love to be
18 able to give these kids some pride in
19 their schools. The only other
20 question I have with support staff,
21 counselors, I'm concerned just like
22 Councilman Johnson and others about
23 the effects on what our kids are
24 seeing on a daily basis with all the
25 murders as well as some of the areas

1 where they go to school, what they
2 have to see in route to school.

3 How are we doing with
4 staffing up on counselors and things
5 like that? And is there any kind
6 of -- if somebody is deemed to need
7 more therapy let's say, is there a
8 way that we can or we are partnering
9 with different psychological
10 departments or agencies in order to
11 get these kids the treatment they may
12 need?

13 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll take
14 the first stab at that.
15 Councilmember Harrity, in terms of
16 how we're doing with guidance
17 counselors, historically the School
18 District of Philadelphia has had a
19 ratio of students to guidance
20 counselor of 1 guidance counselor per
21 649 students or so. The National
22 Counselors Association recommends a
23 ratio of 1 counselor per every 250
24 students. So historically, we've
25 been about three times higher than --

1 if that's the right way to say it --
2 what the national recommendations
3 are.

4 So long story short, we don't
5 have enough guidance counselors. And
6 in this budget, we are just focusing
7 on a small number of our highest-
8 needs schools. If we got additional
9 resources, counselors would certainly
10 be one of the areas that we want to
11 apply more resources to, in addition
12 to some of the other areas and to
13 upgrading the school buildings.
14 That's the short answer to your
15 question, sir.

16 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.
17 Are we looking to do any kind of
18 partnership, like I said, for the
19 students that may need a little bit
20 more extra attention? I had a
21 meeting with St. Chris the other day
22 and we had a discussion about mental
23 health and our students and how we
24 could get maybe some of the
25 children's hospitals to kind of help

1 out with students that may need a
2 little extra talking, and just
3 getting it out for them.

4 DR. WATLINGTON: To
5 specifically answer that, I'm going
6 to ask Chief Lynch if she'll come
7 back on. She leads a lot of key work
8 in this area, so we'll defer to her
9 expertise.

10 MS. LYNCH: Thank you,
11 Dr. Watlington. A couple of things:
12 One, I would stress we are currently
13 partnering with Drexel, Jefferson and
14 Penn on services and trauma support
15 related to the experiences that
16 children are having but also related
17 to the anxiety, the depression, some
18 of the psychological experiences that
19 students are having as a result of
20 COVID, the isolation of COVID, the
21 changes that took place during COVID.

22 And so, partnering with our
23 local experts in suicide prevention
24 as well as depression and anxiety are
25 extremely important. We're

1 partnering with several nonprofits in
2 this regard. And I would share with
3 you, I believe your question was also
4 about our counselors who are seeing
5 students and what that impact is on
6 our counselors.

7 I think Dr. Watlington has
8 also shared that in this last year
9 since his arrival we have increased
10 the behavioral health services for
11 staff within the School District of
12 Philadelphia. So that would be in
13 addition to the benefits that they
14 already receive, and it provides an
15 opportunity for staff to engage
16 confidentially with practicing
17 psychologists and for mental health
18 services.

19 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank
20 you. That was great. Very
21 informative. Thank you so much.

22 MS. LYNCH: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
24 you, Councilmember Harrity.

25 Chair recognizes

1 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 Thank you very much for this
5 morning's hearing thus far. Thank
6 you to Mayor Kenny, Board President
7 Streater and Superintendent
8 Watlington and your entire team.

9 I've been here listening to
10 the testimony and obviously have a
11 few questions, and wanted to go back
12 over a few things that I did hear and
13 also see, and then also mistakenly
14 put into the chat relative to the
15 teacher reduction at Girls' High or
16 the staff reduction I should say at
17 Girls' High.

18 So I have to put that one on
19 the record as a graduate of the
20 Philadelphia High School for Girls,
21 having met with the girls here at
22 City Hall and we've hosted them for a
23 briefing prior to their S.A.F.E.
24 Conference that they held at La Salle
25 University, I just want to get it on

1 the record that I am looking forward
2 to working with you all relative to
3 ensuring that all of our schools
4 across the District, but particularly
5 the Philadelphia High School for
6 Girls has the opportunity to be fully
7 staffed to meet the needs of the
8 young women at Girls' High and the
9 young people at Girls' High.

10 So I just want to be very
11 clear and put that on the record,
12 that I would like to work with you
13 all to ensure that they have what
14 they need, because I cannot continue
15 in this process without acknowledging
16 that. I heard you talk about those
17 three schools, Superintendent
18 Watlington.

19 I also wanted to circle back
20 and thank our Chair Councilmember
21 Thomas and all of my colleagues who
22 traveled to Harrisburg with all of
23 you yesterday in advocacy for the
24 District. It is very important that
25 we work collaboratively to ensure

1 that from an intergovernmental
2 perspective we are able to do as much
3 as possible, particularly around I
4 saw the fund balance ending numbers
5 for FY27 and also for '28.

6 I wanted to just ask a couple
7 of questions. But before that, I
8 want to give a shout-out and a
9 special thank you to Principal DeLuca
10 at Samuel Gompers Elementary School,
11 Ms. Summers who is the teaching
12 assistant, she is just phenomenal,
13 Mrs. Davis and Principal Johnson and
14 all of the staff also at Engineering
15 and Science. Those are the schools
16 that my children attend. I have
17 three children in the Philadelphia
18 public school system, and I missed a
19 bit of the testimony dealing with an
20 issue to ensure that my son was
21 receiving adequate service via his
22 speech therapy.

23 So I wanted to start by
24 talking about the catchment issue.
25 You all know that this has been a

1 challenge for me for three years and
2 I want to appreciate the staff,
3 particularly Laurel for working with
4 us to engage you all. But you know
5 that we've talked about this, and I
6 appreciate you all making changes to
7 the website to ensure that you can
8 fix some of the technological issues
9 relative to ensuring that people are
10 going to the proper schools, and
11 particularly parents when they sign
12 up for their young people.

13 While you all are continuing
14 to work on finding solutions for
15 families around this catchment issue,
16 I am still really concerned about how
17 the District is creating the
18 catchment areas, and thus, how we do
19 not promote our neighborhood public
20 schools to all of our families. So
21 for the record, can you just start
22 with providing an update on how the
23 District plans to address falling
24 enrollment and also how you all will
25 ensure that you improve the catchment

1 boundaries to better serve families?

2 Now, I will say for the
3 record that we are being based on the
4 current catchment zones routed to the
5 correct school and being routed to
6 the Renaissance Charter, and then the
7 secondary school for middle school
8 for whatever unknown reason is
9 Blankenburg for our catchment even
10 though the closest local public
11 school is Gompers, but I know that's
12 what you all have in place, and then
13 it goes back to Overbrook.

14 How are you all going to fix
15 this? Okay. And then how are you
16 going to ensure that you are
17 marketing and promoting our
18 neighborhood public schools to
19 families so that they know they do
20 have an option to attend their
21 closest local public school without
22 having to go through the enrollment
23 office? So I'll start there.

24 MR. STREATER: I can speak
25 generally as it relates to the

1 enrollment issue. I think that what
2 the District is doing, and the Board
3 is doing its part, is to amplify the
4 good news of the District. We're
5 talking about a lot of technical
6 things, but sometimes we have to go
7 back to basics, right. And I think
8 that as you know we are just like you
9 are as City Council, there's a
10 24-hour news cycle so we're trying to
11 keep up with some of the beautiful
12 things that are happening.

13 So for example, we have
14 students get into Harvard, not saying
15 that everybody has to get into
16 Harvard and things like that. We
17 have students that we amplify when
18 they save someone's life or students
19 as it relates to CTE. I think that
20 the more that we all can amplify the
21 good news and, Councilmember Gilmore
22 Richardson, I know you do. You are
23 one of our biggest cheerleaders, and
24 I appreciate the advocacy and the
25 passion. I too share it as a parent

1 of children in the District.

2 I think the District has done
3 a lot over the last year or two to
4 help to be honest and transparent
5 about the things that parents need to
6 know and that the City needs to know
7 but also amplifying the good news of
8 the District as well. So it sounds
9 like to me that if we're not
10 targeting high schools intentionally
11 in the good news, I think that we
12 are -- I'm not the District. I'm not
13 in the weeds on that issue.

14 I think that could be
15 something that we also could talk
16 about as well. But just wanted to
17 say that piece. I think as we all
18 continue to amplify the good news in
19 the District and all our public
20 charter sector, I think that's a
21 starting point.

22 But, Dr. Watlington, I'll let
23 you get into the technical piece.

24 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll just
25 piggyback on what President Streater

1 said. And I think the quickest way
2 to get an answer real specific to
3 you, Councilmember Gilmore
4 Richardson, I'm going to ask Chief of
5 Staff Sarah Galbally if she'll just
6 say a little bit about the work we're
7 doing in that area.

8 Chief Galbally.

9 MS. GALBALLY: Yeah. Thanks,
10 Dr. Watlington and good afternoon,
11 Councilmember. So I know that there
12 have been some ongoing conversations
13 between folks on our end and with you
14 and your team about both catchments
15 and the school finder issue. I think
16 specifically on catchments what we
17 are currently looking at is what is
18 the process by which other districts
19 update their catchments on a more
20 regular basis so that we can be
21 looking at this issue regularly and
22 not just tying it to a Facilities
23 Master Plan, which we might undertake
24 every, I don't know, hopefully every
25 20 years, right.

1 So how can we put a process
2 in place that we are regularly
3 looking at our catchments and making
4 sure that we are effectively serving
5 our families and providing options
6 close to where they live, and that
7 work is ongoing and happy to set up a
8 conversation to provide you with an
9 update.

10 On the school finder issue, I
11 know that work is ongoing on our side
12 between our Chief of Information
13 Technology, our Chief of Student
14 Support Services and Laurel around
15 how we can update this school finder
16 system so that when families are
17 identifying their catchment school if
18 that catchment school is a
19 Renaissance school, how we can
20 provide clear opportunity for them to
21 opt into a District-run school.

22 So I believe that we have
23 been working with the developer of
24 school finder and are exploring those
25 options and hopeful to have an update

1 and next steps to you shortly.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Okay. Well, I await
4 that information with anticipation.

5 As you know, this is my third year
6 working on this issue with all of
7 you, and I will continue to work with
8 you on this issue. But this is
9 something that I think is important.

10 In addition to that, we regularly
11 receive postcards from other schools
12 notating that they are available for
13 enrollment.

14 I do think the District
15 should be in the business of doing
16 that as well, particularly for the
17 young people that live in the
18 Renaissance Charter areas also. So I
19 wanted to get that on the record and
20 also thank you, Sarah, for your
21 willingness to meet and for receiving
22 the feedback that I shared during the
23 meeting.

24 I also wanted to talk about
25 looking at your Budget 101 document.

1 There's a section that kind of walks
2 through school budgets and details
3 how budgeting is allocated by a
4 student and then some additional
5 resources noted for schools that have
6 high needs. Some of the things I saw
7 were -- I heard the bell, and I'll
8 finish up on this and come back on
9 the second round.

10 But some of the things I saw
11 were like a central counselor or
12 additional funds being implemented
13 for the positive behavioral
14 interventions and supports, but it
15 doesn't seem to really be enough to
16 make sure all of our high-needs
17 schools have an equitable number of
18 resources. So we can come back and
19 talk about it on the second round.

20 But the question is how are
21 you all ensuring that equity is built
22 into the school budgeting process so
23 that the young people who do have the
24 highest needs are being prioritized
25 for support? And is there one

1 central counselor sort of enough to
2 really meet the needs of our young
3 people who are struggling?

4 And I know I heard my
5 colleagues talk about earlier the
6 difference in the counselor but also
7 trauma support. I heard Councilman
8 Johnson talk about that. But if you
9 all could just address that on the
10 second round, that'll be helpful.
11 But that's the questions and then I
12 have some additional questions as
13 well. I heard the bell. Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Point of
15 information, Mr. Chair. Will I
16 humbly have the opportunity to finish
17 my questions since I had a technical
18 difficulty before we go into the
19 second round, sir?

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah, I'm
21 sorry. Councilmember Johnson, can
22 you hear me?

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, I
24 hear you loud and clear, Mr. Chair.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So thank

1 you, Councilmember Gilmore
2 Richardson.

3 Councilmember Johnson, we'll
4 come back to you after Councilmember
5 Bass, if that works for you.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That
7 works for --

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: And
9 Councilmember Bass is up next.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
11 you, sir.

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Chair
13 recognizes Councilmember Bass. Then
14 after Councilmember Bass it'll be
15 Councilmember Johnson, and then we'll
16 move to a second round starting with
17 myself and Councilmember Jones.

18 Chair recognizes
19 Councilmember Bass.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
21 you, Mr. Chairman. How are you
22 today?

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm
24 excellent. Thank you, Councilmember
25 Bass. Glad you're here and looking

1 forward to your line of questioning.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
3 so much. Glad to be here. I want to
4 thank the Philadelphia School
5 District and everyone for being here
6 today. It's always my pleasure.

7 And let me just jump right
8 into some of my questions because
9 there's been a lot that's been
10 discussed today. And I think that
11 it's been very, very informative, I
12 will say that. I wanted to go back,
13 if we could start at the very
14 beginning and go to Goals and
15 Guardrails because we've been talking
16 about Goals and Guardrails for quite
17 some time now.

18 And I can't remember exactly
19 when it was started or implemented,
20 but it's been a number of years. And
21 so, when I look at the schools within
22 my District and look at what some of
23 the progress is and how resources are
24 being spent, I have some concerns
25 about trying to move the needle in a

1 significant way.

2 I know that these things
3 don't happen overnight, but I think
4 that given where some of our schools
5 were and where they are now, we
6 haven't seen the Goals and Guardrails
7 really come to fruition for a lot of
8 our kids. And so, I was hoping you
9 all could talk a little bit about
10 that. And let me give you a couple
11 of very specific examples.

12 And so, I think it was about
13 2014 or 2015 there was a big hubbub
14 about -- what school was that, Edward
15 T. Steel School which is in the 8th
16 Council District in Nicetown. And
17 there was talk about another charter
18 school provider coming in and
19 providing the services, but that
20 wasn't accepted. And so, I wanted to
21 just ask about that school and a few
22 others in particular because the
23 Edward T. Steel School in 2015, and I
24 don't have the numbers directly in
25 front of me from back then.

1 But in 2014-15 or so, it was
2 probably among the lowest-performing
3 schools in the City of Philadelphia.
4 And when you fast-forward to 2023
5 based on what you posted on the
6 School District site, which I know
7 it's dated because of COVID and
8 everything, but the last exams,
9 standardized testing exams, that were
10 posted were from 2019.

11 And so, those exams show that
12 the Edward T. Steel School is still
13 among the lowest-performing schools
14 in the Philadelphia School District.
15 And so, the only thing that's
16 happened -- so it seems between now
17 and then is that time has passed, but
18 the time has not given any sort of
19 advantage or benefit or assistance
20 from the District to the students
21 because it's still among the lowest-
22 performing schools with a math score
23 of 0 percent proficiency in math and
24 8 percent proficiency in English.

25 And if I go just about a mile

1 and a half away from Steel in
2 Nicetown to Central over in the
3 Logan-bordering-on-Germantown area,
4 Central High School, then I wonder
5 how does a student from Steel, how do
6 we get those students, that
7 neighborhood, that community that's
8 been struggling, how do those
9 students get to be in a school like a
10 Central or a Masterman?

11 And I don't see that the
12 District has done, you know, sort of
13 made that a priority to figure out
14 how do we get them there, because the
15 average scores at Central from the
16 last standardized testing according
17 to your site were 92 percent in
18 proficiency in math and 100
19 proficiency in English.

20 So again, I want to just draw
21 the contrast, Edward T. Steel 0
22 percent in math versus Central -- and
23 Edward T. Steel just for full
24 disclosure is an elementary and
25 middle school, 0 percent in math.

1 Central, to get into Central High
2 School, it's at 92 percent
3 proficiency in math. Edward T.
4 School 8 percent proficiency in
5 English, Central High School 100
6 proficiency in English.

7 And so, I say that to say
8 there is no pathway, there is no
9 direct line that is going to lead
10 these students out of a school that
11 has great support from the teachers,
12 from the support staff, from the
13 principal, all these things, from the
14 community, all of these things are in
15 place. But there is no pipeline out
16 of poverty I would say into a school
17 like a Central or even a Masterman.

18 Masterman's proficiency rates
19 are similar to Central's, 96 percent
20 proficient in math and 100 percent
21 also proficient in English. So how
22 do you jump between 92 and 96 percent
23 if you're at Edward T. Steel School
24 in math? How do you jump from there
25 to there? And how do you jump from 8

1 percent proficiency in English to 100
2 percent at both Masterman and Steel?

3 How do you jump 92 points to
4 be able to attend a school, a well-
5 performing school? So I just have a
6 great deal about concern the
7 allocation of resources. And how is
8 it that we're not after all this time
9 after all we know paying more
10 attention to the Steel school, and
11 that's not the only one. But I point
12 that out because it is among the
13 lowest-performing.

14 And I'll draw one other quick
15 contrast because I really want to
16 hear your answer. Martin Luther King
17 High School, which is a high school,
18 is at 3 percent proficiency in math
19 and 14 percent proficiency in
20 English. And one last contrast, let
21 me see, I got a lot of them. I got
22 my whole District here. But let's
23 say Thurgood Marshall School, and
24 these schools are all about I would
25 say less than 2 miles, 3 miles apart

1 from each other.

2 Thurgood Marshall is at 9
3 percent proficiency in math and 23
4 percent proficiency in English. So I
5 was hoping that you could help us to
6 understand what is the pathway for
7 these children to be able to get into
8 some of these highly-performing slots
9 because I don't see it?

10 And as I think it was
11 Councilmember Jones who spoke earlier
12 and who said that the desperation
13 among parents to get their kids into
14 these slots is the recognition that
15 these are life-changing
16 opportunities. And so, if they don't
17 have the chance from the giddy-up,
18 what does this mean for their future?
19 And I'll wait for your reply.

20 MR. STREATER: Councilmember
21 Bass, I just want to talk about the
22 Goals and Guardrails piece first.
23 Thank you for your question.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Sure.

25 MR. STREATER: Also, we're

1 co-parents of children -- not
2 co-parents, but we're both parents of
3 children who are at the same public
4 school, so appreciate that as well.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

6 MR. STREATER: So I just want
7 to put context to the Goals and
8 Guardrails. They were adopted in
9 2020. And I think the question
10 you're asking is the question the
11 Board was asking itself, what are we
12 going to do about the fact of our
13 learning outcomes. And in our
14 attempt to shift our time we spent,
15 the questions we asked even the
16 superintendent we're going to hire,
17 we did it through a framework that
18 aligns with the Goals and Guardrails.

19 And I just want to kind of go
20 through them real quick. For people
21 who don't know, the Goals and
22 Guardrails, we have three goals. One
23 is reading. Goals 1 and 2, every
24 student reads on or above grade
25 level. These are aspirational and I

1 believe they are doable. Math, every
2 student performs on or above grade
3 level in math. College and career,
4 every student graduates ready for
5 college and career.

6 And then we have guardrails
7 that support our goals. Guardrail 1,
8 welcome and supportive schools;
9 Guardrail 2, enriching and well-
10 rounded school experiences; Guardrail
11 3, partnering with the parent, family
12 members and guardrails addressing
13 racist practices. So while we know
14 that we are not where we're going to
15 be, we have (inaudible).

16 Every month we monitor the
17 things some of the things that you're
18 saying and we ask the District
19 questions why and bring attention,
20 and the District offers solutions and
21 tells us what the District is doing.
22 This is something that we've been
23 doing since 2020, right. It's going
24 to take time for I think the outcomes
25 that we are looking for to come to

1 fruition, but we have also asked the
2 question what are we doing about the
3 now.

4 So again, the goals and
5 guardrails redirect our energy from
6 not focusing on these things, and I'm
7 not saying that the previous SRC or
8 previous leaders of the School
9 District was going to do that, but I
10 do think in a school district of this
11 type if you're not careful with some
12 of the crises and issues that go on,
13 it may be harder to stay focused on
14 these things.

15 So with that being said, some
16 of the things that Dr. Watlington has
17 stated as we can do right now is
18 focus on teacher attendance, right.
19 Not to say teachers are bad, they
20 don't show up or castigate them, but
21 saying that teachers being present in
22 the classroom is important. Inperson
23 learning, yeah, we know we have
24 challenges with our facilities right
25 now, but inperson learning is also

1 very important to the Board as well.

2 And then number three,
3 ensuring that students are in school
4 at the -- and Dr. Watlington will
5 talk more about this as well, in
6 school to receive said instruction.

7 And also, there's things such as
8 high-dosage tutoring and things like
9 that that Dr. Watlington is proposing
10 as well for the here and now. But
11 just to let you know, I think that
12 you're asking the same questions that
13 we ask ourselves every day, and there
14 is a movement to ensuring that
15 resources are shared equitably in the
16 District to support some of those
17 outcomes so that they can get better.

18 Dr. Watlington.

19 DR. WATLINGTON: I'm yours.

20 Yes, sir. Thank you, President
21 Streater. And I thank you for that
22 question, Councilmember Bass.

23 I'll just say there are five
24 things right off the bat that
25 students absolutely must have in the

1 most challenging school situations.
2 They are, number one, highly-
3 qualified, well-supported stable
4 teachers over time. Now, I'll be the
5 first to admit I've not made it to
6 Edward T. -- I don't think I've made
7 it to Edward T. Steel yet. I've been
8 to at least 75 schools --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'll be
10 happy to take you on a tour.

11 DR. WATLINGTON: I'm going to
12 take you up on it, Councilmember.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All
14 right. Very good. Thank you.

15 DR. WATLINGTON: We'll
16 arrange a joint visit with President
17 Streater, if he can come with us. So
18 highly-qualified, well-supported
19 stable teaching faculty over time. I
20 don't know what the teacher turnover
21 ratio looks like at Edward T. Steel,
22 but I certainly will study the data.
23 Two, students who are in really tough
24 circumstances must have a highly-
25 qualified, well-supported stable

1 principal over time.

2 Three, students in tough
3 situations and all students must have
4 high-quality, rigorous curriculum in
5 their classes. They've got to
6 have -- to move the needle, students
7 have to have attendance, monthly
8 attendance 90 percent or higher.

9 Teachers have to have attendance 90
10 percent or higher. And then on top
11 of that, you add in high-impact
12 tutoring, kind of like the model that
13 we are studying in Chicago that we're
14 going to roll out as a part of our
15 strategic plan where we bring really
16 high-quality trained tutors in the
17 school during the school day and
18 they're with teachers in the
19 classroom.

20 In addition to that, I'll
21 just be quite frank with you. I've
22 had an experience turning around one
23 of North Carolina's lowest-achieving
24 schools in the bottom 5 percent in
25 the state, Oak Hill Elementary

1 School. And I distinctly remember it
2 was a school where we had tried a lot
3 of stuff and we just had to
4 reconstitute that particular school.
5 That's not the only way to do it.

6 But I will say that when you
7 have a school where there's really,
8 really, really, really low
9 achievement, we have to fully support
10 the folks who are there. We have to
11 partner with the parents. And then
12 we have to also look at what are all
13 the other options that we can put on
14 the table to do the five things I
15 referenced before.

16 Now, I had a school very
17 similarly in my last district before
18 I left North Carolina. And quite
19 frankly, we were talking with our
20 elected officials and others about
21 the models across the country where
22 we're getting the absolute strongest
23 growth teachers from across the
24 state, across the Eastern United
25 States.

1 And we were talking about
2 really significant improvement
3 bonuses, really significant annual
4 performance bonuses and retention
5 bonuses. Where if you stay in this
6 school where people are transferring
7 out all the time, five years we would
8 allow you to cash out part of your
9 salary. Now, people say, well, it's
10 not just about money and education.
11 I beg to differ. The districts that
12 are getting better, they are doing
13 some significant work with financial
14 incentives.

15 When it comes to
16 Councilmember Johnson's question
17 earlier about paying more, I do think
18 there's a place for paying what I
19 would call I think someone previously
20 referred to as combat duty. I think
21 there are places where we have to do
22 that. And so, we're going to put
23 those issues on the table as a part
24 of our strategic plan and see if we
25 can get some energy around agreeing

1 to how we might do that. Can't do it
2 everywhere. We should do it in some
3 places.

4 But I will tell you Title 1
5 money alone will not turn around a
6 historically underperformance school.
7 It's just too limited a resource to
8 do so. But anyway, those are some
9 beginning thoughts. And I'd love to
10 talk more about it when you and I go
11 visit (inaudible). Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

13 Certainly, certainly. And I thank
14 you and I want to respect the time.
15 I know that the bell has rung. But I
16 did want to say that as we are
17 recognizing, and I don't know how you
18 all track these sorts of things, but
19 as we recognize that there are some
20 schools that are performing in a way
21 that is absolutely unacceptable to
22 you, to me, to the school itself, to
23 the parents of the community, it is
24 not performing.

25 And so, the question is how

1 are we being intentional in sending
2 resources directly to them to support
3 them? And I know that everybody
4 needs resources, but clearly if you
5 have not one student in the school,
6 and I realize these numbers are a
7 little bit older, but you have not
8 one student who is proficient in math
9 and you have 8 percent of the
10 population that is proficient in
11 English, that means that they're able
12 to read and write and understand the
13 English language on grade level.

14 And so, that means that 92
15 percent of those students are not,
16 and 100 percent of those students are
17 not proficient or able to perform
18 math on their grade level. Then I
19 think it should set off a set of
20 bells and alarms. And I don't know
21 that that's not what's already
22 happening. But I would certainly ask
23 that we would prioritize sort of like
24 the very bottom of the list that is
25 not getting what they need because

1 otherwise we are doing a disservice
2 to these young people.

3 So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
5 you, Member Bass.

6 Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Johnson.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
9 you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry
10 for technical difficulties earlier
11 today.

12 But I did hear the tail-end
13 to the question regarding teachers'
14 salaries, but I wanted to go into
15 specifically the support that's
16 provided for behavioral health
17 counselors, which is totally separate
18 from guidance counselors to the type
19 of trauma-informed support around gun
20 violence for our young people. How
21 are we expanding CTE programs,
22 particularly around the Building
23 Trades and other service trades? And
24 do we have the appetite to begin
25 maybe looking at going back to the

1 model of when we had more trade
2 schools here in Philadelphia?

3 I want to give a special
4 shout-out to also Karyn Lynch that
5 I've been working close with around
6 some of the (inaudible) trauma-
7 support services and ideas for the
8 District, and also give a shout-out
9 to the President of the School Board
10 Reginald Streater, just for being
11 accessible as it relates to these
12 particular issues as well as the
13 facilities issue here in the City of
14 Philadelphia as well. So I just want
15 to say good morning -- good
16 afternoon.

17 MR. STREATER: I appreciate
18 you too, good brother.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
20 Dr. Watlington.

21 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir.
22 Councilmember Johnson, thank you for
23 that feedback. You referenced Chief
24 Karyn Lynch, so I'm going to ask her
25 if she'll speak to that.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

2 DR. WATLINGTON: She may have
3 missed a part of what you said, but
4 Chief Lynch can speak to that.

5 Thank you, Chief Lynch.

6 MS. LYNCH: Thank you,
7 Dr. Watlington. And, Councilmember
8 Johnson, thank you for your kind
9 words. Much appreciated.

10 I think that we can always
11 improve certainly. But we have a
12 great focus on the training that's
13 received by our behavioral health
14 counselors. I think I shared a
15 couple of minutes ago about the
16 really engaging program that we have
17 that's coming on board, which we've
18 already started in fact. The group
19 is here today.

20 I talked about the Healing
21 Centered Engagement. It's an
22 opportunity for our behavioral health
23 counselors to gain additional
24 experience in their engagement with
25 children that have had trauma. I

1 think all the support that we can
2 offer in this regard is extremely
3 important. We also partner with
4 Community Behavioral Health here in
5 the City, and they have provided
6 training not just for our teams but
7 also for the providers that they have
8 in our schools that are helping with
9 this work.

10 I will share with you just to
11 be transparent that one of the
12 challenges that we have with regard
13 to behavioral health positions is
14 just like nurses, this is a position
15 where people have lots of
16 opportunities. Unfortunately, as a
17 result of COVID, as a result of
18 community violence, so keeping these
19 positions filled is a big challenge
20 for us. But providing the support
21 that is needed is extremely important
22 and making certain that we maintain
23 the state of the art, and how to
24 support children is extremely
25 important to us as well.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The last
2 part of the question revolved around
3 the expansion of trading school
4 opportunities for our young people.
5 There was a recent partnership with
6 the Building Trades. So I guess the
7 biggest question is how many -- and
8 I've been down this road with the
9 Building Trades before in the past
10 regarding the School District. I
11 think Paul Vallas was here.

12 And so, I guess in terms of
13 moving forward what does that
14 partnership look like? What schools
15 are prioritized for young people to
16 participate? And then also, do we
17 have an appetite to begin looking at
18 alternative career opportunities for
19 our young people, which basically
20 means looking at both tech school
21 models similar to Dobbins, similar to
22 Bok. I think Mastbaum is one as
23 well.

24 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, that's
25 one of the areas that's a part of the

1 audit from the Southern Region
2 Education Board, to give us some
3 feedback, an external opinion, an
4 objective opinion about how do we
5 (inaudible) as you refer to it career
6 tech. I think Governor Shapiro's
7 uses that same language, some people
8 use it the career technical ed, but
9 we understand exactly what you're
10 talking about. And we're looking at
11 how do we grow more opportunities
12 because we know a lot of children
13 absolutely need it and can benefit
14 from it.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
16 right. Last but not least since I
17 have a little more time, I think I
18 brought this up before, not in a
19 public setting, it might have been on
20 the side but I'll just state it for
21 the record. Have we considered
22 engaging organizations such as PAAN,
23 which is Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-
24 Violence Network to actually work
25 within the school system regarding

1 the issue of conflict resolution and
2 violence?

3 We know that some of the
4 homicides and shootings actually
5 start in the school system, right,
6 and spill out over into the street as
7 well as some of the gun violence
8 starts on social media and then end
9 up inside the school. So is there a
10 considered effort to partner with
11 community-based organizations as
12 being interveners to try to resolve
13 these conflicts before they actually
14 escalate to the level of shootings
15 that we're seeing impacting our young
16 people as well as our communities?

17 DR. WATLINGTON: Councilman
18 Johnson, I'm going to ask Chief of
19 Safety, Chief Kevin Bethel, if he
20 could maybe speak to that. I know
21 he's got a lot of innovative good
22 work going on, and I want to
23 underscore good word.

24 Chief Bethel, what are your
25 thoughts, sir?

1 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. Thank
2 you, Dr. Watlington. Councilmember
3 Johnson, so we use PAAN on a regular
4 basis. We've been using them for
5 years. Town Watch Integrated
6 Services has also been a great
7 supporter, but PAAN has been a
8 phenomenal partner. Whenever we're
9 having any kind of neighborhood
10 conflict because of their just level
11 of outreach in the community, we're
12 regularly reaching out to George
13 Moses and his team. They've been
14 supporting us. Every time we've
15 called they've answered the call and
16 will come to our schools and support
17 us across the entire city.

18 And so, that's been an
19 ongoing relationship and continues to
20 be working very effectively as a
21 supportive resolution, and
22 particularly with the neighborhood
23 activity and parent issues we have
24 after school.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank

1 you very much. Thank you. I have
2 other questions in my next round.
3 Thank you very much.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
5 you, Councilmember Johnson. I think
6 we're going to move on to the second
7 round so I'll have a few questions
8 myself, and then I'll be recognizing
9 Councilmember Jones as well as
10 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

11 And we discussed earlier a
12 number of different things that we're
13 looking at. I want to go back to the
14 PowerPoint slide that had the line
15 graph related to Special Admission
16 Schools. I believe the number that
17 you said was I want to say maybe a
18 couple hundred slots that we still
19 had available in Special Admission
20 Schools according to the line graph.

21 And I believe you said you
22 reached out to folks, maybe
23 300-something students to fill maybe
24 the 500 to 800 spots that were
25 vacant. And I believe the number was

1 less than 50 who actually accepted
2 those positions as of at least the
3 vacancies in our Special Admission
4 Schools. Do those numbers sound
5 correct?

6 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir.
7 After the lottery process, there were
8 approximately 800 vacant seats that
9 had not been -- let me be really
10 clear. Our desire going forward is
11 to fill as many, if not all, vacant
12 seats in the future to the extent
13 that we can do that. So that's our
14 goal, one of the goals we have. And
15 we'll have to figure out how to do
16 that and we'll have more to share
17 about that after the audit is
18 finished.

19 But out of those 800 vacant
20 seats, we identified 316 students who
21 applied to at least one of the
22 criteria-based schools and did not
23 get an acceptance into a criteria-
24 based school. So the team held four
25 information sessions, made phone

1 calls to communicate with our
2 students and their families. I
3 believe 54 of those students out of
4 that 316 accepted an offer to attend
5 one of those criteria-based schools.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: What is
7 the plan to fill the other couple
8 hundred vacancies in order to make
9 sure that students are in place by
10 the start of the school year in
11 September?

12 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll say two
13 things, sir. Historically, I've
14 looked at the data for the five years
15 before the pandemic hit, and the
16 District each year had some unfilled
17 seats in our criteria-based schools,
18 so this is not a new phenomenon.
19 What is new --

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: How
21 many -- because I can't see the
22 PowerPoint. We can go back to it if
23 you want to. But how many seats are
24 we talking about we've had in the
25 past compared to where we are now?

1 DR. WATLINGTON: Prior to the
2 pandemic -- I want to get the exact
3 number so I don't misquote it -- but
4 if my memory serves me right, and I
5 know better than to do this but I'm
6 going to do it anyway, anywhere from
7 1 up to high 300s as I recall in the
8 data. I'm going to fact-check that.
9 I'm going to fact-check myself with
10 Dr. Tonya Wolford, our Chief of
11 Research and Evaluation, because
12 she's excellent at that.

13 But I do know that we've had
14 seats available, but 800 is an
15 anomaly. As best I can tell, we've
16 never gotten that high at least in
17 the past five, six years or so. And
18 so, next year we're looking at how we
19 tweak this process, well, improve the
20 process so that we don't have as many
21 unfilled seats. This year we wanted
22 to follow the criteria to the letter.
23 I believe if you're not going to
24 follow the criteria just don't have
25 it.

1 If you're going to establish
2 criteria, we try to make sure this
3 year that we follow it, one. And
4 two, we wanted to make sure that we
5 learn from the process. There are
6 lots of things that we're thinking
7 about and we're studying that might
8 help us to do better next year. For
9 example, it could be that we allow
10 students to apply to more places. It
11 could be that we do a different
12 process for how we match students
13 based on the schools that they're
14 interested in so that there's a
15 greater likelihood you get into one
16 or two.

17 There are several things that
18 we'll be prepared to share when we
19 finish the audit about what we can do
20 and we'll do next year to not have
21 800 vacancies at the conclusion of
22 the lottery process.

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Are you
24 going to entertain the idea of
25 allowing principals to go back to the

1 interview format or do you feel like
2 that's just not an optimal way to do
3 this?

4 DR. WATLINGTON: We also are
5 thinking through as a part of this
6 process how do we marry together a
7 lottery system and absolutely hear
8 the voices of principals at the
9 table, because I recognize even
10 though I think the lottery did
11 overall what it was intended to do
12 this year, I say that as a new person
13 to the District this year.

14 I also recognize I could have
15 a Tony Watlington sitting out there
16 who is 1 point short and nobody talks
17 to me, and I'm the principal. And I
18 know that I'm 1 point short and I'm
19 taking care of three of my little
20 siblings in the home. And so, there
21 are all those kinds of issues that we
22 need to pay attention to. But short
23 answer to your questions, we're
24 looking at how we can marry the two
25 together and have the principal voice

1 at the table, but do it in a way that
2 we don't have the hookup, opportunity
3 where because I know somebody, I get
4 privilege over somebody who doesn't
5 have a connection. Not to say that
6 was rampant, but I can tell you
7 everywhere I've worked where we've
8 had some kind of a special admission
9 process, that's always a risk.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: What
11 about the issue of middle schools who
12 originally were guaranteed admission
13 into high schools like Engineering
14 and Science Middle School? I'm
15 pretty sure there's a couple others.
16 I believe SLA has a middle school
17 that has that same intentional
18 pipeline. What do you see as the
19 final conclusion?

20 Because when those middle
21 schools and those pipelines were
22 originally created, the intent was to
23 allow the young people to have
24 automatic admission into the Special
25 Admission high schools. So have

1 there been any decision made around
2 what happens with those middle
3 schools whose parents at one point
4 were promised admission to the high
5 school and now that process changed
6 so they don't have that guaranteed
7 admission?

8 DR. WATLINGTON: We are
9 currently reviewing the process if
10 you're in a school in a feeder
11 pattern and you're making
12 satisfactory progress, the merits of
13 letting you stay in that school we
14 haven't landed on the final
15 conclusion, but it's one of the
16 issues that we're carefully reviewing
17 and thinking through now because
18 we've heard that feedback loud and
19 clear from many of our parents or a
20 good number of parents.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
22 you. Let me just put a couple other
23 things on the record before I pass it
24 to Councilmember Jones.

25 As it relates to Act 158 when

1 we last spoke, I think we were above
2 60 percent of our young people who
3 met the requirement for that.

4 Councilmember Jones and I, I believe
5 that's one of the resolutions where
6 we'll be having a hearing next month
7 for those in the listening public to
8 examine where we are with our young
9 people that are at 158 and how many
10 have met the graduation requirement
11 and how many we have to get across
12 the finish line this summer because
13 we have until August to essentially
14 get that done.

15 So I don't want to do a deep
16 dive right now, but
17 Mr. Superintendent, can you just tell
18 us what percentage we're at now?

19 DR. WATLINGTON: Absolutely.
20 When we first came to your Committee
21 hearing back in December I believe it
22 was, we were at 49 percent. The last
23 numbers I looked at we eclipsed 74 --
24 no, excuse me, 76 percent. And so,
25 we're looking forward to coming back

1 to your Committee, sir, and to speak
2 to that. I want to really say a
3 shout-out to our high school teams,
4 the high school principals who are
5 working day and night working hard
6 under the leadership of Associate
7 Superintendent Tomas Hannah and he's
8 getting some specific support from
9 Assistant Superintendent Dr. Malika
10 Savoy Brooks. I want to thank that
11 team for the work they're doing.
12 We've eclipsed 76 percent and the
13 number continues to grow.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
15 you. Thank you for that information.
16 And I'll go ahead and echo the
17 sentiments that you just
18 communicated, and shout-out to
19 Dr. Brooks and her team. She's an
20 amazing educator, one of our leaders
21 here in the City of Philadelphia.
22 When we were in Harrisburg, one of
23 the things that was communicated to
24 us was concerns around previous
25 dollars given to the District.

1 So I don't want to do a deep
2 dive today because I know this is
3 going to be an ongoing conversation.
4 But I'm wondering if you can give Bob
5 and some of the folks on our team
6 some information. The first thing we
7 would like to be able to communicate
8 to our partners in Harrisburg is how
9 all COVID relief dollars were spent
10 during the pandemic and what they
11 were spent on.

12 Now, I know we've gone
13 through this a number of times as it
14 relates to operating costs and other
15 things that we had to do to
16 essentially fill some gaps, but we
17 want to make sure that Harrisburg
18 understands exactly what we've done
19 with funds in the past. So the first
20 thing we would ask for is an itemized
21 document that can be sent over to
22 Council that explains how all federal
23 relief dollars were spent during the
24 COVID crisis.

25 The second thing that we

1 would ask for is any extra money that
2 was given to the School District
3 outside of general operating dollars
4 over the last 10 years to deal with
5 facilities issues. There are
6 concerns in Harrisburg that dollars
7 have been sent to us in the past, and
8 I can assure you, Superintendent as
9 well as Board President, that none of
10 us were in the seats that we're
11 currently in right now when these
12 dollars were given, so you might have
13 to do a little digging.

14 But we want to know all
15 dollars that were given to the
16 District from the Commonwealth
17 specifically to address facilities
18 issues? What was given? What was
19 actually spent on facilities? And I
20 know that's not going to be easy to
21 find, but I'm going to have to push
22 you to expedite those numbers because
23 we're in the midst of budget
24 negotiations, and the more
25 information we can get to our

1 colleagues and the legislators in
2 Harrisburg, the better off they'll
3 be.

4 And I also want to just take
5 a moment to put on the record and
6 thank all of the people who hosted us
7 in Harrisburg and all of the members
8 of the Philadelphia Delegation, both
9 in the House and Senate as well as
10 the School Board members who joined
11 us to advocate for dollars that we
12 know we need to address some of the
13 facilities crisis that we're facing.

14 My last question before I
15 close out and pass it to our Majority
16 Leader: We've been in talk for some
17 time around a report that
18 specifically speaks to the issue of
19 Black Charters. I'm wondering where
20 we are on that report and when that
21 information will be made available?

22 MR. STREATER: Yeah, I can go
23 to the last thing, the Charter issue.
24 So we -- the Board has been very
25 careful not to lead the evaluator or

1 the investigator, to be independent.
2 So we have not pushed the evaluator
3 or the investigator to come up with
4 any outcomes and/or to either speed
5 up or slow down the report. But what
6 I can say is right now we don't have
7 the report.

8 We don't know what the
9 evaluator or investigator is even
10 thinking, where this is heading. We
11 are completely in the dark as well.
12 We do have the capacity to direct
13 them to speed up, but we don't think
14 that'll be prudent because I think we
15 want to make sure we get this right
16 as well. So I know that there's a
17 few more investiga -- a few more
18 follow-up interviews that the
19 investigator wants to do, and I
20 believe that there's some other work
21 they have to do on the tail-end as
22 well to draft the report, but I can't
23 give you an exact date as of right
24 now.

25 But I will say that the

1 District and the Board has made
2 ourselves available and as quickly as
3 possible to give every document and
4 be as responsive to the needs and
5 ensure that the investigator is
6 separate and apart as it relates to
7 its ability and capacity to come up
8 with a report that he finds. So
9 that's what I can give you right now.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
11 you, Board President.

12 I do want to just remind the
13 listening public that we had a
14 hearing around this issue in February
15 to begin to dissect the problem based
16 on some of the communication that was
17 presented to myself and other folks
18 who are in new leadership positions
19 as it relates to the work that we're
20 doing right now. And we look forward
21 to continuing to having that robust
22 dialogue to allow people to have the
23 platform as well as the transparency
24 as it relates to this particular
25 issue. So thank you for that

1 information and we're going to keep
2 pushing and pushing to make sure that
3 information becomes available.

4 Chair recognizes Majority
5 Leader Jones.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your
8 insightful questions.

9 And thank you for your
10 responses, Dr. Watlington and your
11 team. I want to go back to what
12 Member Johnson touched on, which was
13 emotional supports to young people,
14 students, scholars who experience
15 traumatic events, sometimes big. It
16 could be death, watching other
17 shootings and then sometimes small,
18 the everyday stressors from home.
19 And there was some mention of a
20 support system.

21 As you are aware,
22 Dr. Watlington, every Monday
23 7:00 a.m. we've been having a roll
24 call with about 10 or so of my
25 schools in my District. And one of

1 the things that was a recurring theme
2 is that they did not know about
3 emotional supports for kids that
4 could be offered to the students that
5 they did not know the connectivity to
6 places like DHS and others, to the
7 point where we brought Commissioner
8 Ali on at 7:00 a.m. to address some
9 of the availability of services.

10 So there is a disconnect
11 between what is available and what is
12 known to be available by principals
13 in the system and, therefore,
14 students and parents in the system.
15 I just want to put that out there.
16 If it's through Community Schools in
17 my District and if that's an example
18 citywide, I have them in two schools.
19 One in Overbrook and one in
20 Wynnefield at Gompers. And those
21 schools have need but not as
22 compelling a need as other schools in
23 my District.

24 So I don't know how those
25 resources apply. I don't need an

1 answer to that right away, but I do
2 need to understand the methodology
3 because it's not clearly communicated
4 to the principals in your system.
5 The second part of it is we have a
6 situation where student-to-student
7 violence has happened since Fairmount
8 Park was a flower pot, but it has
9 gotten more intense since COVID.

10 And what my principals on
11 that same call talk about is not just
12 student-to-student violence, but
13 student-to-teacher violence, parent-
14 to-student violence and parent-to-
15 teacher threats of violence. So I
16 want to know what our policy is to
17 safeguard our teachers and their
18 employees in the school system
19 because you're going to get a lot of
20 people that don't come to work to be
21 threatened?

22 And I've heard that more and
23 more throughout my communications
24 with the members of your employees.
25 So how are we addressing that?

1 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir.

2 Thank you for that question. I'm
3 going to take the violence question
4 first, the latter first. Student-to-
5 teacher violence, parent-to-student
6 and parent-to-teacher threats, it's
7 something that we absolutely do not
8 support, defend or tolerate.

9 There is no excuse for
10 threatening people who are working
11 there doing their level best to help
12 our young people to have an
13 opportunity to succeed in
14 Philadelphia and in this American
15 society, and there's just no place
16 for going to threaten folks. We
17 don't support that, and we don't
18 condone it and we do everything we
19 can to follow the code of the latter.

20 Now, I think that when you
21 have young people who sometimes have
22 a little attitude or sometimes may be
23 a little bit less compliant around --
24 President Streater says I'd like you,
25 Tony, to move from this seat to this

1 seat, and I just kind of roll my
2 eyes. We can work with some of that
3 stuff. That's developmentally
4 appropriate sometimes for some kids.
5 But threatening teachers or other
6 people and to do harm, we're just
7 not -- we don't support it, and we
8 follow the code of conduct to the
9 letter. And if we find out we're not
10 doing that --

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: I guess my
12 question is what is the code of
13 conduct? And what I often hear is
14 that there's a recycling of students
15 that might be troubled and that they
16 wind up back in the class or in the
17 school. And so, I need to know
18 structurally one strike, two strikes,
19 three strikes what is it that creates
20 the action that says that if I have
21 30 kids in a class and one of them is
22 disruptive, at what point do we
23 remove that individual so that the
24 other 29 can learn?

25 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll say two

1 things to that. First, we know that
2 in schools, building relationships is
3 really important. And there's a
4 strong focus through the
5 relationship's first initiative to do
6 that. Because when we have
7 relationships and we know each other,
8 we're less likely to do things that
9 we might otherwise.

10 Now that said, there is a
11 time and a place for removing folks
12 from schools who are threatening
13 individuals, whether it's a teacher,
14 other student, et cetera. I will
15 just say we can certainly share the
16 Board of Education approved code of
17 conduct offline. We can make that
18 available to share with you.

19 If there are cases where we
20 feel like somehow something is not
21 working appropriately or a decision
22 has been made that is inappropriate
23 to someone's safety and health and
24 well-being, please encourage that
25 individual, whether it's a parent,

1 teacher or yourself to send that
2 directly to me, and we'll take a look
3 at it on an individual basis because
4 I want to make sure we're not missing
5 something there.

6 Relative to the question,
7 sir, that you asked about the
8 supports that are available, and I
9 think it was maybe a disconnect, we
10 will certainly work on doing a better
11 job of communicating with our
12 principals to make sure that if there
13 are gaps, we'll do better in that
14 area notwithstanding the size of the
15 District.

16 Last month we started doing
17 town hall meetings directly with
18 principals, so I'm looking forward to
19 putting that as one of the agenda
20 items on the next town hall meeting
21 that I have directly with the
22 principals to get some feedback from
23 them.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I
25 appreciate you and your staff,

1 Bethel, and some of my members in
2 Council for getting up early in the
3 morning to be a part of those
4 principal-teacher meetings, so I
5 appreciate that. But as we try to
6 prevent violence, but after a while
7 you start to hear some of their
8 frustrations. So I look forward to
9 following up on those support systems
10 that they can have and be able to
11 offer young people who come in with
12 human issues from home that a lot of
13 times require a deeper dive into the
14 situations they have at home.

15 And so, I look forward to
16 whoever the point person is for that
17 because we need to work on that as an
18 information filler because there's a
19 disconnect.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 DR. WATLINGTON: And, Leader
22 Jones, let me just say really quickly
23 I'm happy to come to your invitation
24 to an upcoming roll call meeting.
25 I'll be logged in at 6:55 and we'll

1 be ready to go, and I'm happy to talk
2 directly with any principals who have
3 some outstanding concerns. And I
4 thank you for bringing that to our
5 attention.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good to
7 go, Councilman Jones?

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Gestured
9 thumbs up).

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Chair
11 recognizes Councilmember Gauthier.

12 Sorry, Councilmember Gilmore
13 Richardson. But we got to give
14 Councilmember Gauthier her first
15 round. Then we will come to you for
16 your second round.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chair.

19 Good afternoon,
20 Dr. Watlington. I'd like to thank
21 you and the entire School Board for
22 the work that you're doing to create
23 safe schools and programming for our
24 City's children. I wanted to ask you
25 a question, just a clarifying

1 question or questions about the
2 facility improvements that we're
3 looking towards.

4 We saw a recent facilities
5 report I think a few months ago in a
6 briefing that you all did for Council
7 that named a \$7.89 billion price tag
8 for facilities improvements, and that
9 was in, I believe, 2017 dollars. And
10 that report also looked out through
11 2028, which puts us more than 10
12 years out from that initial report
13 and said that the District intended
14 to spend \$2 billion on improvement.

15 So can you just clarify where
16 you envision the \$2 billion coming
17 from and what we should be looking
18 towards as a plan for the rest of the
19 funds needed?

20 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll start
21 by saying that I'm very pleased that
22 one of the things we shared with you
23 in March is that under the Board's
24 leadership, the District will build
25 three new schools which is really

1 exciting, Cassidy, AMY 5 and Holmes.
2 Also, you're correct, that was the
3 Parsons Report that was shared in
4 2017. So those numbers aren't
5 probably accurate anymore due to
6 inflation.

7 The second part of your
8 question I'm going to defer to our
9 CFO to see if he can share anything
10 specific to that part.

11 MR. HERBSTMAN: Good
12 afternoon. I apologize. I'm looking
13 for the 2 billion number. I wasn't
14 in that particular meeting. I'm not
15 exactly sure what the number refers
16 to, but I could work with our team to
17 get a number on exactly what that
18 represents.

19 DR. WATLINGTON:
20 Councilmember Gauthier, we're happy
21 to also reprovide the -- since Chief
22 Herbstman may not have been with us
23 then, the five-year plan that
24 includes some specific investments
25 not limited to the three new schools,

1 and I think that might be helpful to
2 provide as well. Would that be
3 sufficient at this point?

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

5 Unfortunately, my system froze for a
6 little bit so I missed his entire
7 answer. I'm so sorry. Can you just
8 repeat what you said?

9 DR. WATLINGTON: Sure. No
10 problem. First, the 2017 Parsons
11 Report is correct, \$7.89 billion was
12 the price tag. Those numbers will be
13 higher now due to inflation. Second,
14 I've mentioned that we're pleased
15 that within this five-year capital
16 budget for the District, we talked
17 about last month that three new
18 schools will be built, Cassidy, AMY 5
19 and Holmes.

20 And the third thing I
21 mentioned was that we're happy to
22 provide a recap of what's in that
23 five-year budget, if that would be of
24 interest to you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure.

1 Are you able to answer today where
2 you thought the 2 billion would come
3 from and how we might fill the rest
4 of the gap or is that something you
5 need to get back to us on?

6 MR. STREATER: Well, I think
7 I can help with that a little bit.
8 So one of the benefits I think of
9 being we would say good stewards of
10 public funds is that our credit
11 rating is as such where we can seek
12 additional funds even though these
13 funds have to be paid back obviously
14 with tax dollars, but we can seek
15 additional funds from other funding
16 sources.

17 And yes, the hope is that we
18 can get other additional funds from
19 the City and the state or even
20 probably from anywhere to help
21 backfill some of the costs so, yeah,
22 I think as long as we keep our fiscal
23 house in order.

24 Chief Herbstman, am I on
25 point with that --

1 MR. HERBSTMAN: Yes.

2 MR. STREATER: -- with where
3 we thought we would those additional
4 funds. And I want to make another
5 point as well. In that report
6 though, that report is an as-is 300
7 buildings based upon what schools
8 should either be completely
9 demolished, some schools may need to
10 be completely retrofitted, some
11 schools that are in the middle
12 position and some schools that are
13 kind of okay, but there's also other
14 options in that report that talks
15 about other approaches that could be
16 taken as well.

17 But I think if you're looking
18 at the whole kit and caboodle of what
19 we have right now, the \$7.89 billion
20 is that number. That doesn't take
21 into consideration the conversation
22 around utilization, things like that.
23 And I'll just leave it at that. But
24 I hope that answers your question
25 about the 2.5 billion.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes,
2 somewhat. And when do you think
3 you'll have more specificity around
4 sort of the financial plan for that?

5 MR. HERBSTMAN: So I think
6 we'll be sharing soon the full
7 six-year capital budget which will
8 outline all of the expenditures over
9 the next six years, and the schedule
10 is to be passed by the Board on May
11 25th so that will be available soon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
13 you so much. And I'm not asking you
14 this to put you on the hot seat. I'm
15 asking you this because we're your
16 partners in this. We were in
17 Harrisburg yesterday pushing everyone
18 we could find, the Governor's team,
19 the legislature for more money this
20 year and every year going forward.
21 So we very much see ourselves as your
22 partner in getting that funding.

23 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you.

24 MR. STREATER: Thank you so
25 much.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

2 You're welcome. I also wanted to
3 take a moment to focus on the pools
4 that the District owns. We all know
5 that pools provide a safe outlet for
6 our City's kids, and keeping them
7 shuttered due to disrepair deprives
8 our youth and their communities of
9 opportunities to gather and to
10 develop skills through participating
11 in programming and through fun
12 recreational activities.

13 It also hampers us from
14 certifying lifeguards every summer.
15 Sayre Pool as you know is a prime
16 example of the important role that
17 these facilities play in our
18 communities. And I've been very
19 excited and grateful for the
20 partnership that we've developed
21 there.

22 So can you share the outlook
23 for the Sayre Pool? And then can you
24 also speak to how we can use Sayre as
25 a model for working, you know,

1 bringing together the School
2 District, the City and the state on
3 other pools that are closed at
4 moment?

5 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, it's
6 been a topic of conversation at Board
7 meetings, and we're working with the
8 City on a long-term use agreement at
9 the present time and we'll be
10 bringing that item forward again at
11 the May 25th Board of Education
12 meeting. In terms of how it -- I
13 don't remember your exact words, but
14 how it kind of aligns to or
15 influences future actions --

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Well,
17 I just think if we get this done,
18 right, and we're able to pull
19 together money from the City, money
20 from the state, money from the
21 District and a use agreement that
22 benefits students and the communities
23 more broadly, it's a wonderful model
24 for how we can do this going forward
25 with other pools that are important

1 to the community. And I'm asking how
2 you see that?

3 DR. WATLINGTON: Well, first
4 I want to thank you for your
5 assistance and your help with
6 securing funding, because anytime
7 funding streams result from the City,
8 from the state, whether it's the
9 legislature or other places as well
10 as the District, it's a gold standard
11 quite frankly in how we work together
12 to solve some really tough complex
13 problems. And I think that gives us
14 hope that we can do that in other
15 areas as well.

16 In terms of what that might
17 look like, I think it's probably best
18 for me to just say we are just moving
19 night and day to get the long use
20 agreement finalized so we can bring
21 that to the Board. Like all capital
22 work, this project requires Board
23 approval and I know the Board has a
24 lot -- President Streater, Vice-
25 president Fix-Lopez and the Board

1 members have a lot of needs that they
2 will have to wade through and
3 consider.

4 And I personally have been on
5 record supportive of the Sayre Pool
6 as a recommender. I think it's a
7 good thing. If you can't do all of
8 the things, that doesn't mean we
9 shouldn't do one thing in a way to
10 try to work together to do more
11 things. That's kind of just my
12 opinion, approach. But I know the
13 Board has some considerable needs to
14 include broad environmental facility
15 challenges, et cetera.

16 So I certainly don't want to
17 get out of place and speak for the
18 Board, but I would defer to --

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can I
20 have a point of information please.
21 I guess just a point of information.
22 I think for more clarity on this
23 budget request regarding Sayre, last
24 budget cycle, so it's been a year
25 since this process has started in

1 terms of the funding. So I guess for
2 more clarity what's the time frame at
3 least for that one particular project
4 as a model that will be open to the
5 wider community for the children to
6 actually participate?

7 I hear bigger stuff that we
8 can do just in general, but a year
9 has passed. And I think what
10 Reginald Streater said early on in
11 terms of the guardrails was a very
12 excellent response. There's so many
13 different things that we have to
14 address as the District that we're
15 working on, and those guardrails kind
16 of keep us focused and in line in
17 certain areas.

18 But in this particular case,
19 I know for a fact we started
20 supporting this process during the
21 last budget cycle, which is a year
22 ago. There's a new budget cycle and
23 nothing has moved for it as of yet.
24 I think that's the clarity that I'm
25 trying to get an understanding.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Well,
2 let me just jump in because I think
3 we're not in a bad place with Sayre,
4 though I appreciate Councilmember
5 Johnson having my back. We're not in
6 a bad place with Sayre. We're
7 working on a memorandum of
8 understanding, and I believe that's
9 between the City and the School
10 District. And I think that's the
11 last piece before we can get a
12 successful vote before the Board.
13 But I'll let President Streater
14 confirm that.

15 What I'm asking for is for
16 clarity on that, right, and to have
17 that on record. But I'm also asking
18 is this partnership something that we
19 can bring to bear once we succeed on
20 Sayre to bring other pools back to
21 life?

22 MR. STREATER: Well, as it
23 relates to pools, I think that I'm
24 focused on, I think the Board is
25 focused on this pool right now,

1 right. But as you know of our
2 budget, about 10 percent of it is
3 flexible. I mean, I can go on and on
4 and on about all the other facility
5 issues that we have and priorities,
6 right.

7 Yes, pools should be near the
8 top of priorities. But as you all
9 know, we have some facilities issues
10 that require some work. As it leads
11 to the vote, I don't think I could
12 publicly comment on what the Board is
13 going to do right now on that. But I
14 think as it relates to MOU, waiting
15 to get that from the state, from the
16 City and the District to sign that.

17 And as it relates to the
18 cost, I think that for me personally
19 it could be a good start. But as it
20 relates to any other point of --

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
22 information, Mr. Chair. Point of
23 information.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Chair
25 recognizes Councilmember Jones.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: As Chair
2 of Appropriations, the City has skin
3 in the game. We put up our share of
4 dollars to renovate the Sayre Pool
5 because it has a wider citywide
6 implication on things, like lifeguard
7 training and other things that are
8 essential to the operation of the
9 City's Rec Department.

10 We really need our partners
11 at the School District. Member
12 Gauthier is just one Councilperson,
13 but she's fighting for all of us to
14 make sure all young people get an
15 opportunity to take advantage of that
16 facility. So it is more than just a
17 3rd District asset. It is a citywide
18 asset that we really need.

19 I have a pool in my District,
20 Rhodes(ph) that is \$300,000 worth of
21 repair, but I'd still rather have
22 Sayre come before that because of its
23 historic importance to aquatics in
24 Philadelphia. So that point of
25 information completed.

1 DR. WATLINGTON: If I may
2 just say, Leader Jones, I think that
3 we've looked at the data from the
4 Listening and Learning Tour and it
5 was a very strong theme from members
6 of the community who said that
7 basically there's a dearth of
8 swimming opportunities, pools,
9 lifeguards, et cetera, across the
10 City.

11 The Centers for Disease
12 Control in Atlanta has reported
13 research that African Americans in
14 particular are six times more likely
15 to drown, to have death by drowning
16 than White Americans. You know my
17 brother was one of those people. And
18 so, I certainly understand and
19 support any and every opportunity
20 pending the resources that we can
21 commandeer.

22 And I think it's just
23 inherently -- I think this is a
24 bright spot for Philadelphia that the
25 City and the District are trying to

1 figure out how to bring resources
2 together. So I don't want us to be
3 too hard on ourselves. I think the
4 School District and the City are
5 really working together here. And
6 I'm really pleased to be a part of
7 helping to facilitate the long-term
8 use agreement with the City.

9 And I wonder, I might still
10 have one of my brothers if we had had
11 access to learn to swim at a very
12 young age, so it's been something
13 that's dear and dear to my heart.
14 And so, I think we're having the
15 right conversation. I thank you for
16 it.

17 MR. STREATER: And I'll just
18 say that I'm acknowledging that we
19 are working together. We're pushing
20 this hard, right, to get the MOU
21 done, and we're trying to create a
22 model of partnership. I mean, what I
23 said earlier I wasn't playing. I
24 don't think the Board is playing
25 either or the Superintendent is

1 playing about partnerships with all
2 of our City partners.

3 So again, the discussions are
4 continuing to go. We're getting
5 updates on them. The requisite
6 amount of energy is here. As it
7 relates to will all the pools in the
8 City of Philadelphia that are part of
9 the School District's docket be open,
10 to me I don't feel comfortable as
11 Board Chair to make any promises
12 right now that that can happen.

13 But I do see this could be a
14 model for not just this, but all
15 other iterations of partnerships. We
16 may decide to start actually infusing
17 rec centers in public schools. We
18 may want to infuse neighborhood
19 historical markers in public schools,
20 things like that. So anyway, I think
21 that we're building the muscle memory
22 as a City under local control, right,
23 to wrap our arms around our children,
24 and I think that this is the first
25 step today.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yeah.

2 And I'm less asking you for a time
3 commitment by when you're going to
4 have pools open. I'm more so going
5 back to what you started with your
6 testimony, President Streater, when
7 you pointed out how we have to have
8 recreational facilities, particularly
9 during this time for our young people
10 and just saying that this has been an
11 amazing partnership that I hope that
12 we can carry forward.

13 And I want to also thank my
14 colleagues, Councilmember Majority
15 Leader Jones, Councilmember Johnson,
16 for supporting. This just shows how
17 this was like an all-Council effort
18 to really get this open for the
19 community in the City.

20 Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
22 you, Councilmember Gauthier.

23 Chair recognizes
24 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

2 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson was
3 queued up for a second round. I'll
4 give her a moment just to see if she
5 still had a lot of questions for the
6 second round.

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm not
9 hearing from Councilmember Gilmore
10 Richardson. I don't think we have
11 any more questions three hours
12 later --

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: I'm here.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm here
16 too.

17 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: There she
18 is.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: I'm here. I'm sorry.
21 I'm sitting --

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

23 Councilman Johnson, you had questions
24 too for the second round?

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: (Muted).

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

2 Councilmember Johnson, you're on
3 mute.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: (Muted).

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

6 Councilmember Johnson, you're on
7 mute.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'll let
9 Kathy go first because I think she
10 was queued up. And then I can go
11 second, if that's all right,
12 Mr. Chair.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah,
14 that's perfect. I just didn't know
15 you had questions. I apologize.

16 Councilmember Gilmore
17 Richardson. Then Councilmember
18 Johnson.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so
21 much, Mr. Chair. And I apologize. I
22 don't know what happened. I couldn't
23 really hear.

24 But at any rate, I wanted to
25 go back to my question from the last

1 round relative to how the District is
2 ensuring that we have equity in
3 school budgeting and ensuring
4 particularly around the schools that
5 have high priority needs, that they
6 are being prioritized? And then I'll
7 go to my next question.

8 MR. HERBSTMAN: So the
9 District engages in what we call
10 equity-focused budgeting and the
11 process is outlined a little more in
12 our Guide to School Budgets, which we
13 post on our website. As part of
14 this, school leaders are asked to
15 consider in all of their budgeting
16 decisions how does the utilization of
17 resources in my upcoming budget
18 advance equity.

19 And members of our Office of
20 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team
21 as well as the Budget team and Grants
22 team and others are available to work
23 closely as thought partners as they
24 consider their budget decisions. But
25 it's about more than that. That is

1 really a decision after the
2 allocations. There's also ways that
3 in the allocation process we're
4 looking to be more equitable in the
5 actual resource allocation.

6 So the first area is really
7 around additional per-pupil
8 discretionary funding for schools
9 based on their level on what we call
10 the School Progress Report on
11 Education and Equity, their screen
12 level. So schools there that have
13 more need get additional funding for
14 discretionary.

15 Second, there are equity
16 considerations placed for specific
17 allocations, especially around
18 diverse learners. Our special
19 education staffing is outside of the
20 general operating staffing. It's
21 based on individual student needs
22 within their IEPs. Schools receive
23 specific resources based on English
24 as a Second Language students.

25 Third, I think you actually

1 mentioned earlier where there is
2 higher level of need in the specific
3 areas with an additional counselor
4 and student improvement support
5 liaison positions that have been
6 provided to schools. And really the
7 fourth area is around schools with
8 greater needs also receive higher
9 levels of supplemental grants. That
10 includes Title 1 allocations, which
11 are based on the poverty levels
12 within the schools.

13 Another big area within the
14 grant side is what we call CSI or a
15 Comprehensive, Support and
16 Improvement funds. These are
17 allocated by PDE in alignment with
18 ESSER based on school performance.
19 So those are the primary ways that
20 we --

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: Sure. And I know we're
23 limited for time in this second
24 round, but I just wanted to say if
25 you all could just send me examples

1 of where you have done a
2 re-allocation based on an equity
3 concern. Can you send me three to
4 five examples of that happening in
5 your budgetary process so that we
6 could see how it plays out?

7 MR. HERBSTMAN: Yes. I think
8 most likely what we'll look in is the
9 extraordinary requests that we
10 receive from schools for specific
11 situations, but I'll work with the
12 team to get that answer to you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
14 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be
15 helpful. Then I wanted to quickly go
16 to the piece around conflict
17 resolution. After the hearings that
18 I hosted in November of 2020, the
19 District agreed to provide Tier 1
20 conflict resolution at every school
21 that 440, you know, you all would pay
22 for it out of your budget.

23 So if you all could provide
24 an update on this initiative and the
25 implementation of Tier 1 conflict

1 resolution across all schools because
2 it was my understanding that each
3 school would be able to select the
4 Tier 1 Conflict Resolution program
5 that they would utilize, and that you
6 all would just ensure that you
7 covered the cost for it, so it
8 doesn't impact each school's
9 individual budget and their ability
10 to select a staff and the team
11 members that they want for their
12 school?

13 DR. WATLINGTON: If it's
14 appropriate, if it's okay with you,
15 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson,
16 we'll take that as a homework
17 assignment and we will produce that
18 information for the Council.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Okay. That's fine. I
21 just wasn't sure if anybody could
22 just talk briefly about it though,
23 because this is something that we
24 have been working on for a couple of
25 years, and I just wanted to make sure

1 it did not get lost in transition
2 relative to the implementation of the
3 model being a priority across
4 schools, and recognizing that it will
5 be important for our young people to
6 have this from K through 12th grade
7 for us to see long-term change and
8 shift around our young people having
9 the ability to do better in resolving
10 conflicts.

11 DR. WATLINGTON: I'm less
12 familiar since I wasn't here last
13 year. I'll ask Chief Lynch to
14 certainly honor your question right
15 now, Councilmember Gilmore
16 Richardson.

17 Chief Lynch, can you speak to
18 Tier 1 conflict resolution and our
19 commitment previously that schools
20 could select the initiative and the
21 District cover the cost?

22 MS. LYNCH: Yes, absolutely.
23 And thank you for the opportunity.
24 Councilwoman, if you would like to
25 meet with one of us and talk about it

1 in greater detail, we can certainly
2 do that. Please know that the
3 initiative continues. It's still
4 under way.

5 We are coincidentally right
6 now in the process of schools
7 determining their climate initiatives
8 and a conflict resolution for next
9 year, so a good number of our schools
10 are going to continue with that
11 effort. And we can as soon as that
12 processes is complete, let you know
13 what schools selected and what they
14 decided.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

16 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be great.
17 I just want to be clear for the
18 record though that every single
19 school has the ability to have Tier 1
20 conflict resolution, correct?

21 MS. LYNCH: Yes, it's part of
22 our school improvement and
23 development process. Having a Tier 1
24 initiative is a requirement of every
25 school.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: Okay. And for the
3 record, you all at 440 cover the cost
4 of whatever program that individual
5 schools select?

6 MS. LYNCH: We offer the
7 support. We offer the services. We
8 offer the professional development.
9 We offer the ongoing coaching for the
10 schools that they select.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: Okay. And so, meaning
13 there's --

14 MS. LYNCH: There's --

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

16 RICHARDSON: Oh.

17 MS. LYNCH: I'm sorry.
18 There's a list of schools that we
19 make -- initiatives that we make
20 available and it's those initiatives
21 that they select from, and we provide
22 that resource.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Got it. So I just want
25 to be clear though that all schools

1 are held harmless, meaning there's no
2 specific cost to them or any impact
3 on their individual budget?

4 MS. LYNCH: When they select
5 one of those schools that is among
6 our inventory and opportunity,
7 Dr. Watlington, in fact, during this
8 session has talked to a few of the
9 initiatives that are included, yes,
10 that is our -- we support that
11 effort.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Okay. But if they pick
14 a program that's outside of what you
15 all have listed, then they have to
16 cover the cost or can they be
17 reimbursed?

18 MS. LYNCH: That becomes the
19 school's decision and the school's
20 selection. It's outside of what we
21 offer.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Got it. So --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can I
25 have a point of clarity please

1 because I'm confused? I thought --

2 Mr. Chair, is that okay, sir?

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yes.

4 Chair recognizes Councilmember

5 Johnson.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank

7 you. Just a point of clarity because

8 I remember this initiative very, very

9 well. It's one not too long ago when

10 Madame Councilwoman was just elected

11 and it's one of the key initiatives

12 she was working on. So I just want

13 to have clarity on this.

14 Is there a conflict

15 resolution curriculum or a conflict

16 resolution programming? Because I

17 was under the impression that there

18 would be an actual curriculum, right,

19 that would be part of, I guess, the

20 service is provided per school for

21 our young people just based upon a

22 lot of shootings that we're seeing,

23 the homicides that we're seeing all

24 start from a lack of having a full

25 understanding of conflict resolution.

1 So are they picking
2 curriculums or programs that will
3 come in that provide support services
4 around resolving conflicts
5 peacefully? I just wanted clarity on
6 it because now I'm a little confused.

7 MS. LYNCH: Okay. So we
8 offer the training. We offer the
9 programming. We offer the tools. We
10 offer the coaching. We offer the
11 materials. We offer the supports
12 that are needed based on the
13 initiatives or as you say programs,
14 and I'm not certain how you're
15 defining program versus -- so schools
16 will get several options that they
17 can pick from, they select and we
18 provide internally those resources
19 that are needed.

20 And for some of them, we do
21 have external support. So for
22 example, PBIS --

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: When I
24 say -- Dr. Lynch, when I say
25 programming, I guess I'm saying it

1 because you said they get options to
2 pick from.

3 MS. LYNCH: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And so,
5 again I just thought this was a
6 straight-up, across-the-board you
7 know how we all take reading and
8 math, like across the board it's
9 mandatory. I just thought there
10 would be an actual class. And again,
11 maybe I'm wrong. I thought it would
12 be an actual class/curriculum, right.

13 Every Friday the students at
14 South Philadelphia High School,
15 right, with Strawberry Mansion will
16 participate in a curriculum-oriented
17 class that deals with conflict
18 resolution -- now, that just may be
19 my thought of how it operates --
20 compared to bringing in a NOMO
21 organization or a PAAN, right, which
22 will be from a programming
23 standpoint. So maybe that's where
24 the confusion came in at. That's
25 all. So break it down for me please.

1 MS. LYNCH: I think Kevin
2 earlier talked about PAAN and how
3 PAAN comes in to help in certain
4 circumstances. I'm not talking about
5 PAAN in this instance, and I'm not
6 talking about just one specific class
7 that happens on a Friday. I'm
8 talking about the culture of the
9 organization in addition to the class
10 that takes place on a certain day
11 where students are learning skills
12 for resolving the conflicts that they
13 have. And they are learning, in
14 fact, how to rejoin individuals who
15 have had conflict in their schools
16 back into the school community.

17 And at the same time, the
18 staff within the schools are learning
19 how to build relationships with the
20 students that are in their schools so
21 that they can be the go-to person in
22 a school that a student will approach
23 when, in fact, they're having
24 difficulties, that person knows the
25 student better than anyone else.

1 So it's not just a class that
2 you go to where you sit down and you
3 find out, you take notes and you take
4 a test. It's an ongoing experience
5 that takes place not just in the
6 classroom, but across the school.
7 It's in the cafeterias. It's on the
8 playgrounds. It's in the transitions
9 that happen in the hallways. All of
10 those places where we find that
11 students can have conflict that can
12 grow into other things.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I think
14 I get you somewhat now --

15 MS. LYNCH: And I will share
16 something else since you gave me the
17 opportunity, Councilman. It's not
18 exactly the same in every single
19 school because we recognize different
20 schools need different initiatives.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
22 Well, can you clarify when you say
23 each school has an option, right, to
24 pick, what are they picking? What's
25 their option?

1 MS. LYNCH: They are picking
2 an evidence-based initiative that has
3 been proven time and time again where
4 it's not just our jurisdiction, but
5 other jurisdictions have proven that
6 the result is going to make a
7 difference.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
9 right. Well, help me out with this
10 last part and I'm going to wrap up.
11 I just want to believe -- I'm just
12 trying to understand, Karyn. You
13 know I work with you, but I'm just
14 trying to get some clarity on this.
15 So the options are they get to pick
16 from an evidence-based whatever, you
17 may say not a program, but something
18 evidence-based.

19 So give us three or four of
20 those examples. I'm from South
21 Philadelphia. I'm McDaniel. You're
22 presenting to me a group of options
23 for me to address conflict resolution
24 in my school. What are those
25 examples that McDaniel the principal

1 can pick from that he doesn't have to
2 pay for, which Katherine just said,
3 that can be a part of the learning
4 culture around conflict resolution at
5 McDaniel's middle school, which I'm
6 probably going to actually follow up
7 on if they don't have it now that
8 we're having this conversation?

9 MS. LYNCH: So I'm sure
10 McDaniel does have it. So one could
11 be relationships first. It's a
12 restorative practices model that
13 speaks to children in our school and
14 to staff about how to engage and
15 build relationships in the school. I
16 believe Dr. Watlington mentioned that
17 one earlier.

18 Another is positive
19 behavioral interventions and
20 supports, which provide incentives to
21 students for the positive behavior,
22 but also teaches students how to
23 engage in discussing, negotiating
24 their differences and resolving their
25 differences, which is extremely

1 important at our schools.

2 Another thing that we have
3 available that takes place in a good
4 number of our schools, in fact across
5 all of our schools because you asked
6 for one where we do it across the
7 board, and that's our community
8 meetings. I think when we met
9 previously the Councilwoman mentioned
10 that one of her children was
11 participating.

12 It's a way for children in
13 schools to share their feelings,
14 their emotions, what's happening to
15 them during the day, how one child
16 can express themselves and other
17 children can share with them their
18 experience and help that child feel
19 be more a part of the community.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's
21 it. Thank you very much.

22 MS. LYNCH: Sure.

23 DR. WATLINGTON: Councilman,
24 in some districts -- just really
25 quick because I want to honor the

1 full spirit of your question. In
2 some districts, they'll use other
3 evidence-based, which is a fancy way
4 of saying somebody's done some
5 research on it and we can say it's
6 making a difference based on some
7 data outcomes, Capturing Kids' Hearts
8 is one such initiative. Responsive
9 Classroom is another initiative.

10 With your permission, we'd
11 like to put together a list of what
12 we're currently using in the District
13 which schools they're being
14 implemented in --

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You were
16 reading my -- thank you.

17 DR. WATLINGTON: We'll put
18 that in writing for you, sir. We'll
19 be glad to do that. We'll do that.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: It was a
21 Jedi mind trick you just did because
22 I sure nuff was going to ask what
23 schools are these in and what actual
24 actions are available. Thank you
25 very much.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: Chair Thomas, I'm back.

3 I just respectfully request that I
4 can reclaim my time.

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

6 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson --

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Time
8 reclaimed, Madam.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Your
10 remarks will be the last comments and
11 questions as we close out this
12 section of today's hearing.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: I'm sorry. I am -- I
15 would like to also have the list and
16 I'll submit the remainder of my
17 questions for the record.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

19 Mr. Chair, I am in the queue for
20 questions, sir. That was a point of
21 information.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Oh, I
23 thought that was a --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: No, and
25 I see Councilman Jones has questions

1 as well.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.

3 Look, I'm good to go. Let's rock and
4 roll. Councilmember Gilmore
5 Richardson seems like she's good to
6 go.

7 So Chair recognizes
8 Councilmember Johnson. And then
9 after Councilmember Johnson, we'll go
10 to Councilmember Jones.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I
12 just wanted to go back. I think you
13 gave us a pretty good, and I was
14 looking forward to this, overview of
15 the comprehensive plan regarding
16 addressing our facilities management
17 around asbestos and lead. But I did
18 have some additional questions. And
19 I think Councilman Thomas, Chairman
20 Thomas, talked about some of them
21 early on.

22 In terms of one, how are you
23 going about recruiting experts for I
24 think you called it a committee or a
25 council to participate? Also, the

1 process on how you're recruiting the
2 community/faith-based members. But
3 also, I remember when Mallory gave
4 her presentation, it was a specific
5 dollar amount that was requested to
6 address fixing up these facilities.

7 So I want to get an idea, can
8 you reiterate the dollar amount but
9 also the staffing that's going to be
10 needed and then also the timeline,
11 right? I know we have 200-something
12 schools, so obviously if you're
13 finding out that asbestos and lead
14 are in some of these schools, that
15 means you're actually doing your job
16 because if you're not doing your job,
17 no school would be found with
18 asbestos doing inspections, and then
19 obviously you wouldn't have to shut
20 down and transferring your students
21 as the issue is being remediated.

22 But can you give us an
23 overview of, okay, how many schools
24 have been expected, how many schools
25 are still on the list that's going to

1 be expected so we can have an idea of
2 what this is going to look like in
3 the future? And then, two, with this
4 new partnership that you have with
5 the company that's doing the
6 inspections, I think it might have
7 been mentioned that there may be
8 staff needed. But what can we do to
9 ramp up basically our efforts around
10 these issues?

11 And then three, are there any
12 conversations, tough conversations
13 regarding the possibility of school
14 closures and consolidating as it
15 relates to building new schools as a
16 part of your plan?

17 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll take
18 the first step, Councilmember
19 Johnson. I'll take the last one
20 first. We are working closely with
21 the Board and Board President not to
22 approach this in terms of straight-
23 out just jump right to closures and
24 that kind of thing. We're trying to
25 imagine what does 21st century, the

1 best learning facilities look like
2 and how do we do what Councilmember
3 Bass was talking about in a school
4 that has if you just think about
5 really poor achievement. How do we
6 make sure that facility supports the
7 very best academic programming that
8 we're developing in the strategic
9 plan. And we're going to look
10 forward to sharing that on May 25th
11 at the Board meeting.

12 The number that we've been
13 referencing from the Parsons Report
14 from 2017, according to 2017 dollars,
15 \$7.89 billion, that would bring our
16 facilities up. And the strategic
17 plan, we're looking at a lot of
18 things about how we have more
19 advanced placement courses across
20 high schools, how we have better
21 science laboratories, career
22 technical education facilities.

23 So with regard to the Project
24 team, sir, you asked for a quick
25 update on that, what we are doing

1 right now under Chief Oz Hills'
2 leadership, he's the sponsor of the
3 Project team, is we started making
4 connections with the diverse group of
5 faith-based leaders, diverse group of
6 experts in the field in this area,
7 some diverse group of businesses and
8 community partners.

9 And the next step would be to
10 come back to the Board and the
11 Council and say, all right, here's
12 the draft list, anything we want to
13 tweak on here, it's not finalized
14 just yet, but we have some
15 commitments already in all those
16 areas. And then the next thing will
17 be to work to share a timeline.

18 First thing I know Council
19 wants to know, what's the begin date,
20 what's the end date to get this
21 finished and what does the end
22 product look like. We don't quite
23 have the end date and the end product
24 just yet because we want to get other
25 people around the table. But as

1 President Streater said far better
2 than I can, we already have done a
3 good amount of work and know the
4 scope of the problem.

5 We know a little bit about
6 what it's going to cost, at least in
7 2017 terms. But once we get that
8 team together, then we have to do
9 what Chief Hill is going to walk us
10 through how we refresh the data, take
11 a fresh look to make sure what we
12 think we know is what we know.

13 With your permission, I want
14 to ask Chief Oz Hill if he'll just
15 say briefly did I miss anything in
16 trying to answer the question, sir?

17 MR. HILL: Thank you very
18 much, sir. Councilmember, I would
19 suggest that Dr. Watlington provided
20 a comprehensive overview of the
21 process. Once we do have the team
22 assembled, the focus then becomes on
23 looking at the data, identifying any
24 gaps and seams that might exist in
25 our current repository and then

1 refreshing the data from 2017.

2 So first of all, validating
3 that what we have is accurate and
4 it's effective to comprehensively
5 address our facilities' needs,
6 determining if there were things that
7 somehow were not effectively
8 addressed in 2017 based on the
9 knowledge and awareness that we have
10 right now in 2023, and then
11 capitalizing on what we have in our
12 repository and refreshing that so
13 that we have a holistic or a
14 comprehensive picture as we move
15 forward and develop the plan.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
17 So I guess the only part that I
18 didn't hear, you have these two
19 committees that are being created,
20 right, which I think is great because
21 it shows a public-private
22 partnership, how to hire people from
23 a transparency standpoint being
24 recruited, right, to participate on
25 these two committees.

1 Is there a registry? Is
2 there an application process? How
3 does the average individual -- how
4 are you selecting who gets to
5 participate? So I guess that would
6 be one, the first question, for
7 clarity. And then the other part of
8 clarity is how many schools have we
9 already inspected and how many
10 schools will we be inspecting in the
11 future?

12 MR. STREATER: I --

13 DR. WATLINGTON: I'll take
14 the first part. And, Chief, you
15 can --

16 MR. STREATER: Let me --

17 DR. WATLINGTON: -- speak to
18 the second -- oh, go ahead. I'm
19 sorry.

20 MR. STREATER: So I think one
21 thing I want to just -- I understand
22 the spirit of your question. But I
23 do want to just for the public's
24 clarity because we have buildings
25 with asbestos, we're going to be on a

1 hamster wheel of inspecting in
2 perpetuity for the next 3,000 years
3 if we have these buildings for the
4 next 3,000 years, right.

5 So that's the one thing I
6 kind of want to say, that we're going
7 to kind of constantly -- because
8 that's what AHERA requires, right.

9 So I just wanted to put that context
10 out there, just to kind of answer
11 that big question. I know you might
12 want to kind of go deeper into that
13 question or that doesn't put context,
14 but I think it's important to
15 understand that there's a three-year
16 requirement and then there's also an
17 ongoing six-month requirement as it
18 relates to inspecting.

19 And the fact that we have
20 been able to because of City Council,
21 this Mayor, the state have funneled
22 more resources to the District, we've
23 been able to marshal more resources,
24 right, to do this work at a higher
25 clip and to do the work in a way with

1 additional viability due to the fact
2 that we have more capacity.

3 We're not there yet, right.

4 We need more capacity, right. And I
5 think that that's something that I'm
6 excited about because I believe that
7 we're going to get that capacity
8 because of the additional funding.

9 But just to kind of answer the big
10 question, especially for the public
11 to understand what's the Sahara,
12 what's the asbestos issues. And
13 remember, we also have lead issues as
14 well, lead paint.

15 I mean, we've replaced so
16 many of our water fountains as well
17 to filter out that, so the
18 environmental issues are larger than
19 the scope of just the asbestos. I
20 don't want to say just asbestos. But
21 we're going to be on an ongoing
22 hamster wheel, almost like washing
23 clothes.

24 Chief Hill likes to use this
25 analogy: You got to wash your

1 clothes. We're going to have to
2 continue washing our clothes until we
3 no longer -- until we buy new clothes
4 that don't need to be washed. I
5 guess it's a weird analogy, but
6 that's the point of what -- we're
7 going to be inspecting forever until
8 we get out of this.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Got you.
10 And has there been -- I still want to
11 ask about how to recruit individuals
12 for these two committees. But also,
13 will we consider -- let's say a
14 school may be open that you inspect,
15 right, and they impose a service to
16 1,000 students, but you only have 500
17 students, right. Is it part of our
18 budget process to maybe tear down and
19 rebuild new schools where needed,
20 because obviously it's a budget
21 process if the school is available to
22 house 1,000 students? But if you
23 have 300, 400 students in there,
24 you're paying overhead honestly from
25 a business standpoint that doesn't

1 calculate to the type of students
2 that you're supporting.

3 And so, I guess something to
4 take into consideration down the line
5 with a partnership obviously with the
6 state and the Feds in terms of
7 rebuilding new schools for these
8 young people and maybe new smaller
9 schools, right. Because you're
10 right, we want to be here forever
11 addressing the history of asbestos
12 and lead because these are old
13 buildings, but maybe thinking outside
14 the box if we get funding from a
15 federal standpoint, from my federal
16 partners to maybe begin looking at
17 how do we reimagine, right, school
18 facility buildings in the future.

19 So if you know that school is
20 built to house 1,000 students and
21 you're running heat, gas and electric
22 but there's only 300 students
23 attending there, don't move the
24 school out of the neighborhood, then
25 maybe possibly that school comes down

1 and a smaller, newer school gets
2 built, right, for the local kids
3 that's in the neighborhood. Just
4 something to think about in
5 consideration that we all can partner
6 on or work on together for our
7 children in the future, that's all.

8 But the last part of my
9 question, and I'll wrap up on this
10 for the day, is just about how you go
11 about recruiting people for these two
12 new committees that's going to be a
13 part of the facilities, I guess
14 oversight committee?

15 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir,
16 Councilmember Johnson. And we're
17 certainly open to feedback and
18 anything else you, Council and the
19 Board will share with us. Some
20 individuals, as Chief Hill mentioned,
21 kind of just volunteered and raised
22 their hand and said, look, we
23 (inaudible) last City Council hearing
24 and you guys presented, and I'm just
25 raising my hand.

1 There are other folks that
2 we're trying to reach out to, to make
3 sure we have geographic diversity,
4 diversity of experience versus
5 putting a survey out and saying,
6 everybody across Philadelphia who
7 might want to be a part of this, we
8 really want to make sure we have
9 people who are steep and have some
10 expertise in these kinds of issues
11 because they deal with them in their
12 own organizations.

13 For example, it's not a
14 secret that the University of
15 Pennsylvania gave the District \$100
16 million to help with environmental
17 issues. So we have the Treasurer.
18 We kind of think it might make sense
19 to ask, well, is there any time and
20 talent that could be provided along
21 with 100 million. Similar to that,
22 there's no one right way to do it.

23 But certainly, if there are
24 folks who have expertise or have
25 interest or have some community

1 connections, anything you can share
2 with me or Chief Hill, Board
3 President Streater, we're happy to
4 take that under advisement as we
5 populate this team because we want to
6 make sure to get it right and do it
7 right.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just
9 wanted to make sure I know. But
10 listen, other than that thank you
11 everyone. Thank you for your time.

12 I want to give a shout-out to
13 Dr. Tony Watlington, to your guy
14 Edwin Santana for just staying on the
15 case. Called me like 5:00 in the
16 morning when Vare was on the verge of
17 being closed and so forth and just
18 keeping the lines of communication
19 open for me and my stakeholders.

20 And so, I just want to give a
21 shout-out to the young brother that's
22 over there doing some work on behalf
23 of the District. Thank you,
24 everyone.

25 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you,

1 sir.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
3 you, Councilmember Johnson.

4 Chair recognizes
5 Councilmember Jones.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
7 so much. And thank you for your
8 endurance. We've been at this a
9 while and inquiring minds wanting to
10 know because it's an important part
11 of our future as a City.

12 I want to shift gears a
13 little bit to say that there are 48
14 zip codes in the City of
15 Philadelphia. And I think it's 18 of
16 those zip codes, 90 percent of the
17 inmates come from up on State Road in
18 our prisons. I was told that an
19 interesting map, an interesting
20 correlation can be drawn to where
21 those individuals come from, their
22 zip codes and the school's
23 performances in those same zip codes.

24 So it dubs the question of a
25 school-to-prison pipeline. Not just

1 because the school's poverty is a
2 part of it, but the schools are a
3 part of it because if social workers
4 know that a person, particularly a
5 male, cannot read up to par by the
6 time they're in the 4th grade, they
7 know how many jail cells to build by
8 the time they are 18.

9 So with that said, is there a
10 person within your team that is
11 responsible? I mentioned outcomes
12 before, positive ones, going to
13 college, getting a job, being in the
14 military. But some of those outcomes
15 are negative. Who's keeping track of
16 those outcomes, where they come from
17 and how we can reverse-engineer
18 solutions to stop the school-to-
19 prison pipeline and create a school-
20 to-paycheck pipeline?

21 DR. WATLINGTON: I really
22 loved the way you said -- reverse the
23 school-to-prison pipeline to have a
24 school-to-paycheck pipeline, I don't
25 think I've quite heard that said that

1 way before. But to answer your
2 question, Leader Jones, Dr. Tonya
3 Wolford is our Chief of Research and
4 Evaluation. We are keenly aware.

5 I can't quite speak to the 48
6 zip codes. But at a high level,
7 we've been looking at some research
8 around that area. Know someone who's
9 doing a doctoral dissertation around
10 that area, who we want to have to do
11 some advisement for us. So we hear
12 you loud and clear. And that's one
13 of the reasons why -- and I'll just
14 say this really fast -- I think it
15 all starts with having a Board of
16 Education that spends its time on
17 academic achievement.

18 I've worked in two other
19 school districts and I can't say that
20 the time allocation that the Board
21 allocated specifically to progress
22 monitoring everything from 3rd grade
23 reading, 3 through 8th reading, 3
24 through 8th grade math, et cetera.
25 So it starts at the top and we really

1 are pushing hard to get better
2 because we know the outcomes are just
3 life and death for a lot of our
4 children. We hear you loud and
5 clear.

6 MR. STREATER: Councilmember
7 Jones, if I could just also add, you
8 know, we're Black men on here, right.
9 And we were once Black boys. And I
10 always evoke Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu,
11 Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys.
12 And in his books he talks about how
13 in the '80s, and it's sad to say it
14 still happens in some of our schools
15 in America, Black boys when they were
16 younger are students, and I'll just
17 say students who are deemed to be
18 disruptive, when they're younger,
19 maybe disincentivized to be in
20 school. And he said, you'll notice
21 that a child who sits in the front,
22 who might be gregarious and loud and
23 they have some behavioral issues that
24 slowly but surely will end up in the
25 hallway and then out the schools.

1 And I think this touches on one of
2 the hardest things that the Board has
3 to balance.

4 Earlier you spoke about code
5 of conduct. What do you do with
6 students who are disruptive? Do you
7 suspend them, which should be the
8 road to expulsion? As you know,
9 expulsion is probably the number one
10 way to get a child into the
11 school-to-prison pipeline, right.

12 But how did you do this in a
13 way where you don't have the
14 resources necessary to have maybe an
15 additional support in the classroom,
16 in the moment to help the teacher
17 deal with students that might have
18 some behavioral issues of no making
19 of their own, because they live in a
20 society that was created in a way
21 that disincentivizes our people for
22 being successful and things like
23 that.

24 So this is something that we
25 wrestle with a lot. Whether it's

1 cell phones, what do you do with cell
2 phones? Do you keep them in Yondr
3 pouches? When do you suspend?
4 Should you suspend a child, should
5 you not? These are things that we're
6 wrestling with. And I think that
7 we're trying to strike that right
8 balance.

9 And I think for us the thing
10 that's actually going to fix this is
11 our focus on student achievement and
12 partnering with our community. I'll
13 just add this one last thing. I'm
14 going to be meeting with
15 Dr. Watlington, Mr. Santana, some
16 Black men in the community, some you
17 know, Ameen Akbar, Brother Qayyum,
18 Bilal Qayyum, trying to figure out
19 how can we create partnerships and
20 relationships and do things that can
21 incentivize Black men and fathers in
22 general to come back and be a part of
23 the solution.

24 So I think it has to be kind
25 of a holistic approach as well. And

1 I think that we're putting things in
2 place right now to put those things
3 in place.

4 DR. WATLINGTON: Chair

5 Thomas, can I --

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: I know --

7 DR. WATLINGTON: -- have a
8 few seconds?

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Oh, I'm
10 sorry. Go ahead.

11 DR. WATLINGTON: Leader
12 Jones, I'm going to say something
13 really, really relative to what
14 President Streater just mentioned. I
15 just want to note that the District
16 is working to try to get this right.
17 97 percent of our students don't get
18 suspended in the School District of
19 Philadelphia, and some people see
20 that as a strength. Some people
21 don't.

22 I think the extent to which
23 we can keep kids in school and to
24 make sure they're well-behaved is the
25 key. We need kids in school in

1 Philadelphia, and we need them to be
2 well-behaved. It's a District
3 responsibility, it's a parent
4 responsibility, and it's a community
5 responsibility.

6 I have been in schools,
7 Councilmember Jones, with this
8 Relationships First initiative.
9 That's why I don't think it's just
10 pie in the sky and fluff. Sitting on
11 the floor Indian style, legs crossed
12 or folded, not crossed, but folded, I
13 can still do that at my age with
14 elementary kids, and it was
15 fascinating to see them not talking
16 to each other, sharing something
17 about themselves and building the
18 relationships, because too often we
19 don't see that.

20 Then finally, I just want to
21 say really quick, Chair Thomas, in
22 Chief Kevin Bethel's office they
23 actually track arrests in his office,
24 and they work very hard through that
25 diversion program to figure out how

1 to make sure that we avoid it when
2 possible, how we help turn kids
3 around, improve their behaviors. And
4 I really like what he's doing with
5 the school safety officers in
6 schools.

7 When I go back in the South
8 and I tell people that in
9 Philadelphia our School Safety Office
10 don't carry weapons in schools, they
11 say, what, you're kidding me. You
12 won't find a high school in North
13 Carolina, a traditional school, where
14 folks are not -- they have armed
15 police officers with weapons and
16 sometimes tasers walking through the
17 hallways. I say, no, it's -- in
18 Philadelphia, there's good things
19 happening there. And so, I do want
20 to note what Chief Bethel does in
21 terms of tracking that data as well.
22 So thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just
24 want to close on we need to laser-
25 focus on that population. The more

1 we can do to divert them from getting
2 ever in the system, the better off
3 society as a whole will be. The
4 better educated, the better able they
5 are to be able to provide for
6 themselves and their family, the
7 better this City will ultimately
8 become.

9 I'll never forget, Member
10 Thomas, Chairman Thomas sitting on
11 the stage of the swearing-in. And
12 Mayor Jim Kenney talked about a visit
13 to State Road to the school facility
14 up there and he got to know the young
15 person, the person that was
16 incarcerated. And he was very happy
17 because he finally understood his
18 math, the algebraic problems. And he
19 was beginning to excel.

20 And he said and I quote,
21 "This is the best school I've ever
22 been to." Now, I'm glad you finally
23 found a public school that is helping
24 him, but we failed that individual
25 back in 3rd grade and we really --

1 the sense of urgency, Member Thomas,
2 Chair of the Education and other
3 Members of this body, if for every
4 year we don't get this right, we
5 create another inmate that is sucked
6 into a vortex of a correction system
7 that they may never ever escape from.
8 So there's a sense of urgency, a
9 sense of now and right now to get
10 this right as quickly as we can.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Thank you, Mr. Watlington.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
14 you, Mr. Leader. Thank you, Majority
15 Leader Jones. We appreciate it.

16 I want to make sure that I'm
17 doing this right. Are there any
18 other questions or comments from
19 Councilmembers as it relates to this
20 particular panel?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I think
23 we're good to go. I just want to
24 remind really the general public that
25 we are going to be in the midst of a

1 number of different conversations
2 with the School District and the
3 School Board between now and the
4 passing of the budget.

5 We talked a little bit about
6 the Facilities Project team. I'm
7 going to go ahead and volunteer and
8 raise my hand as well too and also
9 recommend some folks who we think
10 would be good for that initiative.
11 We're also going to encourage our
12 leadership over at the School
13 District to reach out to our state
14 partners to include them in this
15 conversation to let them know that
16 this team is being comprised and to
17 see if any of our state partners have
18 any recommendations because we're
19 going to be leaning on them a lot
20 over the next month.

21 We'll continue dialogue
22 around safety, Act 158, Special
23 Admission Schools and other issues
24 that we know have a direct impact on
25 our teachers and our students who

1 attend all of our schools.

2 Mr. Superintendent. Thank
3 you, sir. Thank you for your
4 patience. Thank you and your entire
5 team for today's dialogue.

6 For President Streater, thank
7 you and your entire team for today's
8 dialogue and for all of the
9 information. And to all of our
10 School Board members, we just want to
11 take a moment to say thank you. It's
12 a volunteer position. It's a very
13 difficult job you have on your hands.

14 A lot of the problems that
15 we're dealing with, a big part of
16 portion of the School Board members
17 weren't actually here when these
18 problems have started and there are
19 problems that you inherited. If you
20 wake up every day and you do this
21 work for free, so on behalf of this
22 legislative body we just want to let
23 you know that your service is very
24 much appreciated.

25 Seeing there are no other

1 questions or comments from members of
2 this Committee, the Committee will
3 stand in recess until this afternoon,
4 at which time we will reconvene with
5 Dr. Generals and our team over at
6 Community College in Philadelphia.
7 Thank you again, everybody. And try
8 to take a few minutes break before we
9 jump back into conversation. Have a
10 great day.

11 (Afternoon recess.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Good afternoon, everyone. We have
14 reconvened the FY24 Budget Committee
15 of the Whole hearing. This morning
16 we had the Committee of the Whole for
17 the School District, but we also
18 combined the required Bi-annual
19 School City Meeting.

20 So this afternoon we will
21 hear from the Community College of
22 Philadelphia. And I see the good
23 doctor is connected. So if you're
24 ready to go, Dr. Generals, please
25 proceed with your testimony.

1 DR. GENERALS: Sure. Thank
2 you, President Clarke and members of
3 Council. Thank you for having us.
4 We look forward to this opportunity
5 to engage with you on some of the
6 progress that the College has made in
7 the context of our budget request.

8 I'm speaking with you today
9 during a very exciting time at the
10 College's academic year. As this
11 coming Saturday, we will graduate May
12 6th at the Liacouras Center, so it's
13 always an exciting time of the year.
14 Even more -- (inaudible). Sorry, I
15 have my co-pilot here.

16 Even more special is the fact
17 that Mayor Kenney will serve as our
18 keynote speaker. While Saturday's
19 commencement will provide a very
20 joyous opportunity to recognize our
21 graduates, it is also a celebration
22 for the City as a result of our
23 partnership in addition to Mayor
24 Kenney's steadfast support of our
25 institution over the years.

1 Thousands of students will be
2 able to take the next step on their
3 educational and career journey. I
4 look forward to sharing more of the
5 College's successes with you, so you
6 can see the very tangible ways this
7 funding that you have provided over
8 the years affects the students we
9 serve. Together we can continue to
10 keep our positive momentum going and
11 make higher educational reality for
12 the Philadelphians who are eager to
13 give back to our communities.

14 So I will begin with basic
15 narratives. I'm bringing up our
16 slides. This is Shannon.

17 MS. McLAUGHLIN ROONEY: Hi.
18 Nice to see everybody.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Good afternoon.

21 MS. McLAUGHLIN ROONEY: Is it
22 possible to share Dr. Generals'
23 screen with the Council? It doesn't
24 look like it's enabled on Teams right
25 now.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

2 Bob, can we share his screen?

3 THE CLERK: Presenter access.

4 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: He now
5 has presenter access.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 There you go.

8 DR. GENERALS: Okay. Are we
9 on?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Yes, sir.

12 DR. GENERALS: Okay. So I'll
13 share some comments. And at the end
14 of our presentation, our brief
15 presentation, we certainly will
16 open -- we're open to any questions
17 you might have. So first screen,
18 fast facts. We are about 18 -- we
19 serve approximately 19,000 students,
20 excuse me. We are set to graduate at
21 least 1530 students this weekend.
22 That number continues to rise. As we
23 move towards the weekend, students
24 are completing their finals, so we
25 hope to have a much higher number.

1 What sets us apart is the
2 fact that approximately 85 percent of
3 recent graduates live and work in the
4 Greater Philadelphia area so we
5 really are training the City's
6 workforce. We are a minority-serving
7 institution reflective of the
8 communities we serve in the diversity
9 of our students, faculty and staff,
10 is one of our greatest strengths.

11 You can see other demographic
12 data represented in this presentation
13 here on this slide. And of course
14 our slides have been presented to
15 you. So anybody that would like to
16 take a closer look can certainly do
17 that. Here you have a graphic of
18 Councilmanic District Nos. You can
19 see your various numbers.

20 Up in District 10 is over
21 2,000 students and the numbers vary
22 across the City of Philadelphia. Our
23 students come to us from all over the
24 City, and we're able to serve them
25 among our various campuses, including

1 the main campus in Center City, the
2 Northeast Regional Center and the
3 West Regional Center right next to
4 our Career and Advanced Technology
5 Center on Chestnut Street.

6 We have about 196
7 international students as well. Our
8 budget requests for '23-24 Fiscal
9 Year is \$51 million, including 11.7
10 million for the previous Catto
11 Scholarship and \$150,000 for dual
12 enrollment. In addition, the College
13 requests \$15 million in one-time
14 funding for capital supports and
15 programs. These funds will help
16 support important projects to provide
17 meaningful academic opportunities and
18 world-class facilities for our
19 students, as outlined in our
20 strategic plan which is World-class
21 Facility No. 6 or is world-class
22 facilities.

23 Some of these projects
24 include the renovation of the Great
25 Hall for Academic and Student

1 program, the creation of a simulation
2 and skills lab for our award-winning
3 nursing program, upgrades to our
4 dental clinic and improved lighting
5 to enhance safety and security on
6 campus, among other things.

7 I'd like to touch on how the
8 College is supporting the City and
9 why this funding is so crucial. The
10 latest economic impact report
11 conducted regarding the College's
12 contribution to the region by EMSI
13 demonstrated the College generated
14 approximately \$631.3 million in added
15 income to Philadelphia County in
16 Fiscal Year 2019-2020, and supported
17 more than 7500 jobs during that time.

18 Additionally, for every
19 dollar invested in the CCP education,
20 Pennsylvania will see an average of
21 \$9.40 in added income and social
22 savings, while students gain \$5.90 in
23 lifetime earnings. These figures
24 hopefully illustrate how valuable the
25 college is to the City.

1 As of April 24, 2023,
2 approximately 1530 students are set
3 to graduate as part of the Class of
4 2023. Of these students, 107 will
5 earn their high school diploma
6 alongside their college degrees. In
7 fact, most of them will receive their
8 college degree prior to their high
9 school diploma, which doesn't come
10 about until June.

11 Dual enrollment programs
12 allow high school students from
13 schools like Parkway, Central, City,
14 Middle College and MaST Community
15 Charter School to take college
16 courses while enrolled in high
17 school. Other programs that prepare
18 learners for the college life include
19 the Junior STEM Academy, Gateway to
20 College and Advance at College
21 experience as previously mentioned,
22 part of the budget funds will go to
23 support dual enrollment, which will
24 be particularly timely due to the new
25 Pennsylvania mandate for high school

1 graduation which is Act 158.

2 Since the roll-out of Act
3 158, we've experienced a 50 percent
4 increase in the number of new
5 applicants for dual enrollment since
6 this time last year. We look forward
7 to serving even more high school
8 students looking for pre-college
9 training in the years to come. The
10 Octavius Catto Scholarship is
11 certainly a highlight of the
12 developments over the last couple of
13 years.

14 Octavius Catto Scholarship is
15 the result of the partnership between
16 the College and the City, and a
17 significant portion of this year's
18 budget requests, about 11.7, will be
19 devoted to this initiative. Since
20 the introduction of the Octavius
21 Catto Scholarship in spring of 2021,
22 the college has welcomed 1100 Catto
23 scholars with the first full cohort
24 graduating this weekend.

25 In addition, last year's

1 (inaudible) eligibility was expanded
2 to include select transfer students,
3 re-engaged CCP students and students
4 who graduated from high school
5 outside of Philadelphia. Not only do
6 these students have the opportunity
7 to graduate for free, but they also
8 have access to wraparound services,
9 including Catto support. Coaches
10 check in with students individually
11 to make sure they have what they need
12 to succeed.

13 This year on Catto's
14 birthday, students shared writings.
15 They put together about what the
16 scholarship means to them, which was
17 inspiring to hear. We can't wait to
18 see all that this first cohort of
19 Catto scholars will do in the future.
20 In terms of additional supports at
21 CCP, we're also proud of the
22 additional supports.

23 We're able to provide
24 students outside of the classroom,
25 for example, our Single Stop program

1 connects students to resources like
2 tax filings, legal aid and financial
3 counseling. And we've been able to
4 serve more than 19,000 students and
5 families since 2013.

6 Part of the request for this
7 year's budget includes funds to
8 renovate our Single Stop office, so
9 we're able to provide even better
10 services to our students. Other
11 supports include our Shared Housing
12 program partnership with the
13 Philadelphia Housing Authority, which
14 provides housing for housing-insecure
15 students, those blocks from the
16 campus. This program focuses on
17 students who've been involved in
18 foster care.

19 I'd also like to recognize
20 our food collaborative, including
21 Grady's Garden which has provided
22 more than 8,000 meals to students
23 over the years. CME, I Am More,
24 another support that helps students
25 both inside and outside the

1 classrooms, our Center for Male
2 Engagement. This initiative makes
3 support coaches available to male
4 students of color to help them adjust
5 to the college environment.

6 We are also proud to support
7 students navigating life after being
8 involved in the criminal justice
9 system. Last year one of our I Am
10 More coaches, Luis Suave Gonzalez,
11 won the Pulitzer Prize for his
12 involvement in a podcast about his
13 more than 30 years in prison. We
14 know how important it is to uplift
15 traditionally underserved
16 communities. We are committed to and
17 we are looking forward to continuing
18 this effort.

19 The Saxby's Café: In 2022,
20 Community College of Philadelphia
21 opened an entirely student-run café,
22 the Saxby's Café on campus. Thanks
23 to the Saxby's experiential learning
24 platform, this café is headed by a
25 student, CEO, who earns full academic

1 credit in addition to a stipend while
2 working and training other student
3 employees.

4 To train students interested
5 in STEM, we all know that STEM, life
6 sciences, gene and cell therapy --
7 gene and cell sciences I should say
8 are becoming prevalent in the City of
9 Philadelphia. To train students
10 interested in STEM to better meet the
11 workforce needs of the City, the
12 College has increased its academic
13 offerings related to STEM and updated
14 STEM-related facilities.

15 Collaborations with companies
16 such as Iovance, WuXi and Integral
17 Molecular provide training for
18 cutting-edge jobs in the cell and
19 gene therapy sector, including in the
20 areas of quality control, animal
21 research, manufacturing and more. In
22 addition, a noncredit aseptic
23 technique training course provides a
24 hands-on immersive laboratory
25 experience in a GMP setting.

1 Furthermore, science labs have been
2 updated with the following technology
3 to provide students, quality academic
4 experiences, various microscopes,
5 thermal cyclers, gas
6 chromatographers, fermenters and
7 more, all of which are spelled out on
8 this particular slide.

9 A number of upgrades have
10 occurred, including the renovation of
11 our Athletics Center. We have a
12 brand new Athletics Center, brand
13 newly renovated Athletics Center
14 which includes LED lighting, new
15 paint, new bleachers, new wood floors
16 and an LED scoring screen. The
17 Library and Learning Commons on the
18 main campus provides study spaces and
19 rooms for students in addition to
20 collaborative areas with classes and
21 groups to meet, is also equipped with
22 state-of-the-art video equipment and
23 computers for academic work.

24 These students can access
25 tutoring services there, remains a

1 main hub on the campus for students
2 to gather and study, and it is right
3 next to the Saxby's Café, so students
4 have the opportunity to study while
5 at the same time they can go to the
6 café to relax and enjoy a cup of
7 coffee or a cup of café.

8 As you all know, we opened
9 70,000 square foot brand new Advanced
10 Technology Center out in West Philly
11 on the corner of 48th and Market
12 Street. The Career and Advanced
13 Technology provides a host of
14 technical training programs,
15 including Welding, Auto Technology,
16 Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical
17 Mechanics, Computer Numerical
18 Controls as well as a suite of Allied
19 Health Science programs, including
20 Dental Technician, Sterilization and
21 Certified Nursing Assistant. So the
22 programs began this past fall. We're
23 now into our second semester, and
24 we're extremely positive and
25 extremely optimistic about the future

1 of this brand new state-of-the-art
2 facility.

3 We continue to provide
4 business development opportunities
5 both in Power Up Your Business, which
6 was supported by City Council in the
7 City of Philadelphia as well as
8 10,000 Small Businesses. So we have
9 two. One is more regional. The
10 other is certainly committed to the
11 corridors here in Philadelphia. Both
12 of which are very popular with
13 numerous alumni in both cases.

14 And these are the Workforce
15 Development programs. We all know
16 that workforce development in the
17 form of short-term and immediate
18 training and education that provides
19 an opportunity for students to go out
20 into the workforce is something that
21 community colleges are doing. The
22 Community College of Philadelphia is
23 in the forefront providing these
24 types of training programs. We
25 believe that it is a major part of

1 the future.

2 Here are some examples of
3 some of these Workforce Development
4 programs that we have, and you can
5 read through in the Health Care &
6 Wellness, which mentions Dental
7 Assistant, Massage Therapy, Dialysis
8 Technician, Pharmacy Tech, Nurse
9 Assistant. These students
10 (inaudible) in receipt of short-term
11 training and they're able to go
12 immediately out into the workforce.

13 In our Manufacturing and
14 Logistics Infrastructure, we have
15 Computer Numerical Controls,
16 Electrical Mechanical, Industrial
17 Maintenance, Gas Pipeline Mechanic,
18 Safety Inspection Mechanic Training,
19 Certification & Emissions Inspector,
20 Certification. Again, students are
21 able to receive this training and go
22 out to the field of work.

23 Over in the Technology, we
24 have A+ Certification, CompTIA
25 Security, Coding Certification and

1 Cybersecurity. And what's not here
2 is our Hacking, both our moral
3 aspects of hacking as well as the
4 amoral, if you will, aspects of
5 hacking.

6 And then we provide a number
7 of Business Development opportunities
8 for students, including Diversity,
9 Equity & Inclusion Institute,
10 Logistics and Supply Chain Management
11 Basics program and Nonprofit
12 Management. So we have a suite of
13 Workforce Development programs, all
14 of which have the possibility to be
15 stackable, meaning that the student
16 can begin those programs in a
17 noncredit short-term certificate
18 format. And then should they decide
19 they want to continue their education
20 towards a degree, they can stack
21 those credentials into credit
22 opportunities and move towards a
23 degree.

24 So I believe that's the end
25 of my presentation, the formal

1 presentation. And I'm certainly open
2 to any questions that anyone might
3 have. Stop sharing.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Generals.
6 And thank you for your work and your
7 steady hand. Ever since you came on,
8 I mean you could just see an upward
9 swing in the student population. And
10 you make us feel comfortable that you
11 are at the helm. We know despite of
12 some of the challenges that we've
13 dealt with over the last couple of
14 years with the pandemic and other
15 things, that CCP is going to be in
16 good hands, is going to continue to
17 move in an upward trend.

18 Now, I wanted to ask you a
19 question about --

20 DR. GENERALS: I'm sorry.
21 But I'd like to recognize -- I'd be
22 remiss if I didn't recognize our
23 Board Chair Mr. Epps. The slides
24 point out our Board, and I would be
25 remiss if I didn't acknowledge their

1 support through the difficult times a
2 couple of years ago with the pandemic
3 and now with some of the lagging
4 effects are certainly very supportive
5 and knowledgeable relative to how the
6 College needs to get to where it's
7 ultimately going to go.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Thank you, and I thought we spoke
10 earlier. Good afternoon,
11 Mr. Chairman.

12 MR. EPPS: Good afternoon.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: A
14 couple of questions. The scholarship
15 has been an extremely successful
16 partnership between the City and the
17 College. I want to give the Mayor
18 kudos for the Catto statue and then
19 also the scholarship. That's
20 something that will definitely be a
21 part of his legacy in public light.

22 One of the challenges that we
23 face though is obviously being in the
24 position to pay for the education,
25 but a debt-free education is so

1 important. But this whole issue
2 around housing insecurity continues
3 to be a problem, and we're finding
4 that increasingly it's actually a
5 problem for a lot of young people in
6 high school and in junior school.
7 And some of the challenges where
8 we've made some of these young people
9 that actually find themselves going
10 down the wrong path are actually
11 homeless, which is pretty amazing.
12 That in a country like ours we can
13 find ourselves in that position.

14 I see you referenced the
15 Housing Authority and the
16 partnership. Can you be a little
17 more detailed? Is it a voucher or is
18 it a unit? How exactly are they
19 supportive of the housing insecurity
20 among your students?

21 DR. GENERALS: So right now
22 we have two units a couple of blocks
23 from the college and those two units
24 are housing 16 students. PHA
25 renovated the units for that purpose.

1 The rent is very minimal. I think
2 Dave Thomas is here. I believe it's
3 a little bit over \$100 a month. Is
4 it 150 I believe is the max that they
5 have to pay. So it's a shared
6 housing.

7 We've had 16 students. I
8 think we've only lost one. A couple
9 of them are graduating this year, so
10 it's a model, we viewed it as a pilot
11 with the hope that we can extend it.
12 One of the modifications to it is
13 that Kelvin Jeremiah is working with
14 the City on the new MOU to provide
15 some of the support services, because
16 many of these students that are in
17 these housing have come out of foster
18 care. They've come out of
19 backgrounds that require support
20 beyond just the housing.

21 So we found that to be a bit
22 challenging for the College, and
23 we've been able to work out an
24 agreement with Kelvin Jeremiah to
25 provide that. We see it as a pilot

1 and we hope to be able to expand it.
2 It is a model. He's received
3 attention and credit for it as have
4 we. And, you know, 16 doesn't come
5 anywhere near the demand. We have
6 referral services here that we're
7 able to refer students.

8 Dave, can you rattle off some
9 of the places we send them? I know
10 this falls under Dave's area.

11 MR. THOMAS: Yes, sir,
12 certainly. Good afternoon, Council
13 President Clarke, Majority Leader
14 Jones. I'm happy to see you both
15 today. So the partnership we have
16 with PHA has been extremely
17 successful in my opinion in that we
18 have been able to support 16 young
19 people who have been deemed housing
20 insecure in these two units.

21 The process typically is
22 students apply to us. They actually
23 complete an interest form. We do a
24 basic assessment and then put them
25 through the Office of Homeless

1 Services assessment process, right.
2 The purpose for that is we need these
3 individuals to be in the City system.
4 In case anything else happened to
5 them, they don't become housing
6 insecure again. They have the safety
7 net that is provided by the Office of
8 Homeless Services system.

9 At that point, then they move
10 to PHA's system and they are actually
11 PHA's residents. They meet PHA's
12 requirements. They are then allowed
13 to access the unit on a sliding
14 scale. So no student is paying more
15 than \$150 a month for the unit. Most
16 of the students are not paying
17 anything based off of the fact that
18 they have no income coming in. So
19 this is the partnership that we have
20 with PHA.

21 We've been doing it for a
22 little over two years now -- no,
23 actually doing it for three years
24 now. We're looking to expand the
25 operation in partnership with other

1 entities. We've been in
2 conversations with Covenant House and
3 we've been in conversation with
4 People's Emergency Center as well to
5 figure out how we can find additional
6 units and partner with other entities
7 across the City that have an
8 expertise in providing the wraparound
9 support and services for people who
10 are experiencing housing insecurity.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 All right. So I think I heard you
13 reference, Doc, that these 16 units
14 are not nearly enough. Is it only 16
15 because of the resources on the CCP's
16 end or the Housing Authority's end or
17 both, because I would think that --

18 DR. GENERALS: I think the
19 initial idea was let's try it to be
20 honest, because it's a pilot.
21 There's a lot vested in terms of
22 PHA's resources. They were the ones
23 who renovated it. But the students,
24 the educational support and some of
25 the social support we're providing.

1 Where we found we needed more
2 support was in some of the emotional
3 psychosocial support that some of
4 these students were carrying with
5 them into this. Many of them have
6 lived traumatized lives and we found
7 that we needed more support in order
8 to support them through those types
9 of situations.

10 So the good news is that if
11 they did not have the housing, we're
12 convinced they would not have stayed
13 in school. The good news is that
14 they have stayed in school, so we're
15 now talking about, okay, how can we
16 expand this. I don't know what PHA's
17 budget is, just anecdotally. I know
18 they've got quite a bit and they can
19 do more.

20 I know there's houses
21 throughout the neighborhood. These
22 houses, one is on 10th and one is on
23 11th. They're like three blocks away
24 from the school, so it works
25 perfectly for these students, great

1 neighborhoods. And I'm hoping that
2 they'll be able to -- let me
3 backtrack for a minute.

4 One of the reasons that this
5 came about is just sort of a casual
6 conversation or recognition that many
7 of our students were already PHA's
8 clients. That was pretty obvious.
9 And so, it only made sense. I know
10 that they wanted to provide support,
11 education and support. Kelvin has
12 always said it's more than housing,
13 and we needed to have the housing to
14 be able to support them academically.
15 So it was a natural partnership. And
16 I think we're at the point now where
17 we really need to push to try to
18 expand this further.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Okay. All right. Well, I'll talk to
21 Mr. Jeremiah. I pretty much talk to
22 him every day, to see if we can
23 expand the program to address the
24 obvious need. Thank you.

25 Speaking of housing, let me

1 ask you a question about the housing,
2 I think Hamilton Street we did years
3 ago.

4 DR. GENERALS: Yep.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 And correct me if I'm wrong, I think
7 the units were supposed to be
8 targeted for -- was it for --

9 DR. GENERALS: International
10 students.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 How is that working? Some people
13 think it's just a straight-out market
14 rate development that we have --

15 DR. GENERALS: It was working
16 beautifully until the pandemic.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Okay.

19 DR. GENERALS: The pandemic
20 hit, and most of those students were
21 from Southeast Asia and China, could
22 not get back into the country. So we
23 went from 45 to 0 overnight. I think
24 we've got about 10 now. We're trying
25 to rebuild that. Our international

1 population is slowly growing back.

2 We're about 190 international

3 students.

4 We do think that's a viable

5 source for not just cultural reasons

6 but of course revenue. International

7 students pay three times the rate,

8 and Philadelphia is a huge attraction

9 for international college, students

10 that are interested in coming to

11 study internationally. So we

12 absolutely see that as a market that

13 we want to try to be a part of.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Okay.

16 DR. GENERALS: But it was

17 working beautifully until the

18 pandemic.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Yeah.

21 DR. GENERALS: Literally,

22 overnight.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

24 Yeah, so was some of us. It took its

25 toll on pretty much everything and

1 everybody. We're all trying to
2 recover.

3 DR. GENERALS: Right.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
5 in your presentation you talk about a
6 one-time funding request for \$15
7 million for capital programs. Can
8 you give me a little more detail
9 about that request and what it's for?

10 DR. GENERALS: Sure. So it's
11 a combination of deferred maintenance
12 issues. We have old buildings.
13 We're constantly fixing busted pipes.
14 We're constantly fixing ceilings that
15 are leaking. And at the same time,
16 we try to balance that with the need
17 to renovate old equipment, old
18 systems.

19 Right now we're renovating
20 our physics lab. We think it's an
21 essential part of the education of
22 our students to have state-of-the-art
23 equipment because that's what's going
24 to get them the job, that's what's
25 going to get them the transfer to the

1 high-tech institution that hopefully
2 they will go to.

3 So it's a combination of the
4 two. We've laid out the capital
5 growth plan for three to five years,
6 and we think this will be a part of
7 it. Again, part of it is deferred
8 maintenance, part of it is technology
9 increases and upgrades. Technology
10 upgrades, as you know Moore's Law,
11 every six months that you have in
12 front of you becomes obsolete very
13 quick. So those are some of the
14 capital expenses that we are
15 constantly trying to get ahead of.

16 So with the way the City's
17 budget is structured, we benefit by
18 having capital dollars set aside from
19 our operations and separating the
20 two, so that we don't have to go in
21 and formulate our budget in a way
22 where more dollars are committed to
23 the essential needs of the capital
24 needs.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 All right.

2 DR. GENERALS: We do have --

3 MR. EPPS: Council President
4 Clarke, let me --

5 DR. GENERALS: We do have a
6 list, a three-year plan for capital
7 projects that we certainly could
8 send. As you know, Rob Dubow is on
9 our Board, so we work very closely
10 with him on some of those projects as
11 well.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Right. Was there --

14 MR. EPPS: Yeah. I was going
15 to clarify, but President Generals
16 covered it. And, that is, the
17 request is only a portion of the real
18 deferred maintenance that exists on
19 the campus.

20 DR. GENERALS: Right.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Okay. Well, thank you for only
23 asking for a portion. In these --

24 MR. EPPS: President Clarke,
25 let me just say to you that since I

1 know where your offices are and you
2 know MSB and you know 1515 Arch,
3 these buildings are in similar shape.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Yeah. All right. I'm very familiar
6 with them.

7 MR. EPPS: They all have the
8 same ilk.

9 DR. GENERALS: Before the
10 Career Tech Center out in West
11 Philly, the newest building was
12 2020(sic), so that's 23 years old.
13 So the building looks okay, but we
14 have issues with HVAC systems. We
15 have issues with air handlers, air
16 controllers. You know, the amount of
17 maintenance that goes into
18 maintaining these 20- to 100-year-old
19 buildings, this building I'm standing
20 in is over 100 years old.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Right.

23 DR. GENERALS: It's pretty
24 extensive. So we don't want -- we
25 try to keep educational dollars from

1 having to deal with --

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Yeah. Didn't one of the buildings
4 used to be the Mint?

5 DR. GENERALS: Yep. That's
6 the 100-year-old building.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Yeah, it used to be the Mint. All
9 right. Not that I was around --

10 MR. EPPS: We all have young
11 people. And unfortunately, they have
12 choices and the physical conditions
13 help drive their choice. A lot of
14 our students don't really have the
15 same amount of choice, but we need to
16 give them something that's
17 reasonable. And in some cases, what
18 we have at the college needs some
19 investment to be reasonable.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 Right. Okay. If you could just
22 provide that list.

23 One last question since we're
24 talking about facilities. And you
25 know my annual question about the

1 North Philadelphia branch of CCP that
2 we talk about pretty much every year.
3 I won't be in a position to cut that
4 ribbon as an elected, but I'm going
5 to ask in the last budget process the
6 conversations -- and correct me if
7 I'm wrong, I know at one point we
8 were talking about starting with some
9 courses just to get a foot in the
10 door in one of the public schools.

11 And I've noticed we've
12 changed leadership over at the School
13 District, but the need is still
14 there. Every time I ride by that
15 state-of-the-art building in West
16 Philly, I say, man, wouldn't one of
17 these look good over here in North
18 Philly. Where did that conversation
19 go? I know we talked about GED and
20 some other preparatory type of
21 courses. And I think we were looking
22 at Dobbins at the time. Did it kind
23 of go away?

24 DR. GENERALS: No, it has
25 not. We're very closely aligned with

1 the School District's vision and
2 strategies for expanding in the
3 career and technical education areas.
4 I along with Dr. Thomas who was just
5 on, with the School District
6 officials, Dr. Watlington and a
7 couple of his executives have been on
8 a tour.

9 Dobbins was one of the stops
10 we made. Strawberry Mansion was one
11 of the stops we made. Spinson(ph)
12 was one of the stops we made and
13 South Philly, with the idea of
14 finding where we can align in the
15 context of dual enrollment programs,
16 opportunities for students to either
17 continue or take college-level
18 courses, and these fields that will
19 put them on a pathway towards career
20 and technical education.

21 So to answer your question,
22 it's a little bit more than just the
23 conversation stage of things.
24 Dobbins has a lot of space that we
25 could conceivably utilize. The

1 question is what would we do, what
2 kinds of programs would we put in
3 there that would make sense.

4 Yes, we started with the
5 idea, you know, of putting an anchor
6 down with some basic skill types of
7 things, but we could very easily
8 pivot that to job readiness
9 opportunities for students in some of
10 the career and technical education
11 fields, so that's kind of where the
12 thinking is right now.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 Yeah. I mean, the schools you
15 referenced I know we had the tour at
16 Dobbins a couple of times. The space
17 is still there. Some of it was raw
18 space that would require a
19 significant capital investment. But
20 we also have as you know Strawberry
21 Mansion. It has around 300 students
22 at the school that was built for 1200
23 students.

24 And fortunately, I want to
25 thank the Building Trades for coming

1 in and running a program,
2 apprenticeship program out of there.
3 And next door to that, we have L.P.
4 Hill that is basically vacant, a
5 similar school in terms of the
6 configuration. Again, it's
7 1,000-plus student school that's
8 empty.

9 So I think the space needs
10 can be addressed with minimal
11 investment, particularly in those
12 latter schools that I referenced.
13 But I'm glad to hear that you're
14 talking to Dr. Watlington, who's
15 actually going to be up at Hill
16 School this week to look at the
17 potential use of repurposing of that
18 school. So I'm glad to hear it.
19 I'll obviously bring that up when I
20 have a conversation with them.

21 All right. Well, thank you.
22 Thank you, Dr. Generals and Chairman
23 Epps.

24 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
25 Gauthier.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
2 afternoon, Dr. Generals.

3 DR. GENERALS: Good
4 afternoon.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
6 First, thank you to you and your
7 entire team as well as the Board for
8 all of the good work you do on behalf
9 of Philadelphia every single day. I
10 have a few questions about CCP and
11 how it is engaging with the growth of
12 the life sciences industry.

13 Earlier this year I took a
14 tour of the new CCP facility in West
15 Philadelphia. I am very excited
16 about this state-of-the-art
17 educational facility in the 3rd
18 District, which will help prepare
19 students for a range of
20 transportation, tech and health care
21 jobs.

22 And as I've seen the
23 explosion of real estate in West and
24 Southwest Philadelphia dedicated to
25 life science companies, I want to

1 make sure that we are equally as
2 invested in preparing our workforce
3 for the life sciences jobs sure to
4 come to Philadelphia. Can you talk
5 about the investment that CCP is
6 making in life sciences education
7 both in terms of curriculum as well
8 as physical lab space?

9 DR. GENERALS: So to be
10 clear, our life sciences labs that
11 exist as well as the current plans
12 for future life sciences labs are on
13 the main campus. We believe that --
14 I understand resources kind of
15 dictate what you do. But for the
16 most part, all of our health
17 sciences, all of whom have to take
18 life sciences courses, they're here
19 at the main campus.

20 So the investments that have
21 been made have been -- just in lab
22 facilities and lab equipment is
23 probably approaching \$12 million to
24 \$15 million just in the last two or
25 three years. The latest project is a

1 physics lab that's going on right
2 now. But we have brand new
3 biochemistry labs. We have brand new
4 A&P labs. I'd love to give you a
5 tour of these facilities.

6 We are working on dedicated
7 courses that will enable students to
8 not have to take an entire degree.
9 They will only have to take certain
10 courses in order to be eligible for
11 job opportunities and internships
12 with, for example, Iovance, WuXi. As
13 you know, we've had a longstanding
14 relationship with the Wistar
15 Institute. That's a part of our life
16 sciences portfolio, if you will.

17 So it's an area that we're
18 very much attuned to and we've
19 continued to put resources, both
20 capital resources as well as
21 dedicating human resources as well.
22 You need to have the teachers, you
23 need to have the biology, chemistry,
24 physics teachers in order to be able
25 to teach that. So I think we're in

1 this space in a big way. Again,
2 approaching \$12 million to \$15
3 million just over the last three
4 years.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

6 Can you sort of expound on what does
7 that \$15 million get in terms of the
8 breadth and depth of curriculum in
9 this area? And do you think there's
10 any value in -- I know the physical
11 space is on the main campus. But do
12 you think there's any value in being
13 more proximate to where the industry
14 is growing in West, Southwest and
15 South Philadelphia?

16 DR. GENERALS: Certainly,
17 proximity is key. I'm being honest.
18 We just don't have any immediate
19 plans in West Philly. The degree
20 programs and the certificate programs
21 obviously are biology and chemistry,
22 applied engineering technology, some
23 of the cell and gene therapy programs
24 or laboratory technician, project
25 coordinators, animal research, we're

1 looking to develop curriculum in that
2 particular area. We've been
3 approached by the field to develop a
4 program in that area.

5 Quality control is another
6 area. Some of the equipment includes
7 obviously state-of-the-art
8 microscopes, fermenters. Part of the
9 focus, especially as it relates to
10 job placement, is the equipment. The
11 hoods that students have to use, the
12 microscopes that they have to use,
13 the fermenters that they have to use
14 all have to be state-of-the-art
15 equipment.

16 The issue that we have
17 learned through conversations with
18 industry folks is that quite often
19 somebody with a degree and the
20 theories of these fields are very
21 inexperienced with the equipment. So
22 if you're working on half a million
23 dollar piece of equipment, they like
24 to know that you know what you're
25 doing. So we've invested second to

1 none, and you can quote me on that,
2 second to none in the City of
3 Philadelphia in equipment, science
4 and lab equipment for this particular
5 field.

6 However, it is on the main
7 campus at this point. We have had
8 very preliminary conversations about
9 some of the available space that
10 abuts the West Philly campus. As you
11 know, we just purchased \$6 million
12 parking lot. We needed a parking
13 lot. This conversation is about
14 building on top of that, a possible
15 partnership, public-private
16 partnership there.

17 So again, for preliminary
18 conversations we're always in
19 conversations with Hilco. But there
20 are no definite plans about that
21 particular area at this point.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
23 you. And I just have a few other
24 questions that I want to get out and
25 then allow you the time to answer.

1 We know that many others are also
2 tackling this issue in our region.
3 Other community colleges and
4 neighboring regions have fully
5 developed life sciences curriculums
6 as well and they have been successful
7 in preparing students for these
8 careers.

9 Can you talk about any
10 partnerships that you formed with
11 neighboring institutions to share
12 resources so that we can offer the
13 best education for Philadelphia
14 students in this area? And then
15 finally, can you talk about the
16 employer relationships that you were
17 developing to connect graduates with
18 job opportunities in the area of the
19 life sciences?

20 DR. GENERALS: Sure. So
21 again, I would start with Iovance
22 Pharmaceuticals, I believe they are.
23 WuXi, I actually personally visited
24 them at the Navy Yard. We're in
25 conversations with Spark

1 Therapeutics. As I mentioned, the
2 Wistar Institute. It's a huge
3 training opportunity for our
4 students. And we are part of the
5 Delaware Valley Community College
6 Consortium, which includes Montco,
7 Delaware County Community College,
8 Drexel, Camden and Bucks County
9 Community College. And we provide
10 training opportunities for a range
11 from the more technical, mundane
12 including some of the life sciences
13 areas that you're referring to.

14 So I think this is an area of
15 growth. I think from the Community
16 College vantage point it's still a
17 little unsettling about where our
18 space will be. We're being told that
19 these opportunities are there, but
20 we're still very much in competition
21 with the Drexels and the Penns and
22 the Temples and so forth. So we're
23 trying to forge into this space.

24 Congresswoman Scanlon has
25 visited our campus a couple of times

1 because as you know, she's a huge
2 proponent of these opportunities.
3 And so, we think that with time we
4 will certainly be a huge provider of
5 a workforce for these fields. And I
6 think we're laying the foundation to
7 do that with the lab equipment and
8 the lab investments that we've made
9 so far.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

11 Right. And I may be biased, but I
12 think CCP corners the market on its
13 ability to prepare entry-level
14 workers from Philadelphia's
15 neighborhoods or workers that are
16 already in the field and need to
17 upskill in a way that is very
18 different than a Drexel or another
19 institution.

20 And I'm very interested in
21 working with you and working with the
22 other agencies of the City, Commerce
23 or PhilaWorks, to make sure that we
24 can really push this forward to
25 benefit the people of Philadelphia.

1 Thank you so much.

2 DR. GENERALS: Absolutely.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

6 Chair recognizes Councilman

7 Jones.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

9 Mr. President.

10 President Generals, how are

11 you?

12 DR. GENERALS: I'm good. How

13 are you?

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good to

15 see you again. And, Chairman Epps, I

16 had a series of questions. But once

17 you popped on the screen, I kind of

18 got some of the answers, and you'll

19 appreciate why I got some of the

20 answers.

21 It seems that you as an

22 education institution have kind of

23 shifted towards reverse engineering

24 of education that is useful to

25 employers at the end of the day

1 producing a workforce that is hireable
2 and employable. And I sense that in
3 the things that you do by way of what
4 Member Gauthier just said, but I just
5 feel that kind of reverse engineering
6 from a commerce perspective, that
7 you've kind of moved in that
8 direction; is that true?

9 DR. GENERALS: That is
10 absolutely true. I think we've
11 demonstrated that through our
12 investments, both in our labs and
13 equipment. The West Philly Project
14 was \$35 million and we continue to
15 look at ways in which we can expand
16 our footprint in this area. I think
17 that makes us much more
18 comprehensive. It's not an exclusion
19 of the more traditional liberal arts
20 transfer, but it's an extension of,
21 an expansion of the kinds of work we
22 should do.

23 Philadelphia is a big city,
24 so there's plenty that we need to do
25 in order to meet the demand for the

1 economy and the workforce here, and
2 that's what we're trying to do.

3 MR. EPPS: So, Councilman --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Have you
5 been able -- yes, go ahead.

6 MR. EPPS: Can I just --

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Sure.

8 MR. EPPS: So you used the
9 word commerce. I would double-down
10 on what President Generals said.
11 That's what the marketplace needs as
12 well as we're doing quite frankly
13 this collective system. We're still
14 not producing what the market needs.
15 So, yes, we need to do everything
16 we're doing and we need to do more
17 because the marketplace needs it.

18 And it is increasingly
19 affirming that most of the jobs that
20 Councilmember Gauthier talked about
21 and others, many, many, many of them
22 do not require a four-year degree.
23 It requires skills, licenses and
24 certificates that Community College
25 has. Further prepared it's a

1 strategy around, but we even need to
2 do more.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: You guys,
4 kudos, to you, your leadership, your
5 Board, your team because you sensed
6 that and have adjusted a large ship
7 to accommodate that demand. I will
8 tell you once I was up at Pepsi
9 Bottling Plant up in Former -- well,
10 up in Member Lozada's District. And
11 it was a part of an understanding
12 where their industry goes. It was
13 revolving around the soda tax.

14 And long story short, the
15 manager pointed out a technician that
16 was measuring the pH water balance
17 for the use in some of their beverage
18 products, and they were testing it
19 every so many tons and gallons to go
20 through the machine. And he told me
21 that that gentleman a year before was
22 moving product on a crane or on a
23 forklift. And they recruited him,
24 sent him to specific classes to be
25 qualified to do that level of work

1 that was pertinent in their factory.
2 That is becoming more and more the
3 case.

4 And I just think Community is
5 strategically in a position to take
6 advantage of that. Generals, am I
7 close?

8 DR. GENERALS: Absolutely.
9 We refer to that as contract
10 training. A business comes to us and
11 says they have a particular need, a
12 particular workforce need or skilled
13 need for their workers, and we can
14 either train their incumbent workers,
15 people that are working there, or we
16 can train people that are not working
17 there, that population of people that
18 they might need.

19 So I think we have
20 customizable abilities to provide
21 training and educational
22 opportunities in a whole range of
23 areas. And again, the career tech,
24 whether it's in the form of lab
25 technician, if you're an aseptic lab

1 technician, there's a whole range of
2 fields that you can go in that is
3 discipline-specific relative to what
4 you just said.

5 So whether it's that or
6 whether it's electrical mechanics
7 whereby you could be working for a
8 production or a processing unit, and
9 as you know most of production and
10 processing units have various forms
11 of robotics and automation, so the
12 people that run those machines are
13 usually people that have training in
14 a particular area in that field.

15 So some of the foundational
16 subject areas that we're teaching in
17 that West Philly campus will enable
18 students to go into a range of areas.
19 They have the foundations. They
20 understand the basic structures of
21 these equipments and they're able to
22 then specialize with a particular
23 company that they may be with. So,
24 yes, to answer your question.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in the

1 4th District, the old Bud Plant is
2 being converted into Bud Biotech, and
3 I don't know if you've been able to
4 connect with those individuals. But
5 Chairman Epps was probably around
6 when they started the design of it,
7 but they put a half a billion with a
8 B into that facility to attract small
9 biotech companies, independent
10 companies, that wanted a shared
11 workplace.

12 And they are looking for
13 people to train that they don't need
14 a college degree. They want to
15 specifically train them to the needs
16 of their individual companies. And I
17 just think that's an excellent
18 opportunity for Philadelphians that
19 want to stay here, work here, educate
20 here and hopefully buy homes here.
21 And so, I just think that your
22 institution is nimble enough to be
23 able to go right after that kind of
24 market.

25 MR. EPPS: Councilmember --

1 DR. GENERALS: The --

2 MR. EPPS: President Clarke
3 was talking about the connection to
4 the School District. That is why
5 that is so important because today
6 and tomorrow the City has more jobs
7 than we have today skilled people to
8 do those jobs, and Community College
9 must be at the center of those
10 partnerships that will fuel the
11 pipeline to deliver to your Districts
12 the kind of skill resources that are
13 needed today and tomorrow to fill
14 those jobs.

15 We do not have a jobs
16 problem. We have a skills problem.
17 And Community College absolutely --

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: I
19 appreciate what you've done with the
20 institution. I remember President
21 Generals' first year and him coming
22 to my office and explaining his
23 vision. And I thought at the time it
24 was overly optimistic. But lo and
25 behold, I see the actualization of

1 that vision and I think it is the
2 first rung for many people.

3 Many people that work for the
4 City started out at Community and
5 went on while they worked to improve
6 their professional stature, and we
7 are grateful to the institution.
8 Because I would just hope that you
9 venture beyond the 5th District with
10 President Clarke and the 3rd District
11 with Jamie Gauthier, and come to the
12 4th District. We've got plenty of
13 space for you.

14 MR. EPPS: Well, may I put in
15 a plug, Councilmember Jones? You
16 talked about the need for continuous
17 learning. So we have seen the
18 success of the Catto Scholarship
19 program. And through President
20 Generals' leadership, we're beginning
21 to have the conversation about how do
22 we gain the resources to make tuition
23 free for the part-timers. But we're
24 not there yet, but I guarantee you
25 we'll be back because we need to

1 remove the barrier of cost for those
2 that need to work while they go to
3 school.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So true.
5 Thank you, Mr. President.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 You're good, Councilman?

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Nodded
9 affirmatively).

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Okay. Thank you.

12 Chair recognizes Councilman
13 Thomas.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
15 afternoon, Council President.

16 Good afternoon, Dr. Generals.
17 Thank you and your entire team for
18 being here. Thank you for all the
19 great work that you do. I'm actually
20 going to be pretty quick because I
21 don't want to be repetitive. And a
22 lot of my questions were actually
23 already answered.

24 The one thing I didn't hear
25 us talk about in-depth is dual

1 enrollment. I'm wondering where we
2 are with dual enrollment, how many
3 partnerships do we have across the
4 City of Philadelphia and what does
5 the progress look like as it relates
6 to giving our young people an edge
7 when they want to go to some level of
8 higher academia and already having
9 those credits and that collegiate
10 experience because of the
11 collaborative efforts that they have
12 with CCP?

13 DR. GENERALS: I'm going to
14 ask Dave to chime in here, but I can
15 tell you citywide we're doing quite
16 well. The number of dual enrollment
17 students has increased. The number
18 of partnership schools has increased,
19 both public as well as more
20 independent/private.

21 And our budget requests that
22 the Mayor has fulfilled or is
23 proposing includes 150,000, to
24 increase the number of dual
25 enrollment programs.

1 Dave, do you want to give
2 some specificity?

3 MR. THOMAS: Certainly,
4 certainly. Councilman Thomas, good
5 to hear you. I don't see you, but
6 good to hear you, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah, I
8 apologize. I'm having a little issue
9 with my camera. It was messing up --

10 MR. THOMAS: Not a problem.
11 I understand. I'm happy to talk
12 about just the efforts that we've
13 made to advance dual enrollment in
14 the City of Philadelphia for Philly
15 students. Quick backdrop, in
16 2010-2011 dual enrollment was a state
17 budget line item. It was removed
18 based off of the Governor's
19 Administration at that particular
20 time.

21 And since then, we've seen
22 our numbers over the last 10, 12, 13
23 years increase based off of I think
24 our ability to be a bit more nimble
25 and to expand our program offerings

1 to students that traditionally didn't
2 even take advantage of dual
3 enrollment.

4 In the past when those
5 dollars were at the state level,
6 there were different requirements
7 that students could access dual
8 enrollment. And those requirements
9 were typically the students who would
10 take advantage of dual enrollment
11 opportunities in the first place.

12 So when those dollars went
13 away, some of those requirements also
14 went away and we opened up the
15 floodgates and began to do more
16 outreach to some of our opportunity
17 network schools as well as our
18 neighborhood high schools. As of
19 last when I ran the numbers for this
20 fiscal year for dual enrollment
21 students, we've enrolled roughly 1580
22 students and we're still enrolling
23 students for this last summer term.
24 So we'll probably be over 1700 high
25 school students this semester.

1 Our partnerships expand over
2 35 schools and paraprofessional
3 organizations. Of course, the School
4 District of Philadelphia being our
5 largest partner. But also with some
6 recent changes in state legislation,
7 charter schools are actually now
8 taking greater advantage of dual
9 enrollment opportunities through the
10 School District as the Chief LEA. So
11 we are looking to expand those
12 opportunities even more.

13 Last point I'll mention
14 around Act 158. While some folks saw
15 Act 158 as the unfunded mandate that
16 put additional burden on districts,
17 and in many instances it has, we saw
18 it as an opportunity to think outside
19 the box and to have an additional
20 carrot as it relates to dual
21 enrollment, which is one of the five
22 pathway options that students can
23 take to earn their high school
24 diploma as a graduate of the state of
25 Pennsylvania.

1 So when I look across other
2 community colleges in the
3 Commonwealth, we currently enroll the
4 largest amount of students programs
5 across any other community college in
6 the Commonwealth. And I'm hoping
7 that that number will increase. That
8 additional 150,000 that we requested
9 from the City in our budget, this
10 year is on top of the current
11 \$350,000 that we get, so we'll raise
12 the City's investment to \$500,000
13 annually for dual enrollment, which
14 is where we were in 2010-2011 when
15 the state was funding us. So we're
16 now back at where those state funding
17 allocations were, but it's through
18 the City now.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: That's
20 great information. That's a very
21 detailed answer. We thank you for
22 that. Very much appreciate it. And
23 I just also wanted to commend
24 Dr. Generals and the team for the
25 West Philly space. We use it often

1 to convene educators and to talk
2 about issues that we face across the
3 City of Philadelphia.

4 So again, thank you to you
5 and your team. It's a pleasure to
6 work with you, and we appreciate all
7 you're doing for the young people in
8 the City of Philadelphia.

9 DR. GENERALS: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Thank you, Councilman. Are you good,
12 Councilman?

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm good,
14 CP. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Okay. I do not believe we have any
17 additional colleagues in the queue
18 for questions or comments. With
19 that, I'd like to thank you both for
20 a job well done and for your
21 continued commitment to the
22 educational opportunities of the
23 citizens of the City of Philadelphia.

24 One parting statement, North
25 Philadelphia satellite office, North

1 Philly. I got to put a plug in for
2 the 5th Council District and actually
3 the 8th District too. We're on that
4 border, so you can get two
5 Councilmembers pretty excited about
6 locking down those (inaudible). So,
7 gentlemen, thank you --

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: I touch
9 those two, Pres, the 4th, the 8th and
10 the 5th, Lehigh Avenue.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Yeah, I see the Majority Leader
13 trying to slide the 4th in so I got
14 to make sure the 5th is in that
15 queue.

16 Gentlemen, thank you so much.
17 We really appreciate the work you've
18 done. Thank you for your commitment.
19 I look forward to you --

20 DR. GENERALS: Thank you.

21 MR. EPPS: Okay. We
22 appreciate it. Thank you. Bye-bye.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Thank you. That concludes our
25 testimony for today. Let's get our

1 next date that we will -- and our
2 timing. No other questions, there
3 being none, the Committee we will
4 stand in recess until Wednesday, May
5 3rd at 10:00 a.m., at which time we
6 will reconvene in a remote manner
7 using Microsoft Teams.

8 I want to thank you all very
9 much. Talk to you all tomorrow.

10 Thank you.

11 (Committee of the Whole
12 concluded at 3:50 p.m.)
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1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

2

3 I, hereby certify that the
4 proceedings and evidence noted are
5 contained fully and accurately in the
6 stenographic notes taken by me in the
7 foregoing matter, and this is a correct
8 transcript of the same.

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TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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