COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
OPERATING BUDGET HEARINGS - SCHOOL DISTRICT

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, March 8, 2000
2:20 p.m.

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BILL 000007 - Authorizing the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate within Philadelphia. . .

BILL 000008 - Further authorizing the Board of Education to impose a tax on the use or occupancy of real estate within Philadelphia. . .

BILL 000009 - Further authorizing the Board of Education to impose a tax on net income from real property, tangible, and intangible of property of residents of Philadelphia. . .

PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA, Chair
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY
COUNCILMAN W. THACHER LONGSTRETH
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

- - -

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P R O C E E D I N G S

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, everyone. This is the continued public hearing for the Committee of the Whole regarding Bill No.'s 7, 8, and 9.

Mr. Hornbeck, is there anything that you would like to add to your previous testimony?

DR. HORNBECK: No, Madam President. If there are questions, of course, I'm pleased to take them. I'm here to also hear the testimony of others.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

I believe our first witness will be Shelly Yanoff. Is she here? Oh, here she is. Please approach the witness table.

(Shelly Yanoff comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. YANOFF: Good afternoon, Council President Verna and Councilmembers. My name is Shelly Yanoff. I'm Executive Director of Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth,

which is the region's child advocacy organization.

This is the first time that I can remember that I'm testifying without testimony, and that's because the budget isn't ready, and I hope you will provide opportunity for citizen input when the budget is ready.

I would, of course, underscore the need for the City to do the most it can to support the children and the public schools of this city. There are at least 212,000 children who need you to continue supporting them and look for ways to unite your voices in support of them. So I encourage you to do everything you can to cause the kind of consensus to more forward that we're seeing in other areas of the City.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Despite the fact that we do not have a detailed budget, and I think we all feel very strongly that we should re-enact the taxes that are before us, there is nothing that prevents us from having -- and I know the Chairperson from the Education Committee is very much interested in having public hearings at a later date, and we

will certainly do that.

MS. YANOFF: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I know, Miss Yanoff, that we have discussed some ideas as to how we can do something for young people and maybe direct some monies towards their education. And since we have begun discussing a process, it's very good that we begin throwing out these ideas so that people can begin hearing them so that when they're presented as legislative ordinances, we're not surprised by them.

So if you can enlighten us about some of those fund-raising activities for many of schools, we would maybe appreciate some of that.

MS. YANOFF: Well, Councilman Ortiz, you have been you have always been a champion of children and we're very grateful for that. We have been urging Council to -- in its consideration of stadiums, to remember that there's a lot of building that needs to be done for kids in schools and that we've been urging Council that before enacting anything official on

the stadiums, that there be a set-aside for a youth fund so the children of Philadelphia can have those things that other children have in other parts of the city, state, and country.

So that last year, when Councilwoman Blackwell held hearings on the sorry state of the libraries in the schools, when Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown, a few days ago, talked about the need for more arts and music, that we recognize that there are things that we can do with a separate fund that will not take the burden and the responsibility away from the State for the major funding of schools, but those other things that are important, including after-school programs and recreation and music and art and libraries, so that we could have that in the youth fund.

Further, we are urging that the City and the State and SEPTA come together and to make it less of a burden for children in Philadelphia to go to school.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Do you have any ideas how that youth fund should be structured and where the money would come from?

MS. YANOFF: Well, I think the youth fund can be begun by having -- charging $1 a ticket on any stadium -- on any event that is held in any stadium that is built henceforth through a substantial amount of public funds. Just at the very base, that would begin -- just using the numbers that we have currently, that would be more than $4 million on top of the proposed budget, and that would begin to improve the quality of life for children and families in the City.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Very interesting, very good. Thank you for putting that on the record.

MS. YANOFF: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Are there any other questions from members of the committee for Miss Yanoff, or comments?

(No further questions or comments.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

MS. YANOFF: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam President.

I had a call from the constituent that asked if I would ask a question of Mr. Hornbeck. May I do that?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Certainly.

Mr. Hornbeck, do you mind taking the witness stand?

(Mr. Hornbeck comes forward.)

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Superintendent, how are you today?

DR. HORNBECK: Well. Thank you, sir.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Superintendent, you're aware of the controversy that the Philadelphia library system has reduced the age to 12 years old for a child to get R-rated videos from our library system, and also, they have unlimited access on the Internet, and I know we discussed the Internet and your effort to do what's right to limit that material from the very young in our school system.

Does each of our schools -- and maybe I should know this but I don't, should -- do most of our schools have a library?

DR. HORNBECK: Many of our schools do not have a well-functioning library. In fact, one of the Fair Opportunities to Learn proposals that I've made to the old board and will make to the new board is that every school will have a librarian, and that next year, we would spend on its materials an amount equal to the average spent in the Commonwealth.

There are also at least some of our schools where the library is so bad that the principal has made a decision to actually not keep it open and to focus on other ways of supporting instructional materials.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Superintendent, just before I go where I want to go here, have you ever done a study to see that -- I guess in an ideal world, it would obviously be the best condition to have a library in the school. But with the modernization of our libraries and also the additional libraries, could there be some consideration of working closer with our system to be the library for the school rather than have a duplicate? And I mentioned this earlier about trying to work together to save the taxpayers and

the City some money.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, happily, the Free Library and we do lots of things together, so it's not a question of starting that.

I would be most reluctant to see local libraries -- the Free Library units be a substitute for the school library because it just isn't a substitute. It can't respond, it can't be a technology center for the library, teachers can't send the kids and so on.

But what I'm very enthusiastic about is continuing to look for ways to collaborate. And we have -- for example, we keep our central resource library for our special education at the Free Library, and that's a literally jointly funded project. We have a very tight relationship during the summertime around the summer programs, which is a formal joint relationship.

And I suspect that every one of the 50-some-odd Free Library locations in the City has one or more formal school programs in there, and I would certainly want to continue those and grow them if we could.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So then there is

some encouragement to use the Free Library system?

DR. HORNBECK: Absolutely. It's a great system.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Now, give me an example of a school that has what you consider a -- I don't want to use the word "fine" library, but an adequate library. Give me an example of a school that has one.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, there are actually 30 schools, and I can't name one right now. I just know that there are 30 in the system, and I could certainly get you the names that -- in fact, I think there may be as many as 36 this year that have implemented what we refer to as "library power." This is a national program that was begun about eight years, and Philadelphia was one of the place that is we piloted it.

And the foundation money ran out about three or four years ago, but because it was so good, schools in clusters pieced together the money to keep it going in 36 places. And it is that model that we are designing the Fair Opportunities to Learn on for the future, because

we believe that there should be a library power model in each of the schools.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I guess you figure where I'm heading with this question is, do we have any adult material in any of our school libraries?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know of any. It has -- during my five and a half years, it's not been an issue.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Do we have videos?

DR. HORNBECK: I'm sorry?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Do we have video cassettes in the --

DR. HORNBECK: I'm sure we do in some places, but our libraries are so seriously underfunded that the prospect of buying any appreciable number of videos generally -- we spent this year $5 per kid for the whole year on library materials, for example.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So it would surprise you if you found out that in a particular school library that there would be R-rated videos.

DR. HORNBECK: It would surprise me, but I just don't know.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Would you -- would you object to R-rated videos being in a school library?

DR. HORNBECK: I've just never thought the question through or where that might be -- I don't even know which videos are R-rated. I don't know that I agree with the Motion Picture Association and their standards, even.

I certainly would object to the use of popular films that depict violence and sex as being something that anyone would describe as instructionally valuable. And since we have so little money for stuff that is instructionally valuable, we have a long way to go before I would endorse the purchase of anything like that.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But your answer is that you're not confident that you really know the answer -- you don't know if there are or if there are not.

DR. HORNBECK: I just -- I -- I have not asked that particular question because it's never been an issue.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, you know, we never had this issue before where the age went

from 14, and a year later, went to the age of 12. And the reason being -- I assume that the call that I got was to ask you that question. If we have it in the Free Library system, could it possibly in the School District system? And I'm pleased to hear that the likelihood of that happening is very small.

DR. HORNBECK: Is very small, yes.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Councilman Ortiz?

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Yes. I don't think that's one of the biggest problems we have about libraries in the system; is that right, Mr. Superintendent?

DR. HORNBECK: Say that again? I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: That's not the biggest problem we have in terms of the school system.

DR. HORNBECK: No, it is not, not by

any means.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: The aspect of libraries is one that I'm interested in and it's one that -- because my daughter's library does not have a full-time librarian.

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: How do we -- what are the plans to achieve full-time librarians and full-time libraries in every school that we have? We should not be trying eliminate them.

DR. HORNBECK: Three years ago, in part, because of the elimination of positions like full-time librarian, the Mayor and then-City Council President Street and the Board and I drew this proverbial line in the sand so that we didn't go further into that hole, at least from a financial point of view.

As we have -- the other day, when we were talking, there was a total of $155 million worth of Fair Opportunities to Learn items, which we identify as essential to maintaining the graduation and promotion requirements on that list -- which is a very short list as a matter of fact -- would be our ability to have a full-time

librarian in every school, and in the next year, to grow the materials budget to about $12 a child from the $5 a child, the $12 being the average that is spent in the State.

And in the longer term, looking to the subsequent three years, growing that materials budget to the point that we would be at around $30, which is the national average for the purchase of instructional materials.

So it is my recommendation to the Board of Education that next year, we have that full-time librarian.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam President.

And Dr. Hornbeck, thank you very much for your prompt response to my request for information relative to the AMS or Pyramid computer system purchase.

DR. HORNBECK: Of course.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It indicates to me,

unless I'm reading the information you provided incorrectly, that the original contract for AMS was let on 1/12/98 in the amount of $14,500,000. To date, we have spent, according to the information provided to me -- unless I'm reading it incorrectly -- $29,011,000.

DR. HORNBECK: If you include the lease space and the training and all to AMS itself, it's $28,171,000.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. So that -- I mean, that's, I would think, almost a little less than double what we originally thought?

DR. HORNBECK: Just slightly less than double.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And as a result of -- there's other contracts listed here. One is for Unisys.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And Ram Technologies.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And then there's a number for temporary help, H.R. contracts, and temporary help Unisys. Which of those are related

to the original scope of the contract and which of those are related to any problems that may have come about as a result of its implementation?.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, the Unisys contract serves two ends. One part of that is that they helped us design the scope of the project originally, the RFP that went out. So a piece of it is for that.

The other piece is to work with us over the years since in monitoring the implementation of the system. So they both monitor the implementation of the $14 million worth, and they've monitored the implementation of the other.

The Ram Technologies is a contract that arises, I guess you would say, because of the difficulties that we have faced, because it is to actually come in and examine from a detailed point of view all the questions, for example, that you're asking.

The temporary help H.R. contracts, I suppose you could say, in one sense are related to the issues beyond the original, although experience across the United States suggests that

there are problems of the kind that we've encountered anytime you introduce big new systems like this, but they -- we simply had too few people to do all the input we needed to do.

And then that other Unisys piece is additional support that is the consequence of having to extend the contract.

So what we've done in here -- you had asked the other day for both the original, for the extension and for anything else that's related to this, and that's what we've tried to provide.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. So the numbers, whether it's $28,171,000 or $29 million -- let's go to $28,171,000. That seems to be a substantial overrun. I mean, I don't think that anyone who would let a contract for a certain amount and that contract doubles, or almost doubles. How do we explain that to both the taxpayers and to those entities that we are going to go to soon or have been in the past unsuccessfully in an attempt to get additional dollars from the State when these kinds of issues are apparently a very glaring problem?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I guess the single

most important feature in that is that originally, we mistakenly thought that our staff could do more than our staff could do. And we got into contract and all of that in an effort to keep the costs low.

The original contract was really quite exceptionally low, and we found out we couldn't do it. And so we turned back to Unisys and said, We need you to come in and what in effect are higher rates than we pay our own staff.

And so the mistake here in that framework, for the most part, is a mistake that arises out of an earlier effort to try to save money. We would have been better off, I guess, if we had just gone ahead and tried to do it all outside and through AMS, and then the original contract would have a lot higher, and there might not have been any overrun at all.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: During the course of the discussions with AMS prior to the granting of the contract, did AMS tell anybody on the staff that you guys might not be equipped to do what you said you were going to do?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, there was always

discussion of that, and one couldn't tell at the beginning for sure how it was going to play out. I actually don't know -- and the people who were involved in the day-to-day operations are no longer at the School District, but I don't know whether they ever said to them direction, you know, You guys are nuts in trying to do this much by yourselves.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Was the bid of AMS substantially lower than the Oracle, or they never gotten to a bidding point? Did the Oracle overbid?

DR. HORNBECK: Oracle never bid. The Board authorized and we sought to negotiate a contract with Oracle originally. But as far as I know, it never reached the bid point.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'll go back to my last question, and that was, what do you think the effect of these kinds of instances has on the credibility of the School District?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I think it largely depends on who characterizes it. If, in fact, you know, both you and I observe that what we were really trying to do is to save money in the way

that we've saved the other 200 million over the last five years, and unfortunately, we low-balled it, then my guess is that it will have relatively little impact.

But if you or I say, Boy, these guys did a cost overrun like $500 toilet seats and it just shows how unprepared they are, then my guess is that it would have a serious impact the other way.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yeah. I mean, I haven't worked much in my career in the private sector and I don't know what your private-sector experience is but, I mean, I'm you're sure you can imagine what the results of this kind of situation may result in a private company, a private bank, a private institution, where the CEO and the Board of Directors makes it -- or the CEO and the staff makes a decision that the Board of Directors would, I guess, take great umbrage and concern about and may even result in some people losing their jobs.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I have had the --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I mean, doubling a contract --

DR. HORNBECK: I have had the opportunity to work in the private sector, at least as a partner in a law firm. And in that particular instance because, to understate it, they are not underfunded and, therefore, their first concern was not saving money, as ours is, they wouldn't have started by low-balling it in the first place. My experience was quite extensive work with the private sector is that they have the kind of staffing and funding 'cause they pass costs on to the customers.

So that's my perspective on the private-sector view.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And sometimes the public sector has similar experiences 'cause these costs get passed on to the public sector in the way of taxpayers.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we haven't experienced too much of that in the School District, at least over the last five and a half years, because our pur-pupil cost has gone down during that period of time, not up, despite the fact that we've had, over the last several years, to serve about 15,000 additional students.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Let me ask you a question about what I think is another computer contract. I don't know if it's related to this or not, but there's a company by the name of Marcam (ph.). Are you familiar with that company and what services they provide?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes, in general.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Could you or is there someone here who could expound on what services they're providing and how much the contract --

DR. HORNBECK: Let me tell you what I know, and then if you want more, we may be able to get more.

For a very many years, in the maintenance part of the District, handwritten work orders for maintenance operations in schools were written up and passed in through a chain of command, and then it got parcelled out to plumbers or electricians or whomever. And as you probably know from your years of experience here, there would be times that there would be, at least theoretically, active work orders that were as much as ten and twelve years old that had never

been worked on. And one of the most unhappy parts, anytime you'd go into a school was how long the delay and so on.

The Marcam system computerized all of that, and now we have a system that permits us to line those up and know where they are in the line and systemically send people out. And the good news is that as part of upgrading our facilities and trying to pay attention to maintenance, that we no longer have these 5- and 10-year-old work orders, and it has brought a greater productivity and systemization to that process.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So the Marcam system, in your opinion, is working?

DR. HORNBECK: It's working really very well.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Where is Marcam Corporation located; do you know?

DR. HORNBECK: In Boston.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do they have offices anywhere in the country or outside the country?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know.

Tom, come on up here. This is Mr.

McGlinchey, who is the Acting Managing Director of the School District, and before that, was responsible for facilities, and has been intimately involved in the installation of marketing.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Marcam is an international company. They have facilities throughout the United States and in some parts of Europe.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do they have any offices in Canada?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: There is an office in Toronto, one of the their divisions, yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you know the entire amount of this contract?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: It's approximately $8 million.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Are there employees from Marcam who come either weekly or monthly or bimonthly to Philadelphia from Toronto, from Chicago, from other cities, who are paid for -- or whose expenses are paid for to live in Philadelphia, to rent cars in Philadelphia, to travel back and forth on a weekly basis and the

like?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: We have personnel from Marcam on site in Philadelphia as part of the implementation team. Their expenses are covered under the contract, and I assume that's lodging as well as transportation.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And do they come in weekly or are they here for an extended period of time or --

MR. MCGLINCHEY: We are in the third year of this contract, the final phase of installation, and some of those folks have been with us since the beginning of the contract.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Again, do they come in on a Monday and fly home on a Friday or --

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Some do. Some come in periodically and stay for a week and we don't see 'em again for five or six weeks. It depends on the nature of the work that they're doing on the implementation.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Do any of these people have expenses that are paid for by the School District in the city they return to, either Toronto or Chicago? My information is --

and it may be wrong and maybe we can dispel it here -- that there are employees of this company that actually lease cars back in the cities that they live in at the expense of the School District of Philadelphia.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Well, that would not be covered under the contract. Transportation from their home to the airport, if they're in travel status, would certainly be covered, but the rental of cars for personal use is not covered. And if that's being billed to the School District, we certain will --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: For example, an individual rents a car in Chicago, comes to Philadelphia to do the work for a couple days or a week, flies back to Chicago and gets into a leased car leased by the School District of Philadelphia to drive home.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: No, that should not be. That would not be covered under the contract and should not be billed by the consultant or the company, either.

DR. HORNBECK: Mr. Kenney, if you actually do have information to the contrary, I'd

really like to know because it seems to me that that would be entirely inappropriate.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do any of the individuals who are employed by Marcam being paid for by the School District who come from either Toronto or Chicago or wherever, are any of those paying the wage tax in Philadelphia?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Quite frankly, I do not know. I know there are some -- there's at least one gentleman who does come from their Toronto office, and several come, on occasion, from out of city, out of state. I'm just not certain.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Who is that gentleman? Who would that individual be?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Pardon me?

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you know the name of that individual?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: I just know his first name. I don't know his last name.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What's his first name.

MR. MCGLINCHEY; Pierrot is his first name. He's from the Toronto area -- or Montreal.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there a Mr. Fred Wilke who is involved with this company?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Yes, thee is.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What is his position in the company?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Mr. Wilke is the president of a company called Management Results Incorporated, and they are the project implementation representative hired by Marcam to implement the project here in Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: He does not work for Marcam, he works for -- is he on the contract for Marcam or --

MR. MCGLINCHEY: He works for Marcam.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Did Mr. Wilke, at anytime during the selection process, work as a volunteer on that project prior to the selection of Marcam?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Mr. Wilke was a member of the audit team that was commissioned by the School District through Greater Philadelphia First to perform a management and productivity audit of the School District. Mr. Wilke served as a representative of that team to audit, among other

things, the facilities department.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Was he involved in the selection of Marcam as a vendor?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: He was involved in the drafting of the RFP that we used to go out and secure respondents towards the computerized maintenance management system, and he helped us develop the criteria under which we selected those --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And now it's either being paid by -- he's either being paid by or works for or is under contract to Marcam?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: He was hired by Marcam to implement the system in Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Does Mr. Wilke's -- are any of his family members also receiving any contracted -- any payments under contract to Marcam or under this company that's owned by Mr. Wilke or run by Mr. Wilke?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: The company is a family-owned company. And I believe his son and daughter are both employees of the company.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. What I would like, if possible, is to get information from the

District as to the specifics on the amount of money that's been paid to Marcam to date, what service were rendered as a result of that, and what expenses -- lodging, travel, transportation, meals, anything that may be available to you that you could show us as a result of what we paid to individuals involved in this particular project, whether or not any of the individuals being paid for by Philadelphia and Commonwealth tax dollars are paying State taxes, City wage taxes, or any of the other appropriate taxes that any other employee of the District or any other vendor would be paying their employees?

If you can just get me a rundown on exactly how much money we've spent and what we spent it on.

DR. HORNBECK: We will give you that information and also try to calculate for you the significant increase in productivity for the kids as a consequence also.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Anytime we're dealing with contracts at the level of $14 million, $28 million, $8 million, you know, after a while, as they say, that starts to add up

to big bucks.

DR. HORNBECK: Everett Dirkson was on target.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's money that could be used for improving the $5 per head in the Library budget that we're dealing with.

DR. HORNBECK: I agree with that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So I appreciate the information. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Are there any other questions or comments for Mr. Hornbeck?

Councilman Nutter?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just one point of information. From the discussion that Councilman Kenney and the Superintendent had with regard to the computer information, I got the impression that there was a document that my colleague was reading from. Is that document available?

(Superintendent Hornbeck hands

Councilman Nutter a large binder.)

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Oh, okay. Great. Thank you. That's a fair amount of information. I thought it was just a couple pages.

The only other issue that I have, Superintendent, was from the other day, and I don't know whether since Monday, you or the office were able to put together information responding to a request I had made regarding open or acting-filled positions at the upper levels of administration.

DR. HORNBECK: We are putting it together in our response to a variety of questions but, no, I don't have it with me today.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, no problem. Thank you.

Did you respond to a question the other day? I'm not saying that the question was asked, but there was some discussion about the financial situation. And I do not believe I asked, what is the plan to try to deal with the District's financial situation and the closing of the gap that presently exists or the gap going forward?

DR. HORNBECK: There is not a complete

plan at this point. The Board, having been in place only since Friday, is still having discussion about that and with the Mayor. And it's one of the things that the Board is going to attend to in very short order, for obvious reasons. But there's not a finished plan of that kind at the moment.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Well, I mean, I understand about the situation with the new board and certainly wasn't expecting that they necessarily would have a game plan themselves at this point, but kind of the more stable portion of the operation of certainly yourself and your staff and -- I mean, all of you have been anticipating that this situation was going to come either in the current fiscal year or in the next fiscal year.

So, I mean, I have to assume that you or members of your administration have been thinking about this for a little while and have some thoughts or suggestions that you will then transit to the new board.

DR. HORNBECK: The thinking to date was reflected in President Ramos's testimony the other

day and that -- contained in those principles that he articulated. And namely, that most importantly, that the Board, the Administration, the Mayor has made clear as well that there would be no further cuts that would impact on school-based educational programs, that we needed to, in effect, go through the expenditure side with a fine-tooth comb to identify, whether it's $500,000 or $5 million, any extra efficiencies that we could add to the $200 million of efficiencies that in the aggregate we've accumulated over the last five years. And that to the extent possible -- and this is a subject still to which the new board needs to address itself -- that the Fair Opportunities to Learn would then add to that.

Now, that means that the so-called carry-forward budget, as the President testified to the other day, would leave us at the end of '01 with a deficit of about $137 million, plus the $39 million carry-forward deficit from this year, and that whatever portion of Fair Opportunities to Learn were added to that would be on top of it, and on top of that, any settlement with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

But beyond that, I think it's fair to say that the issues, as you've framed them, are undecided.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, all right. I just -- as I said, I think I meant to ask you that the other day, I realized that I had not, and I don't think the question actually came up so. . .

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Hornbeck, needless to say, it is my understanding that once you have completed your plan, you will share that with City Council?

DR. HORNBECK: Sure, absolutely.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Again, are there any other further questions or comments of Mr. Hornbeck?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness is Mr. Joseph Boyle.

(Joseph Boyle comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good

afternoon, sir.

MR. BOYLE: Yes, good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. BOYLE: Thank you. My name is Joseph B. Boyle. I live at 9111 Blue Grass Road, Philadelphia.

I would like to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, Mr. Boyle, would you speak into the microphone so that the stenographer could hear you.

MR. BOYLE: Okay. I would like to talk about the SAT scores for this year, and the verbal was -- the verbal SATs was 416, the math SATs was 416. This 416 is a drop of 5 points from last year, and the other 416 is a drop of 7 points in the math from last year. So that's an indication of deterioration of the public school SATs, which is a very serious matter.

I have new information on the number of students that -- the School District is 212,000 students. The number of employees is 31,313, the number of teachers is 12,300. If you divide the

212,000 by 31,313, you get 6.77 students per employee. So 212,000 divided by 31,000 employees is 6.77 student per employee. And then if you divide the 212,000 students by 12,300, you get 17.23 students per teacher. Now, that certainly is a very low number of students per teacher.

These verbal and math scores -- this drop in the verbal and math scores shows a very strong deterioration in education rather than it getting better. And I don't think there is any college or university in the Philadelphia area which would accept students who have such low SAT scores. I don't think there's a single college or university in the Philadelphia area which would accept such low grades as that.

Parents who have children in Catholic schools have no desire to transfer them to public schools. God-centered education is important. What they need is a rebate of the real-estate taxes which go to the public school system, a rebate of those taxes, so that they can more readily support, as in our case, the Catholic school system, which gave us -- gave me a tremendous education and given my -- currently

giving my grandchildren a very good education, and they have no desire to go into the public schools.

And I'm sure that there are many other parents who have that same desire: they want God-centered education, they don't want to be taxed for non-God education, which does not even mention God, doesn't even mention mortality. And we are hopeful that City Council will some day come to the realization that the Catholic school system, the Lutheran school system, and any other Protestant school systems which put God first are doing a much better job of educating children for what they will -- how they will have to meet the needs when they become adults themselves.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Mr. Boyle, I really want to thank you for coming in. I think for as long as I can remember, you have been coming in year after year to testify. And we want to thank you for that.

MR. BOYLE: Oh, thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

MR. BOYLE: Thank you for your kinds words.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Vernard Johnson.

(Vernard Johnson comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We're going to give each witness ten machines to testify.

Good afternoon Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Council President Verna and Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good afternoon.

MR. MILLER: I just wanted to -- unlike Shelly this year, I have mine in writing. All the years before, I didn't. So I'd just like to read what I have here.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You, too, are very loyal.

MR. JOHNSON: I'd like to say that the statements that I'm about to make are in response to our years of involvement with the school system, in response to Town Meetings that were just held by Mayor Street, and plus the meetings that were held by Mayor Street and the School District in the last month or so, and -- and here

we go.

A major concern of ours for the last number of years has been the environment. That is that the students have to live in these old buildings. And I'd just like to say it is clear that a number of children attending Philadelphia schools have been lead-poisoned. A major concern is that many children are not tested before the level of lead in the blood reaches a very dangerous level. Many children attending Philadelphia schools, not limited to public schools, may very well be acting out in a negative way because of the levels of lead that are in the child's blood.

High levels of lead in the blood can cause learning challenges for children. Is the District aware of children enrolled in school who have high enough levels of lead in their blood that can cause behavior and learning challenges? Has each one of these students received an individual education profile? What is the relationship between the school nurse and the health-care professional responsible for the student's health?

The question related to lead in schools is one of major concern. Should that question go beyond drinking water? What is the agreement -- and we now know -- what is the agreement between the School District of Philadelphia, the Department of Health and the EPA around drinking water in the schools? Does the Health Department have the resources to monitor such an agreement? We often think that the Health Department comes for this Council and doesn't ask for the appropriate amount of money to carry out its mission in the community. And so we, therefore, feel that any agreement that involves the School District will continue to put an additional stress on the Health Department's resources to monitor the health care of students.

The School District held the position several years ago that the levels of lead at the Franklin Learning Center were safe. An independent study supported with the assistance of then-Council President Street shows otherwise. Should children, students affected by the dangers of lead poisoning be placed in a school designed for students with behavioral challenges, or should

the School District be meeting the challenge to provide those students with a fruitful learning experience and a clean, safe environment? I believe that the School District should be providing a fruitful learning experience and a clean, safe environment for children whose academic abilities and their behavior are called into question by their health care.

Yesterday, we did some research and found the agreement at the EPA between the School District and the Department of Health that Councilwoman Reed and Councilwoman Blackwell now have in their possession. And I think it is far more than just turning on water that we're talking about, and I hope that the School District and the Health Department continue on the path to keep our children safe from being lead-poisoned in the very schools where they should be safe. We cannot stand for that.

I'd like to talk some about safety and security. For too many years, I have seen the relationship between far too many students, their parents, NTAs, school police, and others take a turn for the worse. School police by themselves

cannot control the environment of a school building. That environment has to be set by the adults who manage and work in the building daily and by students and their parents. They also must be counted on in setting a tone for which the students are to learn.

The leadership of the -- the student leadership of the West Philadelphia Student Government Association attended the West Philadelphia Cluster Town Meeting last week. They requested Mayor Street to assist them in meeting with the leadership of the School District police and the NTAs. They have been seeking such a meeting without success for a very long time. One of those students is a neighbor of mine, I've watched him grow up to be a real interesting young man. And I said to him that we would begin to work with the Student Government Association to at least meet with Councilwoman Miller and Councilwoman Blackwell.

And I would like to have you consider my request to meet with those students, and if you find that those students' concerns and their methods that they have planned to address the

concerns as it relates to their relationship with the School District police and NTAs and others are positive in their thought, then maybe you would help them to secure the meeting that they have been trying to secure for the last couple of years with the School District officials.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mr. Johnson, Councilwoman Miller. I certainly will be glad to help coordinate and facilitate that meeting between the students and the School District police and the NTAs. And we'll talk about it after the hearing.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You're welcome.

MR. JOHNSON: Many of our students have experienced serious situations in their life and react to certain situations based on their life experience. School officials are often aware of a student's background, when police officers may not be. Developing an ongoing relationship with student leaders may prove to be a rewarding learning experience that we all might profit from.

As it relates to the health and safety of students, we strongly support each school

having a school nurse. And we're glad to hear that Superintendent Hornbeck, I believe, in one of the Town Meetings last week is in full support of that. The West Philadelphia Cluster at this moment does not have a complement of school nurses in every building. This is an issue that we've raised in public forums for many years, and this is an area that we certain are willing to work with the District to secure adequate -- more than adequate funding for.

But in absence of that, we have been meeting with organizations like the Health Department, Greater Philadelphia Health Action, Horizon House, the Healthy Start Program, which I am pleased to be serving as the Chair of the Philadelphia Healthy Start Consortium. And what we would like to do is to offer our services as a network of health organizations to support school nurses in the Bartram Cluster and the West Philadelphia and University City Cluster, if so desired, to offer health education programs to students and families of those particular clusters, in absence of the school nurse being able to do so.

Because many school nurses spend their entire day providing primary-care services to many of the students, and so we cannot wait until we have adequate funding to support the school nurses, and this is an effort that we have all agreed upon that we would like to be involved in with the School District, and we'll give more detail of that effort at the Bartram Cluster meeting. And I'd like to say that the -- that the Health Commissioner -- the interim Health Commissioner, John Domzalski, has been sitting in on those meetings with us and has pledged the full support of the Health Department in that effort.

And I'm almost done.

I'd like to talk a little bit about our concern that charter schools in this system may be looked at as the stepchild of the public school system. And I haven't seen these figures personally, but I've been told that for each child who attends at least the World Communications Charter School, only $5100 follows that child to that school. And I believe that I've heard the figure for a public school student to be around $6900 a year.

Well, if you take 500 students, and you do some math there, times the 1800, there is quite a bit of money that the charter schools, for whatever reason, and I'm sure the School District can explain the reason, but there's quite a bit of money that is being taken from students in charter schools.

And as an example, the charter -- the World Communications Charter School, which is at Broad and South in Councilwoman Verna's district, I believe, had an after-school program for tutoring of students. They had a Saturday enrichment program and tutoring program for any student who wanted to attend and has had to, last week, send notices out to parents of those students that those services would no longer be available because of administrative budgetary kind of constraints.

And I think it's -- my daughter, my youngest daughter is now a student at the World Communications Charter School, and I think it is a disservice to us, to me and her mother who's over, that we have chosen to send our child to a public school, to a charter school, that in fact gives us

more choice, that we are basically happy with. I know my wife is happy with the feeling that our child is safe in this school. There's always a struggle, even if you're paying for it, around quality academic education.

But we think that this Council -- we hope that this Council will look closer at the issue around the budget as it relates to charter schools. And if the School District is holding $1500, $1800 per student, what is happening with those dollars?

And I'm almost done here. I wanted to kind of respond to what I thought --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Johnson, would you please summarize, please.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. The powers of a principal. There was a question here the other day about the powers of a principal. And what I would like to say is that I thought that the school plan for any individual school was put together by the principal as well as the other parts of the school family -- the parents, the students in some cases, the teachers. And in many cases, as it relates to my experience, principals

run into go lots of obstacles in developing the kind of school climate that they think students need to be involved in.

So I don't think that all of this criticism -- and I've been (unintelligible) on principals in the past, I don't think that all this criticism about books and other supplies and materials that the students don't have should be laid at the feet of the principals, solely.

And my last point is this, is that I know that this is the year of the teachers' contract, and I think that teachers, like all of us, need to make a liveable wage, but I also think that the students should gain something from a decent contract. And maybe we might consider having teachers go out into the halls. As I understand it, it's part of the contract that they don't have to go out into the halls and monitor the halls that are unsafe. That it may be a part of a teacher's contract to go into the school yard with their elementary school students while those students are out playing at recess, and I understand that this contract says that they don't have to do that.

So in closing, I'd like to say that we support teachers, we support good wages for teachers, but we hope that the School District doesn't give away the shop just to satisfy teachers and their requests for more dollars, but that they take into consideration the students' well-being and the safety of the school as well.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. I, too, want to thank you for your continued interest in our schools and certainly for your community involvement.

Mr. Johnson, I believe that a couple Councilpeople would like to either ask you a question or make a statement, if you don't mind being seated.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Johnson, again, thanks for your hard work and your concern about the School District and the City.

In reference to your health issue about the lead -- possible lead contamination in our

City school water system, do you know if the teachers and the administrators drink the same water, or do they have bottled water in the schools? Do the school teachers, principal, administrators drink the same water?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I don't know personally, but the same water's available to all, but I do know this: I think that there is a level of ignorance as it relates to the dangers of lead and the effects that lead can have on an adult.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But we did hear that the School District is doing a lot -- purging the pipes in the morning, four by four, to try to make the water supply system safer. And that is a technique that is used not just here but it's a proven technique.

My question. When you visit a school, do you see water coolers in the offices?

MR. JOHNSON: Some.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But again --

MR. JOHNSON: Some have coolers there, some.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Like that?

MR. JOHNSON: Some.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So maybe the teachers and the principals and the administrators don't drink the same water as the kids.

MR. JOHNSON: I'm not going to say that, but I'm going to say this: that at the Franklin Learning Center several years ago, when the School District thought -- when the School District's position that the building was safe, the teachers' position was the same. And some community organizations came together because we did not believe that. Council President Street made money available so that we could go out and get an independent contractor to come look at the situation of lead dust at the Franklin Learning Center, only to find out that those dusts -- that that dust was at unacceptable levels.

And so all I'm saying to you is that I think that with more education, both from our children to their parents and to women of child bearing age who happen to be teachers in the school, that we could do something different.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I --

MR. JOHNSON: I'd also like to say that the document -- this is not a voluntary effort on

the part of the School District, that the document that we secured yesterday from the EPA will show you in detail what the School District is supposed to do both short term and long term to remedy the problem.

And I just hope that --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So what you're saying is that the EPA is requiring the School District rather than the School District voluntarily --

MR. JOHNSON: The document's in --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Yeah, I'll have to read that; I have not.

MR. JOHNSON: That is correct.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHNSON: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mr. Johnson, can you hold up a second. Can you tell me, how much is the dollar amount for the per-student cost at charter schools? It's not 69 --

MR. JOHNSON: No. My understanding from Dr. Rider, in the telephone conversation

yesterday, is that his school receives about $5100 a year for students, that a lot of that money then has to go into capital costs, which prohibits them to provide the kind of academic education they would like to provide. And because of that, those programs that the traditional public school would like to enact, such as Saturday schools that this charter school already had in place, has been cut back, has been stopped.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Can we have someone from the School District to speak to this matter?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes, Councilwoman Blackwell?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: John Skief is here. And as you may know, he is the President of the Charter School Organization, and he absolutely can explain exactly what charter schools get, what the issues are, and what the problems are. So I'm sure that he's an expert on all of these and speaks all over the City.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Since we're doing charter schools, it makes sense for John Skief to

come up to the witness table, in addition to Superintendent Hornbeck.

DR. HORNBECK: Me too?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: May I just note, Madam President, while I'm at the mike, that Vernard Johnson is the reason that Franklin Learning Center really is being replaced. As you know, he came in here year in and year out to complain about the condition of the school. And he's really, really to be commended for all of his work in this issue of trying to protect our children, and we thank him.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We'll just ask -- since we're on the issue of charter schools, maybe Mr. Skief can go, and then we'll ask the questions to Superintendent Hornbeck.

MR. SKIEF: That's fine. Good afternoon, Council President and Councilmembers and members of the community. My name is John Skief. Presently, I'm the Chief Administrative Officer of Harambi Institute of Science and Technology Public Charter School. Harambi was one of the first charter schools to be authorized in

Philadelphia. We are now in our third year of operation.

Previously, I spent 28 years as a high-school teacher within the public schools. I spent 26 years at West Philadelphia High, and in 1989, I became the leader and coordinator for the 1989 initiative of high school renewal and restructuring. I was a part of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, in which at least $20 million was poured into the City from the Pew Foundation in order to reconstruct the way high schools were currently being operated.

As a facilitator, I was very, very frustrated behind the lack of change within the system. There would be workshops held at Edison High School on Saturdays, teachers would be compensated $100 for attending these workshops. You would get $100 as soon as you entered at 8:30 in the morning, and by the afternoon, half the parking lot was empty.

I followed the charter school bill and decided to move into the charter school operation because I was, as a teacher, frustrated by the lack of change within the public school system.

And I might say that much of and many of the innovations that are featured in charter schools were offered to the public schools through the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative. But in 1991-'92, when there was a push to do exactly what was stated in 1989 -- that is, school-based management as well as shared decision-making -- the union and the principals balked at this. The Philadelphia Schools Collaborative Office was closed, and it was folded into the school system.

I'm reminded of a statement that was made by the late President Kennedy. "Those who make gradual change impossible make radical inevitable."

Charter schools are filled by parents who have been frustrated by the lack of change, teachers who have been frustrated by the lack of change, and students that have been failed or students who the school system has failed to reach educationally. On the other side they're called "students who are at risk." These are the people who make up the charter schools.

When I first became a charter school operator, I still felt -- in fact, I felt that I

was a member of the public system of education. I soon felt that I was not. I was a teacher in the in-service program where I taught innovative ways of teaches, and I was fired from that position.

Once we got our charter -- and let me just say in regards to the funding, all charter school children are included in the overall count and the per-capita count of the Philadelphia School District, which means that if $6800 comes into the system for my children, I will eventually end up with $5,165, which means that it's an approximate $1600 difference between what my children get, who are typically at risk. There's a $1600 difference.

Now, another way of looking at this is this: My classroom cap is 24. For every 24 students, the School District makes $40,000 a year. The School District does not transport my children, although they get funding to, and a bill was passed at the beginning of this school year, which now gave funding for our children for busing and transportation, but the School District does not bus my children.

I deal with children from grades 1 to

8. My 1st- to 5th-graders still have to catch the bus as they watch school buses go by. There are private schools next to me. Those buses pass my children. Our children are public-school children.

The first year of operation, the School District got approximately $300 per child, every child, for Title I services. The School District couldn't figure out how much of the Title I money should go to our schools. So the first year, the School District kept all $300 of the Title I money, and the State and the Governor took outside of his budget to provide that money to our children.

Our first year of operation, the School District receives -- I don't know how many, 1,000-plus for special ed. students. I'm to get around 9,000. There's once again a difference there for special-education students, which the School District keeps. The first year, it was difficult for us even to get records, much less the funding for special ed.

Now a lot of that has been ameliorated since then, but the reason why I came is because

too often than not, charter schools are offered up as the reason why there is a budget shortfall in the School District. And I hear statements such as, "We're giving the School District money." Well, if we put the children first, then we would say that the $6800 actually belongs to the child, and not the system. And there is absolutely and positively no benefit of keeping that $1600 to the School District. When you put the child first, any reason why they should keep that $1600 does not add anything to the educational resources of children who already are at risk.

So as charter school operators, we have a greater at-risk population, but yet and still, we are asked to respond to the standardized testing. Now, it just so happened that last year, my 8th-grade class came in fifth in the City of the Pennsylvania assessment test. Our class -- our SAT-9 scores, our target was a 10 percent increase from year 1 to year 2. We did a 17 percent increase from year 1 to year 2, with less resources.

What has to be understood is that charter schools give the public a choice in public

education, and we cannot simply tell people that this is the best that you can get. Charter schools provide that choice. Public schools aren't for everyone, charter schools aren't for everyone.

Now, I spent a week in Milwaukee in which I looked at the process that Milwaukee has chosen to settle its problems. Milwaukee uses a combination of charter schools as well as school choice with means, provided vouchers. That is, depending on your income level, you can get a voucher up to 5 or $6,000 per child to go to any school. The fact of the matter is, all of these choices in Milwaukee, everyone works together. And it is actually -- and this I got from the Mayor: They gained $25 million as a result of the alternatives that they have used.

Now, as a charter school operator, we were talking about after-school funds. I applied to PCCY for $5,000 for after-school money. The final decision for that went to the Board of Education, in the Superintendent's Office. And I was denied the $5,000 because we are a charter school.

This summer, there's going to be Freedom Schools. Charter school children are denied the opportunity to go to the Freedom Schools because they go to charter schools.

The Philadelphia Education Fund has been providing workshops and staff development for teachers for years. They get paid to come. Charter school teachers have to pay to come.

You see, I thought that we would work together in this, because there is nothing that stops the public schools -- and there were clusters within the public schools that wanted to transfer into charters. This would save the public school money and it would also -- this would save the School District money and it would also give them the kind of freedom that charter schools have within their own operations. Well, these clusters were not allowed to do that, and to this date, not one existing public school has turned to charter school under the District.

If we put the children first, then we would know that our children deserve all of the money that comes through the School District. But I am simply very, very frustrated and tired of

being blamed for the shortfall of this district or the statement being made that this district gave us money. No, it didn't. The money simply passes through, and we have been able to educate with less resources and less money than what's going on in the School District. And for us to get blamed for this shortfall or any insinuation of that is really a disservice to our children.

And I think that we really need to look at the children first, because if charter schools work, it was my understanding that the School District would look and see what does work and then replicate that. But what I see and what I have been feeling from my former colleagues is that we are in a tug-of-war over this money. No, we're not. We are all here together, we are educating children for free. And as far as we're concerned, those of us who have joined the charter school movement have taken pay cuts, many of us, worked much harder, but what we are educational pioneers who have been locked in a system, and we owe the public a choice.

My children went to the neighborhood schools, they made the honor roll in elementary,

but they did not pass -- or did not get high enough marks in the standardized test scores. I asked the principal and the principal flatly said, "We have very low expectations of these children." It's not my fault that they do not teach up to the standards necessary. So all of my children have graduated from Catholic school because I had the economic means to do so.

So if I had a choice because I had the economic means, don't you think that our children, who do not those same economic means and these parents shouldn't they be given the choice? I think if we put the children first, the answer will be very simple.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's great. I have a couple questions, but I first want to get to the question that we have of Superintendent Hornbeck. We have questions regarding the operation of charter schools, but Superintendent, can we hear the reason why there's a 15 or a $1600 difference in what students receive in public versus charter schools?

DR. HORNBECK: The State identifies with great specificity what goes into the payment to charter schools. Part of what makes up the $6969 are things like federal funds and privately-raised money and debt service. Those are excluded under State law from the calculation of the per-student calculation. Those are expenses and funds that we in effect have off to the side, and what is paid to the charter schools is precisely what the law provides.

Let me also say -- just make two other comments. I think that the work that Mr. Skief has done and the work that has gone on in the World Communications Charter, for example, to which Mr. Johnson referred to a little while ago, is very good, and I applaud the work that they've done and the initiative that they have taken. Indeed, it is our support of charter schools that has resulted to date in the approval of more than half of all the charter schools in the whole state of Pennsylvania.

And I applaud also -- and I really am glad to see Mr. Skief focussing on how kids actually achieve, because at the end of the day,

that's the only thing that matters, and the 17 percent increase in the first year is terrific, and I look forward and presume that he will achieve in Harambi the same 40 percent improvement that all 259 public schools achieved in its first three years. And I think as long as charter schools are focused on children, as we are in the public schools, that that will take place.

It is the case -- and this isn't blaming the charter schools, it's blaming the State law in the way that it was written -- that, in fact, the charter school law, the way it is crafted, has resulted in the withdrawal of a net $38 million in this school year from the balance of 204 or 205,000 in the public schools. That's just a fact of life.

And it arises from two principal things. One is that about a third of the kids going to charter schools never went to public schools in the first place, and so we never had any money for 'em, but we have to pay the $5100 for each one. That's not Harambi's fault or World Communications or anybody else, it's the way the law is crafted.

And, secondly, it arises from the fact that as kids leave the School District, the public school system, they don't leave in little groups of 30, and thus you can't always fire the teachers as they walk out the door. They leave one here and three there and two over there.

Now, it is true that there is an offset. In fact, this year, the total payment to the charter schools is something in the neighborhood of 45 or $46 million, but there's an offset of 7 or $8 million that we save as a consequence of not needing as many teachers. But the net loss to the School District this year is $38 million. And we have repeatedly urged not anything to the charter schools but to the State legislature that they correct what we consider to be a serious imperfection.

Kids, whether they're in charter schools or in the public schools, neither one ought to lose out as a consequence of the particular features of the law. And we would be delighted to see it changed and then grow these kinds of innovations even more.

MR. SKIER: May I respond? I'd like to

respond. I would -- I would urge the Council to do its own financial study and count up the number of charter school students, and you multiply that by $1600, and please tell me how the School District is losing money.

(Applause.)

MR. SKIEF: Put those two things together because of that $1600, there is absolutely and positively no obligation, none whatsoever, to charter school students.

The last thing that I would like to say is -- and I really don't want to get into the political thing, but when this charter bill came out, the total amount of dollars -- 68, whatever it is -- would have followed the child. It was through the lobbying and the political -- whatever goes on in Harrisburg which weakened the charter school bill. Strong charter-school bills say the money follows the child.

And I ask again: Who should get the $6800? The child who is coming to us at risk, shouldn't they get that full money? And if the public school takes some of that money, and Mr. Hornbeck referred to federal programs, which we

are locked out of, and the other programs, which we are locked out of, you know, if we put the children first, I think the answer will be very clear.

DR. HORNBECK: There are several of those features that are just plain untrue.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Superintendent, are you going to speak to the issue of being locked out of --.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes, I am. And Title I, for example, that's federal money and they are not locked out of getting federal money and Mr. Skief knows it, and I don't know why he would say that they are.

(Mr. Skief responds inaudibly off mike.)

DR. HORNBECK: They get Title I, money which is the single largest federal grant in the United States and in the history of education in the United States.

The second piece of this is, we, for example, have to provide services to parochial schools, and that's part of the $6969. There's not a single charter school that provides those

services or bus transportation, and that's not included under State law.

MR. SKIEF: The fact is --

DR. HORNBECK: Mr. Skief, may I --

MR. SKIEF: I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

The fact is that in the course of this notion of money following the child, there's no reason particularly that Mr. Skief should know this law, but he has implied that money comes into the system as the number of children grows, and that, of course, is not true since the early '90s. The only time that the State legislation has money following the child is when the child leaves the School District, not when the children come in. And that's a very significant difference.

I think in many ways that if money did follow the child both in and out, we would, in fact, have had $100 million more under the old ESBE (ph.) formula that was wiped out back in 1993. It's a piece of legislative history that someone who is focused on running a school need not know, but the Council ought not to go away with the misunderstanding of that.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I can't understand why they would not qualify, a charter school would not qualify for after-school program funding.

MR. SKIEF: There was only one charter school that got it, only one. And when the $5,000 -- only 5,000 -- I mean, because after-school money is millions of dollars. And when we went to PCCY and put in our application and I was not told because the application was open to schools, community centers, everyone. But I was denied, and I was denied because of out of office, they were told that as a charter school, we could not get that funding.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And who do you believe made that decision?

MR. SKIEF: Well, Bonnie Raines (ph.), and I forgot the other lady that worked for PCCY, but the person within Dr. Hornbeck's office was Diane Casabona (ph.). That's the person that they had to call, that's the person they called, and for the $5,000, we were denied. We put over $20,000 of that meager sum we had in our after-school program. We ran it anyway.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Well, maybe Miss Yanoff, from PCCY, can respond to this question because I would think that children are children irregardless of what school they attend -- whether it's a charter school or a public school. And I'm not quite understanding why you would not qualify to receive after-school money.

MS. YANOFF: My understanding is that this is what happened. I will check with Bonnie Raines and my staff about that. But about five years ago, when we started talking about the importance of the after-school programming, when neither the School District nor the City was providing support for that, we went out and raised money -- PCCY -- from the corporate sector and started a process where we would give people technical assistance, communities, $5,000 if they would start a program in their neighborhoods, and we provided a lot of support for it.

About two years ago, I believe, the communities and schools -- the School District secured funding -- or maybe three years ago from the federal government for special programming for after-school programs. They had worked with us to

develop the way in which you could assist communities and schools in starting programs.

Even in the earliest part, we asked the School District to put up the sites -- that is to say, not to charge rent -- so that we could provide -- these programs could be provided. My understanding is that a partnership then grew between the School District and PCCY in which we cast a net and had people apply for the funding. And then there were decisions about who was available to get them or not.

And I do not know the specifics of that decision but I will certainly get back to you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. So then basically, you're saying that charter schools are not excluded from getting --

MS. YANOFF: As far as from our end of it, I don't know what the end decision-making was. I will get back to you on that process.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

MS. YANOFF: As far as what we were dealing with, originally, it was a model that was used without external, actually private dollars, then it became more public dollars with the School

District and the partnership continued of looking at the -- at seeking applications and looking at the applicants and helping them along.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

MS. YANOFF: I will be glad to participate with any conversation with Mr. Skief, as always and certainly with you, Council.

MR. SKIEF: I had got my answer. That is the answer -- no. Because I called and Denise said I have to talk to someone in the district, who was Diane Casabona, and the answer was, "You are a charter school, no."

DR. HORNBECK: Well, under State law, the charter schools are considered LEAs. And as far as I know, we also didn't open programs in any other LEA as well.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: What is a LEA?

DR. HORNBECK: It's a school district. And they did that under State law for the purpose of permitting, among other things, charters, which I think make a lot of sense, to receive the federal monies that we were talking about a little while ago.

The fact is -- and I must also say,

Mr. Skief referred to millions of dollars. That's just absurd, he knows that we didn't have millions of dollars.

MR. SKIEF: I didn't say that.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes, you did. If you'll look at the record, you'll find that out.

But the fact is that when we did the $5,000 grants, which are a part of this hearing and that have been brought up, there were a couple of hundred thousand dollars involved that were involved. And we do lots of things for those particular programs.

MR. SKIEF: Let me just clarify again. When I say "millions of dollars," I'm talking about the 21st Century Grant. That's millions of dollars that go to school districts.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

MR. SKIEF: What I asked for was a mini grant coming from PCCY. It was very clear that it was $5,000. And in that RFP, it did not say that charter schools were excluded. I learned that when I was finally given the answer "no."

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Well, one of the things we want to do, Mr. Skief and Shelly

Yanoff and Mr. Hornbeck, is to get together after hearings. We'll schedule something because I think this issue is just going to grow and grow. So we think the best way to resolve it is not here today. You brought it up, we're really happy you did.

I commend you, Mr. Skief and Mr. Johnson. I know that Mr. Johnson -- I've been here four years now, and Mr. Johnson has been at every hearing that I've attended, and he has a strong commitment to the children and families of the City, as well as Mr. Skief.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So we want to thank you. And I'll get in touch. As the Chair of Education, I'll facilitate pulling the meeting together to begin to have this dialogue that's much needed.

MR. SKIEF: And may I conclude by saying that I would really invite the Council to look at Milwaukee and Cleveland, where everybody works together, rather than working apart. Because by everybody working together, the level of education rose and the school districts saved

money.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Reverend Robert shine.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam Chair, may I as one question?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Who did you want to ask a question of?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I wanted to ask the Superintendent a question just about charter schools.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. Can we hear from Reverend Shine first, Councilwoman, because I believe he has another commitment.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: (Nods.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And I told him we would call him next, and Mr. Hornbeck's going to stay with us till the conclusion of our hearing.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And Mr. Skief, ask him to stay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Skief,

Mr. Skief, can you stay with us also?

MR. SKIEF: Pardon?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you stay with us also? I believe Councilwoman Blackwell would like to ask other questions. However, I had asked Reverend Shine to testify because he does have another commitment.

(Reverend Shine comes forward.)

REVEREND SHINE: Thank you, Madam President and Chairman of this committee and Members of City Council, and all that are here present. I'm Reverend Robert Shine, the Pastor of the Baraka Baptist Church in West Oak Lane. I am also Chairman of the Board of the World Communications Charter School and a Board Member of PCCY and an avid advocate for public education.

Madam President, I'm no stranger to appearing before this Council and I'm not accustomed to wasting your time or my own time on some frivolous minutia. This present Council represents the very best of the interests and the concerns of all the people of Philadelphia. Therefore, I feel it compellingly incumbent upon me to come before you today and with a degree of

great enthusiasm in the belief that each of you in this chamber shares a commitment to public education. As I look, all of you will spend every effort to do what must be done to make critical choices and critical changes that provide for and support quality educational opportunities for the more than 200,000 students in our public schools.

As the debate continues about public funding, the Black Clergy, on whose behalf I am here, support any proposal that includes full funding. It is our belief that by the workings of divine providence, we have reached a moment in our city's history where the Mayor, the Superintendent, the School Board, and others of us are in accord with certain initiatives, such as small class size, quality preschool and after-school programs for our children of all ages, clean and safe schools and classrooms that provide state-of-the-art technology for our children, support for children who are at risk and need tutoring, summer schools, and other help that is needed.

It is our contention as well that research-based professional development for our

teachers and principals be enacted because we know that the school has a better chance of succeeding if the principal is a leader and a good teacher, and that is a fundamental ingredient for every classroom. It is our believe, as Black Clergy, that these are common and good objectives.

We have lobbied State legislators, written letters to and met with the Governor and his staff. We have been responsible for drafting legislation for full and equal funding. We have held Town Meetings with State legislators. We have support rallies and aided in mobilizing Statewide coalitions to address the need for full funding for all the underfunded districts of the State, and we're among the signatories that filed suit against the State for more money for public education, particularly here in Philadelphia. We have spent considerable hours with top school officials and administrators, all in an effort to ensure that our children were achieving.

Madam President, from our observation, there has been incremental success -- not as much as we have hoped nor liked. Nevertheless, there has been some success.

Significantly we are happy to report that the Black Clergy has seen the marked progress of student achievement in Philadelphia, dramatic improvement through the determined efforts of the often critical and criticized role of the District Superintendent. Black Clergy's latest data, as we seek to be involved as leaders in our community, where most of the students of our school attend our churches. The teachers attend our churches, the parents attend our churches.

It is our belief that from the data that is available to me now that for the second year in a row, test scores are up. What more can we be asking as we see this incremental success being written. Students in the 4th, 8th and 11th grade score higher in reading, math, and science making significant, broad-based improvement. This is data that we have received. In each grade, in each subject, students' scores improved from 1996 to '98. In reading 4th-graders scored more than 13 percent points higher, 8th-graders scored 11 points, and 11th-graders scored more than 8 points higher.

This indicates marked improvement over

what has been. And we cannot rest our laurels on what has been. It is our belief that, yes, more needs to be done. And these gains came while more students took the tests. Fully, 93.5 percent of the school system's 4th-graders took the test in 1998, an increase of 9 percent over '96-- 1996, that is. Nearly 89 percent of the 8th-graders were tested, an increase of more than 16 percent points. More than 75 percent of the 11th-graders completed the test, an improvement of nearly 25 percentage points.

Again, according to the data we received, the number of the special-education students taking the test increased by 36 percentage points. Some 241 of the City's schools showed progress since 1996, more than one-half of the schools in the system, and 145 schools exceeded their goal. I believe that's incremental success. It's not total, but we're reaching our goal.

Annual tests administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education fully corroborated the District's results. And if that's believable, then I commend what has taken

place in our school system in Philadelphia.

Our watchful eyes perhaps do not see all that some others might be seeing or have seen in the past, but let's train our eyes on the present and the hope of the future, for we are cognizant that our tax dollars were being responsibly spent by the school administrators. For in spite of the student enrollment increase of 10.8 percent, 364 administrative positions were eliminated since 1981.

And if we can believe the State Department of Education's numbers, it is our School District that spends more of each dollar on instruction than the average in every one of the four suburban counties around Philadelphia -- meaning Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery. And, again, if this data is correct, our district spends $7,080 per student per year, compared to $10,284 per student per year in Jenkintown, and nearly $12,000 per student in Lower Merion, and more than 12,500 students per year in Radnor.

What this suggests is that our district spends more than $1500 less than the average for all 61 districts in the surrounding four counties,

again suggesting that the per-pupil cost has widened to 60 percent over the last eight years.

What does all this data mean to us? That we are competing with our neighboring counties for more competent teachers, and at the same time, paying them nearly $3300 less. How can we ever hope to meet the challenges and demands of our ever-modernizing society?

It goes without saying that in a large urban center such as Philadelphia, far more impoverished children come to school in greater need of health care and less prepared to learn than children of wealthier school districts. Here again, our data indicates that 78 percent of all children who live in poverty in Philadelphia, they are our children and they must be provided for.

Madam President, I've received the success stories written about charter schools, and as we serve as the Chairman of the Board of the World Communications Charter School, there is great numbers of success stories, yet there still exists those problems that we need to attend to. And we believe that this chamber, this body can aid us and remedy many of the problems that our

district has.

The Aid to Families with Dependent Children in Philadelphia increased while, at the same time, decreased in other areas around the State. This data supports our idea of the ever-widening gap in the readiness to learn among our Philadelphia school children. I will hasten to add that this Council ought not to be fooled nor misled by influences that are willing to write off the children of God who are impoverished.

In spite of all of what I have said, here are some of the success stories that we have learned. Full-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds is now in place. Student attendance across the board has improved by 80 percent. Social promotion has been cut out. A meaningful accountability system is now in place. A performance index now allows parents and communities to know how well the school is doing. A comprehensive professional development plan has been initiated. Efforts are being made to provide books for every child. More computers have been provided for the classroom, of which the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and vicinity have purchased and supplied some 20

computers. The issue of truancy has been more aggressively dealt with. The community of safety has responded to the needs for addressing school safety. The District has expanded family resources to have 14,500 volunteers.

That, to me, is an incremental success story that cannot be short-circuited.

We, as a society, have made many mistakes. We have corrected some, like slavery, like segregated accommodations, like unequal employment opportunities, like redlining, for example. We are working on others, like miseducation, uneducation, poor education, and lack of education, and the inequities in our schools.

I believe providence has bought you here to deliver and support every resources that you have and make them available for adequate education of our students in Philadelphia. I believe that the first and foremost task imposed upon all of us in the school system, in the charter school system, all of our foremost task is to provide for our schools if we want an enlightened citizenry so that the future of our

city and society and government might work.

I believe that we must always impress upon our youth that our experiment in self-government needs them, and they need education. We must, with God's help, take the challenge and give our children and youth what they deserve, what they need, give them a good sense of self-worth, self-pride, a sense of value, a sense of dignity, and we will then equip them to correct the mistakes that we of our generation have made. Most of us know that quality education and equal opportunity, because of education, are the unquestioned dividends that we ought to gladly pay for our children's future.

Finally, Madam President, I need to say a word. If it takes a village to raise a child, then one of the very meaningful components is our working together to the exclusion of none.

I'm reminded of the ruling handed down in the opinion of Judge Dora Smith. And somehow I can't but humbly beseech this Council that in my considered opinion, Judge Smith's this order is consistent with the objectives that I have aforementioned, and that this prudent body will be

well-served by supporting this implementation.

I believe we need to work together, and thus far, I believe there have been many efforts to work together, both in the charter community and in the public school community.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much, Reverend.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any questions of Reverend Shine?

(No questions.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you for your patience. I hope we didn't keep you too late.

Mr. Hornbeck, would you again approach the witness table. I believe Councilwoman Blackwell did have further questions to ask.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And I thought we would get Reverend Shine out of turn simply because he had another commitment.

(Dr. Hornbeck returns to witness

table.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam President, never have a problem with the clergy. Thank you.

Mr. Hornbeck, do you know what the difference is between the services that -- is there a difference between the services that Catholic schools get and those that charter schools get? How does that relate, do you know? I know it -- in terms of transportation, do we pay for Catholic schools' transportation?

DR. HORNBECK: We do.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But yet, we don't pay for charter school transportation; am I correct?

DR. HORNBECK: No. As a result of a change in the legislation last year, we did start paying for transportation for charter schools.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Are there any other such services? I know there's -- I've forgotten that we do --

DR. HORNBECK: We also transport parochial-school children.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What about

lunches? I know there are other services that -- because we've talked about it in here. There are other services that we pay for for parochial schools that the State mandated we pay, and I was just trying to compare those in my mind to what happens with charter schools.

DR. HORNBECK: I do know that in the case of parochial schools, there is also, under federal law, a provision that we provide services in the school from the School District. Unlike charter schools that receive Title I money directly, parochial schools do not receive Title I money directly, but they do receive services -- for example, reading specialists -- from the public schools.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What about food?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know about food services.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm concerned, and I would say to the Chair of this committee who talked about meeting that when we had a committee hearing with regard to charter schools, we could see that there are a lot of problems.

And, Madam President, I would also say that charter schools obviously, in my opinion, grew out of desperation and a need for parents to have hope that their children could receive a positive education.

It is ironic that Reverend Shine mentioned Judge Dora Smith's decision because it points out that obviously, we still have problems in public schools in terms of equity in education. Just the other day, I met with some monitors who were here to make sure to investigate whether or not Judge Dora Smith's decision is being honored, so they're all around. I'm sure they've met with the Superintendent, and they're going to schools and talking to parents, principals, and other interested people about that. So it means that we do have problems.

I only regret still that I don't know why the -- I don't know why the State law was written as it is. Obviously, there are inequities between what charter schools get and what public schools get, and it isn't fair that -- I agree with Mr. Skief. Charter schools are always made the brunt of, we don't have money, we fund charter

schools. And it's absolutely -- it's not fair because charter schools are exciting, wonderful maces, and I have said even in one of our newsletters about charter schools that these people are pioneers. They're leaders, they're pioneers in education.

Mr. Skief, is there something that you can think of that we need to work on that, in a feasible way, could be helpful, some area where we need to focus? And maybe it's not -- maybe you don't need to answer that today, but certainly we always recommit ourselves to the exciting schools that charter schools are and want to pledge our support and are willing to focus in any way we can to be helpful in this Council and to work with the education Chair to do that.

MR. SKIEF: Well, let me say that this is the second step, because the first step was done by you --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MR. SKIEF: -- in which we got a chance to educate and put out the information as it actually is. And this is the second step because, basically, all we want is the truth to come out

and for real facts. And what had not happened, even during the debate about charter schools, what are the actual facts about charter schools, and many people, even to this day, do not know that charter schools are, in fact, public schools.

But understand that the money comes from the State through the City for transportation, and that's to transport parochial school, private school, as well as public school children. The law was written in such a fact that the School District would bus children in the way that they normally do, so the law was kind of vague.

But the upshot of that law was, charter- school children could not catch the bus, and we would be housed next to private schools, Catholic schools, and watch empty buses ride by because they were charter school children. And once the law was passed this year, when we were finally given money for transportation, we ran into the same problem because all of the buses were tied up through the School District. So for us to get and contract bus service was almost impossible.

So what we were able to do is simply to provide tokens, but I have 1st-graders 2nd-graders, and 3rd-graders who have to get on that bus. And the School District said that they could not handle the overload, and because of the fact that the law was passed in such a way at such a late time, that they couldn't get the routes together. So hopefully, this September, our children will be able to get on that bus.

Another thing was nursing. We were told nursing services would be provided to charter schools, as the School District does nurses, the parochial schools and private schools. And once again, charter schools were locked out.

So, you know, once again, I would urge Council to get some more information, to get some testimony from some of these other cities that have tried some things kind of different. And please look at the fiscal facts that we talked about separately. And I think that we, you know, will come up with some answers.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

And, Madam President, as you know, for

the last two years, there was no directory available, and we printed one. Obviously, now that other charter schools have been approved, I guess, last month, I suppose --

MR. SKIEF: No, that's on hold.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Pardon me?

DR. HORNBECK: Those decisions will be made on Monday.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay, the decisions will be made Monday. I had forgotten that we have a new school board, and the Mayor wanted to have them consider issues.

But for the last two years, we have created charter directories that we make available to anyone who wants them because we saw a need for people and parents and community people to know that charter -- what they are and that they are available.

So certainly, they are still -- until Monday, they are still current. Usually, we do them in the summer, but anyone who wants a directory, I'll tell my office to bring down a few. They are always available, they always tell what charter schools are, who can apply. And we

just think it's very, very sad and unfair that we have these public schools who are sometimes considered quai-public, sometimes public, sometimes private, and they're not really given their due.

This is -- I'm holding up a Philadelphia charter school directory from August 1999 for anyone who's interested in having one and who would like it, to have one, until Monday, when they create new ones.

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Mr. Skief and Mr. Hornbeck.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome, Councilwoman.

We were just having a little side conversation here about the empty buses passing children.

MR. SKIEF: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Hornbeck, would it really be a great imposition to be looking into this? I mean, if the buses are half-empty, why wouldn't we have children who are, what, in 1st grade or 2nd grade being accommodated by the school buses that are passing them by?

DR. HORNBECK: Assuming that that's accurate, I would be glad to look at that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And I think in Milwaukee, I think he said that everybody works together to make sure that the program works. I think that we have to make a concerted effort to make sure that we all work together for the benefit of all of the children.

DR. HORNBECK: I agree with that.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So I think that with this meeting -- before coming to the meeting, Mr. Hornbeck, I think it would be very wise to check about the bus routes and how and if, in fact, there are empty seats on that bus, if the children from the charter schools could not be transported. Okay?

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Madam President?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, sir? The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Just so I understand the response that the Superintendent gave is if in fact that's accurate -- did I hear you say earlier

that the School District does not provide transportation to the charter schools?

DR. HORNBECK: We pay for transportation to the charter school.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We give them tokens. We're giving them tokens.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I understand that.

DR. HORNBECK: Many of our kids --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: What I'm getting at is that, are yellow school buses passing these children accurate because we're not picking them up in the yellow school bus, we're providing them tokens for transportation. Is that accurate?

DR. HORNBECK: I'm sorry, I didn't understand.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: If we're giving them tokens to get SEPTA, the yellow school buses are passing them by because they're not authorized to pick up the charter-school children because they're given tokens, so that is an accurate statement that yellow school buses are passing charter schools.

DR. HORNBECK: The question I have is, how many seats are on that yellow school bus?

There's no question but that yellow school buses cross all over the City every morning and up and down, but the assertion is that all of these buses are half-empty.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That's what you're questioning. Well, I think I've told you before that I see lots of school buses. As a matter of fact, I describe the one location at Rising Sun and Cottman where that's five intersections that come together, and I have seen as many as a dozen school buses, ten -- and maybe that's exaggerated -- where every intersection has a school bus or two waiting, and I look and I see ten kids on this one, seven on that one. I don't think -- rarely have I seen a school bus that had all 49 seats, or whatever their capacity is, filled.

But just so I understand, the charter-school kids given tokens and not transported by the School District of Philadelphia, and if the buses are half-empty and they pass by these kids, that's an accurate statement.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Those buses could be half-empty for a number of reasons, I would think.

MR. SKIEF: Excuse me.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We don't know the route of that bus and how many more children they have to pick up, we don't know how many children could be absent that particular day. I don't think that's for us to judge.

What I'm asking is for Mr. Hornbeck, before coming back for the meeting that Councilwoman Miller indicated she would like to have, is to get that information so that we can all discuss it. Okay?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you. That's a fair statement.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Because we can't double-guess.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That's right. But I was just trying to understand the concept that charter-school kids are not provided transportation by the School District but are given tokens to use public transportation.

DR. HORNBECK: Actually, we don't even give the tokens; we give money to the charter schools, and the charter schools use a variety of means to transport their kids. Apparently in the

case of Harambi, they use tokens. Other places do too, but still other places use other means, including reimbursing parents for bringing their kids.

So it's a variety.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So just 30 seconds more. If the capacity were there on a particular route to take the -- to transport charter-school children, would that be something that you'd consider doing?

DR. HORNBECK: There are lots of things to take into account, including what the implications would be for adding kids to routes to non-public schools. For example, every time we try -- there are a whole set of interlocking factors here.

If there is a way, without added cost, to increase the ease of transportation for anybody anyplace, then absolutely, we would be more than open to it. But it's not as simple, as Madam President suggests, as saying, as that bus passes that intersection, it's half-empty and there's a kid going to a charter school so we ought to put him on it. It's a whole variety of other things,

and I will be glad to see to it that knowledgeable staff meet with whomever -- Mr. Skief certainly, but others as well to look at this issue.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So when we have the meeting, I think that would be very helpful.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Superintendent.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any other questions from members of the committee?

(No further questions.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Our next witness is William Devlin of the Urban Family Council. Is Mr. Devlin here?

(Mr. Devlin not present.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Arnold Hall, Home and School Council. Arnold Hall, is he present?

(Arnold Hall comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, Mr. Hall. Kindly identify yourself for

the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. HALL: Good afternoon, President Verna. I'm Arnold Hall, President of Home and School Council. As such, of course, I have a child in the public schools. I am a member of many other organizations, board positions and otherwise throughout the City, and I say that I wanted to say reflective of my comments, and I will make them brief.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. HALL: I look to you with the kindness that I know we're going to get from you, but I look to you with the hour, and also because a good bit of what I would have to say, I could simply say and echo a ditto to Reverend Shine's remarks that you've hear already and several others.

But I would like to mention and also to our Chairlady, who is not here at the moment, Councilwoman Miller, and to those here, Members of Council and those not here. I come primarily to continue to exhort you. I have appeared before this body on many occasions. And amongst the first several years ago, I began to exhort this

Council to take a very forward step -- sounding kind of corny -- about selecting and placing billboards throughout the travel ways of this city, to make a firm statement to the commitment level far back then about this city, this city caring for our children. The casinos certainly know how to get you there. They billboard all the way and you'll never get lost trying to find one of them.

I want to preface now to say that my remarks come out of the thinking of a period that some here may not recall. Some of, I'm sure, were there with me, but during the outbreak of World War II, this nation was called and came to a stop to meet the challenge of a war that we found ourselves in. By virtue of a set of circumstances, the mass production of automobiles and other related products had to be set aside, things of convenience that we had come to expect to be the norm for American citizens, but they had to be set aside to address the needs of winning a war. And "winning" is the key word.

Industry and machinery had to be converted. For as much as the love of automobiles

and other conveniences to status had become so desired, common sense and a common-sense approach had to be taken if we were to commit to survival and winning that war. Resources had to be diverted, priorities had to be shifted, unity had to be realized, good and proper leadership had to be exemplified, waste had to be halted, spirited morale had to be built, focus had to be maintained until victory was achieved.

Today, Madam President, most of us who know and those others will probably awaken at sometime to recognize that we are again faced with a war. We're in a very crisis time, and the issue at hand speaks directly to the survival and to the winning of saving the future. It's our children. It speaks directly to the war that's being waged every day on the attacked of the survival and future of our children. This equates also to the survival of our city and the future of our city.

The heart of the preservation and the opening of opportunities for our children rest in the schools, in the educational system. And in greatest measure in this city, it happens to be the Philadelphia School District, where the vast

majority of our students will go.

But it's time to move aside, and I was so delighted this evening to hear from the many who face and come from different paramours of new creativity. Because I am here to speak to you and to our other Councilmembers. Like I, an elected person, although I didn't run for this office, I did inherit it from a write-in vote from across the City. And I'm convicted that I am going to continue to exhort it.

I won't try to lay numbers to you; you will hear many. And the others that I have for you, I will be meeting with you and others from the Council following these hearings, because we'll talk to those specifics.

But I want to speak to the sheer fact that the number-one issue, the number-one issue -- and that means where the greatest dollars, the greatest dollars, have to be turned in the City. And you're the vehicle, you're the determining body as to how the dollars coming into this city tax-wise ought to be spent. And it has to be diverted, it has to be prioritized to the education of our city.

Beginning with understanding that we cannot ignore extremely aged buildings, the monies oftentimes, and I truly believe, that are being wasted trying to race after maintenance, trying to race after rehabbing, trying to race after refitting buildings that are far and beyond that ability to do it meaningfully and with any common-sense approach about the dollars spent.

I speak to you also of the thousands of our children who end up in the penal institutions, where we have found it so easy to build another system of employment and another industry in this country. Money that's being wasted on the back half, because we are not spending it on the front half.

One of the things -- and I'm in agreement with much of the issues in the dealings of the Children Achieving agenda. I have some questions about portions. I'm thrilled by the successes that I know are real, about the achievement levels going up for our students. I'm in the schools literally every day. I'm working on this behalf for the last ten years -- at no pay. But that's not a bragging issue; it's simply

to say that like so many others in the home and school movement, they are volunteering, they are in there with heart, body and mind and soul, many every day. I know I am.

But I speak to the absence, as I tour our schools, of the abdication from the old votech. When I look in our schools and I see the shops that we we've moved away from, because there is an absolute need to fit our children in the mindset of technology and in the skills of technology.

But I know each and every day that if we don't find a way to touch the literacies that are within our children, if we don't find ways of keeping them interested and staying in our schools at the middle-school levels -- and over the past two months, I have been in the juvenile justice system nine times, advocating and representing families of children in our Juvenile Justice Center -- many and most of whom I know should have never ended up here, but some have dropped out for the sheer lack of interest to hold them, to hold them long enough to get them to understand about this other technology, that they do have some

attunement to. We definitely need to keep up that.

But we don't need to abdicate it as though we have to throw away one thing to have the other. It all comes down still to the need for more and greater resources. And those resources boil down to dollars. And we need this Council to stand up and reach to that greatest level of creativity, bringing in all the collaboration that you can, to find new ways to bring that additional funding that this district needs. We can't have those shops without having teachers in them, but we need them. I know that if my house is backing up plumbing-wise, and I'm quite sure you may feel the same, and I'm calling for a plumber, and you understand what I mean when that crisis thing hits in a house. When that plumber gets to my door, I'm not about to stop him to ask him how computer-literate he is. If he can fix my pipes, if he can straighten out that stuff, then he's got a job. And there are people performing those jobs every day. We're not training our kids to that today.

In reference to the music, to the arts,

to that which used to be called "home economics" that covered a multitude of things, in reaching the literacies and the interests of our kids and training them to hold them there, we've moved away from them, we have moved away from them. And it's not right, that in the balance of saying as far as a librarian and a music teacher, an art teacher, can we have this? No, we can't have this because we have to go this way.

I do believe, I do believe, as others are doing more and as you are trying to do more, that there's more we can do here and we must do at the local level before we can impress and as we make effort to impress those at the State and other levels. But I simply exhort you to look into it as I know you will. I've seen and am delighted at your interest shown in our educational system, at the interest that Councilwoman Blackwell has done in so many different areas, but to our children's and people's interest, and to the others and Councilwoman Miller.

But I exhort you not to let up but not box out the reality that we cannot have smaller

class sizes. We need to keep -- and thanks to Mr. Hornbeck and the Children Achieving agenda that we have full-day kindergarten. And we don't need to take backward steps, trying to balance out whether we can keep those or have to give up and back up on that in order to meet some other needs.

I believe our children deserve every bit of it, I know they do. And I believe we have the means, if we reach and stretch. But this body must stand up and take the leadership and unify the leadership that says and speaks to our children, because if you speak to our children, you'll speak to the rest of us.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, Mr. Hall.

MR. HALL: Go right ahead, Councilwoman.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Could you please wrap up and summarize.

MR. HALL: I'm going to summarize it this way: to ask you and to continue to exhort this Council body, and as I said, we will meet with you and other Councilmembers repeatedly.

But if you can evidence -- and that's

the issue -- evidence to the children of this city that this city government and you personage and as out of the administrative offices of the Mayor, really believe, really mean, raise their level of hope, give them reason to understand a new respect for authority and government and our working relationships, give them a reason to believe that they are important enough, that we really do care enough, without a great deal of vacillation but study is required, but they need to have that evidenced. And if it gets to our children, it will get to their parents and the other residents of the City.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much Mr. Hall.

Are there any questions or comments from members of the committee of Mr. Hall?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you again.

Our next witness is William Mackey from City Wide.

(Mr. Mackey and students come forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Mackey, please identify yourself for the record and please proceed.

MR. MACKEY: William Mackey, City Wide Youth Agency, Executive Director.

MR. SPEARMAN: Mark Spearman, City Wide Youth Agency, Program Manager.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Mackey, are you going to testify?

MR. MACKEY: Yes, we are.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Would you complete your testimony, and then we'll take the others.

MR. MACKEY: Okay. I'm going to ask if Mark Spearman can -- you have a draft in the back of our package to you and I'm going to ask if Mark briefly can explain it to us.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

MR. MACKEY: Thank you.

MR. SPEARMAN: Madam President --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Kindly identify yourself for the record, please.

MR. SPEARMAN: Mark Spearman, City Wide Youth Agency, Program Manager.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MR. SPEARMAN: Good afternoon.

Madam President, in this chart, it lays out the three high schools in the William Penn Cluster as well as City Wide, and what we're showing is the effectiveness of City Wide's program and how it affects the promotion persistence and/or the promotion rate of students inside of the cluster area.

The first school is the William Penn High School, which, in 1999, put out a 43 percent promotion rate, meaning that 43 percent of their students either graduated or were promoted to the next grade. The Bodine High School had 87 percent, and Carver High School put out 81 percent. And City Wide Youth Agency, the students that we dealt with in our year-around program, we graduated or promoted 74 percent of the students that worked with us, and that would be within our career exploration classes, labor-market orientation, as well as tutoring.

MR. MCDANIEL: Good afternoon, Madam President. My name is John McDaniel. I am the

Community Outreach/Corporate Outreach Liaison.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me. Would you mind pulling the microphone closer to you so that we can hear you.

MR. MCDANIEL: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's much better. Thank you.

MR. MCDANIEL: Should I repeat that again for the record?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, please.

MR. MCDANIEL: My name is John D. McDaniel, and I am the Corporate Community Outreach Officer for City Wide Youth Agency. I just want to speak briefly on our overall program.

What City Wide endeavors to do with our academic program, with three academic components, we have two components of our program, one geared towards high-school students that prepare students for careers in law, health, business, computer technology, arts and culture, and engineering. The same with our middle-school program, focussing on those same academic tracks.

We work with students in the William Penn cluster from William Penn High School,

Elverson Middle School, and Wanamaker Middle School. We also accept students citywide for our academic programs, and what we endeavor to do is provide tutoring, homework assistance, and mentoring so that we can give our kids a positive outlook on life, enrich their academic achievement in their respective schools, and provide assistance to them with college preparation, youth employment, and summer internships.

I'm going to turn the microphone over to one of our high-school students and let her speak on how our youth agency has helped her in her respective school with academics, tutoring and the like.

MISS HARRIS: Hi. My name is Kashmiera Harris and I attend (unintelligible) High School, and --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me, Kashmiera. I have a teenage daughter too, and teenagers tend to talk real fast. Slow down, spell your name for the stenographer. Slow down.

MISS HARRIS: My name is Kashmiera, and you spell it K-A-S-H-M-I-E-R-A, Harris. And I attend (unintelligible) High School.

And I am here to represent City Wide Youth Agency and I am here to tell you that City Wide Youth Agency has gave me great excellence in education because they help me in tutoring. I mean, if I came there with any problems, they helped me, they was always there to push you if you felt as though you can't go any further. They tell you it's more -- you can try harder, keep trying harder.

I'm there for computer and technology because I want to be a computer programmer or a computer specialist when I grow older. And City Wide Youth Agency has helped me to gain hands-on experience with computer specialists system analysts, and other important people.

City Wide is a great influence to the community because their youth give back to the community by helping clean up vacant lots, keeping students out of trouble, helping people who have came there with negative attitudes, change them to positive-attitude people. And they just did a great deal to the community and to the students and the schools around them.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Thank

you. So you enjoy going there?

MISS HARRIS: Yes.

(Applause.)

MR. MACKEY: Councilwoman Miller and other Councilmembers, for the last eight years, we've been working very hard with the School District and primarily up in the William Penn Cluster.

In the back of your package that we gave you, those colored charts means a lot to us because what it tells us is that City Wide Improvement and Planning Agency is operating at a level of engineering science embolding school. That's what it tell us. And it tells us that we are taking the average student in the William Penn Cluster and having 'em graduate at a rate just as high as those two schools.

However, I can tell you that no matter how much innovativeness we come in with, sometimes it's hard getting things to the School District. I can't understand it. For instance, four or five years ago, we came to this Council and we talked to the School District, and we had our deal of the Philadelphia resource card, and people kind of

laughed at us. But today, I can tell you that almost every high school has that youth I.D. scan card in there, and I'm proud to say that we gave that -- as far as I know, we was the first one that started that ideal in this school system. But you know what? We was never involved in the planning and implementation of that, and I have a problem with that, and if I tell you I didn't, I'd be lying to you.

I have another issue. I don't think the School District should receive one dime yet from this Council or the State until they show profiles for every child in their system. We should see student profiles, and this should be -- it should be a plan, special talent for every kid for success. That's what we should see. Attached with every student pocket should be a plan to succeed.

Do you agree, Councilwoman?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I just --

MR. MACKEY: Thank you. I know you did.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You didn't let me finish.

MR. MACKEY: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I do agree that there needs to be a plan, and it would certainly help parents be able to track what's going on with their kids in terms of areas that need to be improved. And I would hope that that's happening within the individual classes.

MR. MACKEY: I think it needs to happen at a cluster level, and I'm going to be brief, and if you let me go on, we -- our model that you have in front of you talks about a demonstration that we're pulling together of 350 students in the William Penn Cluster. And what it talks about is a wholistic approach. On like Page 5 in here, it lists all of the stakeholders who are coalition members in here -- Community Service Network, DHS, Philadelphia Anti-Drugs Anti-Violence, and so on, on Page 5.

And we have all these groups at the table to serve these 350 model students because we believe in the model, that if we profile every student, we will be able to bring all of this after-school enrichment to their daily life and to their family, and the number could probably be

higher, but this is not happening.

It goes on to be, you know, almost like if you're the chosen one at 21st and the Parkway. For instance, I'll give you one. Under the federal law now, each county must establish a youth board for its job-training dollars, right? And the School District set up a board and, you know, we think we got a pretty good reputation. If you look at this, I think we doing a good job in the William Penn Cluster, and I think one of my staff should be part of that youth advisory board. I can't understand it.

But that youth advisory board plans to spend millions of dollars for some employment and year-round money and never even consulted with us, more or less never even talked to us. But they tell me today that our program -- we've been -- we've been doing a year-round program for years. I think everybody in this town knows we do a pretty good job at year-round after-school programs. Why not talk to us? I think that's important to us, and I think it's an insult with numbers like this coming out and we not being consulted. I don't understand it.

But you, as the Chairperson of Education, I know we going to get to the bottom of it and get some answers. And I know we going to sleep good tonight with that.

Councilwoman Miller, if I could add on briefly two of our recommendations. You know, this stadium issue seems to be real big in this town, and I know PCCY is talking about a surcharge on youth -- tickets being sold to generate a couple of million dollars to do some stuff, and we applaud the effort, but we don't think it goes far enough. We think that it should be $1.20 or $1.25, Councilwoman Brown, and we think it should be a youth reinvestment act with a youth board. Where's the youth board?

Young people spend a lot of people in this town too. They tell me they spend about $2 million a month. You have a teenage daughter.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: She spends most of my money.

MR. MACKEY: Okay. And I don't have any kids, and they spend most of my little bit of money. So I know they spend a lot of money, right, okay? Am I right.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And my nieces and nephews and neighbors' children and everything.

MR. MACKEY: Well, a couple of your nieces and nephews came to City Wide.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I know.

MR. MACKEY: And I have one of them back here now with me.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

MR. MACKEY: And we proud of that.

But anyway, we think it needs to be a youth council or a youth commission to help recommend how that money is spent. If we don't never hear from the young people and then we set 'em on the side and we lock 'em up and the yellow school buses leave 'em and the mud come in their faces, and then we tell 'em they bad. You know what I'm saying?

(Applause.)

MR. MACKEY: But that's -- again, that's on the Transportation Committee. Now, we've been researching this issue for a long time.

My last one is a real good one. My last one is SEPTA. Now, we know in the Mayor's budget, Councilwoman Blackwell, that the Mayor

said $2.8 million to the SEPTA, and we know the School District contribution to SEPTA on whatever plan they have equals something, and we know SEPTA's been doing some stuff with the University of Pennsylvania, even though they tell us that it's no such thing of a discount.

We think that the school I.D. that the youth scan in the school, that should be a library card too. You agree? Every public-school child should have a library card, right? So we think we've worked out a system with the library to make the school I.D. card a library card.

We met with SEPTA this morning, and guess what? With a little bit of time, the school I.D. can work for ridership for youth too. We've been telling the school this for four years now. They won't listen to me, maybe they'll listen to you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, William.

MR. MACKEY: Yes?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: One of the things that I'd just like to say is that we can talk and we can put all your -- condense this and make a smaller packet of the things that you want to be

involved in.

MR. MACKEY: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just have a question. Did you ask the School District for involvement in the youth advisory board around job training?

MR. MACKEY: We asked them a lot of things, Councilwoman. And to be frank about it, I think the School District has turned the corner and is coming some way. I don't think they got enough of that grass-roots "oomph" involved, if I may say. And probably a lot of times, we get caught up with the messenger and not hearing the message.

And that's been the case with me. You know us, we start out on the corner and we be advocates and some of us get elected and some of us don't. And a lot of times, you know, people that talk loud and say loud things, sometimes the message gets missing. And, you know, I can live with that. But I'll tell you what, I'm not going to go nowhere 'cause people going to listen to the message. We have asked consistently, repeatedly, sent documentation over and over and over and over

and over, begged 'em. And we watched our stuff be developed. It's no way right now with numbers like this in the William Penn Cluster that William Penn is not open at 11 o'clock at night, free of charge. Do you agree? Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I do think that school should be open in the evening.

Your time has been way up, I just let you go on and on.

MR. MACKEY: Okay. We only had a few students because you all upped our time. We thought we was going on at 6 o'clock, and we wanted to really pack the place to show we can get numbers out because we know numbers mean a lot.

And I'd like for you all to applaud ourselves, these young people from the William Penn Cluster that come out. They all are not bad.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mr. Mackey, I am very familiar with the number of children that you can bring to the City Council. I know I've seen that for the whole four years I've been here. And prior to coming here, when I worked for Representative Richardson, you certainly came into

our office to help get your whole organization going.

MR. MACKEY: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just want to commend you and commend the children and commend the other people that are involved, 'cause I think you've done a fine job. I was there in the beginning when you first started, so I can certainly see, you know, just how far you've come.

I'd be willing to sit down -- I'll talk to Councilmember Darrell Clarke, who is your City Councilperson and see if we can sit down and figure out ways that we can work together.

MR. MACKEY: Councilwoman, and to the Councilmembers, we want to say thanks for letting us come again. This is our eighth year coming here with our year-round program, and we have received a lot of support from Council, and we want to say thanks to the staff that go over and beyond the call of duty on Saturdays and in the evenings, and they scream, but they always help.

And I want to say thanks and especially to my Councilperson, Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes. Councilwoman Blackwell, is your light on?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Let me commend Mr. Mackey and all of you and City Wide. You continue to do an excellent job. As you know, I come out of West Philly to come down to show my support for the fine programs that you do. You're always on the mark.

I think it's a great idea to have one card that can used for library admission and as an I. D. for student. And, you know, an I.D. is just really, really important. We've talked about it over the years here. Especially when it comes to youth crime, it's easy to identify who should be in school and who shouldn't be if you have an I.D. or if you wear an I.D. So that alone is very, very important across the board.

But we want to commend you for all that you do and congratulate all of the young people here, and certainly are committed to doing whatever we can to help your program.

Thank you.

MR. MACKEY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

Councilwoman Brown?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I simply want to go on the record and echo what you've already stated with the work of City Wide and to encourage you to continue to come. We want to take that 8 times 2 that you'll be here for the next eight years to advocate for young people and to say hats off to you as well for all the work I know you've done there in the William Penn Cluster.

The challenge is to multiply, have that kind of thing that you're doing become contagious in other clusters in our city.

MR. MACKEY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I'm prepared too to follow the lead of the District Councilperson as it relates to subsequent action on your concerns.

MR. MACKEY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you and thank all the young members for coming in to

testify today.

Miss Phyllis Babcock?

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Do you want to identify yourself for the record and spell your first and last name, please.

MS. BABCOCK: Yes. My name is Phyllis Babcock. P-H-Y-L-L-I-S, B-A-B-C-O-C-K.

I noted on Councilman Nutter's face when Mr. Hornbeck handed him a copy of the packet, and I want to take you through my packet because it's not as daunting as it looks. After the cover page, there is simply a reference for more information. Then there is a list of 22 pages, one per cluster, that shows which schools are in compliance and which are not. At the end, you will find my speech written out for those of you who learn better visually than orally. And there is a reference sheet that refers to the State laws.

It is fitting that I, a retired teacher of home economics, am here on International Women's Day, representing a profession which has traditionally been considered a woman's field.

But as more women have gone out of the home to work and more men are taking more responsibility for work in the home, the profession has changed its name.

This name change follows a societal change in the family. Say "home economics" and immediately stitching and stewing come to mind. In the 1950s, when the family was a producing unit, "home ec." was a fitting name. Now that the family is a consuming unit, "family consumer sciences" reflects the way the 21st century family lives. But at the heart of the profession, whatever its name, remains the family.

The State Department of Education (PDE) has recognized the importance of teaching our children the skills they had need to improve the quality of their lives and has mandated the study of family and consumer sciences (FCS) in the new regulations they promulgated in January of 1999. These regulations require each 4th, 6th, 7th and 8th-grader to receive instruction in family and consumer sciences, taught by a certified teacher of home economics. In addition, every high-school student from the class of 2003 onward must have

family and consumer sciences instruction as a requirement for graduation.

This means that there must be standards for family and consumer sciences included in the curriculum frameworks. This means that certified teachers of home economics must be appointed to the schools.

I am here today to alert the Members of City Council to the fact that the School District of Philadelphia is not meeting these State requirements. Family and consumer sciences is not included in the curriculum frameworks. The District does not hold principals accountable for following state Law, allowing them to choose whether or not to meet this State requirement. Therefore, principals have been closing FCS programs, albeit illegally, dismantling laboratories, and dissipating the equipment. The School District has been laying off -- again legally -- certified teachers of home economics. Only 60 certified teachers of home ec. are appointed to teach family and consumer sciences in the entire School District.

For your convenience in ascertaining if

your constituents have the mandated FCS programs, I have placed in your information packet a list by cluster of those schools with and those without an FCS program taught by a certified teacher of home economics.

When one asked the Administration about this, they agreed that some of the FCS subject matter is important but that they are doing it, quote, differently, unquote. What they fail to tell you is that their way is not in compliance with the regulations of the State Department of Education.

The School District has taken some of the FCS subject matter and placed it in the health curriculum. While State regulations multi-discipline courses, these same State regulations demand that the people who are teaching the various parts of a multi-disciplinary course be certified to do so. Teachers who are certified in health and physical education are not certified to teach home management, consumer education, human development, family relations, or child care and development.

Members of the concerned teachers group

have brought this concern to the Board of Education, but we have not been taken seriously. We have been informed that the Superintendent had not even discussed our concern with members of the previous board.

I must say parenthetically that Mr. Ramos has agreed to meet with us later in the month.

Therefore, we filed a complaint with Auditor General Robert Casey and the State Department of Education. They have taken our concerns seriously. They have invoked Section 11-24 of the Public School Code, which resulted in the rehiring of the teachers of home economics who were illegally laid off last June.

(Applause.)

MS. BABCOCK: Thank you.

They have invoked Section 4.81 of the PDE regulations, Chapter 4, which initiated an investigation. My most recent contact with PDE informed me that the Administration has not responded in a satisfactory way to their inquiries. The State Department of Education is not amused.

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At this point, you may be asking why I am bringing curriculum and certification concerns to the City Council's budget hearings. I believe that the School District's flagrant disregard for both the State mandates and the State's inquiries into the compliance may have a negative effect on district finances.

There are two legal remedies the State Department of Education can use to compel the School District to comply with their laws?

1. They can fine the School District, as they did to an upstate district which eliminated family and consumer sciences. Can Philadelphia afford this loss of revenue?

2. They can revoke the certification of any administrator who is having teachers teach out of their certification. Can Philadelphia manage the chaos that decertification of large numbers of administrators would cost?

And as the City goes to Harrisburg to request the additional funds we need to provide an efficient and thorough education for our children commensurate with that received by students in the suburbs, is it wise to offend the very people to

whom we are appealing for additional funding?

On many occasions, Harrisburg has criticized the School District for financial irresponsibility. Unfortunately, when these FCS programs are closed, the laboratories are dismantled, and the equipment and supplies dissipated, Harrisburg's criticisms appear to be valid.

There seems to be no working policy in the School District for safeguarding the extensive investment the taxpayers have made in these laboratories and equipment. Many teachers have told me that usable equipment has been thrown away. At one school, the principal sent in a parent to clear out the cabinets and threw away some of the teacher's personal possessions as well as School District equipment. Another teacher carefully boxed and labeled the equipment she was told would be transported to and stored at Kennedy Center, but a coworker saw those neatly-labeled boxes on the curb on trash day.

In the autumn of 1993, I requested some of the equipment from the Dobson School, which closed their home ec. program that summer. Dr.

Benjamin Dent reported that no such equipment could be located, and he had to assume that it had, quote, been pilfered, unquote. Many other home ec. teachers have reported much the same response when requesting equipment from closed programs. They are reluctant to let me use their names in open testimony, as they fear retaliation by their superiors.

The only equipment which has arrived at another school is that which the teachers themselves have transported. One teacher, whose program was being closed, transferred all of the usable equipment and supplies to five different schools with the help of receiving teachers. Instead of the School District commending them for their volunteer service, the District harassed them. Isn't it ironic that the only accountability for equipment was provided by dedicated teaches doing volunteer work?

Having a written policy is not enough. Being able to provide State legislators and auditors with inventory lists and a tour of the storage facilities would go a long way to show fiscal responsibility.

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The obvious approach to showing good faith to the Department of Education and State legislators is for the School District to come into compliance with these State regulations by doing the following:

1. Write standards to be included in the curriculum frameworks as a content area.

2. Appoint a curriculum coordinator for family and consumer sciences to facilitate that inclusion.

3. Hold principals accountable for establishing family and consumer sciences programs with laboratories for the hands-on education Children Achieving recommends.

And no. 4. Hire certified teachers of home economics to teach those classes.

We wish to invite you to exert your influence on the School District to ensure that our students have the family and consumer sciences instruction they need while complying with the requirements of our major funding source. Our students deserve no less.

I will be happy to answer any questions.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So one of the things that you're saying is that people will no longer have a cooking class or a sewing in addition to the other consumer-related classes?

MS. BABCOCK: Neither those two areas of home economics or child development, family relations, consumer ed., and all the other parts of it. Cooking and sewing is a minor part now because it is a minor part of our daily lives. People don't do the amount of cooking and sewing that they used to, so we don't teach that much.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Well, I know we all still cook. I mean --

MS. BABCOCK: But not as much.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I wish it was a minor part of my life.

(Laughter.)

MS. BABCOCK: But many, many families don't spend the amount of time in the preparation of the food that they did, and so we have -- we still do it, but not -- you just don't take a cooking course unless you're in a vocational program like the culinary arts program.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Like when we were

in junior high, we --

MS. BABCOCK: Not like when we were in junior high and we spent one semester making an apron and the other semester learning how to cook.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And I guess we would need to hear from the School District, particularly why these classes are being cut.

I do know of a couple instances. For example, one in my district, where the entire classroom -- I think it was maybe about five or six stoves or maybe eight little mini kitchens in this great big room was dismantled. And I had heard that things were pretty much put out in the trash.

MS. BABCOCK: Yes. We have pictures of one Dumpster filled with usable equipment, including textbooks.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mm-hmm, okay. So maybe we can ask -- Mr. Hornbeck's here, he's still in the audience, to respond to this family and consumer science curriculum -- or lack of.

(Dr. Hornbeck returns to witness table.)

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DR. HORNBECK: Let me make two comment, if I may.

One is that we, of course, disagree with Miss Babcock about her interpretation of the State law, and we have consulted with City Council on these issues, and we do believe that we're in compliance with the law. And that issues of the kind particularly that Ms. Babcock just described -- child development, nutrition issues and others -- are a part of the standards that we've developed in a variety of the areas. For example, both in science and in the health standards.

Secondly, it is true that one of the things that we struggled with is placing the kind of emphasis that we believe is necessary, particularly on literacy, in the first instance, and on math and science. And so there are a number of separate individual courses that, as a consequence, are not offered.

So we believe that we are meeting the requirements of State law while, at the same time, not necessarily doing that within the framework of individual courses in the way in which Ms. Babcock believes is required under State law.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, it sounds like she's been --

MS. BABCOCK: If I could respond to that very briefly, as I've gotten my information from the State Department, and they said that I was correct.

DR. HORNBECK: Just to make the observation. There have been other moments when the State Department of Education and the School District of Philadelphia are not entirely in accord.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's for sure.

Councilwoman Blackwell?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What exactly -- so who's in charge? If they're not in accord, what does that mean? So who has to do what? If the School District and the State disagree, we could begin everything -- we could begin with Adam in terms of what we think in education. Isn't the State the boss in that respect?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, for example, the State Department of Education thinks that they fairly fund the School District of Philadelphia and its children. We disagree with that. And in

that particular instance, among other things, we're involved in federal court because we believe that we are being treated unfairly. It's just an example of what I mean when I say we don't always agree with each other.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay. This family consumer and sciences program, does every child have to have so much of this? Like when we were in school, you had good citizenship and all of those things. Where does this fit into our curriculum for kids?

MS. BABCOCK: The number of hours has been taken out of the State law. What it is, is that sometime during the 5th and the 6th and 7th and 8th grade, the students have to have instruction in family and consumer sciences.

There is no -- what we're supposed to do is set up standards and then devote the amount of time that is necessary to achieve those. The State doesn't say, You have to have 30 hours like they used to, just enough time to meet the standards.

And State standards are in the process of being developed, they are complete, and they

are waiting in present communications to be let out of the that particular part and going to the two-year process of approval with statewide hearings and that sort of thing. As soon as they are released from present communications, they will be on the Web, and I have put the Website address in your packet.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell.

I guess this is a topic that we would probably need to expand some discussion around, and we'll give you a call, Miss Babcock, and we can talk about it further. I'm glad that you came today and brought this subject up, and there will be further discussion. I'll give you a call.

MS. BABCOCK: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You're welcome.

Thank you, Superintendent.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: The last person on our list to testify is former Councilperson Ed Schwartz.

(Ed Schwartz comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Welcome. It's good seeing you again.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Here, I have some material for you guys, as always, if somebody could grab that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Good evening. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. My name is Ed Schwartz, and I'm here from the Institute for the Study of Civic Values.

And I'm here today not simply to support the School District in its quest for additional funds from Harrisburg, but to urge that we all see this battle as the price we must pay if the largest city in this Commonwealth, America's founding city and the home of the first public school in America, is to succeed as a city in the future.

In 1995, in adopting Children Achieving, the School District set forth the following long-term goal for education in Philadelphia: namely, that at the end of 12 years, 90 percent of our students would be achieving, and the Superintendent tells me that it

is at proficient in their various levels, not simply basic but proficient, meaning above grade level or better. They recognize that this was a Herculean undertaking, given how far below basic most of our students were at the time, and still are. And "basic" really means grade level. But that's what the Superintendent and the School Board asked our support to help them do. And without thinking about it, everyone said more or less, sure.

What we perhaps did not realize is that this superintendent, David Hornbeck, and that School Board, and now this one meant it. This wasn't going to be one of these, Well, we'll do it if we can propositions, compromised the moment it proved difficult to accomplish. This was going to be a serious goal, with ongoing indicators for progress, to be backed by recommendations from the leadership of the School District as to what Children Achieving would have required.

So the basic questions that we need to ask at this point are these:

Are we still committed to a long-range effort to bring all students in Philadelphia up to

proficient or better by the year 2007? If we are, do we agree with the School District's assessment of what this will cost? And if we don't agree, if we don't agree with their cost estimates, then what do we think it should cost?

And once we all agree as to this goal and the relevant cause, how are hard we willing to fight to pay the price?

Isn't this precisely what we are asked to do in relation to major economic-development projects?

In 1997, the federal government awarded the City $320 million, equivalent to nearly double that today, to build a tunnel between our two rail stations, in the name of economic development. When I served in City Council in the 1980s, Harrisburg awarded us, I believe, $150 million -- maybe it was 185 million -- to help defray the cost of a convention center that right now absorbs, I believe, $20 million in debt service -- is that, correct Charlie, $20 million? -- from the General Fund again to promote our economy.

And then there's the Navy Yard, the Kvaerner project, and now the stadiums, each with

their price tag for us and for Harrisburg, all defended in the name of economic development.

Well, that, in my judgment, is the way we need to see Children Achieving -- as a sustained effort to help the citizens of Philadelphia become employable in the emerging information economy so that the City itself can grow.

Three years ago, as part of the Institute's effort to fight for funding for adult literacy, I documented that the fastest-growing cities in this country -- Boston, Phoenix, Portland, San Jose, and Dallas -- all had high school graduation rates of 80 percent or better. The slow-growth cities, like Philadelphia, all had high school graduation rates of only 60 percent.

Just as an individual with a high school degree earns $7,000 more than someone without one, and a college graduate earns twice the income of a high school graduate, $40,000 versus $20,000, that is in the appendix from the Census Bureau that I attached here. So a city without large pool of educated employees cannot hope to compete in the growth high-tech industries

that are emerging today and setting the terms of our economic profile as a nation.

So the relevant question is not, can we afford to finance Children Achieving? The question is, how can we not afford to support this program or some comparable large-scale effort to improve our schools if Philadelphia hopes to achieve its goals for its economic progress in this, our new millennium?

So where are we now? The simple answer is, we're, in fact, falling behind our target. To keep pace with the pace of progress established in 1995, each cluster at this point must reduce the number of students testing below basic by roughly 5 percent each year.

Now, I admit and acknowledge that there has continued to be, as Reverend Shine said, incremental progress, and that's good, but we are falling behind the targets set for that progress. In fact, only two clusters -- William Penn and Roxborough -- met that goal in 1998-'99. This is in a table in the back.

That means that 20 clusters must now reduce the percentage of students below basic by

better than 5 percent in the coming year or remain behind its two-year cycle for improvement. And all of this is documented in an appendix that I've provided you here.

The picture is especially bleak in relation to the neighborhood high schools. By that, I mean the schools other than the magnet schools like CAPA and Bodine or Central and Masterman. And by the way, just in terms of achievement, in response to one of the testimonies that was made earlier today, when the School District sets about to create an excellent, top-level school, it achieves. The two highest performing schools in this whole region are, in fact, Masterman and Central. It comes up again and again at the top of every regional listing of high schools.

But now I'm talking not about those schools where we find the best students and push them forward; I'm talking about our neighborhood high schools. And unfortunately, roughly 83 percent of these neighborhood high schools and vocational schools are still testing below basic, 83 percent. And you can look again at a separate

page we've provided on each of these neighborhood high schools.

So there is improvement, but it's not fast enough. The only neighborhood high school that kept pace, in fact, with a 5 percent increase this year, was Kensington High School. Everything else was below that, and some of these high schools, in fact, were -- oh, well, I see we have some Kensington High School -- I did not even know that, I'm stating the truth as it's there.

But this means that more than 43,000 young people out of the roughly 52,000 students enrolled in these schools are still testing below basic. These young people will be graduating over the next few years. Can they make it in today's economy, even with their high school diplomas? And, again, isn't this a question we all need to ask as we look at the future of the City?

Some may say that no matter what we spend, it's impossible to achieve these goals. Again, the evidence does not support this proposition. Now here, I've done some sort of original work. In a third page in your packet, I have identified and am providing to you 37 schools

in Philadelphia that achieved at least a 10 percent reduction in the number of students testing below basic in a single year, at least 10 percent. That means they've met their two-year goal or more in a single year. In fact, 11 of these schools achieved better than a 20 percent reduction.

The most dramatic improvement occurred at Clymer, in the heart of North Philadelphia, where 68.9 percent of the students were testing below basic in 1998, and only 28.6 percent were below basic in 1999 -- a drop of more than 40 percent. Schools like this appear all over the City, in some of our poorest neighborhoods. And we need to understand why these schools are succeeding so that we can apply their experience to the schools that are not.

And this is the basis on which we need to evaluate the School District's request for additional funding as well -- all those new program that columnists like Tom Ferrick, in the Inquirer this morning, dismissed as needless frills.

If the School District is now asking

for more support for after-school programs and summer school and enriched services for students who are failing, it is because these appear now to be necessary to meet the performance goals that the District has set for the students of Philadelphia. If we agree that these goals are valid, then relevant questions are:

One, are these new programs essential to meeting them? Is the cost of these new programs reasonable? If the cost of the programs is reasonable, then are there other programs and services that are supported by the School District now that we can drop to help pay for them, without jeopardizing the sort of education that we hope to provide in Philadelphia?

My own hunch is that the programs are essential to meeting them, and the cost is reasonable. I equally suspect, as a parent whose daughter attended public schools in Philadelphia, that there are not all these frills that critics of the District claim there are, though I'm open to suggestion, but that is what the School Board and the Mayor and the Council and the Governor and the State legislature need to be discussing in the

weeks and months ahead.

Again, we take this kind of analysis for granted in relation to economic development. We need to see education as economic development and apply the same process to our shared investment in our schools.

I do have three additional suggestions for this City Council.

First, you should get to know not only the schools in your district, which I do know you do know, but the performance scores of those schools in relation to Children Achieving. This will give you a school-by-school perspective on these matters that can help in evaluating the big picture with the School District as well. And all of these scores, by the way, are on the Internet, on the School District's Website. That's where I got all of the information that I'm giving to you. It's fairly easy to get into it either, from their Website or mine, but one way or the other, you can get them.

Secondly, I invite you to assign a member of your staff, each of you, to a citywide e-mail list that I am managing on these issues via

the Internet. Just have them send an e-mail to me at edcivic@libertynet.org, and I'll add them to the list because this is where we're having a dialogue among activists and people in the school system and others about these issues on a day-to-day basis.

And, finally, on the separate page that I've given you, the one that's not stapled, I call your continuing to a social contract that we have negotiated between the leadership of the Cook Middle School in Logan, the Olney Cluster, and community leaders in the surrounding Logan neighborhood, defining their mutual responsibility to improve education at Cook. This is the sort of agreement that we need to develop throughout the City.

And I would add in response to the comment about the need for a student profile, I note in the material associated with some of the new programs that there is some discussion in the School District's new programs about a parent compact, relating to their own kid in educational performance. I think that comes pretty close to the sort of profile that is being called for here.

But the critical part is to see all of this as an aspect of our ongoing effort to help our children and our city succeed. And if we're serious about that, and Harrisburg can be persuaded to see Philadelphia residents as Pennsylvania residents as well, whose success is a part of the success of this Commonwealth as well, then we have a chance to build the kind of school system in the future of which every one of us can be proud.

I want to thank you for your time and attention. I call your attention to the charts in the back for your use. There is also something here from the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, a Guide to the School Budget, which you may have seen, but I think it's a useful reminder, at least a couple years ago as to what the School District is spending on various aspects of this work.

And then there is the census data here that shows you how much a student graduate earns at different levels of education. Imagine doubling the number -- imagine 200,000 students in the Philadelphia School District who graduated

high school and went on to college, and look at the income increase. And start comparing that to the kind of income projections you get when the economic development people come to you and say, If only you put down X-amount, the tax ratables will grow, and by the year 2030, eventually the amount we're investing in the City budget will be repaid.

What a fast return on investment we would get if could double the number of students going to college, double the number of students who've graduated high school at a high-school heavily of performance, and you begin to see how this impacts on other things that we do take seriously and even manage to raise support from Harrisburg for doing.

So I thank you again for your time and attention, and I look forward to working with you again on this in the future.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I want to thank you. Your testimony is also very, very informative,.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And we can

see that you did a lot of work here.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Yeah.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And we certainly appreciate your coming in and sharing the information with us.

MR. SCHWARTZ: The truth is, I've been doing this work and was glad to have an opportunity to come somewhere and share it. I've been sitting at my home doing it, so I'm glad to have this chance.

So thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there anyone else to testify on these bills?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, this committee will stand in recess until Monday, March 13, at 9:00 a.m.

Thank you all very much.

(Adjourned at 5:33 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia of Wednesday, March 8, 2000, were reported fully and accurately by me, and that this is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BILL NO.'S 000007, 000008, 000009

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,
Registered Professional Reporter