

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 15, 2012
1:15 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

BILLS 120164, 120165, 120166, 120173, 120174,
120175, 120230, 120338, 120339, 120340 and
120341
RESOLUTION 120167

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
afternoon. Can we have your attention.
Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, everyone.
We're resuming our school budget
hearings. These are our callbacks,
School District department callback. We
have our members of our SRC. We see
Pedro Ramos. We see Feather Houstoun.
And certainly we are happy to entertain
any concerns that you may have.

Thank you very much. As you
know, this is a continuation of the
public hearing of the Committee of the
Whole regarding Bill Nos. 120164, 120165,
120166, 120173, 120174, 120175, 120230,
120338, 120339, 120340, 120341 and
Resolution No. 120167. Again, thank you
very much.

MS. LEWIS: Bill No. 120164, an
ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for
the six Fiscal Years 2013 to 2018
inclusive.

Bill No. 120165, an ordinance

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 to adopt a Fiscal 2013 Capital Budget.

3 Bill No. 120166, an ordinance
4 adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal
5 Year 2013.

6 Resolution No. 120167, a
7 resolution providing for the approval by
8 the Council of the City of Philadelphia
9 of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for
10 the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal
11 Years 2013 through 2017, and
12 incorporating proposed changes with
13 respect to Fiscal Year 2012, which is to
14 be submitted by the Mayor to the
15 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
16 Cooperation Authority (the "Authority")
17 pursuant to the Intergovernmental
18 Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an
19 ordinance of this Council approved by the
20 Mayor on January 3rd, 1992 (Bill No.
21 1563-A), by and between the City and the
22 Authority.

23 Bill No. 120173, amending
24 Section 19-1806, entitled "Authorization
25 of Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 further authorize the Board of Education
3 of the School District of Philadelphia to
4 impose a tax on the use or occupancy of
5 real estate within the School District of
6 Philadelphia, under certain terms and
7 conditions.

8 Bill No. 120174, amending
9 Chapter 19-1500 of The Philadelphia Code,
10 entitled "Wage and Net Profits Tax," by
11 repealing Section 19-1508, entitled
12 "Refunds and Forgiveness for Poverty
13 Income."

14 Bill No. 120175, authorizing
15 real estate taxes for the City of
16 Philadelphia and the School District of
17 Philadelphia for Fiscal Year 2013 and
18 thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300
19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real
20 Estate Taxes," to provide for a tax and
21 tax rate on real property, for
22 exclusions, and for an established
23 pre-determined ratio; and by amending
24 Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code,
25 entitled "School Tax Authorization," to

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 further authorize the Board of Education
3 of the School District of Philadelphia to
4 impose a tax on real estate within the
5 City of Philadelphia, and providing for a
6 tax rate and for exclusions; all under
7 certain terms and conditions.

8 Bill No. 120230, authorizing
9 real estate taxes for the City of
10 Philadelphia and the School District of
11 Philadelphia for Fiscal Year 2013 and
12 thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300
13 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real
14 Estate Taxes," to provide for a tax and
15 tax rate on real property; and by
16 amending Chapter 19-1800 of The
17 Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax
18 Authorization," to further authorize the
19 Board of Education of the School District
20 of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real
21 estate within the City of Philadelphia,
22 and providing for a tax rate; all under
23 certain terms and conditions.

24 Bill No. 120338, an ordinance
25 amending Section 19-1307 of The

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Deferrals of
3 Real Estate Tax," by further providing
4 for certain deferrals of payment of a
5 certain portion of Real Estate Taxes due
6 the City of Philadelphia or the
7 Philadelphia School District, all under
8 certain terms and conditions.

9 Bill No. 120339, an ordinance
10 amending Title 19 of The Philadelphia
11 Code, by adding a new Chapter 19-2900A,
12 entitled "Special Real Estate Tax
13 Provisions for Low Income Taxpayers,"
14 providing for credits against real estate
15 tax for certain low income taxpayers,
16 under certain terms and conditions.

17 Bill No. 120340, an ordinance
18 enacting a new Chapter 19-3800 of The
19 Philadelphia Code, authorizing the
20 granting of tax exemptions to longtime
21 owner-occupants of certain properties in
22 the city of Philadelphia.

23 Bill No. 120341, an ordinance
24 amending Chapter 19-1300 of The
25 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real Estate

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 Taxes," by further providing for
3 installment payments of real estate
4 taxes, all under certain terms and
5 conditions.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: To
7 repeat, this afternoon is a callback
8 session to provide members of this body
9 additional opportunity to question the
10 School District of Philadelphia on their
11 spending requests.

12 We see that members of the SRC
13 have approached the witness table. We'll
14 ask you to identify yourselves and then
15 we will call for questions.

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good
17 afternoon, Chairwoman Blackwell. My name
18 is Pedro Ramos. I'm Chair of the School
19 Reform Commission, accompanied by Feather
20 Houstoun, Commissioner on the School
21 Reform Commission.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you. Would you like to make any
24 statement?

25 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No, Madam

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 Chairman. We're here on the callback and
3 we'll submit our previous comments for
4 the record.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much.

7 The Chair recognizes Councilman
8 Greenlee.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
10 you, Madam Chair.

11 Good afternoon.

12 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good
13 afternoon.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I know
15 your voice is getting weak there. I
16 think there's a reason for that. You've
17 been very active, I know, in the last few
18 weeks, so I hope you're feeling better.

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I have
21 just a general question that kind of came
22 up as a result of the public testimony
23 from the School District last week, and
24 it had to do with your proposed plan for
25 the future of the District.

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2 It was said that in the
3 preliminary discussions, if you will,
4 there was no involvement of the teachers,
5 principals, parent groups, that kind of
6 thing, and it just seemed, I think, to a
7 lot of us that -- and I know it's just a
8 proposal, but in order to try to get the
9 best proposal, wouldn't the inclusion of
10 folks like that make some sense? And I
11 guess the first question, is that
12 accurate that they were not included?
13 And then, secondly, if not, wouldn't it
14 have made some sense to include those
15 individuals?

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No, yes and...

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That's a
18 short answer. That's good.

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'm getting
20 better, right?

21 My understanding of the process
22 that the administrative leadership team
23 followed was that there were a number of
24 meetings to get feedback through the
25 process. And I do agree that engagement

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 is important. Since the submission to
3 the SRC by the Administration of the
4 proposal, the SRC, both I think in our
5 testimony here last time, also in various
6 community meetings and other forum, have
7 said that we are interested in much
8 deeper discussions and feedback on
9 defining the scope of how this goes
10 forward, particularly in two areas. One
11 thing, that with respect to the idea for
12 this different organizational structure,
13 whether you call it networks or something
14 else, the SRC has said that it wants to
15 hear directly from principals before any
16 specifications or description is --
17 rather than put out an RFP for comment or
18 something like that, that before anything
19 like that's done, we want to hear
20 directly from the people that are
21 supposed to be the customers of these
22 School District-run networks.

23 So that's -- I say primarily
24 School District-run networks.

25 So that's a step. So both the

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2 administrative leadership team will be
3 seeking feedback from principals and the
4 community, and the SRC itself wants to
5 hear directly from principals as well as
6 feedback on the community.

7 And on the school closings,
8 there really -- and I think we said this
9 last time too. We really need to have
10 what I imagine -- and this is not set in
11 stone -- I imagine sort of a two-tiered
12 structure for engagement going forward.
13 It is a lot of work. We do have to get
14 closer to 85 percent utilization over the
15 next few years. So I think there are two
16 tiers. One is, we've said that there
17 should be, in addition to utilization and
18 facilities condition index data and
19 student performance, we should be
20 reaching out to sort of a broad -- to the
21 community for what other criteria should
22 be taken into account.

23 And the second level is -- and
24 I think has to really be a collaborative
25 level -- among agencies, not just the

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2 District, not even necessarily the
3 District and the City. I can imagine it
4 being the City, the District, RDA,
5 whomever, around how do we, on a
6 neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, plan
7 for buildings that could potentially
8 have -- how do you stop the lights from
9 going out in these buildings that are
10 sort of community institutions. So on
11 both, I think --

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Not to
13 interrupt, but I hear what you're saying,
14 but not even to get into real specifics.
15 I was just talking a very general sense,
16 because this proposal obviously has
17 generated a lot of comment and heat and
18 distress with some people, and it would
19 just seem that more inclusion in the
20 beginning, people will probably still be
21 upset, but it would have maybe -- at
22 least you could have said, Well, look, we
23 had these people at the table or tables
24 with us.

25 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think that's

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2 a fair criticism.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
4 All right. Thank you.

5 Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you, Councilman.

8 With regard to the school
9 closings and those that have already
10 occurred, I believe -- I just wanted to
11 double-check -- you said last time you
12 were here that decisions will be made
13 over the summer about the future of those
14 buildings, buildings like the old West
15 Philly High School. Is that what you
16 said?

17 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: With respect
18 to the -- there are -- I think
19 Mr. Knudsen, who is out of town today, as
20 you know, had testified to that, and we
21 can get more specific on the timetables,
22 but there are some set of buildings that
23 are some way along a process of an RFP
24 process where they pre-qualify potential
25 bidders. So I know that process is going

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2 on for a set of buildings. I don't know
3 specifically which set that is, and we
4 can get that information to you.

5 And with respect to the
6 buildings that we -- and I think those
7 were buildings that were primarily,
8 Councilwoman, I think those were
9 buildings that were already empty, and we
10 were starting the process for the ones
11 that will start to be emptied in the
12 future years. So I think that there may
13 be two sets there. One, already empty
14 buildings that were being marketed, and
15 buildings that are becoming available
16 because of the most recent Facilities
17 Master Plan decisions, and we can get in
18 writing a more precise answer, if you'd
19 like.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.
21 Thank you.

22 And with regard to alternative
23 schools, what did we say about that? You
24 know, some charter schools have
25 alternative -- even KIPP, they have

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2 programs in the building, some have them
3 outside of the building. Overall for
4 alternative schools, is that another --
5 is that something we privatize out, or
6 what are the plans for the fall?

7 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll let our
8 Chief Academic Officer, Penny Nixon, is
9 here and I can let her address that. My
10 understanding is that we run some
11 alternative programs and we also for a
12 long time have contracted out some of
13 those alternative programs.

14 (Witness approached witness
15 table.)

16 MS. NIXON: Good afternoon.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
18 afternoon.

19 MS. NIXON: Penny Nixon, Chief
20 Academic Officer for the School District
21 of Philadelphia.

22 I just want to make sure I
23 heard your question correctly around...

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
25 Alternative schools.

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2 MS. NIXON: So the alternative
3 schools program will remain the same. So
4 the same program that we ran this year we
5 will also run next year where we have
6 some outside providers and then we have
7 some of the schools that we run in-house.
8 But there will be no change to the
9 current configuration.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
11 Thank you.

12 Mr. Ramos, I had one more
13 question before I call on Councilman
14 Green, and, that is, with regard to -- we
15 have a little lady who comes in here that
16 I've known all my life. She testifies at
17 all our hearings about prayer in schools.
18 We've been asking for a year to get the
19 school policy in writing. Would you make
20 sure that is provided?

21 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The School
22 District policy?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes. We'll
25 provide that to you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you.

4 Councilman Green.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair.

7 Good afternoon. Good to see
8 you again.

9 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good
10 afternoon.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'll start
12 with an easy question, and, that is, my
13 colleague, Councilwoman Maria
14 Quinones-Sanchez sitting next to me, has
15 been one of the most engaged persons I
16 know in schools since I've been here.
17 She actually founded and has run a
18 charter school, is passionate about
19 providing resources for the School
20 District and is fighting for the children
21 of the City every day.

22 Have you guys considered her as
23 the next Superintendent?

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Don't
25 answer that. Don't answer.

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2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You may
3 nominate people on a confidential basis,
4 Councilman.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I do so in
6 public right now.

7 Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's a better
9 recruit if she doesn't know.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I have a few
11 questions that are specific about how the
12 plans and everything are going to affect
13 the District going forward.

14 How is the District working to
15 ensure that increased student enrollment
16 does not impact the quality of academic
17 programs available to students in those
18 schools where you're putting the 2,000
19 students into seats in what are now
20 schools that are working? And I don't
21 know whether you're the appropriate
22 person or Chief Academic Officer.

23 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll have
24 Chief Academic Officer Penny Nixon
25 answer.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: In other
3 words, Girls High is proposing to add
4 334. Will that affect the academic
5 success that we see, or, if not, how will
6 it not?

7 MS. NIXON: No, it won't impact
8 it. The school budgets are based on
9 enrollment, so that they will receive
10 adequate funding for the number of
11 students that are enrolled.

12 When we came up with the number
13 for the increased seats, we did it in
14 collaboration with the principal, and
15 basically was clear to principals that we
16 did not want the enrollment to -- we
17 wanted to make sure that the number of
18 increased seats did not have an impact on
19 the quality of their program. So we did
20 do it in collaboration with the principal
21 and we came up with the number that way.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And how will
23 you measure that? How should we look to
24 measure whether or not it's had a
25 positive or negative impact two years

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2 down the road? Would it be state test
3 scores? Would it be what colleges people
4 get into? How should we look to
5 measure -- what criteria would you apply?

6 MS. NIXON: I would look at
7 student data, so based on our school
8 Report Card. So look at all of the data
9 there around test scores, climate,
10 graduation rates. So to really sort of
11 compare the school Report Card from last
12 year to this year. So to look at the
13 student data and also visit the school as
14 well.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are you
16 adding additional instructional staff or
17 will class size increase, or both?

18 MS. NIXON: We're adding
19 additional instructional staff. Class
20 size will not increase.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I have a
22 question about the budget. Does the
23 District need permission to do debt
24 financing, to do deficit financing, and,
25 if so, from whom?

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2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I believe the
3 answer -- I'm not sure I'm going to get
4 this a hundred percent technically
5 correct, Councilman. I think the answer
6 is that it depends on the type of debt.
7 If there are, for example, for the
8 TransPass borrowing, which was a deficit
9 borrowing but not a -- it was a deficit
10 borrowing. We had to get court approval.
11 I think there's certain types of deficit
12 borrowings where other types of state
13 approvals are required.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So --

15 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Outside of the
16 court.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So not last
18 Friday but the Friday before, I met with
19 you and I told you I'd be asking this
20 question. So I don't think it's unfair
21 to ask.

22 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: If there's a
23 debt financing that is something like a
24 lease buyback, then it's the State
25 Building Authority.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, for
3 example, we have a specific example here
4 where the District has projected that its
5 revenues will not meet its obligations,
6 and my understanding is no municipality,
7 the state itself, no school district is
8 allowed to do that. And to knowingly
9 spend more than your projected revenues
10 is against the law and there has to be
11 some approval process for that, and I
12 guess I just want to know who has to
13 approve that. Is it the courts? Is it
14 the State Legislature has to act?

15 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: In the -- one
16 of the types of transactions and the
17 primary type of transaction that's been
18 contemplated, the State Building
19 Authority would be one, I believe. And
20 we just were called yesterday.
21 Mr. Knudsen is out of town. We can
22 follow up. But what I'm not certain
23 about is whether the Secretary or another
24 agency in the state government has to
25 approve the borrowing besides the

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 Building Authority in that situation.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So does that
4 mean --

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So the simple
6 answer is yes, somebody does have to
7 approve it. I'm just not clear on each
8 of the approvals that's required.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Does that
10 mean you plan to take out the TRAN that
11 Mr. --

12 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No. The TRAN
13 does not require approval.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- that
15 Mr. Knudsen described -- well, the only
16 way to take out the TRAN is if you can do
17 deficit borrowing.

18 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Right.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Does that
20 mean that you plan to take out the TRAN
21 with some kind of mortgage-backed
22 security, you're leveraging your assets?
23 In other words, I thought it was against
24 the law for the city, the state, a school
25 district to spend more than -- to

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2 knowingly spend more than their revenues,
3 and that's what you're proposing to do
4 and I'm wondering what legal advice you
5 have about that.

6 MS. HOUSTOUN: Well, I'm not a
7 lawyer, and Joan Stern, our attorney, is
8 not here.

9 Feather Houstoun, SRC
10 Commissioner.

11 We are doing a TRAN. In the
12 representations of the TRAN, we represent
13 to bankers that we will be able to pay
14 back the TRAN during the course of the
15 year. We have disclosed or will disclose
16 the expectation that we will have a
17 deficit borrowing and a plan to have the
18 budget in structural balance in Fiscal
19 '14. And it's the combination of those
20 things that permit the TRAN, but then --
21 but also permit the plan, the Five Year
22 Plan. The credibility of the Five Year
23 Plan permits the lease-leaseback, which
24 is the deficit financing that requires
25 approval by the State Building Authority.

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2 So it's a --

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You've
4 answered my question. So you intend to
5 do a sale leaseback that will allow you
6 to get cash to pay off the TRAN?

7 MS. HOUSTOUN: No. I am
8 speaking to a complexity in tax law, tax
9 exempt bond law, and I'm going to do it
10 inartfully, but in order to have the TRAN
11 viable, we have to demonstrate to the
12 banks that we can pay back the TRAN, but
13 we are not using the deficit financing to
14 pay back the TRAN. The deficit financing
15 money is going into our overall budget
16 and we are paying back the TRAN, but they
17 are separate transactions. It's not like
18 a construction loan being taken out
19 directly by a long-term mortgage. It's
20 not that.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand
22 what you're saying, but the fact of the
23 matter is, without the deficit financing,
24 you won't have the cash in your budget to
25 pay back the TRAN. Green dollars are

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2 fungible. They're all in one pie.

3 MS. HOUSTOUN: It is all
4 fungible, but it's a question of the
5 priorities that the District would have
6 for paying back the TRAN versus paying
7 payroll or anything else, because it is
8 all green. So these are legally separate
9 and unlinked financial transactions.

10 I know what you're saying, and
11 I'm just trying to be clear, because it's
12 a point of great importance in tax law.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I
14 don't want to mess up any --

15 MS. HOUSTOUN: Councilman, we
16 do need --

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I think I
18 understand what you're saying, but as a
19 practical matter, I would like to know
20 the certainty with which we think we can
21 do the deficit financing, what legal
22 hurdles we have to jump through in order
23 to do a deficit financing, who has to
24 approve it, and the base question of
25 whether or not we can legally knowingly

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2 approve a budget as City Council -- or I
3 guess we don't approve your budget.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You don't
5 approve our budget.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Whether the
7 SRC can approve a budget that they know
8 will spend more money than revenue they
9 will take in.

10 MS. HOUSTOUN: If we have a
11 plan, which is the reason that this
12 year's budget is embedded in a Five Year
13 Financial Plan --

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand
15 that, but there's nothing in state law
16 about a Five Year Plan relating to this
17 sort of thing.

18 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think the
19 most constructive response is to --
20 you're asking a particularly technical
21 question and it probably merits a
22 technical response that we can get to
23 you --

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's true,
25 which I gave you fair warning for. But

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2 that's okay.

3 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, two
4 things. One, I didn't hear this level at
5 least when I was in that meeting, this
6 level of detail. Two, if you did it,
7 Mr. Knudsen, I'm sure if he's thought
8 about it, he can respond to it when he's
9 back. But we can get you an answer
10 shortly.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Fair enough.
12 Please provide that to the Chair.

13 So I have a bunch of questions
14 about what your contingency plan is if
15 the permission is not granted, et cetera,
16 but I assume you would not address those
17 and we'll just get the specific legal
18 answer and then I'll ask any follow-up
19 questions I have in writing.

20 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, I think
21 Mr. Knudsen also last time responded to
22 the types of contingencies and the need
23 and the School District's needs short
24 term as well as over the course of the
25 Five Year Plan. Without the revenue, you

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 either need revenue from other sources or
3 you need to reduce expenses by a
4 commensurate amount.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. The
6 next assumption is 122 million in
7 operational savings. From the one-page
8 Five Year Plan document, it's not clear
9 which years these savings are realized.
10 Can you detail for us the type and amount
11 of projected savings by type and by year?

12 I see you have your Budget
13 Director there.

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilman, to
15 be clear, your question is on the
16 five-year projection, what's the
17 breakdown by class?

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: No. The
19 question is, detail an amount of type of
20 projected savings of the 122 million by
21 year and type. It's not clear it's
22 custodial maintenance, it's closure of 40
23 school buildings, it's freezing of all
24 non-personnel spend until FY16. How does
25 that roll through the Five Year Plan?

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2 MS. HOUSTOUN: Councilman,

3 we'll provide more detail, but I want the
4 two -- the broad parameters of this, all
5 of these will hit in Fiscal '14 in the
6 plan, or that is the expectation.

7 Thirty-three million represents the
8 closure of yet-to-be-identified
9 schools -- buildings; sorry, not schools,
10 but buildings. An estimated combined 60
11 million in transportation and facilities,
12 12 million in improved procurement
13 processes, and then there is an
14 across-the-board freeze in other
15 contracts and I believe -- was there a
16 salary freeze also? But definitely a
17 contract expenditure freeze. So that
18 doesn't total it up entirely, so we'll
19 provide for the record the exact amount,
20 but it is anticipated that that tranche
21 of savings will -- we will be acting on
22 achieving those in different process over
23 this fiscal year, but the full year
24 savings will occur in the next fiscal
25 year, in the second year of the --

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If you could
3 provide the detail when each year, what
4 specific category, over the five years,
5 that would be great.

6 MS. HOUSTOUN: We can do that.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Can you
8 describe what modernizing custodial
9 maintenance and transportation services
10 is?

11 MS. HOUSTOUN: Mr. Knudsen
12 would again be a better source for this.
13 We are in the process right now of
14 discussions with the bargaining unit
15 involved. It's our hope that we will be
16 able to achieve contract agreements with
17 them that approximate what the District
18 would receive under a commercial
19 contract. There are also savings that we
20 believe we can achieve and are pretty
21 confident of achieving through the
22 modernization of the way the School
23 District schedules and moves its buses
24 around picking up children. We use a
25 manual process. Virtually all

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2 ParaTransit, transit companies, everyone
3 else now has for 20 years been using
4 electronic mapping. We think there's
5 probably some significant savings simply
6 in that.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: In logistics
8 essentially.

9 MS. HOUSTOUN: In the logistics
10 of it, yes.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So as
12 Commissioner Carey talked about in her
13 testimony, the planning and opening of
14 the school year, the start of the school
15 year, set the right tone.

16 As you look to modernize
17 maintenance, transportation, to what
18 extent and how are safety issues being
19 taken into account?

20 MS. HOUSTOUN: Well, we
21 would -- one of two different scenarios
22 might be entailed. If we're able to
23 reach contract agreement with the
24 bargaining units, then we would
25 presumably have similar relations with

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 all of them. I know that Commissioner
3 Carey is very emphatic about infusing a
4 sense of responsibility for climate among
5 all the adults that are part of the
6 School District and part of the School
7 District contracting field. So that's
8 part of the summer planning that has to
9 be undertaken.

10 A lot of the transportation
11 issues are not likely to arise until the
12 subsequent years. So we have some time
13 to plan and to be clear about our
14 training expectations for contractors if
15 we should use contractors, or sooner if
16 we end up continuing to use employees as
17 part of a result of a bargaining unit
18 discussion.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

20 Madam Chair, I have other
21 questions, but I'm going to yield to
22 Councilwoman Sanchez and come back.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you very much. Councilman Jones and then
25 I have two.

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2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The
3 Superintendent nominee.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
5 Councilman Jones.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

7 Before we get to the next
8 Director of the School Board, I would
9 like to hear from some Councilpeople
10 about the issue of education.

11 I have two quick questions and
12 concerns and priorities. As Chair of
13 Public Safety, I'm very concerned in the
14 tough budget times that 91 officers that
15 were laid off and with the classroom and
16 surrounding school area violence, how we
17 deal with that. But before you answer
18 that, I think it was best put in context
19 by one of my colleagues, who is not here,
20 so, therefore, I won't attribute this
21 comment to them. When we were struggling
22 with, Well, we're getting ready possibly
23 to raise a considerable amount of money
24 for the School Board and what
25 accountability will we have after we do

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 that, and he said to me -- I narrowed it
3 down a bit. He said to me it's like
4 being a non-custodial parent that has to
5 pay child support. When he did the
6 analogy of Harrisburg being a parent and
7 Philadelphia being a parent, but we don't
8 have any say-so once we hand over the
9 money as to how the child's conditions
10 are. So it's almost how do we get
11 accountability from you guys after the
12 check is cleared and for my issue on the
13 issue of public safety? A kid can't
14 learn a thing if he's ducking and
15 guarding for his life.

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Let me start
17 with the safety thing, mindful for
18 Council's preference for brief answers
19 and the loss of my voice because of my
20 inability to give brief answers.

21 I think if you watch the
22 District and the SRC over time, you
23 realize that the fact that now in the
24 last six months you see safety as the
25 first word that comes out of many -- the

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 first word of many sentences that get
3 articulated by District leadership is not
4 accidental, because we think it starts
5 with leadership and putting the issue of
6 safety at the top of the agenda, and in
7 contrast to a history of school districts
8 in general I think seeing safety as sort
9 of something incidental to instruction
10 and education. I think the words we've
11 used around it is that it's a threshold
12 issue. It is an issue around if you
13 don't get past safety issues, nobody will
14 listen to what you have to say about
15 instructional, and it's also literally a
16 threshold issue and that if parents are
17 concerned about safety, the child never
18 comes through your threshold, through
19 your door.

20 So you're right, the number of
21 school police is less. That's part of
22 the safety equation. That's sort of
23 the -- has a place in the preventive,
24 also a big part in response to safety
25 concerns. And Chief Myron Patterson,

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 Chief Inspector Myron Patterson, the
3 Philadelphia Police Department, is in
4 charge, as you know, of the deployment of
5 the resources we have of school police.

6 I think the last time we were
7 here, Commissioner Carey and others
8 articulated a number of programs that are
9 being set up to increase the sensitivity
10 and training of everybody, School
11 District leadership, starting with
12 principals, around safety. One, to
13 provide the professional development;
14 two, to again underscore the priority for
15 the District and for the SRC.

16 The other element is I think a
17 more serious effort to define and
18 point -- define and promote whole school
19 efforts around school climate and safety,
20 and some of that is professional
21 development and some of that is -- a lot
22 of that is professional development and
23 it's being able to sustain that work year
24 to year without having for it to depend
25 on sort of funding that may go up or

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 down. It really has to be built into the
3 core. So I think a big difference is
4 making this a core responsibility rather
5 than an add-on. So that's the safety
6 piece.

7 On the --

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Before you
9 go to that, two things. One, as Chair of
10 Public Safety, one of the things that
11 we're looking at is the geography of
12 crime. So we'd like your safety experts
13 to meet with the City's safety experts to
14 talk about logistics. One simple example
15 of that is, my understanding is that
16 official Police Department shift changes
17 actually happen at the time when school
18 is being let out, which to me is
19 counterintuitive to safety. So if we're
20 changing of the guard at the time that
21 we're changing of the class to let out,
22 you run into logistical problems on how
23 to keep these young people safe. So that
24 kind of cooperation from the mindset that
25 safety is important, that gives

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 confidence to parents to allow their
3 children to learn. So that's number one.

4 The other thing is that we did,
5 this body, put forth Resolution No.
6 120263, which is to hold hearings on how
7 to reduce school crime, and one of the
8 things that we are discussing is youth
9 courts, which is a prototype that kind of
10 gives the responsibility for issues of
11 bullying, for issues of -- not major
12 felonies. I don't want them dealing with
13 this guy named Ray-Ray, but I want them
14 to deal with the lesser crimes and how to
15 take responsibility and empower them to
16 deal with their own school climate and
17 issues. Because young people become the
18 citizens that we're going to rely on to
19 be the jurist in the real world.

20 So I want you guys to, A, look
21 at public safety from a two-pronged
22 approach of cooperation with other
23 authorities, whether it's SEPTA, whether
24 it's the Police Department, on how we can
25 better guard our young people, and then

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 internally on the question of bullying
3 and other things to give a sense of
4 empowerment and at least a place to have
5 an outlet that this kid is a problem,
6 maybe he needs to be in another
7 environment. And I understand some of
8 the philosophy that I've heard about
9 those things, but I keep getting
10 flashbacks of these situations that all
11 of us who have gone to public school have
12 had a rite of passage through the school
13 yard, if you know what I mean, and that
14 if we can alleviate that for future
15 generations, we should.

16 And then the question of
17 accountability, that after we do all of
18 this, you know, how -- I know you
19 personally and I know many of you and
20 gotten to know you during this process,
21 but this body -- and I'm looking at those
22 serious six freshmen -- want to know that
23 we don't give money and then don't have
24 the things that Maria is going to
25 prioritize and Bill has articulated not

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 be taken seriously after the check
3 clears.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, a couple
5 of answers. One is that there's no
6 question that the District can't sort of
7 recover and build a strong foundation and
8 thrive without genuine support and
9 credibility among the major stakeholders,
10 including the body that has the
11 responsibility for authorizing the taxes
12 that are levied by the School District.
13 And that's -- and I understand entirely
14 what the history is, and I don't know
15 that words can persuade on this front. I
16 think it really has to come down to,
17 particularly given this critical juncture
18 I believe in the future of the District,
19 whether in the next year we all rise to
20 the occasion of being able to collaborate
21 and really work together. Not in a
22 transactional way, not in a way that
23 volleys back and forth, but really have
24 to collaborate and work intimately
25 together because of the magnitude of the

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 work that has to get done in the next 12
3 months.

4 There's no way, for example,
5 that the District could get through its
6 Five Year Plan without addressing the
7 issue of excess capacity in buildings.
8 There's no way we could do that well or
9 effectively without partnerships with
10 other agencies. There's no way we could
11 do that without support and leadership
12 from Councilpeople, certainly District
13 Councilpeople but Council in general.
14 And I believe that that type of
15 partnership also creates the opportunity
16 and the obligation for us to be on a
17 regular basis, not annually, but much
18 more frequently, just sharing where
19 things are, whether it's quarterly or
20 however really. I think you've seen me a
21 lot in the Caucus Room and Feather and
22 others in the first six months we've been
23 here.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's true.

25 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And that's --

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2 we think it's really important for you to
3 know where all of this is, because we
4 know that this sounds a lot like things
5 you've heard before. And I think that
6 the more that we are able to look at the
7 numbers, the more that the magnitude of
8 this reality sets in, and I think it
9 helps -- certainly has helped the new SRC
10 focus on what our work has to really be
11 and our priorities are and why we're
12 charging so hard individually and
13 collectively on this, because we do think
14 that there's an enormous task ahead. We
15 know we can't do it without you.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, your
17 credibility with us is good, at least
18 with me and many of the members I talk
19 to. The key of it is to follow up and
20 follow through. One good step in the
21 right direction is resolution dealing
22 with technical institutes. We are
23 encouraged about your progress already in
24 that regard and look forward to a game
25 plan, if you would, to bring blue-collar

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 education back to the public schools.
3 That's something I'm keenly looking
4 forward to, Ms. Nixon, to talk about your
5 strategies on that.

6 We believe that there's a
7 segment of the student population that's
8 on their way this June to some college
9 campus. We believe another section
10 should be on their way to a union hall or
11 a contractor's life-style that was also
12 started by the education process.

13 So in that trusting that I
14 mention, we're going to look forward to
15 that game plan being a priority of the
16 SRC.

17 So thank you, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
19 Councilman.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much.

22 I'll ask a question and then
23 defer to Councilwoman Sanchez. I'll try
24 to ask mine in between.

25 I wanted to ask about language

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 of ESL classes, ESOL and is it LLE?

3 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: ELL.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: ELL,

5 okay. Dyslexic.

6 There's some discussion in the
7 African and Caribbean communities about
8 youngsters not being afforded these
9 classes. Out of what pot is that paid
10 and where do you see the issue?

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well,
12 Councilwoman, your question is very
13 timely. Yesterday the School Reform
14 Commission had a policy session
15 specifically on these issues, actually
16 reported in today's Inquirer, and among
17 very good points that came up -- also
18 reported it today -- was meeting the
19 needs of students, particularly from the
20 African continent, students that speak
21 languages that we don't have in enormous
22 numbers in the School District but exist
23 in some levels of concentration,
24 particularly in West Philadelphia. And
25 while we have -- a lot of our written

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 material are not regularly translated
3 into those languages, our live language
4 services, the phone call service we use,
5 I understand does offer some translation
6 services, interpretation services, for
7 some of those languages.

8 But one of the takeaways from
9 last night and there was a woman there
10 last night from the African Center for
11 Educational and Sustainability, Carol
12 Bangura, who talked to us particularly
13 about --

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
15 know her quite well.

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: She talked to
17 us particularly about the languages where
18 a lot of supports coming from her
19 organization under a contract she has
20 with the District, languages of Krio,
21 Mende, Temne, Mandingo, Soso, Fullah,
22 Bambara, which I thought is a good
23 contribution and the reason we have the
24 policy meetings specifically to have a
25 space for that type of feedback. I think

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 it was a very worthwhile effort, and I
3 know that our Chief Academic Officer and
4 others were having some discussions after
5 that meeting yesterday.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
7 I would like to be informed about that.
8 As you know, in '05, we founded the
9 Mayor's Commission on African and
10 Caribbean Immigrant Affairs. Carol
11 Bangura is a part of that. And we have
12 another organization, Echoes of Africa,
13 that we're celebrating. We're going to
14 our 16th year. So we work closely with
15 this community. We meet every second
16 Wednesday across the hall, and we really
17 are interested in this issue and we would
18 like to be able to respond to the
19 entire -- we represent some 38 countries,
20 and we would like to be able to respond
21 in detail from the leadership role to all
22 the various leaders of the countries.

23 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And I know I'd
24 also just offer if there are meetings
25 that you think it would be helpful for me

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 to join you, I'm very interested and I
3 know the Commission is very interested in
4 following up.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you. We would appreciate it. Maybe at
7 our next meeting next month, because the
8 only month we're off is in August. So
9 maybe next month. It's every second
10 Wednesday at 6:00 in the Caucus Room,
11 400, City Hall. Thank you. Thank you
12 very much.

13 I'll defer my next question
14 after Councilwoman Sanchez speaks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
16 you, Madam Chair.

17 I wanted to just quickly ask
18 you some things on the record. I think
19 that one of the things that we keep
20 hearing in a lot of the discussions
21 that's happening is and a lot of the
22 questions asked by my colleague,
23 Councilman Green, has to do with the
24 financial state of the District.

25 Would the SRC be opposed to us

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 getting an objective review of the
3 financial condition of the District?

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No. In fact,
5 I would observe that the budget person --
6 there's probably no more knowledgeable
7 person outside of the District than the
8 person in charge of budget matters for
9 City Council, who at one point was the
10 CFO for the School District. And I think
11 that would be fine.

12 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That's
13 going to be very important. I think you,
14 as well as all of us, want to get to a
15 resolution, and I think as long as we're
16 fighting about the numbers, it gets
17 really hard to get people to move away
18 from -- the numbers are what the numbers
19 are, you know. We say that often in this
20 Chamber people are entitled to their
21 opinion, but they're not entitled to the
22 facts. So we want to get there as
23 closely as possible and want to work with
24 you on that.

25 I'm very concerned about the

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 level of discussion that's happening in
3 the education circles around the plan,
4 and I know that you as recently as
5 Saturday have continued to commit
6 yourself to kind of an open discussion
7 and more input, and, again, the problem
8 with the discussion around the plan is
9 people are focused on killing the plan
10 and it's been hard to get to a discussion
11 about the merits and the elements of the
12 plan.

13 Would the SRC be opposed to, as
14 you have on many occasions, the Blue
15 Ribbon Commission and others, be opposed
16 to having some folks provide another
17 forum for feedback and input and
18 recommendations to the plan? I'm just --
19 again, I think there's some elements in
20 the plan that warrant -- first of all,
21 the plan needs to be vetted, and what I'm
22 concerned about is the public confidence.
23 And when my 13-year-old son is being
24 faced with teachers at his school being
25 handed flyers and all that kind of stuff

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 that will continue to go on unless we
3 agree to a process, it again clouds the
4 issue around what's the plan.

5 I think we all agree that
6 buildings need to be shut. I mean, this
7 Council has talked about the 70,000 empty
8 seats that exist. We all know charters
9 are going to exist, and we've all
10 recognized it's part of our portfolio,
11 and we all recognize that we want
12 low-performing schools' programs to be
13 closed down.

14 And so I think that there's
15 enough, what's come out of all of this,
16 there's enough points of agreement, and I
17 think if we can agree to those guiding
18 principles, I think we can get to a place
19 where we're not going to get full
20 consensus, because there are some people
21 who just want to kill every plan, but I
22 think there's enough people in the City
23 of Philadelphia to really put forth some
24 recommendations, and I just want to know
25 if the SRC is open to that. I mean,

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 we've met with folks like the Black
3 Clergy, we've met with education advocacy
4 groups. I think people's frustration
5 comes out of people care. People are
6 stakeholders.

7 So is the SRC opposed to that
8 kind of process? We're not asking you to
9 stop the plan. We're saying can we put
10 the brakes on the plan.

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You said
12 put -- I think we're not opposed to the
13 type of process you described. In fact,
14 it is the type of process where we've
15 been saying, as you know, that we want to
16 pursue, because what we've -- it's hard
17 here with -- I think the District often
18 with so many multiple audiences sometimes
19 gets language -- sometimes trips over its
20 own language, but we have a Fiscal '13
21 year -- a Fiscal '13 budget which has to
22 be acted on. We have a Five Year
23 Financial Plan, and then we put out --
24 the Administration proposed what they
25 called a Blueprint. I don't know what

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 iterations they went through about what
3 they were going to call it. Apparently
4 the idea that major pieces of this were
5 things that had to be developed, the idea
6 of what the School District structure
7 looked like along the principles that
8 you're describing, that's something that
9 even in that, as articulated initially,
10 was something that would take a year to
11 do. The SRC added the layer of also
12 wanting to hear directly from principals,
13 but also hear from community. That
14 process is -- not only is that specific
15 proposal not set in stone, it's not
16 specific enough to be set in stone and
17 the SRC process hasn't been set at this
18 point.

19 So I think there's a lot of
20 opportunity for how we go about doing
21 that. And as I said earlier today with
22 respect to the buildings, that, by
23 necessity, has to be multi-layered and
24 has to get to the neighborhood -- has to
25 get to the -- I think some broad

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 understanding of what criteria will be, a
3 lot of transparency around that, and then
4 a lot of involvement about what
5 alternatives are for any buildings whose
6 lights would be turned down otherwise.

7 So I think there's a lot of
8 need, not just willingness but a lot of
9 need to do work on both of those fronts,
10 as you said, and we agree by having --
11 the Five Year Plan I think is -- the
12 parameters of the Five Year Plan are what
13 we have to really stay focused on,
14 because the Five Year Plan also has
15 implications, as Councilman Green pointed
16 out, for the short term.

17 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Right.
18 So I think we have to kind of at some
19 point start speaking kind of in a common
20 voice so that we can quell the hysteria
21 that exists out there. So the
22 community --

23 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So the only
24 reason I didn't give you a one-word
25 answer was because you ended -- I was

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 nodding the whole time and you said not
3 stop it, but apply the brakes. I didn't
4 know -- I thought those things sounded
5 inconsistent to me. So I think the --
6 because from our perspective, the plan is
7 still -- many of the elements,
8 particularly the elements that I think
9 have garnered a lot more attention, are
10 not yet --

11 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Fleshed
12 out. I think part of the confusion is
13 that there's this notion that next year
14 you're closing 40 schools and the
15 networks are going up, when clearly the
16 Five Year Plan speaks to a time period.
17 And so part of -- and, again, this is how
18 this gets always spun.

19 Part of the concern is, I think
20 there's some elements to the plan that
21 have to be vetted and should be vetted,
22 but I don't -- I think what folks -- and
23 I think you've tried to say that to
24 folks -- is sort of like we're vetting
25 the plan, and so at some point, we got to

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 agree --

3 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And having to
4 develop what I consider a plan. I think
5 on these major things, what's out there
6 is sort of a concept, right, with some
7 support behind it, but the planning is
8 how do you go about implementing this in
9 a way that works and what are the real
10 specific needs that you're trying to meet
11 from the principals to the community
12 elsewhere, and I think that's all --

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Again,
14 on that one I think we're all clear. I
15 think Penny Nixon has articulated it
16 well. We want as much money at the
17 school-base level. We want good
18 principals that have the authority to
19 make decisions around the issues that
20 Councilman Jones talks about, public
21 safety and all those things. And, again,
22 I think those are elements -- the whole
23 discussion, there's been some constant
24 points that we want to work with. How
25 that ends up looking like, obviously we

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 can negotiate that and we can have
3 discussions about that.

4 I think one of the problems for
5 some of my newer colleagues on this is
6 that they are concerned about we're going
7 to be here next year again, and I think
8 Councilman Goode and others say we don't
9 want to be here again.

10 Is the SRC at all opposed to
11 coming back to Council and not only
12 talking about finance on a quarterly
13 basis, but also talking about this
14 program aspect, notwithstanding the
15 individual conversations that have to
16 happen with Councilpeople? Is that
17 something that we can commit to? I think
18 we need to give people reassurances that
19 we're going to be part of this dialogue.

20 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It's not
22 to give people the misconception that we
23 can control the dialogue, but that there
24 is a public dialogue. Because we were
25 here last year, and many of us had these

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 conversations. And so I can't answer the
3 question to my new colleagues how is it
4 going to be different this year.

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, I think
6 one thing that's already different and I
7 wasn't -- I mean, I think one thing
8 that's fair to say about the last six
9 months is that I hope that -- and I think
10 the Education Chair would agree -- that
11 there's been a fair amount of effort to
12 try to not only be responsive, but to try
13 to do a better job of communicating, and
14 I think even having a more regular way of
15 doing that is welcomed and, again, given
16 the magnitude of everything we have
17 before us, I think very necessary,
18 because I do think this can't -- this
19 work can't all get done. The will to do
20 this has to come not just from the SRC,
21 but has to really be deeper through the
22 community and through the elected
23 leadership.

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
25 I'll end there. I know Councilman Green

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 has two more sheets to go through. So
3 I'll circle back around.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you, Councilwoman.

7 One question. With regard to
8 principals and their new duties, what
9 kinds of things will they have to
10 consider now that they didn't in this new
11 plan?

12 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Can you repeat
13 the first part of your question,
14 Councilwoman?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What
16 kinds of duties will principals have to
17 assume that they didn't before under the
18 new plan?

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, there
20 isn't a plan -- there's a proposal for a
21 different type of structure that hasn't
22 gone to the level of planning that would
23 say in detail what does a -- how is the
24 principal's life different. The goal is
25 to provide more support to schools and to

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2 principals.

3 As that plan starts to get
4 developed, the SRC has asked the
5 Administration to work with us so that
6 not only they hear from principals, but
7 we understand more directly from
8 principals what helps them, what do they
9 want more of, what do they want less of,
10 what should be the standards to which
11 people outside of the school should be
12 held accountable.

13 So we really do want to have
14 that specific conversation with
15 principals and others about what those
16 expectations really should be, and that
17 is not articulated right now in the plan,
18 Madam Chairwoman. It is something we
19 want to develop, but we want to hear from
20 the principals.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: In
22 terms of the cuts and this new plan and
23 with schools closing and schools taking
24 on more responsibility, we assume that
25 means principals will have to do a lot of

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2 things or implement a lot of programs and
3 duties that they didn't have to in the
4 past.

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's a very
6 good and practical point about the -- as
7 you point out, with respect to closings
8 when you start to implement that, and
9 it's inevitable that some of that ends up
10 falling on principals, but it's going to
11 require a lot of planning on how do you
12 not make that too burdensome and what
13 support do you provide.

14 To get beyond that level of
15 detail, I would need our Chief Academic
16 Officer, Penny Nixon, to talk about ways
17 that we could support principals when
18 this type of thing is going on and maybe
19 draw from some of the experience from the
20 current process.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So for
22 September, things will be as they are
23 now, so --

24 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: This
25 September.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: -- all
3 of these changes won't happen until the
4 following September; is that correct?

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

6 Did you want to hear from --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.
8 Maybe you can give us some kind of idea
9 about what schools can expect and it
10 gives us an idea of how they will be
11 different.

12 MS. NIXON: So in terms of the
13 funding in the budgets, the budgets that
14 principals have really reflect what they
15 have this year. So most of the
16 adjustments principals have made. So
17 you're right, we don't have full-time
18 nurses in every school. So it takes
19 planning and support from the principal
20 if there's an incident with a student
21 when the nurse isn't there. So with the
22 budget cuts, it does -- with the budget
23 cuts, principals have had to take on more
24 in terms of monitoring, assisting to
25 monitor the building, assisting in terms

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2 of the nurse when the nurse isn't there.

3 So the short answer is yes,
4 that they have taken on more
5 responsibility due to the budget cuts,
6 particularly in the area of nurses and
7 school climate. So I do have some
8 principals who have to monitor the
9 lunchroom because there's not enough
10 personnel.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
12 this issue of school nurses I assume is
13 still in court.

14 MS. NIXON: Yes. We still are
15 working on the school nurse issue.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
17 a rough issue.

18 And with regard to these -- a
19 lot of us are concerned. You were here
20 and the unions were here and they said
21 27,000 people in some of the lowest paid
22 jobs are being cut, Local 32 BJ, 1201.
23 These are people who make 28,000 and
24 below, many make 20,000, which to us
25 would only be part-time jobs, and, you

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2 know, we are really conflicted about

3 being asked to consider taxes going up

4 for this group of people too.

5 Everybody's taxes go up. So you have

6 27,000 people just in that union. Their

7 taxes go up too, and that's a real

8 problem, being asked to raise taxes for

9 people whose jobs were cut, whose jobs

10 were removed. So I just want to put that

11 out there. That's a big, big, big

12 concern for us.

13 MS. NIXON: Okay.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

15 I will defer to Councilman Green.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,

17 Madam Chair.

18 Penny, while you're there, if I

19 could ask you to sort of expound on the

20 question about principals a little bit.

21 I think next year in your transitional

22 year plan, you talk about forming

23 principal leadership teams. I'd like to

24 understand to what extent were principals

25 involved in the concept and organization

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2 of the idea, and also how do they feel
3 about that in particular. And then the
4 final part of the question is, how will
5 you measure or determine what specific
6 criteria do you have that you're applying
7 to the work of those teams that will
8 allow you and us to objectively next year
9 measure the success of this effort?

10 MS. NIXON: Sure. I'll start
11 with the principal learning teams.
12 Principal learning teams are basically
13 defined as principal learning
14 communities. So what we're doing is
15 building on the concept that already
16 exists amongst many of the principals in
17 the District. So it is -- it's an
18 informal structure which is really
19 designed for principals to share best
20 practices. It's designed for principals
21 to visit each other's schools and learn
22 from each other. It's designed for
23 principals to develop professional
24 development together. So it is truly a
25 professional learning community, and it's

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2 not meant to be a formal structure.

3 For example, all of our high
4 schools are in principal learning teams
5 presently. So that when we had the
6 full-day professional development, we had
7 a group of high schools who planned
8 professional development together, the
9 principals and teachers, and they had a
10 principal -- I mean a teacher
11 professional development fair at one of
12 the schools.

13 So those are the kinds of best
14 practices we're looking for from the
15 principal learning teams. It's really a
16 sharing of practices more than a formal
17 structure. A lot of it happens already
18 in the School District, so we're really
19 trying to take that mission to scale.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you'll be
21 providing some administrative support
22 from the District level to the efforts of
23 bringing principals together that doesn't
24 exist today? Is that how you're going to
25 make this happen? I mean, in other

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2 words, principals with the resources they
3 now have won't have the administrative
4 support to do this unless they do it
5 themselves. I'm just wondering what kind
6 of supports you're going to put in place
7 to make sure the effort is effective.

8 MS. NIXON: So each principal
9 learning team will have a coordinator.
10 So what we're going to do is work with
11 the coordinator around support, so
12 provide them with the professional
13 development.

14 I really want to underscore
15 that the professional learning teams
16 already occur in the District, and what
17 we're trying to do is really bring that
18 best practice to scale, and we will
19 support the teams from the Central
20 Office.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. And
22 so I understand what you're saying about
23 the informal nature of it, and I
24 really -- I know this is a complicated
25 question, but I'd like an answer when you

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2 can get it to this, and, that is, I'd
3 really like us to have criteria for next
4 year and for each year of the Five Year
5 Plan, a blueprint -- and I'm talking
6 about academically; I'm not talking about
7 financial at all -- how we are going to
8 measure and what we are going to measure
9 principals on so they know when they'd be
10 replaced if they don't meet certain
11 criteria. Because obviously if you push
12 authority down there, there's
13 consequences to that, and, that is, if
14 you don't succeed, you're gone. And so
15 what specific goals or measures are we
16 going to use to enable us to judge the
17 effectiveness of that within a school,
18 and those measures that we use to measure
19 are really also going to be a statement
20 of what it is that the District thinks is
21 important that is going to lead to
22 achievement.

23 So I'd like you, if you
24 haven't, to develop that so we all have
25 something to measure this blueprint

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2 against and plan against.

3 MS. NIXON: Okay.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And provide

5 that to the Chair.

6 MS. NIXON: Okay.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

8 MS. NIXON: You're welcome.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm curious
10 about the 70,000 seats. So I guess this
11 is a Pedro question or Feather question.
12 But you set the building utilization goal
13 of 85 percent, stating that it's a
14 national standard essentially. And my
15 question is, there's all sorts of school
16 districts in the country. There's
17 growing school districts. There's
18 shrinking school districts. You're
19 projecting for charter schools just not
20 because of any effort of yours, because
21 it's an isness, to go from 25 percent of
22 students to 40 percent of students.

23 Given that and the shrinking
24 size of the District over time, why is 85
25 percent the appropriate utilization rate

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2 for the School District of Philadelphia?
3 Because as soon as you're at 85 percent
4 again, you're going to be planning for
5 further likely -- because of no action of
6 your own -- further reductions because of
7 state law, which requires charter schools
8 to be able to expand or grow or start.

9 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, first, I
10 think we've set a standard of 85 percent.
11 Part of what we heard is that there are
12 standards that have been described to us
13 as standards being more like 90 percent.
14 We've set the standard at about 85
15 percent. I think an important part of
16 that, though, is to think of it as an
17 aggregate, which is that it's -- as you
18 said, some of those pieces are always
19 going to be in some flux, but you want to
20 get to an aggregate utilization of about
21 85 percent. And, as you know, our
22 utilization rate right now is probably
23 mid 70's and for high schools maybe
24 lower.

25 MS. HOUSTOUN: Lower.

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2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So --

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm sorry.

4 I didn't hear. For high school what?

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think it's

6 even lower for high schools.

7 So I think you're right, it's a

8 moving -- this is something that if

9 you're managing actively, you're always

10 paying attention to from time -- it's

11 more periodically than the District has.

12 You would be looking at catchment areas

13 and boundaries and things like that to

14 manage this in a much more dynamic way,

15 and part of the challenge now is that

16 it's really having to play catchup

17 relatively quickly because of the costs

18 associated with that excess capacity.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. In

20 some neighborhoods you actually have to

21 grow seats, like in Councilwoman

22 Quinones-Sanchez's district.

23 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: There's parts

24 of the City where there's excess

25 capacity.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And in other
3 areas you're way below.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's right.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So is it a
6 goal to be 85 percent by catchment area?

7 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No. I mean,
8 what you're asking is whether the goal --
9 I think the -- there's a need to -- there
10 are places that have over-utilization,
11 which I think is really what you're
12 getting at, and there have to be
13 strategies for those, whether it's
14 opportunities outside of those catchment
15 areas or the need for additional
16 infrastructure in those catchment areas,
17 which is why it's important to be able to
18 keep up with your need that you not spend
19 money to support excess infrastructure.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So when you
21 set a goal of 85 percent --

22 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: As an
23 aggregate.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- after the
25 closing of 64 schools and the shift to 40

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 percent charter, does that get you 85
3 percent?

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The proposal
5 that as -- the framework as described by
6 Tom Knudsen was having to get to about 40
7 through Fiscal '14 and then an estimate
8 of about six per year in the out years,
9 and that gets more speculative. The more
10 you go out, the more speculative it gets,
11 right?

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure,
13 because --

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So that was a
15 way of him just putting a placeholder I
16 think on -- for the fact that you may
17 have continued contraction.

18 Now, what types of things can
19 happen --

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's a
21 specific --

22 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: -- in the
23 interim, the types of strategies that we
24 have not employed in Philadelphia that
25 some other cities have employed is

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2 also -- first of all, strategies we are
3 looking to, for example, on reuse is
4 making School District facilities that
5 would otherwise be empty available for
6 other uses, including other academic
7 uses. We have not even started in any
8 serious way in Philadelphia to look at
9 the potential for co-locations and things
10 like that, which are more common in other
11 cities, and may be limited by some of the
12 way that our buildings are built. I
13 don't know. But I think there's a lot of
14 room left for a lot of creativity and
15 analysis once you get beyond sort of this
16 most difficult initial tranche of excess
17 capacity.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I mean, just
19 doing the math, if 40 percent will get us
20 to 85 percent in '14 and we're going to
21 lose actually though over the course of
22 the next five years 30,000 students,
23 which is the projection, six a year won't
24 keep us at 85 percent. It won't keep us
25 close.

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2 So just to be clear, part of
3 your strategy for utilization could be to
4 close and sell or mothball or get rid of
5 schools and part of your strategy for
6 utilization may well be co-location of
7 charter schools or the leasing to charter
8 schools.

9 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Looking at
10 school boundaries, all those things.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. But
12 utilizing all of those efforts, you
13 believe you can get to 85 percent?

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I mean, I
15 think you want to manage towards 85
16 percent as your standard.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If you're
18 only managing towards it, I'd just throw
19 out there a goal of 95 percent,
20 because --

21 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's a fair
22 point. Look, at one point someone
23 suggested that some of the -- that 90
24 percent, probably for the same reason.

25 You know, we'd be happy to

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 revisit that when we get there, because I
3 think right now -- because I do think
4 that part of this is getting to -- as you
5 get further along, it becomes much more
6 dynamic, and I think you're right to say
7 you have to not just look at building
8 closures, you have to look at how you
9 plan for school enrollment, how you look
10 at boundaries, how you incentivize people
11 through the program that you offer
12 citywide. So that's why -- not just
13 taken as a given that that's sort of a
14 straight-line projection.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'd like to
16 see that as part of -- I know it's
17 complicated this year, but I'd like to
18 see that as part of next year's --

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And how it
20 evolves.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- Five Year
22 Plan.

23 So charter schools, I have
24 questions related to charter schools and
25 the Great Schools Compact. I guess I'll

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2 start with the Compact and then tie that
3 into charter schools.

4 Specifically, I'm interested in
5 the accountability and performance
6 frameworks that the Compact Committee is
7 scheduled to adopt. As we know, the
8 Great Schools Compact, even though it
9 wasn't reported this way, was a plan for
10 a plan. There were no specific
11 measurable criteria within the Great
12 Schools Compact that you could hold
13 anybody accountable to, and there were at
14 this point -- I think May 4th was the
15 date; I don't recall. There was supposed
16 to be the actual plan that contained the
17 measurable accountable goals that --
18 there were several dates in the Compact,
19 but that was one of them.

20 Has that been finalized, the
21 actual Compact with the charter schools,
22 with the public schools, with agreeing on
23 a performance school index with everybody
24 that will allow us to have a citywide,
25 regardless of charter, public, parochial,

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 whatever, measure of the quality of
3 education and the other criteria that
4 were supposed to be completed by this
5 time? Has that been done, or where does
6 that stand?

7 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: As you know,
8 the Compact is a collaboration among
9 several parties, the District, charter
10 associations, representative from the
11 Mayor's Office, representative from the
12 Governor's Office and most recently the
13 Archdiocese were added, with some
14 articulated kind of long-term goals and
15 then get to some of the specifics of your
16 question.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Let me just
18 start with a specific question.

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So on the
20 accountability framework, as far as I
21 know, there has not been an alternative
22 accountability framework that has been
23 agreed to and rolled out. I know that
24 there's been enormous amount of
25 discussion and I think -- around

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2 critiques and ideas to improve the
3 existing School Performance Index. There
4 was some expectation that there might be
5 a School Performance Framework coming out
6 of the state, and I think it is a -- in
7 any given week, I don't know whether it's
8 moving or not moving. I'm looking over
9 at Lori Shorr. I think the answer is we
10 don't know.

11 There are already -- so I think
12 there's been a lot of progress and
13 discussion, as far as I know. I don't
14 think there's been sort of anything
15 agreed to and ready to sort of be --
16 that's being proposed to the SRC or to
17 the various parties to the Compact --

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: -- on the
20 School Performance Framework.

21 On the -- there have been
22 working groups around issues like
23 facilities. Enrollment is a big issue,
24 obviously the coordination of efforts
25 among the different providers.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I have
3 specific questions --

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And there was
5 a proposal and there's a number of
6 deadlines --

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Pedro,
8 please.

9 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: But you put
10 out a date that was about -- that I don't
11 recall being a date for the School
12 Performance Framework. It might have
13 been a date for the submission of the
14 Gates Grant proposal. So I'm just kind
15 of laying --

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The Compact
17 contains specific dates by which things
18 were supposed to be achieved.

19 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think the
20 date was for the grant submission.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And there
22 was a framework that was supposed to have
23 been drafted and adopted, and I assume
24 the answer to that question is no. Let
25 me ask --

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2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The Gates
3 proposal was submitted by the deadline.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I
5 refer you back to the, quote/unquote,
6 Great Schools Compact and I also ask you
7 to compare it with Denver, to which
8 comparisons were made. The Denver Great
9 Schools Compact has within it the actual
10 measures and goals upon which people can
11 determine whether or not there's success
12 or not, and we do not have that in
13 Philadelphia.

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's an
15 excellent point, and the School
16 Performance -- we like the School
17 Performance Framework, at least on the
18 SRC, like the School Performance
19 Framework in Denver. We think there's
20 enormous similarity between the SPF in
21 Denver and the SPI in the District. I
22 think a lot of concern about the SPI in
23 the District came from a number of
24 technical, not really fundamental issues,
25 and I'm actually cautiously optimistic

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 that we can get at least some critical
3 mass of folks to buy into a School
4 Performance Framework.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Has
6 the Committee made any recommendation to
7 the Pennsylvania Department of Education
8 regarding inputs and waiting for
9 statewide school accountability and
10 performance framework?

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Whether the
12 Compact Committee has?

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I don't know.
15 I don't know specifically, but there is a
16 PDE representative on the Compact.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I
18 understand, but the Compact calls for
19 specific recommendations being made by a
20 date certain, which date has passed, and
21 my question is a simple question. Have
22 those recommendations been sent to the
23 state? And if the answer is no, that's
24 fine. I just want to know where we
25 stand, because I think the achievement of

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 that, which goals I agree with, help the
3 transition year, help the Five Year Plan.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And helps the
5 transparency and making decisions based
6 on high-quality schools. I agree with
7 you entirely.

8 So the answer to that is, I
9 don't know, but I can find out. I know
10 Lori Shorr chairs that committee, the
11 Compact. There is somebody from PDE at
12 the table at all the Compact meetings. I
13 know that there's been discussion of the
14 framework, and I know that the state's
15 efforts on the framework have sort of
16 proceeded at different paces, and I don't
17 know where it is right now, but somebody
18 else I'm sure does.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I
20 have some specific questions about the
21 framework, but we can address them at
22 another time, like will all new charter
23 operators be required to sign it, how
24 many didn't sign the Compact and what's
25 the accountability for that, et cetera.

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2 But the next time we're together, I'll
3 try to follow up on that.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And we can
5 also get you some -- we'll reach out to
6 the Compact folks and get you an answer
7 to each of those more precisely.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: But it's
9 fair to say that the goal will be to have
10 everybody measured using the same index
11 that everybody agrees on?

12 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Our goal --
13 the SRC's goal in signing the Compact was
14 to establish -- yes. Well, to establish
15 a measure of quality. I think at least a
16 critical mass of folks should buy into
17 it. That would be our ideal.

18 That said, the SRC I think has,
19 as others do, has an idea of what key
20 measures are. I don't think that there's
21 enormous disagreement about that. I
22 don't know that, in the end, every single
23 party signs on to that, and I don't think
24 that that's necessarily the standard to
25 which we should hold ourselves.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: But in the
3 end, how will this result in or do you
4 have a process for next year for the
5 actual closure of charter schools that
6 don't meet standards, which I guess are
7 yet to be set? Is there an emphasis or
8 the provision of resources for a charter
9 school review and the ability to do all
10 that has to be done to close charter
11 schools that don't perform? And I assume
12 closing charter schools falls into
13 eliminating bad seats, and if there are
14 bad seats there --

15 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yeah. In
16 fact, a few weeks ago the SRC voted to
17 give notice of intention to not renew
18 charters, which is the first charter
19 non-renewal vote that happens and
20 triggers hearings, and we did that based
21 on quality in those three.

22 There's a -- as the SRC goes
23 through the renewal process this current
24 cycle that we're in now, we are seeking
25 from charters -- and many charters are

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 stepping up with this -- to get some
3 understanding -- to have some mutual
4 understanding of what constitutes quality
5 along the lines of where the Compact is
6 going by agreement in the charters from
7 the charter operators.

8 As you may know, state law is
9 pretty permissive -- state law sets a
10 pretty low bar for what constitutes
11 inadequacy on the academic side, and we
12 hope that as the quality movement
13 continues, that we can help also shape
14 the policy towards quality choice.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we talked
16 about accountability for principals and
17 ending bad seats, which I presume means
18 also potentially closing or changing the
19 management of a public school, whether
20 it's a new principal who gets to choose
21 new teachers or it's a pilot that they do
22 in Boston or whatever the case is. I'm
23 wondering if you're going to try to
24 establish the same criteria for, let's
25 just call it, the closure or the

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 elimination of management of all schools
3 that are under your jurisdiction, charter
4 and public, the same --

5 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think that
6 is our goal, and I think that's also
7 important to credibility of the system,
8 that you define quality evenly regardless
9 of whether it's a District provider
10 public school or a charter-run public
11 school.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
13 you very much. I appreciate you guys
14 coming in again.

15 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much.

18 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
20 Madam Chair.

21 Good afternoon. I regret not
22 having the benefit of other
23 Councilmembers in your callback, and so I
24 don't have many questions, but I wanted
25 to get through my list.

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2 Chair Lady Blackwell and Jerry
3 Jordan both on the record and off the
4 record had been very clear about one of
5 their principal concerns, and, that is,
6 safety in the schools. So in a separate
7 discussion with the President of the PFT,
8 what does that look like? What does
9 safety equal? And in his view, it
10 equalled the NTAs and the changed policy
11 you've had to make around NTAs. So give
12 me an update on where that is in this mix
13 as we look to seek a balanced budget.

14 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'm going to
15 pass on to colleagues on the NTA piece,
16 but let me just say one thing in terms of
17 framing the discussion and maybe a
18 different perspective. I'll say this
19 from -- I'll say that as my opinion.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And not
21 the opinion of the SRC as such?

22 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And I think
23 it's the opinion of multiple SRC members,
24 but I haven't done a poll of this. But
25 I'll just speak for myself on this one,

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 because I don't want -- my own view is
3 that school climate is the responsibility
4 of every single person inside a building
5 and outside the building. It is the
6 responsibility of the secretary that
7 greet parents and children and adults.
8 It is the responsibility of the
9 principal. It is the responsibility of
10 all the adults in the building.

11 I don't think that -- and I
12 understand the need to supplement staff
13 in the building, but I can tell you that
14 there are buildings, District-run and
15 charter-run, where the culture of the
16 building is that when children are coming
17 in, adults are front and center greeting
18 children, welcoming them to the school
19 and, by the way, serving as extra eyes
20 and ears and bodies and checking to see
21 how Feather is doing today as students
22 are coming in. When classrooms are
23 changing --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: They're in
25 the hallways.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: -- adults are
3 in the hallways. It's not a burden --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: To
5 anybody.

6 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: -- to say that
7 somebody has to be in the cafeteria. I
8 was just at a school where I saw faculty
9 eating in the cafeteria at tables with
10 students.

11 That's a presence. That's not
12 just an NTA's job. That's a culture of
13 mutual respect, a culture of
14 expectations. It's a culture -- so while
15 I think it's a staffing thing, I think
16 when we start breaking -- I don't think
17 the idea that you can start breaking down
18 to say the school police is going to be
19 responsible for school climate or NTA. I
20 think that a school community should be
21 free to create a school climate, culture,
22 expectations for adults, norms of
23 behavior for adults that create a
24 positive school climate, reduce the
25 chances for risks to safety and are able

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 to respond when risks to safety happen.

3 So we are used to thinking in
4 the District the way we think about lots
5 of -- and I know this is sort of a
6 long-winded answer, but I think it's --
7 part of the culture that we have to break
8 from is that we have to keep reducing,
9 sort of task down in some industrial way
10 down to, well, this is my job and that's
11 your job. There's nothing more
12 fundamentally everybody's job than school
13 climate and safety.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
15 That response is well taken.

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: But I can get
17 you the numbers on NTAs.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I
19 appreciate the response, because I agree
20 with you 2,000 percent. I do. And I've
21 been in schools like you where you see
22 principals who greet you at the front
23 door, and that, in and of itself, sends a
24 tone that's priceless, because it just --
25 it's a domino effect. It's like throwing

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 a stone in the water and the ripple is
3 positive and everything that we need in
4 the way you just stated.

5 But the key word you used was
6 "culture" and how do we change the
7 culture of those who think that persons
8 should be or experience should be or
9 roles should be categorized, if you will.
10 That's the challenge. Agreed?

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so as
13 we look to -- it's a new day with a
14 budget. We have to change the culture,
15 because it's a new day with the budget.
16 Has the SRC thought about how you change
17 that paradigm?

18 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think there
19 are -- there's some out there. They
20 require adults buying into them and
21 committing to them.

22 Council President and I visited
23 two schools in this case and one of them
24 was a charter -- a renaissance school,
25 the Stetson School, which I've talked

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 about before, a school that I've known
3 growing up, where it was probably defined
4 for more of its recent -- last couple
5 decades by its safety and climate and
6 those issues. And now same parents, same
7 kids, same building, same neighborhood,
8 it's a different climate and it's also
9 translating into academic performance.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Or academic
12 performance is translating to climate.
13 Either way, both have changed
14 dramatically.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. Is
16 that philosophy --

17 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And it comes
18 from a --

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's a
20 philosophy as well.

21 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It comes from
22 a dedication of building a school
23 community around that culture.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: But the
25 question is, is that permeating

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 system-wide? Is that the norm as it
3 currently exists, or no?

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We're trying
5 to make that a lot more -- I shouldn't
6 say this while I'm kind of coughing over
7 here -- trying to make that more
8 infectious, and through some specific
9 efforts that the District is doing on
10 training and trying to get people to buy
11 in to that more sort of old-school based
12 approach. It's one of the things
13 Commissioner Carey spoke about last time
14 she was here and something our Chief
15 Academic Officer has talked about.

16 So there's increased efforts
17 even for this summer and this coming year
18 to try to expose more school leaders and
19 more teachers to sort of that. And we
20 may have to look at other more
21 conspicuous and bold-scale efforts that
22 are making that point.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That are
24 obvious to those who still believe that
25 police officers should be principally

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 responsible for inappropriate behavior
3 versus the new paradigm that you just
4 articulated.

5 Okay. The other item is, fully
6 understanding that it's a new day, for
7 lack of a better word, I'm curious to
8 know in this new reality how will any
9 form or shape of arts and culture be
10 manifested at all? And, again, I'm
11 appreciative of the PowerPoint that
12 showed the mandated costs to run a school
13 and then those optional, flexible costs.
14 Now, some might argue that arts and
15 culture should be one of those mandated
16 costs.

17 So what will arts and culture
18 look like as we go to this new paradigm?

19 (Witness approached witness
20 table.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
22 afternoon.

23 MR. CREEDON: Good afternoon.
24 My name is Dennis Creedon. I'm the
25 Deputy Chief for Academic Enrichment and

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 Support.

3 Within the new paradigm, the
4 reality is that the arts will still be
5 central to the School District's mission
6 of building the capacity of our young
7 people to be full citizens and to also
8 engage in the wealth that our city has to
9 offer them. The changes that we hope
10 will actually evolve is also a greater
11 understanding that our children are
12 greater than the sum of their assessments
13 and that it is our culture that gives
14 them a sense of belonging to not only
15 Philadelphia but to the human family.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So
17 translate that for me. What does that
18 mean? What does that look like?

19 MR. CREEDON: Well, in this
20 past year, for instance, we did not lose
21 one music teacher based in our school
22 system.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Repeat
24 that.

25 MR. CREEDON: We did not lose

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 one music teacher in the school this past
3 year.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
5 important to know.

6 MR. CREEDON: And where we've
7 had some reductions in the number of arts
8 educators, we've actually seen the
9 sharing of positions, so that we're still
10 maintaining the mandate of the School
11 District that we have at least an art or
12 music teacher in every building of our
13 city.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
15 important information, because that's not
16 what the whispers are, you know.

17 MR. CREEDON: The other thing
18 that we're still working with is building
19 the relationships with our stakeholders,
20 making sure that the partnerships that
21 we've had in the past continue.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Such as?

23 MR. CREEDON: The relationship
24 with the Art Speaks, with the
25 Philadelphia Museum of Art and the art

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 museums, the Philadelphia Orchestra with
3 our fifth grade concerts, the free
4 programs with the Art Museum, also the
5 Opera Company of Philadelphia, the
6 Pennsylvania Ballet. These are all
7 different programs that we have --

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm
9 familiar with them. I am familiar with
10 them, but I was curious to know if they
11 were being kept whole, if you will.

12 MR. CREEDON: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So what
14 about University of the Arts and Temple
15 University School of the Arts?

16 MR. CREEDON: Yes. We are
17 working directly with Temple University
18 with their performing program with the
19 students studying instrumental music
20 there on Saturdays. Actually, some of
21 our teachers are teaching in that program
22 on Saturdays. And with the University of
23 the Arts, we have our students studying
24 there visual art, as well as PATFA, and
25 then also we have students going to

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 Drexel and Community College on
3 Saturdays.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. All
5 right. And this debate and discussion
6 that we've had, that has gotten either
7 overlooked or presumed to be cut.

8 MR. CREEDON: People have --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So it's
10 important to know that every single
11 school has at least one; is that what I
12 heard?

13 MR. CREEDON: Yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

15 MR. CREEDON: Music or art
16 teacher.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
18 then.

19 Well, that's an important
20 question: Full time or part time?

21 MR. CREEDON: Many of them have
22 part time, depending upon the student
23 population. So that the mandate that
24 we've had for now four years is that if
25 there is one to 500 children, 499, then

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 it's two days. Above 500 to a thousand,
3 it's three days. Anything above a
4 thousand is one full-time music or art
5 teacher. Many of our schools actually
6 struggle to maintain both.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
8 That's really encouraging. I thank you
9 for that.

10 Just a couple of more
11 questions. In another separate
12 conversation that Councilwoman Sanchez
13 and I had, if the leadership could give
14 me an update on this network proposal.
15 Is it a proposal? Is it carved in stone?
16 And I regret if it's a repeat, but that
17 was posed to Academic Officer and we
18 thought that she not be the correct
19 person to raise, because that's an SRC
20 decision.

21 So what's the breadth or link
22 of our relationship with the Boston
23 Group?

24 MS. HOUSTOUN: The Boston Group
25 was contracted with by the School Reform

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 Commission using philanthropic
3 contributions, not operating funds for
4 the District.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
6 right. That's right.

7 MS. HOUSTOUN: They had a scope
8 to essentially respond to the urgency
9 that the new SRC felt, both around all of
10 the fiscal issues that we were facing, we
11 needed to know how we got to some level
12 of fiscal stability, and we also asked
13 them to give us their best or to give Tom
14 Knudsen and Penny their best thoughts
15 about a different way to support schools
16 going forward.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

18 MS. HOUSTOUN: We have a fiscal
19 plan, the components of which everyone is
20 pretty familiar with or at least believes
21 they are, and then there was this
22 recommendation for Achievement Networks.

23 What I've heard said about them
24 doesn't resemble what I understood was
25 the recommendation. In effect, what has

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 been introduced to the SRC, but not
3 approved by the SRC, was the notion that
4 clusters of schools would receive
5 supports from an entity -- and that's an
6 important thing -- an entity that would
7 give them the kind of specialized
8 supports that they would improve
9 principal performance, school
10 performance, bring specialized services
11 in as the principal thought that they
12 were needed for their school, and be held
13 to a contract or an agreement that they
14 would improve the performance of those
15 schools. They would not be running the
16 schools in that sense.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

18 MS. HOUSTOUN: I think the
19 critical misconception was that we would
20 bring a bunch of outside operators in and
21 stick them in between the SRC and the
22 schools. In fact, what was suggested
23 and, again, I stress has not been
24 approved by the SRC --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's so

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 important to speak loudly, because that's
3 been missed.

4 MS. HOUSTOUN: Right.

5 -- (continued) was that what I
6 think was imagined -- and I've confirmed
7 this with the BCG people -- that these
8 support entities would be, by and large,
9 configurations of Central Office staff
10 currently working for the School District
11 but playing a very different role with
12 regard to the schools. So instead of
13 being compliance, you do this, it's,
14 Principal, what are you having trouble
15 with, let me find the best person to give
16 you some advice on how to solve this
17 problem, let me bring -- let me find you
18 someone who can advise you on school
19 climate, let me -- you know, that sort of
20 relationship, with the incentive of
21 getting the schools -- having them
22 perform better, because they'll be held
23 accountable for the schools doing better.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That would
25 be the goal.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 MS. HOUSTOUN: But the core
3 idea was that our schools have and our
4 principals for a very long time have
5 lived in a command and control
6 environment from 440. I have yet to
7 hear -- many people tell me that they
8 welcome the direction from 440.
9 Principals are more likely to say, If you
10 could just leave me alone, I could do
11 better. But that's the nature of what
12 has been recommended to us.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So let me
14 make sure I understand this. The Boston
15 Group came in, made an analytical
16 assessment because that's the business
17 they're in, submitted a report with
18 recommendations?

19 MS. HOUSTOUN: Mr. Knudsen has
20 made, having worked with BCG, has made a
21 recommendation, essentially outlined a
22 conceptual approach. There's no --

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Document
24 as such?

25 MS. HOUSTOUN: -- document per

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 se.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So will
4 the Boston Group be responsible for now
5 the implementation of their
6 recommendation?

7 MS. HOUSTOUN: No.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
9 That's also a very bad misconception.

10 MS. HOUSTOUN: Yes. If I could
11 just reiterate on the basis of something
12 that Pedro Ramos said to Bill Green,
13 Councilman Green. As we think more about
14 this, as we bring a new Superintendent
15 in, we'll go through a process of
16 developing what principals and schools
17 think they need as part of a scope of
18 services for this support entity, and
19 we'll hear from a lot of people, because
20 we regard the principals as the customers
21 of the support group.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

23 MS. HOUSTOUN: So they need to
24 tell us what scope of services should be
25 in -- do we want to be able to get from

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 these guys.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

4 MS. HOUSTOUN: So it will be an
5 iterative process where a lot of people
6 have an opportunity to talk about it, to
7 talk about what the contract should look
8 like, what the performance standard
9 should be, what are the consequences if
10 different parties don't perform. All of
11 that is to be worked through with the SRC
12 and new Superintendent and the community
13 that's involved.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
15 then. I appreciate that explanation.

16 My final question goes back to
17 the one concern -- it's not a concern.
18 It's a new reality, the process that
19 you're going to use as you move to
20 strategically potentially close schools.
21 So this is over one, two, three, four,
22 five years?

23 MS. HOUSTOUN: The fiscal plan
24 that we have, which is a fiscal
25 imperative to balance the budget,

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 anticipates that we would consider and
3 make decisions on the closing of an
4 estimated 40 schools next year. They
5 would be in -- the schools wouldn't be
6 affected by this next year. It would be
7 the next year.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So we're
9 looking at 2014?

10 MS. HOUSTOUN: 2014. And
11 people have said, well, phase it in. I
12 think once we start the process of
13 looking at the physical condition of
14 schools, their utilization, the catchment
15 areas and all of that, we'll have to
16 figure it out, but I think having schools
17 hanging for three or four or five years
18 may be worse than just trying to figure
19 it all out at one time. If we were to go
20 slower, we'd have to raise money for
21 every school that we don't close.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.

23 MS. HOUSTOUN: So it's money
24 coming out of the school budget.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of course.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 MS. HOUSTOUN: So it's going to
3 be very difficult, but it's also going to
4 be a very transparent process. The
5 criteria are not just physical plan and
6 utilization. It's going to be the
7 quality of the program, the quality of
8 where the children would go, what their
9 choices would be, what potentially the
10 reuse of the building, the impact on the
11 neighborhood. All of those things will
12 have to be part of the process.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good.
14 Well, know that I completely understand
15 the rationale and the business I'm
16 thinking behind having to move to a new
17 model, because there are 50,000 less
18 kids. And so the key word you used for
19 me was "transparent." So I would hope
20 that there is a separate strategic plan
21 that keeps those neighborhoods and those
22 communities informed as best you can
23 every single step of the way about the
24 reality that's coming. And there has to
25 be layers and repetitive information

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 given out, because folks just don't get
3 it the first time it's filtered through.
4 So that would be my ask and --

5 MS. HOUSTOUN: The process that
6 we worked through for the eight schools,
7 which started before I joined the SRC,
8 was very transparent.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It was,
10 and you all kept Councilmembers quite
11 informed and up to speed.

12 MS. HOUSTOUN: And we listened,
13 and I think it was very healthy, because
14 we learned a lot that we didn't know
15 directly about the quality of
16 programming, the richness of some of what
17 schools and principals had accomplished,
18 and that has to be factored in to how we
19 think about this.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. All
21 right, then. One last question. The
22 truancy piece, I've been in close
23 discussions with DHS, and there was a
24 very strong relationship, networking,
25 which is too vague a word, partnership

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 with the School District around this
3 whole notion of truancy, and for reasons
4 that DHS understands, that that truancy,
5 I guess, programming with DHS is not
6 where it could be because of the changes
7 happening in the District.

8 So when we look at truancy and
9 its impact on the dropout rate, just
10 update us on how you plan to keep that
11 going and alive, because ultimately we
12 save a lot of kids from not dropping out.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.

15 MS. WASHINGTON: Good
16 afternoon. I'm Erica Washington, Deputy
17 Chief for Student Services and
18 Transition. I supervise the Office of
19 Attendance and Truancy.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

21 MS. WASHINGTON: I'm not sure
22 what you're referring to as it relates to
23 the relationship with the Department of
24 Human Services.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me ask

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 a different question. At one point DHS
3 had a lead contact person at the School
4 District where there was a means by which
5 parent ombudsmen and others would filter
6 that information to the designee in the
7 school, who would filter it to you or
8 your predecessor, who gave that
9 information to DHS so that DHS could
10 kick-start the wraparound services so
11 that we don't lose these kids.

12 So what's the nature of that
13 relationship?

14 MS. WASHINGTON: So what you're
15 referring to is, every school is
16 responsible for identifying an attendance
17 designee in every building, and at the
18 beginning of the year, all of the
19 principals submitted the names of their
20 attendance designee to our office and
21 then I forward it to the Department of
22 Human Services, who could then forward
23 that information to their providers who
24 would be providing services to the
25 children in the buildings.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 When we had our budget cuts
3 this year in the middle of the year when
4 some schools lost some support staff, the
5 attendance designee may have changed.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
7 right.

8 MS. WASHINGTON: And so we
9 informed the Department of Human Services
10 that the name of that person that they
11 may have been familiar with in the
12 building may no longer be there, but the
13 actual services and supports were still
14 there in the building, so the
15 responsibility did not change. So a
16 school may have lost the parent ombudsman
17 or the student advisor or the school
18 improvement support liaison in the
19 building, but that principal still had
20 the responsibility of identifying someone
21 in that building who would be responsible
22 for monitoring the attendance and truancy
23 procedures.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So from
25 where you sit, is that working?

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 MS. WASHINGTON: It is working.

3 And we just met with the Department, as a
4 matter of fact, this week. We are still
5 part of the citywide truancy
6 collaborative where the Mayor's Office of
7 Education, the Department of Human
8 Services, Family Court, the District
9 Attorney's Office and the School District
10 still come together and we're still
11 meeting and collaborating on
12 strengthening the systems of enforcing
13 the compulsory attendance laws in
14 Philadelphia. And it is working. I
15 mean, it requires communication. It
16 requires all of us having a level of
17 transparency. So when we took the cuts,
18 we went to the Department and we let them
19 know that this was happening in the
20 schools, but this is how we're going to
21 be able to strengthen the systems and the
22 partnerships. And one thing the
23 Department, DHS, is doing is, they're
24 strengthening the prevention efforts so
25 that we don't get to the level of

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 truancy, because traditionally DHS
3 becomes involved once the child is
4 truant. And so what we're doing
5 collaboratively is looking at how can we
6 strengthen our system so we can prevent
7 the child from becoming truant and we can
8 connect the child to services with DHS
9 prior to the child reaching that truancy
10 threshold.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Who is
12 monitoring how well that's working? I
13 mean, who or what is responsible for
14 ensuring that what we're saying verbally
15 and what we see on paper is working?
16 Because the only number we can ultimately
17 look at is the continued dropout rate.

18 MS. WASHINGTON: You can look
19 at the dropout rate. You can also look
20 at the average daily attendance in the
21 building. You can also look at the
22 chronic truancy numbers in the building.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

24 MS. WASHINGTON: And there's
25 some systems that we have worked on in

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 the School District to improve those
3 numbers, making sure that we're coding
4 children's absences correctly, making
5 sure that we are doing our due diligence
6 in finding children so that we don't have
7 to code them as a dropout if we find out
8 that the child has moved to New Jersey or
9 is, you know, attending a charter school.
10 And so we're improving our systems and
11 practices internally as well.

12 So I think there's a variety of
13 data that you can look at that would give
14 you an indication that the system and the
15 partnership is working.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
17 Well, thank you for that update. It is
18 encouraging, having met with DHS at
19 length last summer on this issue, and
20 know that that remains an interest to
21 members in Council, the whole truancy
22 effort and what we can do to arrest it on
23 the front end before they head down that
24 path.

25 MS. WASHINGTON: Absolutely.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

3 MS. WASHINGTON: You're

4 welcome.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,

6 Madam Chairwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're

8 welcome.

9 I'm sorry Councilman Squilla
10 had to step out. I know he had
11 questions.

12 Councilman Green.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair.

15 Just for the record, this is
16 not really a question. You can respond
17 or not. I have the Compact in front of
18 me. It says we will develop the
19 framework collaboratively with input from
20 parents and other stakeholders, and we
21 commit to adopting it no later than May
22 1st, 2012 so that it may be implemented
23 to assess school performance for the
24 2011-'12 academic year. As I talked to
25 Penny about, that is part of the reason

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 and why it's important to have these
3 measures, et cetera.

4 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much.

7 Are there further questions
8 from members of the Council?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
11 Further questions?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Seeing
14 none, this Committee --

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Madam Chair?

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I will
18 filibuster for a second while we wait to
19 see if Councilman Squilla would like to
20 come up. I don't want him to lose his
21 spot.

22 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Can't we just
23 call him? I don't want you to feel put
24 upon, Councilman.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, I

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 don't want my colleague to miss this
3 opportunity. I don't think we have you
4 scheduled to come back, and he did sit
5 through a lot of questions and answers.

6 Also it says within 45 days of
7 the formation of the Compact Committee,
8 the Committee shall establish a work plan
9 to guide implementation of the Compact.
10 I think that's been done.

11 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good news,
12 Councilman. Councilman Squilla is back.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And within
14 90 days, it shall make a recommendation
15 to PDE on inputs and waiting for the
16 statewide school accountability and
17 performance framework.

18 Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you.

21 Councilman Squilla.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
23 Madam Chair.

24 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Welcome back,
25 Councilman Squilla.

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

3 A lot of my questions were
4 answered during the process, which was
5 good, and your answers were very long and
6 direct. So thank you.

7 But my one question was with
8 the dismantling of the 440, and I
9 understand that the budget, I guess,
10 going for that will be put into the new
11 network administrative costs from there?

12 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The answer
13 that both Council and the SRC has gotten
14 to this question thus far is I think most
15 aptly put that, Don't count on any
16 real -- don't start spending any savings
17 from that part of the plan from the
18 reorganization. It's conceivable that
19 there could be savings, but it's not --
20 there's no budgeted savings at this point
21 because so much is still undefined.

22 It is clear that under that
23 proposal, the central headquarters is a
24 lot smarter -- smaller, and hopefully
25 smarter too, in that we were work smarter

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 if you have one-fifth of the people we
3 once had or one-sixth. But a lot of the
4 functions, a lot of the responsibilities
5 would fall to this other type of
6 structure in an accountability -- in a
7 different accountability-based system.

8 So while I hope that there are
9 some savings there, being conservative as
10 we are being about how we budget -- what
11 we count as savings, we don't want to
12 count savings there at this point until
13 we know a lot more.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: How about
15 as far as the use of 440?

16 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We have not
17 spoken about the use of 440. I think as
18 time evolves, I like having really
19 creative discussions about what can go on
20 at 440, whether it's some day having one
21 or more schools in there or having other
22 uses that are not just purely
23 administrative uses really or whether at
24 some point you need all that space. But
25 right now it's certainly an enormous

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.
2 investment that the District made over
3 the last many years, so it's not a
4 decision that would be made lightly. But
5 I think even today, it's an underutilized
6 space at 440 and I do think that we
7 should be thinking more creatively about
8 uses of that space. And my own
9 preference, if we have ever had a way of
10 figuring out what school it would be, I
11 would love to see a school at 440 or one
12 or more schools at 440.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So there
14 is no --

15 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Now you got me
16 in trouble. Now I do caveat by saying
17 that's my individual opinion. That's not
18 the opinion of the School District.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That's not
20 an SRC opinion?

21 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Not yet.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Not yet.

23 In the Five Year Plan, then,
24 there's no goal for 440 as far as maybe
25 collecting rent on it or having it as a

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 school or selling it or whatever?

3 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No. Other
4 than the potential that it would have a
5 lot fewer people in it, no, there's no --
6 nothing that I know of. I can confirm
7 that with Mr. Knudsen and the budget
8 folks, but I don't think we've -- no. I
9 now can confirm that.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
11 Thank you very much.

12 Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you, Councilman.

15 Are there now any questions
16 from members of Council?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All
19 right. Seeing none, this Committee will
20 stand in recess until Wednesday, May 16th
21 at 2 o'clock p.m.

22 Thank you, everyone.

23 CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
24 Madam Chair.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 5/15/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, etc.

2 you.

3 MS. HOUSTOUN: Thank you.

4 (Committee of the Whole

5 recessed at 3:20 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on May 15, 2012, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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