

1 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
2 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING
3 BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
4 AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

5
6 Saturday, November 10, 2001
7 Room 400, City Hall
8

9 Resolution 010642 - [Authorizing City Council's
10 Committee on Education to conduct joint hearings with
11 the Board of Education of the School District of
12 Philadelphia to examine the findings and
13 recommendations set forth in the report of Edison
14 Schools, Inc.]

15 PRESENT:

16 COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER, Co-Chair
17 STATE REPRESENTATIVE LeANNA M. WASHINGTON, Co-Chair
18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA CIBOTTA VERNA
19 SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT PEDRO A. RAMOS, ESQUIRE
20 COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
21 COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
22 COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
23 COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
24 COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO
25 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CHRISTINE JAMES-BROWN
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RALPH BLANKS
Yvonne Epps, Executive Assistant to
Councilwoman Miller

ALSO PRESENT:

STATE REPRESENTATIVE HAROLD JAMES
STATE REPRESENTATIVE LAWRENCE H. CURRY
STATE REPRESENTATIVE W. CURTIS THOMAS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE RON WATERS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE MARK B. COHEN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN MYERS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE JEWELL WILLIAMS

- - -

VINCENT VARALLO ASSOCIATES, INC.
Eleven Penn Center, Suite 600
1835 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 561-2220

1	I N D E X	Page
2		
3	Dr. Karin C. Bivins, Education Chair, Philadelphia	
4	Branch, NAACP-----	316
5	Eugene Bivins, Former Organizer, Philadelphia	
6	Federation of Teachers, American Federation of	
7	Teachers; Founder, Original Black Caucus,	
8	Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; Member,	
9	Executive Committee and Education Committee,	
10	Philadelphia Branch, NAACP-----	325
11	Thomas Doyle, President, Local 1201-----	333
12	J. Wyatt Mondesire, President, Philadelphia Branch,	
13	NAACP-----	343
14	F. Joseph Merlino, Project Director, The Greater	
15	Philadelphia Secondary Mathematics Project,	
16	La Salle University-----	349
17	Dr. Edward Robinson, The African Genesis Program---	360
18	Reverend L. Cortes, Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia,	
19	Nueva Esperanza-----	371
20	Arnold Hall, Jr., President, Philadelphia Home and	
21	School Council-----	380
22	Patricia J. Raymond, Vice-President, Philadelphia	
23	Home and School Council-----	390
24	Gloria Crittendon, Parent-----	394
25	Len Rieser, Esquire, Education Law Center-----	398
26	Reverend Bruce M. Edwards, President, Urban	
27	Leadership Council, Inc.-----	404
28	Sam Cook, Trustee, International Hotel and	
29	Restaurant Employees Union, School Cafeteria	
30	Local 634-----	411
31	Lois Fernandez, President and Co-Founder, Odunde---	418
32	Laura Fernandez Garrett, Teacher, Philadelphia	
33	School District; Coordinator, Barratt Middle	
34	School-----	422
35	Dr. Tom Gill, Professor, Department of Literacy,	
36	West Chester University-----	427
37		
38	CEATRICE BEARD -----	450
39	JAMES PIERCE -----	458
40	BERNARD JOHNSON -----	462
41	INA JOHNSON -----	468
42	MARYLYN BURSE -----	472
43	DENNIS BARNABY -----	475
44	JANET FISHMAN -----	481
45	EMANUEL FREEMAN -----	485

24

- - - -

25

- 1 APPENDIX - Prepared Testimony of:
- 2 Eugene Bivins, Former Organizer, Philadelphia
- 3 Federation of Teachers, American Federation of
- 4 Teachers; Founder, Original Black Caucus of the
- 5 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
- 6 F. Joseph Merlino, Project Director, The Greater
- 7 Philadelphia Secondary Mathematics Project,
- 8 La Salle University
- 9 Glen Wilson, Assistant Director, Education Policy
- 10 Studies Laboratory, Division of Educational
- 11 Leadership and Policy Studies, College of
- 12 Education, Arizona State University
- 13 James Pierce, Jr, Executive Board President,
- 14 Comprehensive Early Learning Centers
- 15 Americans for Democratic Action, Southeastern
- 16 Pennsylvania Chapter

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good morning,
4 everyone. We'll be starting the hearing, so would
5 people kind of please take their seats and quiet
6 down.

7 MS. EPPS: Good morning. City of
8 Philadelphia public hearing, Saturday, November 10,
9 2001, recessed from Thursday, November 8, 2001.
10 Resolution 010642, authorizing -- this is a
11 continuation from Thursday.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good morning. I
14 just want to say good morning and thank everyone
15 for coming.

16 This is an important issue that we're
17 facing here in our city. Nothing is more important
18 than the future of our children.

19 This morning in attendance we have
20 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller; State
21 Representative LeAnna Washington, Chair of the
22 Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus; School Board
23 Member Christine James Brown; School Board Member
24 Reverend Ralph Blanks; State Representative Harold
25 James; Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell; Councilmember

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 Wilson Goode, Jr.; Council President Anna Verna;
3 and State Representative Larry Curry from
4 Montgomery County.

5 I don't believe I've missed anyone.
6 We just want to proceed today. We
7 want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity
8 to be heard. I don't know whether people in the
9 audience or any of the testifiers have an agenda in
10 front of them, but we're going to give you no more
11 than three to five minutes. You'll be timed. And
12 please keep other people in mind. On Thursday we
13 had 32 people to testify, and we had to reschedule
14 many of those people until today.

15 Does anyone have any opening remarks
16 they want to make?

17 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: No,
18 Councilwoman. I think we need to allow the
19 community people to have an opportunity to make
20 remarks, so I suggest that we continue on with the
21 hearings.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Very good.
23 Our first witnesses this morning are
24 Dr. Karin Bivins and Eugene Bivins. Would you
25 please proceed to the witness table, speak directly

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 into the mike, state your name and any other
3 identifying information that you want us to know.
4 Just a point of information. We do
5 have people from the Edison Project in the room,
6 so -- and as you know, as most people know, your
7 comments are being recorded by a stenographer, so
8 everything that happens here today, there is a
9 record being made.

10 DR. KARIN C. BIVINS: Good morning,
11 members of City Council, Legislative Black Caucus,
12 ladies and gentlemen, Members of the Board. I am
13 Dr. Karin Bivins, the Education Chair of the
14 Philadelphia Branch of the NAACP.

15 I come before you this morning to
16 discuss the following reasons why you must do all
17 in your power to prevent a takeover of the
18 Philadelphia public schools by a private,
19 for-profit educational corporation, and work to
20 clean up the problems occurring within the
21 administration of the Philadelphia public schools
22 that have brought us to this crisis.

23 The reasons why Edison Schools, Inc.
24 must not be allowed to take over the public schools
25 fall into three categories: fiscal reasons,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 educational reasons, political reasons.
3 We'll start with the fiscal reasons
4 first.

5 1. Edison expects to gets a \$50
6 million management fee off the top, plus 2 percent
7 of the gross costs to run the District. That's 2
8 percent of 1.7 billion or 1.8 billion, depending on
9 who you're speaking to. This will expand the
10 possible costs to \$90 million per year to the
11 School District.

12 The Inquirer of 11/2/01 states that
13 according to Edison CEO Christopher Whittle, "A
14 contract to run the city's 264 public schools would
15 help the company turn a profit quicker" -- do you
16 hear what he's interested in? Turn a profit
17 quicker -- "maybe by next year and for the first
18 time in its 10-year history."

19 Does this sound more cost effective to
20 you? Are they being hired to provide a better
21 education for our youth, or are they being hired
22 because the former and current Republican Governors
23 want to help their Republican friend out of
24 financial difficulty? This smacks of cronyism and
25 corrupt practices.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 2. Areas where Edison costs the
3 school districts more than anticipated include
4 Clark County, Nevada, who had to pay Edison more
5 than \$8 million in overhead, in addition to \$35 to
6 \$38 million per year to operate seven schools.

7 There were cost overrides at Wichita;
8 York, Pennsylvania; Perry County; Wayne County;
9 North Carolina; and Dallas, to name a few. In
10 Philadelphia they will be managing 264 schools. If
11 they follow the same pattern of fiscal
12 mismanagement, the overrides may be astronomical.

13 3. Edison claims to save the School
14 District money by selling the Administration
15 Building and replacing the custodial workers,
16 cafeteria workers, and others, with contracts to
17 outside agencies who pay minimum wages and no
18 benefits. They will then lease or rent more costly
19 facilities to provide offices for the 55 managers
20 they intend to employ, not to mention the
21 hundred-thousand-dollar-plus salaries per manager.

22 4. We have gone from 8 to 6 District
23 Superintendents, to 22 Cluster Leaders, to 10 AAOs.
24 This is partly how the School District incurred a
25 \$216-million-plus deficit. What do you think the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 deficit will be when the number is increased to 55?
3 The airlines have done the same thing
4 when they contracted out airport security to
5 private companies who pay minimum wages and no
6 benefits. Their incompetence contributed to a
7 series of lapses in security that led to 9/11.

8 Is this what we want to happen to our
9 youth? Minimum wages, inexperienced employees who
10 could bring food poisoning to our youth due to
11 poorly refrigerated or poorly heated food that was
12 prepared off premises, resulting in such bacterial
13 infections as botulism, salmonella and e-coli, to
14 name a few often fatal infections related to
15 improper food handling.

16 I doubt if the Federal Government will
17 bail the School District out the way they bailed
18 the airlines out. Government bailouts seem to be
19 for fat cats, not for poor, black and minority
20 people.

21 (Applause.)

22 DR. BIVINS: The current government
23 provides welfare for the rich, not for people like
24 the custodial and cafeteria workers, who will lose
25 their jobs --

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 (Applause.)

3 DR. BIVINS: -- benefits and pensions
4 they worked for and struggled so hard to get. They
5 can't depend on welfare. What will happen to their
6 children?

7 5. Do you think \$7-per-hour workers
8 will be able to handle the boilers, electrical
9 units and other mechanical machines found in many
10 of the school buildings, that are 60 to 100 years
11 old, or the air-conditioners and other
12 sophisticated machinery of the newer buildings in
13 the Northeast?

14 How many boilers have to blow up? How
15 many other machines have to break down before
16 someone realizes that you get what you pay for and
17 that incompetent, minimum-wage workers will not
18 adequately replace the trained, qualified building
19 engineers that we currently have?

20 (Applause.)

21 DR. BIVINS: What are the lives and
22 safety of our youth worth? What will it cost in
23 ensuing lawsuits for damages resulting from the
24 incompetence that Edison will create? If you think
25 that it is cheaper to privatize, count again.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 The educational reasons:

3 1. Many cities have, or are, closing
4 Edison schools, allegedly because of having low
5 test scores, student behavior problems, leadership
6 issues, poor student performance on state
7 achievement tests, high teacher turnover, hiring
8 teachers without background checks, and no evidence
9 that the Edison model represents a superior
10 educational program.

11 Schools that have, or are, getting rid
12 of Edison include Minneapolis public schools,
13 Wichita, Lansing, Baltimore, Miami-Dade and others.

14 2. New York City had the good sense
15 to run Edison out before they could take over five
16 schools and were able to develop alternative
17 strategies for improving the five schools which had
18 low achievement. Parents at those schools were
19 allowed to vote last March, and four out of five
20 parents were against privatization.

21 In Philadelphia, if the Mayor had
22 approved City Councilman Michael Nutter's plan to
23 put a referendum on the ballot for the November 6
24 election, we can conjecture from the outcries of
25 the citizens that Philadelphia would have

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 overwhelmingly voted against privatization too.
3 The political reasons:
4 By law, education is a function of the
5 state. Governor Schweiker has already stated that
6 he does not intend to run for a full term, so he
7 may not personally realize the political
8 consequences of his actions if he ramrods Edison
9 Schools, Inc. on the citizens and taxpayers of
10 Philadelphia. However, his actions may create a
11 backlash that will ensure that a Democrat will be
12 the next Governor of Pennsylvania.
13 Two other states have already switched
14 from Republican Governors to Democratic Governors
15 in recent elections, and other states that have
16 experienced Edison's management may make
17 governmental switches next year.
18 In conclusion, the citizens of
19 Philadelphia need to initiate measures that will
20 ensure the educational reform of the Philadelphia
21 public schools to prevent future takeovers by
22 private, for-profit organizations.
23 Thank you.
24 (Applause.)
25 DR. BIVINS: I want to explain why my

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 husband isn't here. It was his job to park the
3 car. And I went to at least four different
4 entrances before I found a way in. So I have a
5 feeling that he's wandering around outside of City
6 Hall. I do have his presentation here and, with
7 your permission, I would like to read it. His
8 presentation is totally different.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Do you have
10 copies for us?

11 DR. BIVINS: He does, when he gets
12 here. You'll get them before the day is over.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

14 DR. BIVINS: He states: "Honorable
15 panel, I am Eugene Bivins, Former Organizer for the
16 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), the
17 American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the
18 Founder of the Original Black Caucus of the
19 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. I am
20 presently an Active Member of the Executive
21 Committee and the Educational Committee of the
22 Philadelphia Branch of the NAACP."

23 He discusses some past problems that
24 the the School District had, because his discussion
25 is going to be dealing with the need for school

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 reform.

3 "A. Principal Misfeasance and
4 Nonfeasance. A principal -- and I won't read the
5 name -- threw away new materials and said he could
6 not help an Arab substitute teacher."

7 Here he is now. I'll let him finish
8 his speech. I'm glad he found his way. Give him a
9 hand. I know he had to struggle.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. EUGENE BIVINS: Honorable panel,
12 I'm Eugene Bivins, Former Organizer for the
13 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, American
14 Federation of Teachers, and the Founder of the
15 Original Black Caucus of the Philadelphia
16 Federation of Teachers, among other things.

17 I'm presently active as an Executive
18 Committee Member of the NAACP and the Education
19 Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of the NAACP.

20 I would have to say that I don't know
21 of too many people who are in love with the idea of
22 public funds being used, or tax monies, school
23 monies being used, to make a profit. So I want to
24 make that clear from the outset.

25 At the same time, riding here to make

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 my presentation on Thursday, I was listening to
3 WHAT with Karen Warrington and she was taking a
4 little poll: for, against, neither, or none of the
5 above, or your own plan.
6 I made a call to her. I told her that
7 I personally would have to go for "none of the
8 above" because you can't go wrong with the status
9 quo, that has been going down for years and years,
10 with the same old stuff.
11 (Applause.)
12 MR. BIVINS: We need an examination as
13 part of our recommendations to improve the School
14 Board's operation, no matter who is in there,
15 because you need a way of choosing better
16 principals. He's the first teacher.
17 (Applause.)
18 MR. BIVINS: Some of the examples that
19 we've had that they've chosen, even after I've told
20 them what these people have done, include:
21 1. New materials thrown away, when he
22 was a teacher. He threw his things away when he
23 had to move his room. Brand-new stuff. I'd go
24 over and take his trash basket and use it, ask him
25 if he wanted his stuff, and he said no, he was

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 throwing it away.

3 I worked in the same office, in the
4 discipline office, with this same person. And one
5 day we had an Arab substitute, and he told me and
6 the NTA, if this Arab teacher had a problem, he
7 said he just couldn't go down -- he couldn't find
8 it within himself to go down and help him with an
9 unruly class.

10 This is the type of people we're
11 hiring in the Philadelphia School District.

12 Another principal, she's named in this
13 particular -- I'm not going to repeat the name.
14 She encouraged her staff and herself to throw
15 balloons down on the kids, filled with water, down
16 on the kids, on Move-Up Day, for seniors. Of
17 course, this was all in jest. This was like being
18 one of the boys, I guess, to her or one of the
19 girls. I don't know which.

20 She had some of her staff to say
21 that -- and it was her staff that even told us that
22 this happened. She had allowed four-letter words
23 that appeared in her graduation yearbook. You may
24 have seen that in the newspapers.

25 We've had a vice-principal from

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Strawberry Mansion School, my old school, that I
3 started teaching at when it first opened until
4 1980, to be convicted of sexual molestation.

5 We had a principal -- he's named
6 here -- arrested by the FBI. This was in the
7 newspapers, so it's public knowledge. I still have
8 the clipping. He was found with a kilo of cocaine.

9 He told me, when he first got his job,
10 he held a faculty meeting at his home and it was
11 pretty hot, but he didn't have to do it in his
12 underwear, which I'm told he did. He had a young
13 boy, a foster child, who was seen at the meeting,
14 and teachers say in his library were books on
15 Satanism.

16 Then we had a principal at the Penrose
17 School disrespected parents all along. Because we
18 had 85 parents to come out -- we have this on
19 tape -- with their testimony of just horrendous
20 disregard and disrespect for the pupils and the
21 parents who wanted to address problems of
22 molestation inside the school and outside, in the
23 schoolyard.

24 We have a human resource director, who
25 is still there. Why he's still here I don't know.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 But personally last summer -- my wife and I run
3 Black Caucus summer schools, and we tried to get --
4 we were short a Spanish teacher. They're short
5 Spanish teachers all over.

6 Would they allow -- I called and asked
7 him could he help me with his pool, just give me a
8 few names. It wouldn't have hurt him to have given
9 me that.

10 His secretary even said -- complained
11 that she was mistreated. She called the NAACP
12 because of his mistreatment to her. She didn't
13 know that I was also one of his victims.

14 The records of the School District --
15 as you know, there's a list of speakers, just like
16 you have produced for this meeting on Thursday. I
17 don't know if we have one today, but you still have
18 that list. That list is -- there's a list made
19 like that at every School Board meeting.

20 Well, they used to, before the last
21 couple of Superintendents came in -- that list
22 would be part of the record to show who was present
23 that day. Those lists are no longer put into the
24 minutes. They haven't been for at least ten years,
25 in the minutes. You could go read the minutes in

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 the Main Library on the Parkway, or you could go
3 and read them in the Pedagogical Library.
4 And, of course, they used to also
5 maintain everybody's presentation, like this.
6 We're not asking for that, but at least they could
7 have the record complete with the speakers who
8 showed up.
9 (Timer sounds.)
10 MR. BIVINS: I don't know what that
11 is.
12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's the time.
13 MR. BIVINS: I didn't know anything --
14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We'll give you a
15 couple more minutes.
16 MR. BIVINS: Okay. Thank you.
17 All right. I'm going to skip 9 and go
18 down to 10.
19 There's still no response on the use
20 of phonics. Karin and I sat down with Dr. Hornbeck
21 and his Chief of Staff, just two on two, and asked
22 him about the infusion of phonics into the
23 curriculum. And he said, "Well, if you bring me
24 some evidence, I'll send out an electronic message
25 to the principals that, you know, we have got the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 evidence to come forth with a program using
3 phonics."

4 And so we got this evidence. In fact,
5 I have two of them here. One is from Yale, and
6 this one is an old foundation. This is the Weber
7 Report: "Inner-City Children Can Be Taught to
8 Read." This man went to about nine cities and he
9 got four inner-city schools and he proved without a
10 doubt the one thing that made these schools
11 successful, the one thing that was present in the
12 successful schools, was the use of phonics.

13 I gave this to Mr. Hornbeck.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. BIVINS: We also gave him this.

16 This is 1998, Palm Beach Post. Newspapers in
17 Philadelphia, a complete blackout on this study.
18 Showed how an MRI -- the first physical evidence
19 that phonics is taught and causes the brain -- when
20 it's taught, it causes the brain centers, the
21 learning centers, to develop. And that's what has
22 happened in this report.

23 These are available to you, when you
24 want them.

25 (Timer sounds.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 MR. BIVINS: All right, folks. I

3 guess I've had it. Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. BIVINS: In parting, I'd just like

6 to say this one thing. Those who forget the past

7 are doomed to repeat the failures of the past.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We want to thank

10 you, Dr. and Mr. Bivins, for coming in. They were

11 here all day Thursday, until the end.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: The part of the

14 testimony that he didn't read, we're going to make

15 sure the stenographer has it to put it in the

16 record.

17 MR. BIVINS: Okay. Thanks.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Tom Doyle is

19 next.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Before you

22 begin, I just want to make note that we have been

23 joined by Councilman Angel Ortiz, School Board

24 President Pedro Ramos, and State Representative

25 Curtis Thomas.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. DOYLE: Good morning. Before I
4 read my prepared statement, I would like to preface
5 it with: I made my prepared statement purposely
6 short, with the hopes that you would give me an
7 opportunity to speak freely when I'm done. It's a
8 short prepared statement.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Excuse me,
10 Mr. Doyle. Do you have copies of your testimony?

11 MR. DOYLE: Yes, I do. I handed them
12 out the other day, but I do have additional copies.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

14 MR. THOMAS DOYLE: Thank you,
15 Chairpersons Miller, Washington, Council President
16 Verna, Members of City Council, and all of the
17 other elected officials here today, for this
18 opportunity to speak on behalf of the students of
19 the Philadelphia School District and Local 1201.

20 We are here today to categorically
21 deny the accusations and assumptions made by
22 Edison, Inc. in their recent report to the Governor
23 of Pennsylvania.

24 Edison states on page 54 of its report
25 that "the District can follow two broad approaches

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 to rectify its precarious financial position,
3 reducing costs and increasing revenues." Well,
4 isn't that easy? I guess we can all go home now
5 and relax. Edison, Inc. has shown us the way.

6 Unfortunately it's not that simple.
7 Edison has no proven track record of success
8 anywhere it has been. Edison has generated more
9 losses -- \$300 million in ten years -- than the
10 School District's current deficit of \$264 million.

11 I also think that it is safe to say
12 that public education in Philadelphia has been
13 around a lot longer than Edison, Inc. has, and yet
14 their loss numbers are higher.

15 In a press release as recent as
16 October 16, 2001 from San Francisco, their
17 for-profit Edison Charter Academy ranks at the very
18 bottom, 70th, of the San Francisco elementary
19 schools rated on California's Academic Performance
20 Index. This was based on spring of 2001 testing.

21 While Edison was failing the students
22 of San Francisco, its founder, Chris Whittle, and
23 President, Benno Schmidt, Jr., were paid \$296,636
24 last year. Mr. Schmidt has been given low-interest
25 loans of \$1.8 million, and he also gets \$2.5

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 million if he loses his job, plus up to two years
3 salary. We should all be so lucky.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. DOYLE: Mr. Whittle has received
6 more than \$1 million from Edison for professional
7 services since 1995. He also will receive a \$5.6
8 million loan to buy one-and-a-half million shares
9 of stock at \$1.50 each. And, as we all know now,
10 that share price has increased significantly since
11 their involvement with the Philadelphia School
12 District.

13 Since its inception, Edison, Inc. has
14 raised \$232 million in private funding, serving
15 24,000 students. This is an investment of nearly
16 \$9,666 per student. If private investors were to
17 put a similar amount into the Philadelphia School
18 District, that comes out to over \$2 billion. I
19 would like to see our students have \$9,000-plus
20 apiece for their education.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. DOYLE: I challenge Edison to
23 produce those dollars. They won't because they
24 can't. They can't improve test scores, but they
25 can improve their profitability. Higher costs for

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 the districts in Goldsboro, North Carolina; San
3 Antonio; and Dallas, Texas; Pontiac, Michigan; and
4 thrown out of Sherman, Texas. The list goes on and
5 on.

6 Edison, Inc. goes on to claim they can
7 save \$650 to \$700 million over the next five years.
8 Those savings are in the categories of
9 instructional personnel, noninstructional
10 personnel, transportation benefits and procurement.
11 Well, that covers just about everyone in the School
12 District but Edison themselves.

13 I guess Edison will teach the students
14 with their 55 management personnel, who by the way,
15 are replacing only 50 School District management
16 personnel. Replace less with more, there's a cost
17 savings. No wonder their deficit is so high.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. DOYLE: Edison has distorted the
20 cost figures for maintenance and cleaning. We
21 maintain that BOMA's national average per square
22 foot is \$2.26. The School District's cost we
23 believe to be \$2.01 per square foot.

24 That's 25 cents per square foot
25 cheaper, times 29 million square feet. That is a

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 savings of \$7.25 million just on the cleaning side.
3 The maintenance side savings are just
4 as dramatic.
5 Edison claims they are going to invest
6 \$51 million of their own dollars into painting
7 every school in the system. The last time the
8 District painted a large middle school or a high
9 school, I believe it cost approximately \$700,000.
10 Do the math, ladies and gentlemen. \$51 million
11 will paint about 72 schools, not 264.
12 By the way, that was the price of an
13 outside contractor, not Board employees --
14 (Applause.)
15 MR. DOYLE: -- and Edison has already
16 stated that they're going to contract out and
17 contract out and contract out some more.
18 The Local 1201 membership does it
19 cheaper, faster and better than anyone else.
20 (Applause.)
21 MR. DOYLE: Remember, a short ten
22 years ago the School District contracted out ten
23 schools to two for-profit companies, three-year
24 contracts. Within two years the Board canceled
25 those contracts, and 1201 took the buildings back

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 for the above-mentioned reasons, and have had them
3 ever since, without complaint.

4 The Perks-Ruetter Report, as recently
5 as 1996, said the District needed \$765 million for
6 repairs and maintenance, \$130 million just for
7 painting, an independent report; but Edison claims
8 they will do it for \$51 million. Please, please,
9 please stop.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. DOYLE: Edison is about profit.
12 They will not help our students. They will not
13 help the parents. They will cost more money. I
14 ask you, do not allow this to happen and do not try
15 to do it on the backs of the lowest paid, hardest
16 working people in the system, the members of Local
17 1201.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. DOYLE: And those are the members
20 of Local 1201 who, by the way, have 96 percent of
21 their children going to public schools.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. DOYLE: Fight for the students,
24 fight for the parents, fight for the employees, and
25 we will fight with you every step of the way.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 Thank you for your time.
3 (Standing ovation.)
4 MR. DOYLE: Could I please have your
5 indulgence for another minute or two to speak
6 freely? I'm better off the top than with prepared
7 statements.
8 Our people go to -- our people start
9 work --
10 (Audience disruption.)
11 MR. DOYLE: Excuse me, please.
12 Our people report to work 5, 6 o'clock
13 in the morning. Our transportation people are in
14 the yard at 5 o'clock in the morning, warming up
15 the trucks, the bus attendants come with them or
16 they pick them up --
17 (Continued audience disruption.)
18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: Excuse me,
19 Mr. Doyle.
20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Can we have some
21 order over here to the left, please.
22 (Councilwoman Miller gavelled for
23 order; continued audience disruption)
24 MR. DOYLE: I'd like to continue.
25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We would like

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 you to continue. Mr. Doyle, please continue.

3 MR. DOYLE: Our people report to work

4 5:00 --

5 (Continued audience disruption.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Ma'am, we're
7 going to have to ask you to refrain from screaming
8 out, or we're going to have to ask you to leave the
9 chambers until it's your turn to speak.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: We have
11 got to have order, or else you will have to leave.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You're scheduled
13 to speak, and we want to give everyone the respect
14 that we want to give to you too. We just need you
15 to calm down. Let Mr. Doyle finish. Some of us
16 have differences of opinion, and that's what makes
17 the world go around. We're not all the same, but
18 we must be respectful.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Councilwoman
21 Miller.

22 Our folks, as I started to say,
23 they're reporting to work at 5, 6 o'clock in the
24 morning. Our transportation people are there,
25 warming up the buses, meeting their bus attendant,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 picking up kids on the corners at their house,
3 knowing these children, knowing the situations that
4 they come from: that, unfortunately, a lot of
5 these children do not have a breakfast when they
6 come on the bus in the morning.
7 Our people actually bring food onto
8 the bus to give them because they know they're not
9 getting it at home. They go into their own pocket
10 for it.
11 (Applause.)
12 MR. DOYLE: And the transportation
13 department gets the kids to school and home on time
14 99 percent of the time. Okay?
15 (Applause.)
16 MR. DOYLE: Our engineers go into the
17 building 6 o'clock in the morning, turn the lights
18 on, tour the building, check it for vandalism,
19 damage, whatever; then go out to the schoolyard, in
20 the dark, cleaning up the broken beer bottles, the
21 crack vials, the syringes --
22 (Applause.)
23 MR. DOYLE: -- from hypodermic
24 needles, so the kids can have a clean and healthy
25 schoolyard to come to before they go to class in

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 the morning.

3 Our mechanics got to do repairs with
4 spit and duct tape. I don't want to leave anybody
5 out, but we --

6 (Audience participation.)

7 MR. DOYLE: The school aides and bus
8 attendants also, who work in the classrooms.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. DOYLE: I'll wrap this up in a
11 second.

12 Like I said, we do it faster, better
13 and cheaper than anybody. We will continue to do
14 that. We are absolutely against privatization and
15 the contracting out of the school system, of the
16 students, of the members of any bargaining unit in
17 the School District of Philadelphia. We support
18 your effort. We will be there every step of the
19 way.

20 And I guarantee you, the Shaw School
21 or any other school they're talking about, those
22 bathrooms and rooms are cleaned; they're cleaned
23 every night short of people.

24 Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
3 Doyle and Local 1201.

4 Next we'll have Jerry Mondesire.
5 (Applause.)

6 MR. J. WYATT MONDESIRE: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair. And to the School Board Members, City
8 Councilmembers, State Legislative Members: It's
9 good to see you. This in fact is the first real
10 public dialogue about so-called school reform
11 that's ever been held in the City of Philadelphia.
12 Thank God we've come here.

13 (Applause.)
14 MR. MONDESIRE: I just wish other
15 members of the City Administration also were able
16 to join us in the chamber this particular morning.

17 I won't try to add any of the
18 additional information that Mr. and Mrs. Bivins
19 have given you, because they're the experts in the
20 education field.

21 I, as head of the NAACP, am glad to
22 have this opportunity to talk to you just briefly
23 this morning because we believe the privatization
24 that is currently being talked about and proposed
25 for the City of Philadelphia will be devastating to

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 our children and devastating to the work force now
3 in the school system.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. MONDESIRE: And we do not come
6 here with empty hands. We do not come before you
7 this morning as people who are johnny-come-lately
8 to the problem. We do not come here as people who
9 are trying to make a profit off of this system, as
10 we have seen some of our politicians and some of
11 our local businesspeople have.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MONDESIRE: Those of you who know
14 anything about the history of our civil rights
15 organization know that it was the NAACP which
16 opened all schools, public and private, in this
17 country in the 1950's.

18 We also come to you as some of the
19 original plaintiffs in the equity funding suit that
20 was filed in Pennsylvania more than six years ago.

21 So that we have a long history in this
22 process.

23 We have come here, though, to make
24 sure that you know that we object to the
25 privatization that is currently being talked about

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 because it would lead to the profit-making on the
3 backs of 210,000 mostly black, brown and white
4 school children.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. MONDESIRE: Privatization is not
7 synonymous with reform. A few politicians have
8 tried to sell it that way, but there is no proof,
9 just as in the case of trying to privatize the
10 prisons across this country.

11 The NAACP objects to the proposed plan
12 on several fronts. And two of which the Bivinses
13 spoke about, but I just want to add a little bit of
14 emphasis to, is the lack of accountability.

15 They told you about the \$50 million a
16 year that the Edison Company wants to make as its
17 profit from running the school system. Yet, who is
18 to measure them? Who is to measure whether or not
19 they are making any real progress?

20 The State wants to hire them. The
21 State Secretary, Mr. Zogby, who we met with
22 recently, has been the chief proponent of bringing
23 Edison to our Philadelphia school system. Is he
24 going to measure them? How can he measure the same
25 people he hired?

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Are they going to give the City
3 Council power to measure the progress of the Edison
4 Company? Of course not.

5 Secondly, there's been no real power
6 sharing. Under the so-called School Reform
7 Commission, the Governor would appoint the lion's
8 share of the members of that commission.

9 The last thing I want to talk about is
10 balkanization. It's not an issue that I've heard
11 about in the first day of testimony. But a lot of
12 groups are trying to feed off the carcass that they
13 think now exists as the Philadelphia School
14 District. A lot of individuals -- political,
15 business and others -- want to set up their own
16 separate school districts.

17 We want to make it very clear to this
18 panel today: The NAACP objects to anyone trying to
19 set up a separate school district, whether they be
20 a black businessman, a black politician, a Puerto
21 Rican Congressman, or -- it doesn't matter to us.

22 Privatization, balkanization --
23 (Applause.)

24 MR. MONDESIRE: Balkanization of this
25 school system will lead to the destruction of the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 concept of public education. Selling a public
3 education to the lowest qualified bidder, in our
4 eyes, is the first steps to cowardizing
5 Philadelphia.

6 We've already seen the legislation in
7 Harrisburg regarding the Parking Authority. What's
8 next, after they finish with the schools? The
9 Housing Authority, the Redevelopment Authority, the
10 airport?

11 Powerful forces outside this city, too
12 racist or too elitist to live here, still want to
13 control the resources and the infrastructure of our
14 city. Today they've come for our kids, 210,000 of
15 them. And if we sit by and they take control of
16 our future -- we say that cannot happen.

17 Since 1909 the NAACP has refused to
18 sit by, and in 2001 we again refuse, by any and all
19 means necessary.

20 Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. MONDESIRE: My last observation.

23 Of course, this thing is changing, you know, hour
24 by hour, and minute by minute. Most of us woke up
25 this morning to see that our Mayor has moved to his

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 office at 21st Street and has refused to talk to
3 the Governor.

4 We think that there has to be a
5 conversation. And we urge this panel -- because
6 you really reflect the broad panoply and diversity
7 within the city power structure, both political and
8 business, and you have ministers on the panel.

9 We must begin the dialogue. So we
10 urge you, as the panelists who have taken the
11 effort to listen to our voice, along with all the
12 other voices that will come before you this morning
13 and you heard on Thursday -- we urge all of the
14 parties to begin the dialogue. Let's begin it.
15 The children are watching.

16 Some of you, like me, have children in
17 the public school system. My son asked me this
18 morning, when he saw the news, "Daddy, what's going
19 to happen to my class?" And you know what? I
20 don't have an answer for him. And that makes me
21 afraid.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Councilman Ortiz

24 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Mr. Mondesire, I
25 believe that you have spoken about the elements

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 that are here presently. I think Governor
3 Schweiker should come down.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Since he was here
6 yesterday, I invite Governor Schweiker to give us a
7 call, to give us a call and come down and sit in
8 that chair and face our questioning. I invite him
9 to do that.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. MONDESIRE: Maybe we could play
12 the role of the United Nations and bring all the
13 parties to the table, because maybe it's about time
14 that everybody, both in Harrisburg as well as the
15 second floor of this building, begin to listen to
16 the voices that are in this room.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: F. Joseph
19 Merlino from La Salle University.

20 Good morning.

21 MR. F. JOSEPH MERLINO: Good morning.
22 Council President Verna and Members of City
23 Council, President Ramos and Members of the School
24 Board and distinguished elected officials:

25 My name is F. Joseph Merlino. I have

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 worked on math reform projects in Philadelphia
3 public schools since 1989, when I was first
4 employed as a program officer at a Philadelphia
5 nonprofit education fund.

6 Currently I am the director of a
7 National Science Foundation project at La Salle
8 University devoted to implementing systemic reform
9 in secondary mathematics.

10 We began this project eight years ago,
11 with nine volunteer Philadelphia teachers in six
12 high schools. Today we are training over 1500 math
13 teachers from 120 urban and rural and suburban
14 school districts in the Greater Philadelphia
15 region.

16 This region includes about 20 suburban
17 districts, all of the Bronx high schools, Lancaster
18 City, and about two dozen Philadelphia public
19 middle schools and high schools.

20 My staff and I deal every day on the
21 front lines of school change. Genuine reform in
22 the classroom, where it touches kids in a positive
23 way, is neither quick nor easy for schools to
24 accomplish.

25 In our project it takes 40 days of

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 professional development over four years to
3 increase the capacity of a math teacher to really
4 implement the Pennsylvania mathematics standards,
5 plus a great deal of administrative commitment,
6 support and managerial expertise.

7 We think we have learned by now what
8 it takes to make real change in the classroom and
9 make it sustainable. It is from this base of
10 experience that I feel compelled to be here today.

11 At a cost of \$34,000 per page, Edison
12 issued its 80-page report on what is wrong with the
13 Philadelphia School District.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. MERLINO: But there are many
16 things wrong with the Edison Report itself --
17 wrongs of omission. I will list three of the more
18 serious omissions and why the State should not take
19 over the School District or privatize it, and what
20 the State should do instead.

21 First, the Edison Report ignored a
22 root cause of the staffing problems in the
23 District. Quality teaching and administrative
24 staff are the two most important factors in
25 increasing student achievement, but a root cause of

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 these staffing problems is statewide funding
3 inequities.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. MERLINO: Allow me to illustrate
6 this point with a story.

7 Two people go to the supermarket. One
8 is from a new bedroom tract housing development in
9 Chester County. The other is from the East Falls
10 section of Philadelphia. They both buy an
11 identical cart of groceries worth \$100.

12 When they get to the checkout counter,
13 the cashier asks each for their zip code. To the
14 person from Chester County, the cashier subtracts
15 \$25. To the Philadelphia person, the cashier adds
16 \$25.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. MERLINO: The Chester County
19 person gets his bag of groceries for \$75, but the
20 Philadelphia person is charged \$125 for the
21 identical bag of groceries.

22 This is how the State raises money to
23 pay for education. The State is the cashier. The
24 bag of groceries is the market value of a house.
25 Zip codes refer to the school district where the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 house is located.

3 In the pursuit of the worthy goal of
4 education for all, the State has created a perverse
5 and unworthy way to pay for it: unequal property
6 taxation to fund a state service.

7 If you live in Philadelphia or the
8 inner-ring suburban communities or any of the more
9 than 200 small rural districts throughout
10 Pennsylvania, you will pay a disproportionately
11 higher amount of school taxes than the same person
12 who lives in a more affluent area, such as Chester
13 County, for the same market value of the house.

14 The Philadelphia School District's
15 looming budget deficit is not caused by cronyism,
16 patronage or gross financial mismanagement, as some
17 other urban districts. To its credit, the
18 Philadelphia School District has been relatively
19 free of such scandals, and the \$2.7 million Edison
20 study did not uncover any.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. MERLINO: This deficit instead is
23 caused by a structural imbalance in the way
24 Pennsylvania State Government collects school taxes
25 and the way it disburses it to all of its 501

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 school districts.

3 This structural imbalance of taxes and
4 disbursements means Philadelphia, rural and
5 inner-ring school districts with lower-income
6 people and high school taxes have difficulty
7 raising taxes.

8 By comparison, the outer-ring suburban
9 communities, such as those in Chester County, enjoy
10 healthy cash flows and lower tax rates.

11 As a result, the rural and river
12 school districts, such as Philadelphia, cannot
13 raise enough money on their own to remain
14 competitive with the Chester County-type meadow
15 districts in attracting and maintaining good
16 teachers and administrators.

17 As the Edison Report highlights,
18 Philadelphia schools are plagued by a "talent
19 drain": high staff turnover and vacant positions.
20 It also means that they have less resources to
21 invest in teacher and administrative development.
22 This forces Philadelphia to rely on long-term
23 substitutes and undercertified teachers.

24 Since the quality of schools and the
25 tax rate are major considerations when young

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 families decide where to buy a house, the river and
3 rural school districts become less attractive
4 places to live. Their schools deteriorate, further
5 depressing property values in a vicious downward
6 spiral.

7 At the same time, the meadow schools
8 enjoy unprecedented advantages in feeding suburban
9 sprawl and urban blight -- like warm tropical
10 waters feed a hurricane. The Edison Report
11 omitted this fundamental cause of budget deficits
12 and staff turnover from its study.

13 Second, the Edison Report ignored a
14 chief cause of artificially low PSSA scores.
15 Edison and the Governor have used the District's
16 seemingly low PSSA scores as a linchpin to justify
17 the unprecedented plan to privatize the entire
18 School District, as if nothing else could work to
19 raise scores.

20 I have lived through this tactic
21 before. When David Hornbeck became Superintendent
22 in 1994, he established a rigorous student
23 achievement measure that would hold schools
24 accountable for performance. The achievement
25 measure selected was the Stanford Achievement Test

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 9th Edition -- a nationally recognized, normed,
3 standards-based test.

4 But when the test was administered,
5 there was little notice given to teachers or
6 preparation to students. Half the students did not
7 even take the test. Yet, Hornbeck used these
8 artificially low scores to justify his sweeping
9 changes the next year.

10 Later scores seemed to dramatically
11 improve. Better curriculum and instruction in a
12 year? Hardly. Principals and teachers began
13 taking the test seriously, testing conditions
14 improved, incentives were given. And guess what?
15 Kids improved on their test.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me,
17 Mr. Merlino. You might want to condense the rest
18 of your testimony. You only have about two minutes
19 left.

20 MR. MERLINO: Okay.

21 Essentially, what you have in the PSSA
22 is: Kids were taking multiple tests at the same
23 time. The Stanford 9 was the key test for the
24 School District, not the PSSA. In my experience,
25 people really didn't pay attention to the PSSA, and

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 therefore that's why you have artificially low
3 scores.

4 If you now pay attention to it, you
5 will get a dramatic increase. That has nothing to
6 do with curriculum instruction. It has to do with
7 the fact that you're just paying more attention to
8 it.

9 (Timer sounds.)

10 MR. MERLINO: Let me move on to the
11 third omission.

12 The third omission was that -- there
13 are many strengths, accomplishments and lessons
14 learned from the four previous Superintendents, the
15 Boards, and the innumerable partnerships that
16 already exist in the District.

17 The omission of these strengths and
18 accomplishments belies on the part of Edison either
19 a fundamental absence of understanding or a cynical
20 disregard for the highly complex, deeply
21 contextualized, organic process of large-scale
22 curricular change in schools that requires an
23 uncommon degree of collaboration and
24 subject-specific curricular expense.

25 In short, they didn't say how they

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 were going to do any of this.

3 Lastly, let me just put forth seven
4 recommendations, very quickly. May I?

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Very quickly.

6 MR. MERLINO: The first thing is:

7 What the Pennsylvania State Government should do is
8 establish an equitable taxation system. That's the
9 root cause. And not only will you be helping
10 Philadelphia, you will also be helping hundreds of
11 small, rural and inner-ring suburban districts at
12 the same time.

13 If you must hire Edison, do it so they
14 can have the State fund the information technology
15 upgrade and management systems.

16 Keep in place the current management
17 team of Goldsmith and Farmbry and the ten academic
18 area officers.

19 Appoint a team to monitor the progress
20 of these changes over time, and revisit school
21 takeover options three years from now.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

23 We'll make sure that all of your testimony is
24 submitted for the record.

25 (Applause.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Dr. Robinson.
3 I also want to announce that we have
4 also been joined by Councilman Michael Nutter.
5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Madam Chair, just
6 a quick point of information. I didn't see today,
7 as we did on Thursday at the hearing -- are the
8 executives of the Edison Company present with us
9 this morning?

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: There is one
11 person present, and another few people will be
12 here. They're on their way.

13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Is that
14 Mr. Whittle? Is he going to be here?

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mr. Whittle
16 could not come today. They were trying to readjust
17 their schedules so they could join us. I knew that
18 all ten members that were here on Thursday could
19 not be here today, but there will be some
20 representation.

21 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. I wasn't
22 interested in necessarily the group of ten, but I
23 was interested as to whether or not any of their
24 top executives were going to be in the chamber
25 today.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes. We did
3 announce that earlier. One is here now, and others
4 are on their way.
5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam
6 Chair.
7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And let me just
8 remind everyone, testimony today is timed. Our
9 goal is to try and get everyone in today, and your
10 time is from three to five minutes, give or take a
11 few.
12 Good morning, Uncle Ed.
13 DR. EDWARD ROBINSON: Protocol having
14 been established, good morning. I certainly salute
15 my brother union people who are here today.
16 (Applause.)
17 DR. ROBINSON: For the last 60 years,
18 since I've been 23, privatization is like taking
19 poison in a strawberry milkshake. You don't even
20 know it's going down. Then, when it gets in,
21 everything goes up. The prices go up and the
22 profits go down.
23 (Applause.)
24 DR. ROBINSON: I'm here today to
25 represent the overwhelming majority of the school

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 population, which are the black children of
3 Philadelphia.

4 I have distributed the substance of my
5 statement. Those principles which you're reading
6 there are based on the following research:

7 Dr. Earline Sloane, formerly of the
8 School District of Philadelphia, did a research
9 paper for her doctoral thesis, and her research
10 paper was based on her analysis of the attitudes of
11 teachers in the Philadelphia School District.

12 She found that the teacher expectancy
13 of black children was horrific, and she offered
14 four behavioral interventional methods, which the
15 School District refused to accept.

16 There are two things necessary for
17 children to reach the height of their human
18 potential.

19 The teacher and the school must have
20 high esteem of the ancestors of the continent of
21 their origin. That is why the School District has
22 all the children to learn about the origin of the
23 European children. That's why you have to learn
24 about Aristotle and Plato and Galileo and all the
25 rest of those Europeans.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 In addition, the curriculum must
3 incorporate the contributions of those ancestors of
4 those continents to major world culture.

5 The first is the hatred and contempt
6 of the intrinsic value of the children by the
7 teachers and the whole school school environment.
8 Over 90 percent of children cannot learn above the
9 expectation of the teacher.

10 Dr. Earline Sloane and I offered a
11 proposal to the School District and the Board of
12 Education to raise low teacher expectation. It was
13 turned down by the Board.

14 The low performance is even lower
15 today, which we predicted. The contempt of the
16 school children is understandable, since teachers
17 are part of the society.

18 Ruch and Zimbardo, in their
19 "Psychology Today, says this: "The white man views
20 the black man as a loathsome, alien organism, and
21 that organism is to be rejected by the white body
22 politic."

23 Andrew Hacker, in his "Two Nations:
24 Hostile and Unequal," says that 94 percent of white
25 people have that contempt, and he questions the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 other 6 percent.

3 I see no evidence that is addressed by
4 Edison -- or anybody else, for that matter -- to
5 address the low expectation of the teachers in the
6 Philadelphia School District. And that gap, that
7 achievement gap, is going to continue to be
8 widening and widening, as it is today.

9 Teachers must have high esteem also
10 for the ancestors of the continent from which the
11 students come for the students to reach the height
12 of their potential.

13 (Applause.)

14 DR. ROBINSON: Of equal concern is the
15 curriculum. The curriculum must incorporate the
16 contributions of those ancestors of the continent.

17 We had a very dramatic success at the
18 Leeds Middle School, and we taught the white
19 contributions there too. For instance, we taught
20 that algebra was created by a man named Amose, and
21 we showed them his picture. Amose lived 3700 years
22 ago in Africa, a black man, who described himself
23 as jet black.

24 (Applause.)

25 DR. ROBINSON: Now, those of you who

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 question the authenticity of that, I taught the
3 whites teachers there at Leeds -- I said, "Get your
4 World Book Encyclopedia and look up the history of
5 algebra in the World Book." And it says that
6 algebra was created by a black man in Africa 3700
7 years ago.

8 (Applause.)

9 DR. ROBINSON: When I asked
10 Mr. Hornbeck why couldn't the teachers be made to
11 teach that simple fact, since all the children take
12 algebra, he replied that the white teachers in the
13 union refused and that the black teachers didn't
14 raise a whimper.

15 In 1969, Superintendent Shedd
16 appointed me as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Commission
17 to Infuse African and African American Studies in
18 the School District of Philadelphia. He sent out a
19 directive to all teachers that teach African
20 history -- not African-American. African history.

21 In 1994 the School District sent out
22 another directive. They complained that they
23 didn't know it.

24 I co-authored a book, which I have
25 right here, 31 years ago -- co-authored a book

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 called "The World of Africans and Afro-Americans,"
3 and distributed 14,000 of the books to all of the
4 schools. I was on the truck that distributed them.
5 And the teachers refused to use them, all of them.

6 The teachers still refuse to teach
7 African history. And please differentiate between
8 Songhai history and African-American history, which
9 is just a parade of personalities.

10 African-American history is just a
11 parade of personalities: Marian Anderson, Booker
12 T. Washington. That doesn't do anything, not a
13 thing. You've got to go back to the continent from
14 which the children's ancestors came.

15 (Applause.)

16 DR. ROBINSON: Hornbeck did not say,
17 but he intimated, that the white fear would be that
18 our children would dominate the field of academia,
19 just as we dominate every field where the playing
20 field is level: in basketball, track and field,
21 football and baseball. Where the playing field is
22 level, they were afraid that we would dominate the
23 field of academia.

24 African-Americans are the descendants
25 of those brilliant Africans who built the Pyramids;

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 measured the span of the galaxies; created algebra,
3 geometry, trigonometry and calculus; created
4 scientific medicine; and, even under the bullwhip
5 of this country, invented the electric railway
6 system, the first successful open heart surgery,
7 the camera that takes color photos of the surface
8 of Jupiter, and the thousands of other creations
9 adding to man's quality of life.
10 If for the past 400 years our innately
11 brilliant minds have not been brutally suppressed
12 from flowering, who knows that perhaps the scourge
13 of cancer would have been wiped out by us a long
14 time ago, that heart disease would have been a
15 thing of the past.
16 (Applause.)
17 DR. ROBINSON: Don't even try to use
18 that multicultural gambit. No other culture has
19 had their history demonized as we have had ours.
20 There are no motion pictures of naked Chinese or
21 Jews running around in their Chinese or Jewish
22 jungles, lorded over by a white Tarzan.
23 (Applause.)
24 DR. ROBINSON: All other races can go
25 home and get the histories of the old country from

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 their parents. Our grandparents, when babies, were
3 snatched from the arms of their Songhai parents so
4 that the knowldge could not be passed down to their
5 children about our beautiful homes, two and three
6 stories high, made of polished stone, sitting on
7 tree-lined avenues in Songhai, in the city of
8 Timbuktu in West Africa.

9 I have been making scores of pleas,
10 like I am doing right now, since 1945, before the
11 Board of Education. That's 56 years. I get the
12 same response today that I got for the last 55
13 years: a very nice smile and bowing of the heads,
14 no action. But at least thank you for a polite,
15 but cynical, smile.

16 Please note that the Leeds experiment,
17 with 285 children -- and they said, "Well, why
18 don't you go to William Penn? We'll send you
19 children under court jurisdiction, 300 of them.
20 Can you turn them around in a short period of time,
21 in five weeks?"

22 The scores that you see there today
23 were from outside computers, before and after. At
24 Leeds School the seventh graders had created 385
25 offenses the previous year. When we introduced our

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 African Genesis Program, which is an infusion
3 curriculum, those offenses were lowered.
4 You see the stats there. And it's in
5 the computer at the Board of Education, Department
6 of Assessment and Accountability. Today you can
7 see it.
8 The same thing happened at William
9 Penn High School, when we introduced -- it's
10 nothing adversarial to whites. I think whites are
11 just afraid that we're going to dominate the field
12 of academia, as we've dominated all other fields.
13 Thank you.
14 (Applause.)
15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Madam Chair, one
16 quick question.
17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Wilson Goode,
18 Jr., please.
19 DR. ROBINSON: W. Wilson Goode, Jr,
20 how are you, my brother?
21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm doing great.
22 Let me first welcome my frat brother
23 and one of my heroes, Dr. Robinson, here. I want
24 to just ask one question on the record, because we
25 don't get a chance to do this too often.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 In terms of your recommendations over
3 the years, in a perfect world, would you recommend
4 that African culture be added to the curriculum or
5 African culture be infused --
6 DR. ROBINSON: Infused.
7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: -- infused among
8 the entire curriculum?
9 DR. ROBINSON: Infused.
10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.
11 DR. ROBINSON: To white and black
12 children. We took our video, which was a video
13 showing the beauty, grandeur and sophistication of
14 our African background to a white school district,
15 and the attitude between the whites and the blacks
16 soared beautifully, dramatically. So it's not
17 adversarial to whites.
18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I wanted you to
19 make that point: that you're not recommending it
20 be added, but infused.
21 DR. ROBINSON: Oh, not added, like
22 extracurricular activity, no. Added and infused.
23 And I just want to add this. If you
24 even ask me to do it -- this is not a sales pitch.
25 I'm under contract already. We're training 3,000

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 children in the Dessert Club now in African
3 history.

4 (Applause.)

5 DR. ROBINSON: The Dessert Club takes
6 children to Africa free of charge, Mr. Ramos, every
7 year. The dramatic success of those children in
8 behavior and academic performance is astounding.
9 And we laid all these facts before Hornbeck, laid
10 them all, from his own computer.

11 So there has to be an infusion. And
12 that's what we did at the Leeds School, an infusion
13 type of curriculum. And I don't want to take your
14 time, because I'm seeing those smiles.

15 (Applause.)

16 (Audience participation.)

17 DR. ROBINSON: Excuse me. He asked
18 about pyramids. The pyramids are 47 stories high.
19 Japan tried to duplicate the feat of my fathers.
20 They got it 19 stories and the thing collapsed.
21 America in 1974 tried to duplicate the building of
22 a pyramid with 5,000 blocks of granite. They got
23 it 18 stories and collapsed. We're the only people
24 on the face of the globe who can build a pyramid.

25 Thank you.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 (Applause.)
3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Uncle
4 Ed.
5 Reverend Cortes. After Reverend
6 Cortes, we have Arnold Hall, Gloria Crittendon and
7 Patricia Raymond.
8 We also are joined by Representative
9 Ron Waters and Representative Mark Cohen.
10 Good morning. Please speak into the
11 mike, and remember the time limit.
12 REVEREND L. CORTES: Good morning. My
13 name is Reverend Vulcher. I want to start by
14 saying my name is Reverend Vulcher, as I have been
15 accused of being a vulcher who wants to eat off the
16 carcass of the system.
17 So I think I should start by saying
18 good morning and hello to the Council President,
19 Councilmembers, States Representative Members and
20 Members of the Board of Education.
21 The one thing I do not want to happen
22 in our city is for us to begin accusing each other
23 of being vulchers.
24 I happen to know the President of the
25 School Board, Mr. Ramos, and I happen to know he

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 has suffered greatly through this process. I
3 happen to know that he has been juxtaposed and torn
4 apart by this process.
5 And I think it is unfair for anyone,
6 whether they are for reform, against reform, or for
7 the status quo to try to demonize other people.
8 So I want to begin by saying, this is
9 about our school children, this is about how we
10 will educate our school children, and this is how
11 we need to have a civil conversation so that we can
12 in fact reform a system that, no matter what anyone
13 says, is clearly failing the vast majority of the
14 minority children. And specifically, as I sit here
15 before you, it is a genocide against Latino kids in
16 this city.
17 So I want to begin by saying, and in
18 one sense, having to defend myself because it is
19 politically incorrect to say we need reform.
20 But I want to begin by saying and
21 sharing with you some areas where Hispanic Clergy
22 of Philadelphia and Nueva Esperanza -- how we have
23 worked with the school system for over 20 years.
24 Because we're not johnny-come-latelys. This is not
25 a new conversation. We are behaving as if it's a

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 new conversation for reform.

3 Hispanic Clergy and Nueva Esperanza
4 supported Constance Clayton when she was first
5 elected. We felt that an African-American leader,
6 an African-American woman, would reform a system
7 which was deeply failing minority children. It
8 didn't happen.

9 By the end of her term, we were
10 battling her. We were battling with her because we
11 couldn't even get statistics about dropout rates,
12 because we didn't have a Ph.D. and we were told
13 that only a person with a Ph.D. and an approved
14 dissertation topic could get those statistics.

15 We fought three different School
16 Boards so that we could have a new Edison High
17 School. That war started in the '70s. I moved
18 into the city in the '80s, in 1980. For eight
19 years we fought for a new high school.

20 When we finally got Edison High
21 School, you know what they did? The trophies of
22 Edison High School were moved all the way up into
23 the Northeast. Why? Because those trophies
24 belonged to white kids. They didn't belong to
25 Hispanic kids, even though our school was called

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Edison and the trophies were won by Edison.

3 We fought for Clemente Middle School
4 for about six years. We closed down city streets
5 because we needed a middle school.

6 Why am I saying this? Because now
7 we're going to be juxtaposed. Because we want
8 reform, we are somehow vulchers, we are somehow
9 evil people that don't want to work with the
10 system. That is not true.

11 We supported David Hornbeck, who we
12 felt, as a clergyman and as a reformer and with his
13 ideas for Children Achieving, would have success in
14 this city. The Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia and
15 Nueva Esperanza completely supported him.

16 We joined Rochelle Solomon with the
17 Community Compact. We fought the state for more
18 money. We fought for the setting up of clusters.
19 Unfortunately, we were gerrymandered as Latino
20 communities into three clusters, but that's a
21 conversation for another day.

22 But the David Hornbeck Children
23 Achieving reform system meant that we had hundreds
24 of meetings, in all types of forums, for over eight
25 years. It got us higher dropout rates.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 In the 1980's, Hispanic Clergy of
3 Philadelphia had a tutorial program and we worked
4 with three elementary schools and National Council
5 of La Raza in the Barrio.

6 In the 1980's, because Constance
7 Clayton would not give us information, we put
8 together a group that did a study of Latino middle
9 school dropout rates, which we found to be 22
10 percent. That's 22 percent -- this was back in the
11 '80s -- 22 percent of our kids were dropping out of
12 middle school. To this date, we don't know and
13 cannot figure out how many of our children drop out
14 of middle school.

15 In the 90's, we did a study that led
16 to providing services at three Olney cluster
17 schools. We were working with Dr. Theresa Lemme,
18 who was the head of the Olney cluster. The
19 programs were successful, but the schools were so
20 overcrowded that we had to take the programs out of
21 the school because they needed the rooms we were
22 using at all times.

23 Five years ago, Nueva Esperanza
24 purchased a 150-acre campground outside of the
25 city. We take children who graduate from

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 elementary schools -- Latino and African-American
3 the majority, because that's what's in our
4 neighborhood. We take kids from our neighborhood
5 who graduate -- not through social promotion, but
6 who have actually graduated. We take them for a
7 week retreat, for one week, for the cost of \$25.

8 (Applause.)

9 REVEREND CORTES: We also have hired
10 Latino college students and African-American
11 college students from Philadelphia to serve as
12 their counselors, as role models, so they can see
13 it is in fact possible to make it.

14 The campground has been used freely by
15 Philadelphia public schools in the Olney cluster
16 for their science projects. They drive the kids
17 out there.

18 For four years we've done an
19 abstinence program at Cayuga Elementary.

20 (Applause.)

21 REVEREND CORTES: Four years ago we
22 started a charter school, the Planning Forward
23 Charter School. We have been open for two years.
24 We have 320 children. We just won a national
25 award, by National Council of La Raza. And people

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 from all over the country come to see how to open a
3 charter school, here to North Philadelphia and the
4 Hispanic community, if you're going to open one
5 that's majority Latino.

6 The anecdotal information: For 14
7 years Nueva Esperanza has done mortgage counseling.
8 The number one hindrance for Latino families to buy
9 a house in North Philadelphia is a Number 9 on
10 their credit report, due to debts that they have
11 taken and not paid back to Temple University and
12 Philadelphia Community College.

13 And you know why that is? They got a
14 high school diploma from a Philadelphia high
15 school, normally Edison or Olney. They go to
16 Temple, they go to Philadelphia Community College,
17 believing that they have a high school diploma.
18 But after a year and a half and \$10,000 of debt,
19 they have to drop out because they can't read.

20 (Applause.)

21 REVEREND CORTES: But then on top of
22 it, on top of the fact that they cannot read, they
23 have to drop out, and now seven years later they
24 come to our office and they can't buy a \$40,000
25 house in North Philly because they have 9's on

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 their credit report because of the debt they have
3 because we failed them when they were in school.
4 (Applause.)
5 (Timer sounds.)
6 REVEREND CORTES: I'm almost done.
7 Nueva Esperanza has created a junior
8 college with Eastern University. And in this
9 junior college this year, one of our students,
10 which we were very proud of and we recruited out of
11 Edison High School and we brought him in -- he was
12 the honor student from Edison High. When we got
13 him into our school, we found out that he cannot
14 read.
15 Local area high schools have got to
16 improve. Our community schools have got to
17 improve.
18 (Applause.)
19 REVEREND CORTES: I am friends with
20 and I know personally just about every political
21 leader that's in this room and everyone who serves
22 on the School Board. It is not about their
23 integrity. This is about our children. It is time
24 for a change.
25 (Applause.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 REVEREND CORTES: I want to end with
3 three statements.
4 There are things we will never know.
5 I don't know how much of my 40 percent Latino male
6 unemployment rate is tied to the failure of our
7 schools. I don't know how many of our Latino
8 children are in jail because of our schools. I
9 don't know how many of our kids are on drugs
10 because of our schools. I will never have the
11 money to pay for the study that will prove it, but
12 I will tell you this: I want reform. We need
13 reform. It's killing us.
14 (Applause.)
15 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Thank you
16 Arnold Hall, Gloria Crittendon and
17 Patricia Raymond.
18 And is Len Rieser here?
19 Please state your name and your
20 organization.
21 PRESIDENT RAMOS: Madam Chairwoman,
22 while our guests settle in, just a point of
23 information while Reverend Cortes is still in the
24 room.
25 Reverend Cortes, and just for the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 record, I'd like to invite you Monday morning to
3 pick up something that I'll refer to as the Policy
4 102 Report, which provides disaggregated data for
5 student achievement over the last five or six
6 years.

7 And if you make the effort to look
8 into that, you will look at the facts about Latino
9 student achievement over the last five or six
10 years, to substitute the anecdotes that you shared
11 with us this morning. In fact, the graduation rate
12 has achieved 10 percent under that Hornbeck program
13 that you spoke about.

14 (Applause.)

15 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: You can
16 start.

17 MR. HALL: Good afternoon.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Instead of
19 reading your whole testimony, could you summarize
20 that for us, please.

21 MR. HALL: I will make the strongest
22 effort, Madam Chair.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Thank you.

24 MR. ARNOLD HALL, JR.: Madam Chairs,
25 members of the Committee and others gathered here

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 today, my name is Arnold Hall, for the record. I'm
3 a parent. And as it happens, I'm President of the
4 Philadelphia Home and School Council.

5 And with me here are two other
6 parents, one a member of our Home and School
7 Council, and another parent of a public school
8 student: Ms. Patricia Raymond, one of the
9 Vice-Presidents of Home and School, and Ms. Gloria
10 Crittendon.

11 I open my remarks, first of all, to
12 give a heartfelt thanks to you. Thank you for
13 giving your time now to hold these hearings that
14 have given an opportunity for many, like myself and
15 the thousands of parents represented by the
16 Philadelphia Home and School Council, to give our
17 voice, concerns and opinions on behalf of our
18 children in the public schools of this city.

19 Organizationally we carry no data base
20 on income levels or class social levels. We keep
21 no record base on the ethnicity or otherwise
22 demographic breakdown of our members, except to
23 note that we do, and must, represent the whole of
24 that which this district in our city is comprised
25 of -- and we do, as we have been doing so, in

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 existence for more than a hundred years.

3 We know that we are a vital part of
4 the life of this city and our children are its
5 future. We seek not to separate nor to segregate
6 them, nor see them relegated to a status that
7 would.

8 Madam Chairs and Members of this
9 Committee, as a parent -- and I speak here now as a
10 parent of children who are and have been students
11 of this Philadelphia School District, the two
12 eldest who are graduates, both from the Martin
13 Luther King High School, and are doing well.

14 The middle son, who attended the
15 Cook-Wissahickon, the Ada Lewis Middle School and
16 then Parkway Northwest Program, has struggled
17 through his life with sickle cell disease. He is
18 currently in the hospital, having undergone an
19 operation again yesterday, which is my reason for
20 apologizing to you for this not having been typed
21 out, et cetera.

22 And now my youngest, who has done
23 wonderfully through the A.B. Day Elementary School
24 and into and through the Ada Lewis Middle School,
25 and is now in his second year at the High School of

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Creative and Performing Arts, suffering primarily
3 in his personal agony that they have no football or
4 otherwise contact sports for athletic competition
5 and development.

6 As a grandparent of several and some
7 who are currently in our schools and as an uncle of
8 quite a few more nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and
9 grand-nephews, I have had enough experience just on
10 a family basis in enough of our schools to have a
11 fair fix on the history, shape and condition, as
12 well as accomplishments and applaudable efforts, as
13 well as obstacles to successes and noted failures
14 there.

15 I have been involved, and
16 continuously, through the whole of these past many
17 years as a volunteer, from early morning until late
18 night and on an overwhelmingly nearly daily basis.

19 I am not alone in that way. Many of
20 our volunteer member parents and friends and many
21 of our home and school associations have done the
22 same. No money, no pay, whether respected or
23 otherwise, just dedicated and committed, and there.
24 Not always in great numbers, but in faithful giving
25 and seeking engagement and support for the best of

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 our children.

3 So I am not about to sit here and be
4 misunderstood as pleading a case of supporting the
5 status quo. We are the first to have known and
6 worked for change, and change is for the better.

7 We have been a part, by some
8 representation, of working to bring changes in
9 meaningful and accountable ways through our
10 advocacy and engagement in the professional
11 development models, on the School Council
12 Development Committees, on the criteria-based
13 Monitoring Teams, or the new School Safety
14 Committee, the Truancy Committee, through presence
15 and representation on the Fiscal Committee, the
16 African-American Joint Studies Committee, Support
17 of the Arts Program Committee, and others
18 pertaining to health, behavior and otherwise.

19 Yes, we have been involved. We have
20 been engaged, but not enough. Yes, we do recognize
21 need for change, and we are determined to continue
22 to work for change.

23 But now to the matter and nature of
24 this proposed change that is before us. We from
25 Philadelphia Home and School Council must say no,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 and we say so because we do possess common sense.
3 We do place a value on common courtesy. We do want
4 our children to understand the value of respect.
5 And we know when we are looking at a pig in a poke.
6 On the matter of courtesy and the
7 value of respect, we know as parents and resident
8 taxpayers and citizens of this Commonwealth that
9 we, along with all the other citizens of this city,
10 were not respected in the manner that this and
11 these lateest actions have come about.
12 Though brought by tactics of
13 unscrupulous and schemed agendas of members of a
14 legislative body to carry the mantle of being
15 legal, we know in this city it was to the
16 disrespect of its citizenship, not the least of
17 which are our children.
18 On the matter of common sense, it
19 takes not a computer scientist to look at a very
20 visible record of nonaachievement and
21 underaachievement of this private, for-profit
22 organization, some of which I shall read, but I'll
23 omit the reading of it for the consensus of time.
24 From here, from the attached documents
25 that I was only able to make copies for the two

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Madam Chairs, for your perusal -- and hopefully I
3 can get copies for the rest of your team today --
4 that this is not a company, nor the company, that I
5 would want to entrust my or other children's
6 educational futures to. They have simply blown it
7 (Applause.)

8 MR. HALL: They have simply and
9 honestly blown it in too many other places. They
10 have been dishonest about achievement gains in too
11 many other places. They have been improperly
12 evasive about the status of their contracts and
13 positions in too many other places. They have been
14 unable to hold to their proposed past proposals and
15 contracted figures in too many other places.

16 This is not to say that they, as with
17 others who have entered the charter school
18 business, may not be able to make a success out of
19 or in a school somewhere. But that is not what we
20 are talking about in this highly unethical report
21 and proposal.

22 We're talking about a city and a
23 system with the lives and educations of over
24 200,000 of our children, the students and overall
25 management of all the employees and other entities

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 and problematic areas of needs and support that
3 this involves.
4 They have never run even as much as a
5 system this size or the size of one of our former
6 clusters.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. HALL: They have never managed
9 anything near the size of our system, maybe never
10 really met with it. They just don't have the
11 capacity. They don't have the experience, and
12 unknown still is where will any real and otherwise
13 meaningful accountability be wrought.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. HALL: And in a timely enough
16 fashion to be effectively helpful for our children
17 that are here now.

18 I believe that we are all deserving of
19 a genuine restart to the conversation and
20 negotiation of a necessary and deserved plan and
21 means of supporting our schools through equitable
22 funding and responsible, as well as respectful,
23 oversight and monitoring in all areas.

24 I believe that as we should teach our
25 children, we the adults should learn first and

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 teach by example --
3 (Applause.)
4 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Mr. Hall,
5 you have one minute.
6 MR. HALL: Thank you.
7 -- that where we have met with sizable
8 impasse brought by the failures in respect and
9 lacking of dignity to the human spirit, we should
10 be willing to come together, acknowledge same, and
11 begin anew in a spirit of truth and expectation of
12 a common and higher ground.
13 We as parents do seek to be involved
14 and engaged for our worthy base of knowledge,
15 experience and God-given responsibility for our
16 children.
17 We, as representatives of the
18 Philadelphia Home and School Council, do say to
19 you, to the Mayor, to the Governor and to the
20 legislative body, that we seek to be meaningfully
21 and wholly involved. That means at the table. And
22 we do pray there will be a table and not just a
23 take-over or a rake-over.
24 (Applause.)
25 MR. HALL: I am closing.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I would refer all of you to the
3 remarks of Mr. Phil Goldsmith, that I have given
4 you copies of and presented to the Board, of
5 November 5, and to the update for Mr. Paul Sokoler
6 of the Philadelphia School Notebook, on the
7 schools, of Edison, as I've given copies of to the
8 two Madam Chairs today.

9 The time is now for a new beginning,
10 not to be held hostage because of past verbage and
11 any other lesser based reasoning. The time is now
12 for the State to give an opportune relook at the
13 empowerment plan that it accepted, after much hard
14 work here. The time is now to give sustained
15 funding, while a relook and serious effort to bring
16 about a more fair and responsive funding formula is
17 arrived at.

18 The time is now to say we do hold dear
19 the children of our Commonwealth, both here and
20 elsewhere, and we do seek the respect and support
21 the families of this city as true members --

22 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Mr. Hall?

23 MR. HALL: Yes, Madam Chair. That
24 closes me. Thank you for this opportunity. And I
25 pledge to you my sincerest and continued support

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 and prayers. May we all pray for peace and prepare
3 a table for our people.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Thank you.

6 MS. PATRICIA J. RAYMOND: Good day,
7 Honorable Members of City Council and distinguished
8 guests. My name is Pat, and I am proud to live in
9 Philadelphia. But I'm really, really tired of all
10 the Philly bashing that is being done by our
11 politicians in Harrisburg.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. RAYMOND: To hear them talk, we in
14 Philadelphia are the scourge of the earth. Well,
15 we're not going to sit back and take it. We need
16 to show these people that we are a force to be
17 reckoned with.

18 I have been a volunteer with the
19 School District since 1987. Since that time I have
20 experienced many so-called changes in the way we do
21 things. And the bottom line is that Philadelphia
22 public schools need changes, need reforms. But at
23 what cost to our children?

24 Why should the schools of Philadelphia
25 be allowed to be operated by a second-rate company

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 that has not proven themselves? Would you leave
3 your children with a second-rate babysitter?

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. RAYMOND: Would you allow your
6 children to play on second-rate playground
7 equipment? Would you feed your babies spoiled
8 food? Is that all that our children are worth?

9 If you abide by our Governor's
10 decision, then the price tag on each child who
11 attends public school is \$12.87 each.

12 Do the math. Edison was given \$2.7
13 million to audit the system that houses
14 approximately 210,000 students. The worst part of
15 this whole scenario is that the State appears to be
16 paying Edison for the burden of handling our
17 children. Is that the message that we really want
18 to give our children?

19 And let's talk about our children.
20 Has history proven that we've really done such a
21 bad job? Why doesn't anybody talk about all the
22 good that goes on in our Philly schools?

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. RAYMOND: We boast many
25 prestigious alumni, with more coming up every day.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Yes, our buildings need repair. Yes, our books and
3 equipment need upgrading. But have you looked
4 around town lately and seen all of the beauty that
5 is Philadelphia and its children?

6 How many business executives and
7 corporate CEOs can boast a public education? How
8 many politicians can boast a public education? You
9 probably would be surprised to find that many more
10 than you thought possible are products of public
11 education.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. RAYMOND: I am proud to be a
14 Philadelphian, and I am proud to be an American.
15 But when we, the very people who are honored with
16 the privilege of raising and educating our
17 children, put a price on their heads and use them
18 as political ploys, I feel like I am living in a
19 very foreign land.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. RAYMOND: Hey, that's a thought.
22 We should put the emphasis on education that many
23 of the Asian countries do. Many people are happy
24 about the decision on our new stadiums. I say
25 shame on Philadelphia for not putting the emphasis

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 on public education that we put on our sports
3 teams.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. RAYMOND: Now let's talk about the
6 "we" who have been a part of this whole educational
7 dilemma. Over the last 14 years, I personally have
8 logged more hours on a yearly basis as a volunteer
9 for my local school and on a city-wide basis than a
10 lot of people do on paying jobs.

11 You multiply that by the thousands of
12 parents, grandparents and more doing the same
13 thing, and you've really got to wonder why none of
14 us were given the opportunity to participate in the
15 decision-making process for the future of our
16 children. Judge Doris Smith thinks we're capable.
17 How about you?

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. RAYMOND: Why should we allow the
20 very entities that have been criticizing and
21 degrading Philadelphia and our schools the ability
22 to "save us"? We in Philadelphia have not been
23 quitters in the past. Why start now?

24 Without raising taxes, I am sure we
25 can come up with a viable solution to our education

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 crisis. It's time we made the State of
3 Pennsylvania pay up or shut up. These political
4 games have got to stop.
5 Thank you.
6 (Applause.)
7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Gloria
8 Crittendon.
9 MS. GLORIA CRITTENDON: Good
10 afternoon. I address you ladies and gentlemen, and
11 I address the good minds that we have left in us
12 because in instances like these there is a very big
13 temptation to hand over our good minds and to be
14 handed back a nub. But even a nub can recognize
15 that something is not right.
16 Deep within us we tremble and we shake
17 with the truth because we know something is not
18 right.
19 Yesterday I had occasion to take my
20 grandson to the emergency room at Chestnut Hill
21 Hospital because he was suffering an asthmatic
22 attack. He's 16 years old, a very big guy, but
23 when you're fighting for your breath, you don't
24 feel very big.
25 His mother had to come up from Center

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 City, but I was the one called. I took him to the
3 emergency room. And he's very capable of answering
4 the questions that they asked him. However, he
5 needed someone in his corner, someone to interpret
6 some of the big words and prejudiced approach of
7 some of the physicians. And we have all been there
8 at times.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. CRITTENDON: The physician was
11 adequate, but he had an arrogance about him. The
12 questions that he asked he did not like the answers
13 to. They were the truth, but he didn't like them.
14 So he tried to undermine what my grandson was
15 saying.

16 I sat there, listened and observed.
17 My presence there helped my grandson because what
18 he was saying was the truth, but the physician kept
19 questioning the truth of it. My presence there
20 helped to restore my grandson's confidence. He
21 didn't expect me to sell him out.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. CRITTENDON: I'm sure many of us
24 at times have been in family situations when we
25 were growing up where our parents, or whoever the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 caregiver was, had to make some serious decisions,
3 serious decisions that caused them to sacrifice at
4 times, to eliminate things at times, and even to
5 consider many different options.

6 One of them they may have been selling
7 out. Selling out was never very seriously
8 considered, but it was one of many options.

9 Even family members, the church
10 community, neighbors, or whoever came to offer
11 their help and assistance, if they came with even a
12 hint of causing the family to sell out, their help
13 was dismissed, rejected, because it would mean that
14 their integrity as a family would be undermined.
15 They would no longer resemble who they were.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. CRITTENDON: I'm caused at this
18 time, in my good mind, to question why someone or
19 some group, if they want to help, has to take you
20 over, which is so close to sounding to me like
21 taking you out.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. CRITTENDON: I'm also reminded in
24 history -- and perhaps if this Edison group comes
25 in to take over, to infuse, that they will take us

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 back to some historical facts.

3 Historically, before slavery came over
4 here, there was a group of people that went over
5 there and caused our brothers to sell us out.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. CRITTENDON: They were told that
8 this would be a good thing for you, and so our
9 ancestors were kind of fooled into kind of selling
10 us out. That's how the slavery ships got over
11 here. Just one aspect of history.

12 Another aspect of history is, a group
13 of new colonists were trying to be taken over by
14 the few who wanted to think, do and control the
15 many: a little thing like taxation without
16 representation, no free trial, little things like
17 that. Those colonists refused to be sold out.
18 Today we are the United States of America.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. CRITTENDON: We have to be careful
21 to use our good minds, to question alliances that
22 are new and questionable because our good minds
23 tell us, uh-oh, watch out. Someone who comes in
24 and promises they will take care of everything for
25 you, it will be okay, we have to question.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Finally, I would like to say:

3 Remember that nonsense, emptiness and trickery
4 spell n-e-t. A net that can be thrown over our
5 heads, entrapping us, and also allowing our
6 children to peer out and say, "Mom, dad, adults,
7 why didn't you do something?" Don't be caught in
8 the net.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: We have
12 been joined by Councilwoman Marian Tasco.

13 Our next testifier is Attorney Len
14 Rieser from the Education Law Center, followed by
15 Bruce Edwards from the Urban Leadership Council.

16 LEN RIESER, ESQUIRE: Good morning --
17 or maybe good afternoon by now. Thank you very
18 much.

19 I represent the Education Law Center,
20 an advocacy group concerned with public education.
21 We have 25 years of experience, at this point,
22 working with families on public school problems.
23 We have worked with some of the families of people
24 here in this room today. We know the Philadelphia
25 schools very well.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I think that one thing that's become
3 very clear to me, through the six or so hours of
4 this hearing that I've sat through, has to do with
5 who is involved in the process of getting us to the
6 point where we are talking about a State takeover
7 and privatization of the entire management of the
8 District, not just a few schools.

9 None of us, so far as I can tell --
10 that is to say, I know the unions weren't involved.
11 I know that the State Department of Education
12 didn't contact Arnold Hall. I don't think the
13 legislators who voted for the takeover contacted
14 the various other organizations that have spoken
15 here today. I know that the Governor certainly
16 didn't contact us, nor did any of the consultants
17 working for him.

18 And there comes a point where you
19 wonder how a plan can be developed in a way that
20 misses the input of all of us who have been working
21 hard to improve the Philadelphia schools.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. RIESER: Our view is that a plan
24 that's developed that way does not have a chance of
25 success.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Edison is right about some things. I
3 don't think any of us here were surprised to learn
4 after that expensive study that the District needs
5 better management, greater accountability, enhanced
6 professional development and so forth.

7 The problem, as we knew long before
8 Edison told us, is that we could only do so much
9 about those things if we do not make a sustained
10 investment in our school system.

11 Investment means obtaining enough
12 resources. It also means using those resources to
13 carry out a plan that we stick to for a sustained
14 period of time, instead of engaging in political
15 attack and counterattack and a game of throwing the
16 bums out every chance we get and substituting
17 something else.

18 We disagree with Edison that our
19 schools need all new management or a drastic shift
20 to private operation. What our District needs,
21 instead, is the resources that would enable it to
22 improve, committed leadership on the part of the
23 City, the District, school employees, the
24 community, a plan to which leaders would be held
25 accountable, and then some measure of

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 depolitization, peace and quiet. The job cannot be
3 done any other way.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. RIESER: We see no reason to
6 believe that any of these things will be
7 accomplished by means of a State takeover or the
8 breaking up of the District or a massive shift to
9 for-profit management. These are, to us, at best,
10 diversions and, at worse, another dangerous
11 deferral of our dreams for Philadelphia kids.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. RIESER: Finally, Mr. Merlino
14 spoke well to the State funding issue, and I want
15 to make a point that so far I've only heard him
16 make in this chamber.

17 Philadelphia's leaders, in our view,
18 have got to recognize that our funding problem will
19 not be solved through a Philadelphia-only approach,
20 whether it's through negotiations or a hostile
21 takeover.

22 I heard this first from Representative
23 Kathy Manderino I don't know how many years ago.
24 She was right. It will not happen. And we don't
25 understand why anyone in the Administration or

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 anywhere in Philadelphia has ever supposed it
3 could.

4 The fact is that we need to find a
5 solution. The only solution we can find will be
6 one that works for all of the poor districts in
7 this Commonwealth. We need to join forces with
8 other poor rural and urban districts -- and there
9 are plenty of them -- that are working right now to
10 get our legislature to enact a new equitable
11 statewide funding system.

12 If that sounds idealistic, consider
13 this: Legislators all over the state, including
14 many rural Republicans, are making statements and
15 introducing bills that would move us to a system
16 that would provide more money for public education
17 and that would also more fairly distribute that
18 money. They need our support.

19 By mid February, a bipartisan
20 legislative committee, the Select Committee on
21 Public Education Funding, will offer
22 recommendations for a new funding system based on
23 nine principles. I'll spare you seven of them, but
24 I'm going to mention two.

25 The first is that funding for all

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 schools should reflect those of the state's most
3 successful schools.
4 (Applause.)
5 MR. RIESER: The second is that State
6 Government should "pay the substantial majority" --
7 and I'm quoting here -- "of the total cost of
8 public education."
9 (Applause.)
10 MR. RIESER: These are serious
11 proposals. There are actual models on the table.
12 And this is, in our view, the only real answer for
13 Philadelphia or for any of the state's many poor
14 districts. And it has nothing at all to do with
15 takeovers, privatization or any of the supposed
16 remedies being urged on us.
17 I ask that this Council, which has led
18 the way in inviting, finally, some public input
19 into these issues, insist that our local leaders,
20 State Representatives and our Governor join with
21 those such as, just to name a couple,
22 Representatives Nicholas Micozzie and Mario Civera,
23 both Republicans from Delaware County, who are
24 working this fall on proposals for statewide
25 funding reform.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Let's work on that. Let's insist that
3 that effort be made before we talk about State
4 control, privatization and so forth.

5 If the Governor and our other leaders
6 would put their energy now into funding reforms
7 that could muster statewide support, rather than a
8 drastic, untried "fix" -- and I put that in quotes --
9 that divests Philadelphians of control and makes us
10 part of a huge for-profit experiment, our children
11 truly would have something to be hopeful about.

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 REVEREND EDWARDS: Good morning.

15 First of all, let me say that I will be very brief.
16 I know that often preachers are considered
17 long-winded, but I will be very brief.

18 There is a written statement. Pardon
19 it not being stapled. It's two pages, very brief.
20 I'm here today on behalf of a 33-year-old
21 organization.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me,
23 Reverend. Will you identify yourself for the
24 record, please.

25 REVEREND BRUCE M. EDWARDS: My name is

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Reverend Bruce M. Edwards, and I am the proud
3 President of the Urban Leadership Council.

4 The Urban Leadership Council is an
5 organization that comprises some 200
6 community-based organizations throughout the city
7 and in some of the suburban areas.

8 The Council has existed since 1967.

9 And many of our groups deal with day care and
10 after-school programs and mentoring initiatives,
11 along with many other things that they do on meager
12 resources.

13 And so I come here today to add our
14 voice to that of Dr. Bivins and the NAACP and many
15 others to categorically say that we denounce the
16 Governor's plan and we urge a repititioning to the
17 courts for proper redress in the matter of taking
18 over this city's public school system.

19 Very specifically, because we do have
20 some knowledge here, we're outraged. We are angry
21 at the manner in which the Edison Company was
22 selected to do a study of this city's School
23 District in the first place.

24 There was no competitive bidding and
25 now, with no competitive bidding, Edison is poised

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 to become the management agency for the entire
3 school system.

4 It is nearly unbelievable that this
5 government spent \$2.7 million of taxpayers' money
6 to study a system that had no shortage of studies
7 in the first place.

8 (Applause.)

9 REVEREND EDWARDS: \$2.7 million, with
10 no new recommendations for improvement and no new
11 considerations for how we can move forward.

12 You know, it's really sad. It's
13 almost shameful, because prior to the election of
14 our current Mayor, John Street, I sat in a meeting
15 that he called as President of the City Council --
16 he called it an Education Summit. The best minds
17 in the city were called together to find out what
18 we were going to do about public education.

19 And here we now have our Mayor taking
20 up shop at 21st and the Parkway, as if he never had
21 a meeting in the first place.

22 (Applause.)

23 REVEREND EDWARDS: It is shameful. It
24 is disrespectful. It is, as a preacher, I must
25 say, ungodly. This state's historically poor

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 funding of the school system is not the only
3 problem, though, that we all know that we have.
4 It's been said over and over again
5 here -- I stayed here until 8:30 the other night.
6 If I had known you all were going to end at 9
7 o'clock, I would have stayed until 9:00. I was
8 trying to hang with Dr. Bivins, but my legs --
9 which are not quite as old as hers -- gave way on
10 me and I had to go.

11 But you know, when I go throughout the
12 neighborhoods and deal with our groups and I look
13 at the crumbling buildings and know about the
14 disciplinary problems and the inadequate tools and
15 the underpaid teachers and the lack of staff
16 support, all of that is what makes us get to the
17 point where we find ourselves today.

18 The public school system is simply
19 that. It's a public system. It is about the
20 general public's welfare and the functioning of the
21 public.

22 (Applause.)

23 REVEREND EDWARDS: What we have
24 discovered is that the back-door dealing and
25 political payoffs that have led us to this point

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 are additional indicators as to how we find
3 ourselves in this room today.

4 (Applause.)

5 REVEREND EDWARDS: You know, many of
6 our member groups, we went to these schools. I am
7 a graduate of Mastbaum Vocational Area Technical
8 High School, as they called it. I graduated there
9 in 1968.

10 I called that school the other day.
11 We were trying to get a book done, and I called the
12 school to see whether they could maybe take on our
13 book as a project, as an educational mentoring kind
14 of a project, and they told me they didn't have
15 that going on there anymore.

16 When I went to Mastbaum, I was a
17 member of the marching band. I asked them about
18 that. They said they didn't have music at Mastbaum
19 anymore.

20 Well, the question then is, what do we
21 have in our schools right now?

22 (Applause.)

23 REVEREND EDWARDS: I was here. I was
24 impressed with the 13 Edison people who stood
25 before you and gave their pedigrees.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 And I was really impressed with our
3 legislative officials. And I'm so proud of you.
4 We sometimes have some disagreements, but I've been
5 saying it since your hearing how proud I was just
6 to be in the room and see you stand and state your
7 case strongly and truthfully. It's a proud moment
8 for those of us who you lead.

9 And I will report that back to our
10 groups, just how proud I am of Donna Miller, LeAnna
11 Washington, and the rest of you, for allowing at
12 last the public's voice to be heard on this issue.

13 (Applause.)

14 REVEREND EDWARDS: Finally, I will
15 conclude, but I have just three questions. I
16 thought that the Honorable Councilman Wilson Goode
17 and the Congressman Chaka Fattah asked some
18 questions that were most pertinent. And what
19 really amazed me was -- and it saddened me too --
20 we paid \$2.7 million for 13 people who couldn't
21 answer a question.

22 Well, I just want to throw a couple
23 more at them: What are or what were, what were and
24 what are, the basic terms of the initial contract
25 agreement between Edison and those who they

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 contracted with? I imagine, the Governor or the
3 former Governor of our state.

4 Have you seen the contract? Has the
5 public seen the contract? Who are the
6 subcontractors? In short what I'm asking is, who
7 got paid?

8 (Applause.)

9 REVEREND EDWARDS: My next-to-the-last
10 question and I'll be gone. I get revved up, I'll
11 start preaching.

12 (Laughter.)

13 REVEREND EDWARDS: Until now -- and
14 again, I said we're grateful. But until now, why
15 has it taken us this long and we had to get to this
16 point before there's been any public input, any
17 grass-roots involvement, in this process? Why is
18 it always a top-down strategy as opposed to a
19 bottom-up strategy?

20 (Applause.)

21 REVEREND EDWARDS: You know, the
22 Scripture teaches me that we raise up children, we
23 don't squash them down. Raise them up and they
24 will go in the right direction, so says the Bible.

25 Finally, who really stands to gain

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 from all of this, the children of the city or those
3 who see an opportunity to advance themselves --
4 (Applause.)
5 REVEREND EDWARDS: -- those who either
6 seek political power or those who seek to fatten
7 and secure themselves financially?
8 Thank you very much.
9 (Applause.)
10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Sam Cook, Local
11 634. And after Sam Cook we have Louise Bovell, a
12 concerned citizen.
13 And we want to recognize that we have
14 been joined by State Representative John Myers.
15 (Applause.)
16 MR. SAM COOK: Good afternoon. First
17 I want to thank Council President Verna and
18 Education Chair Miller, all the members of Council
19 that are present and other elected officials.
20 When I walked in the Council at 10:00
21 a.m., I looked around and thought this is a healthy
22 group. Nobody here looks hungry. I thought they
23 all looked like they had a good breakfast and are
24 prepared to go about their business and hopefully
25 have a successful day.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 My name is Sam Cook. I am the Trustee
3 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union
4 International. I'm here to speak on behalf of our
5 over 2100 School District employees who are
6 represented by the School Cafeteria Local 634.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. COOK: On a regular day, a school
9 day, 10:00 a.m. would be an important time for
10 almost every one of our members. Just as today's
11 10:00 a.m. is important to all of us as we sit
12 here, well fed and prepared for a successful day,
13 it is also an important hour for the kids.

14 For many people the term "cafeteria
15 worker" conjures up the image of some nice old lady
16 standing before them in a uniform, head covered
17 with a hair net, handing out a carton of milk or
18 juice to a long line of kids pushing trays across
19 the food assembly line. And once that mental image
20 evaporates, they never give the job or the
21 responsibility another thought.

22 Maybe it's a good thing we do our job.
23 It gets done well. Because it gets done well, it
24 becomes a routine that you can count on and soon
25 give little thought or notice to. It's like the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 morning paper showing up at your door in the
3 winter. Because it's there, you don't give a
4 second thought about the time and trouble and
5 effort of how the paper got there. It's just
6 there.

7 At 10:00 a.m., breakfast in the
8 schools would be over and the seamless preparation
9 for lunch would be well underway. We serve some
10 form of breakfast in 90 percent of our city
11 schools. Our members are the first staffperson
12 many kids see each day. For most of the kids this
13 is the first nourishment they receive that day.

14 At 10:00 a.m., the food service
15 personnel who showed up for the day at 7:30 a.m.
16 are getting their first breather. And they are
17 greeting their colleagues, the noontime aides who
18 are just arriving to assist with providing lunch.

19 We do lunch. Every school in the
20 system gets lunch, including the satellite schools.
21 All kids get lunch. Some pay. We handle payment.
22 Some free. We match a face with a written list of
23 300 or 400 or more. Some subsidized. We check
24 them off a written list too. But they all get it,
25 just like the newspaper:

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 The noontime aides first report for
3 the school's recess period. They're the ones
4 responsible for the kids' security during recess.
5 Then leading up to and immediately following lunch,
6 they are responsible for overseeing the kids in the
7 hallways. And as you'd expect, noontime aides are
8 responsible for safety, security and order in the
9 cafeteria during lunch.

10 By 10:00 a.m., our utility workers
11 have unloaded the delivery trucks. They have
12 stowed and stored the cases of milk, juice, water
13 and cereal. By 10:00 a.m., they have provided
14 their supervisor with food and supply orders for
15 the next few days.

16 They've finished the first round of
17 kitchen cleaning and are busy refitting steam
18 tables, reloading utensils, trays, napkin
19 dispensers, and the like, to prepare for lunch.

20 And on a good day, maybe by 10:00
21 a.m., one of the women -- and 90 percent of our
22 members are women -- has been to the union medical
23 center for care and actually found an OB/GYN
24 available to treat or examine her. That wouldn't
25 just be a good day. That would be a rare day.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 She'd be back in time to clear tables,
3 to stop fights, to wipe noses before the second
4 lunch serving we do at many schools.

5 Or maybe because there was no doctor,
6 she'd take a few moments, as so many of our members
7 do, to pick up supplies to decorate the cafeteria,
8 to make the setting more pleasant and enjoyable for
9 the kids. And decorations for Halloween, for
10 Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanza don't
11 come out of the School District budget. The cost
12 comes out of our members' pockets.

13 Or maybe because there was no doctor,
14 she would have time to stop at the bank to deposit
15 her biweekly portion of her \$7,000 a year salary.

16 By 2 o'clock, the noontime aide is
17 headed home. So are most of our members. They are
18 all part-time employees. They are 90 percent
19 women, predominantly African-American, about 13
20 percent Hispanic, and they are long-term employees.

21 Our members work on an average 20
22 hours a week. They start at \$7.71 an hour. A
23 utility worker, the heavy lifting, heavy-duty guy,
24 can make up to \$10.95 an hour. They make from
25 \$7,000 to \$19,000 a year.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Food service personnel get District
3 health care, but noontime aides only get the
4 union's limited health care coverage. They can
5 come to the Hotel and Restaurant Employees medical
6 facility and see a doctor, if one is available.
7 They get no hospitalization coverage. All members
8 get some form of dental, prescription and vision
9 provided for by the union, and it's limited too.
10 That's what they get.

11 On the other side of the coin, the
12 kids get one, more often two, healthy, nutritious
13 meals that allow their heads to focus on learning,
14 not their stomachs on yearning. They get to see a
15 face they recognize, a face they are comfortable
16 with. They get protection and security. They get
17 a helping hand with the runny nose and the bloody
18 nose. And we do this in the summer too.

19 The Edison Report says that Edison can
20 get the school system out of its financial fix by
21 reducing costs and increasing revenues. All of our
22 members live here. Their kids and their
23 grandchildren go to the public schools. They can
24 neither afford reductions as employees nor tax
25 increases as parents and guardians.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 The Edison way won't work for our
3 members. There's no more blood in our stone. I
4 implore you, on behalf of the kids and our members,
5 to consider alternatives. For our members, your
6 long-term employees, there are few alternatives for
7 employment. They have demonstrated their
8 dedication.
9 Please reward them with a
10 demonstration of appreciation to the people who
11 care about the kids more than their personal
12 profit. You owe it to them.
13 On their behalf, thank you.
14 (Applause.)
15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Is Louise Bovell
16 here?
17 (No response.)
18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Ali Kromley. Is
19 Ali Kromley here?
20 (No response.)
21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Lois Fernandez
22 and Laura Garrett.
23 After Lois we have Lee Talbert. Is he
24 here?
25 (No response.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: After Lee
3 Talbert we have Dr. Tom Gill.
4 MS. LOIS FERNANDEZ: Good afternoon.
5 In a sense, I am honored that you're having this
6 hearing, but I'm dismayed.
7 My name is Lois Fernandez, Co-Founder
8 and President of Odunde.
9 (Applause.)
10 MS. FERNANDEZ: I hope I don't get too
11 emotional. My sister just told me, "Don't." But
12 you know, it's been a long struggle. I'm 65 years
13 of age.
14 In 1968 the Kearney Report said that
15 we are moving towards two separate and unequal
16 societies. Here we are. They have the nerve to
17 tell us that they want to -- that is, I believe,
18 the Edison people -- they want to split this
19 system.
20 I support public schools. I'm a
21 product of public schools and so are my children.
22 And I'm not dumb, neither are my children, and many
23 of us sitting here.
24 The Kearney Report said we're moving
25 towards two separate and unequal societies. Is it

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 worth splitting the School Board for the 60 schools
3 they're going to take over? But the other schools
4 are going to remain in the system.
5 Am I in error about this? Didn't they
6 say that the language schools, the Northeast,
7 untouched? Separate and unequal. I make no qualms
8 about that.
9 (Applause.)
10 MS. FERNANDEZ: We're talking about
11 racism. It's white and black. All right? We
12 cannot allow them to split this system you all are
13 in. Stand up, goddamit, and fight them.
14 (Applause.)
15 MS. FERNANDEZ: I'm angry. The fight
16 has been long. I took my daughter to fight the
17 School District in 1980. She was six, seven years
18 old. We were on the picket line because the
19 teachers were on strike. We picketed in the 60's.
20 You all remember. And I said, here I am again.
21 You know? And I'm saying, we're in trouble.
22 We can't allow nobody to take away
23 public education because that's the end for us.
24 (Applause.)
25 MS. FERNANDEZ: We play into it.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 We've been bamboozled. We've been took. We've
3 been had. We cannot buy into it.
4 Our schools are in trouble. That's no
5 secret. Hornbeck came back down to our schools,
6 and I was there at Audenreid when he said we need
7 to Keystone Audenreid and Olney because they were
8 in trouble. This is about five, six years ago.
9 But Keystone died. He saw it. The problem is
10 nothing new.
11 The violence and all the disruption
12 that's going on in our schools must be stopped.
13 (Applause.)
14 MS. FERNANDEZ: We must use the
15 holistic approach. Our children are in trouble,
16 and so are our teachers. They cannot teach when
17 there's violence going on in the schoolyard and in
18 the classroom.
19 (Applause.)
20 MS. FERNANDEZ: So I say to you, get
21 serious; don't bullshit. Let's talk about the real
22 deal. If we're going to correct this problem,
23 let's look at it straight up front. Support public
24 schools.
25 There is a remedy. We don't have to

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 reinvent the wheel. There are successful schools.
3 There's Masterman, there's Central. What are we
4 talking about? There's private schools that are
5 successful. The remedies are there. We must adopt
6 them. But we must give support to our teachers, to
7 the principals. Parents must take responsibility.
8 (Applause.)
9 MS. FERNANDEZ: We must line up. We
10 community groups, we have to go into those schools.
11 Don't go past them. Go in and see what teachers
12 are faced with. Spend a day, spend an hour, go
13 into our schools. It's sad. I will not let no
14 young person go for me, because us ought to know
15 they ain't thinking that damn fast.
16 (Applause.)
17 MS. FERNANDEZ: But we cannot go on
18 emotions. We cannot go under rhetoric. We must
19 get down to business.
20 So I say to you, those of you from the
21 State Representatives, Council, get serious. We've
22 been to the School Board many years ago. You all
23 remember. I got thrown out.
24 The thing is, let's make a commitment
25 to our children. Make a commitment to public

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 schools. We cannot let the Governor take over.
3 Oh, no. We're in trouble. Because again it
4 becomes separate and unequal. We allow ourselves
5 to be bamboozled in, but we cannot allow that.
6 And so I say to you, as a citizen who
7 cares about public schools, do something. Give the
8 remedy. Ask the Mayor for his plan. I have not
9 seen it. I support public schools, but give me a
10 plan. Don't tell me just to support you without a
11 plan.
12 And I say to you, Pedro, I support
13 you, but give me a plan for success for our
14 children.
15 (Applause.)
16 MS. FERNANDEZ: I yield to my sister,
17 a teacher in the School District for over 30 years.
18 (Applause.)
19 MS. GARRETT: I listened to a former
20 speaker, and he asked for the characteristics that
21 I believe I have always exhibited --
22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me,
23 please identify yourself.
24 MS. LAURA FERNANDEZ GARRETT: I'm
25 Laura Fernandez Garrett. I'm a teacher, I'm a

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 Coordinator at Barratt Middle School, 16th and
3 Wharton.

4 I am a dedicated teacher. I'm well
5 educated. I have self-esteem and, most
6 importantly, I have high expectations -- have had
7 them, have them today and will always have them --
8 for my students.

9 I teach so that my students can go
10 anywhere. And if I give them an A, they will show
11 an A in California, in Massachusetts, in Texas.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. GARRETT: Let me spin a yarn to
14 you. Five years ago I was demonized because I
15 refused to lie. I failed 94 percent -- and, Pedro,
16 I know you remember me -- 94 percent of my students
17 because they could not read.

18 I went to the Board and testified.
19 The Board came back to me and told me I needed to
20 be remediated. My former students, some of whom
21 are doctors, engineers, lawyers, wrote and said,
22 "You don't need to remediate Mrs. Garrett. You
23 need to replicate Mrs. Garrett."

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. GARRETT: If I have one skill that

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 God has given me, it's the ability to teach. I can
3 teach anyone, as long as they have two things:
4 they're sane and they sit still long enough.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. GARRETT: The students that came
7 to me six years ago, and continue, are so low when
8 they get me -- I'm not God. I never said that. I
9 can teach, without a doubt. They were so low, I
10 took them where I could take them, but they still
11 were not passing. Was this upsetting to me? You
12 better believe it. But I refuse to lie.

13 You know how many teachers came to me,
14 even on my way out of the Board, and said to me,
15 "You have guts, because I couldn't do it in my
16 school because my principal would not allow it."

17 Five years ago I did this. I was in
18 the front of the newspaper. Every major media was
19 in the yard at Barratt waiting for me to come down.
20 The only other time any media was in that yard was
21 when we had the rape, the first rape in the United
22 States.

23 And I continue to work at Barratt.
24 Why? Because I'm needed at Barratt. We have
25 dedicated teachers. Am I the only teacher that has

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 dedication? No. There are many teachers all over
3 this city. There are many at Barratt exactly like
4 me. Has anybody asked me?

5 And I saw the handwriting on the wall
6 five years ago. You know, here comes Edison, here
7 comes the President of the United States, here
8 comes the Governor. I knew it then. I could have
9 told you then what the remedies were. Nobody asked
10 me. They wanted to have me remediated.

11 What gave me the temerity, the
12 audacity, the guts to say my students are failing?
13 Because it was the truth. And it's time somebody
14 stood up and had the guts to say it.

15 Is there an action plan for our
16 system? Hornbeck may have had a plan, but he was
17 cut out when he had the guts, the temerity, to say
18 black children in this system were being
19 shortchanged by the State.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. GARRETT: Now the State comes and
22 says they can do the job. Can they do the job for
23 212,000 students? Absolutely not. Take it from
24 me. Can Edison do it? No.

25 Let me ask you a question. Has CEP

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 done it for our disruptive kids? The answer is no.
3 What's the answer? Has anyone really asked the
4 people who know, the educators who are on the front
5 line every day? No.
6 Can I give them -- hey, look, I can
7 run this system. I know what the hardships are. I
8 know what teachers go through every day. No. Part
9 of the answer is, educators need to be asked. We
10 are educated. You know?
11 (Applause.)
12 MS. GARRETT: Parents need to be given
13 the responsibility, a charge, for their children,
14 and their children behave.
15 (Applause.)
16 MS. GARRETT: Finally, the community,
17 both that which is verbal and that which is sitting
18 in the corner hoping to God that if this system is
19 taken over -- they're the silent majority. They
20 need to bone up. They need to come out of the
21 closet. They need to be held accountable. Because
22 our system is predominantly black.
23 Because our system is predominantly
24 black, that doesn't mean that our system is
25 inferior. No. What is inferior is the fact that

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 we don't have all of the things that we need.
3 At my school right now we need science
4 books, we need other books. Our books are old.
5 Our computers are not working. Anybody in there
6 asking us? No. They're paying \$2.7 million for
7 somebody to come and give you 9.5 pounds of paper,
8 and I could have told them in five days. Tell me
9 what's wrong.
10 (Standing ovation.)
11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you for
12 your testimony.
13 An announcement. We've also been
14 joined by State Representative Jewel Williams.
15 I'm not sure whether Lee Talbert was
16 here.
17 (No response.)
18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Dr. Tom
19 Gill.
20 (Applause.)
21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: After Dr. Gill,
22 Ceatrice Beard. You're after Dr. Gill.
23 DR. TOM GILL: My name is Tom Gill. I
24 am a Professor in the Department of Literacy at
25 West Chester University. I'm also proud to say

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 that I work with community groups that have worked
3 so hard in Southwest Philadelphia in literacy, such
4 as Healthy Family/Healthy Life and other groups.

5 I want to thank City Council, the
6 Black Caucus and other representatives in the
7 School Board for allowing me to speak today. I
8 would like to address the all-important issue of
9 the Philadelphia School District's reading program
10 and reading achievement in relation to Edison's
11 report and its recommendations.

12 I have been a classroom teacher of
13 English and reading and a reading professor for
14 over 30 years. For the bulk of my career, I
15 directed a field-based reading program for the
16 University of Virginia, a leader in reading
17 research and practice.

18 It became apparent to me, as it has to
19 the reading field at large, that we have come to
20 understand the process of learning to read and its
21 instruction sufficiently so that if certain proven
22 principles were applied all children could become
23 fully literate.

24 These principles are those which are
25 followed in successful suburban schools every day,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 but have never been applied fully or effectively in
3 inner-city schools.
4 These principles are, first, that
5 children must do copious amounts of reading in
6 order to become fully literate.
7 Second, that the materials a child is
8 given to read must be a level of difficulty in
9 accord with his or her present level of literacy:
10 not too easy, not too hard.
11 Third, that phonics and spelling
12 instruction is necessary but, like reading, must be
13 in accord with each child's current knowledge of
14 how letters work in words.
15 Fourth, that children must receive
16 guidance from a knowledgeable teacher while reading
17 and writing in small groups.
18 Fifth, that reading progresses in a
19 common systemic and developmental way for all
20 children, but that children proceed at varying
21 rates, not according to race or socioeconomic
22 factors, but depending upon individual propensities
23 and the degree to which the materials and
24 instruction are of a goodness of fit with their
25 current literacy levels.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 And sixth, that a good instructional
3 program provides a balance of reading, writing,
4 phonics and being read to.

5 Now, this is known. This is known to
6 be true. The question is, why haven't these
7 principles been applied in all school districts?

8 Across America, at any one grade,
9 approximately half the students read and spell at
10 grade level or above, while one half reads and
11 spells below grade level. That all traditionally
12 have been taught at grade level has resulted in
13 approximately half of all adult Americans today
14 being functionally illiterate.

15 In most suburban schools, about 75
16 percent of the students read at grade level or
17 above, while 25 percent read below grade level.
18 Therefore, if grade-level instruction is provided,
19 the vast majority of students, given suburbia's
20 small class size and credentialed teachers and
21 aides, have their literacy needs met and score well
22 year after year.

23 However, in most urban schools,
24 particularly those serving the inner cities, and in
25 many rural schools, only about 25 percent of the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 students read at grade level or above, while about
3 75 percent read below grade level and fall further
4 behind the grade-level goal each year.

5 The reason for this is simple:

6 Suburban children tend to be raised in
7 literacy-privileged households where they are read
8 to and given direct experience with print for over
9 1500 hours before ever stepping foot in
10 kindergarten, while children from
11 literacy-impooverished homes enter kindergarten
12 having been read to less than 50 hours.

13 Since the American reading curriculum
14 has evolved to fit well the literacy privileged,
15 instruction is on their current level and they
16 progress well. However, literacy-impooverished
17 children enter the same curriculum without the
18 prerequisite knowledge literally years behind.

19 Now, before we do what most do, which
20 is we blame parents or take false pride in reading
21 to our own children, we need to remember that it
22 was less than 150 years ago when in much of this
23 country it was against the law to teach
24 African-Americans to read. You reap what you sow.

25 And it is only relatively recently

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 that all children of the working class, black and
3 white, attended school en masse. Their parents
4 couldn't possibly read to them. And when these
5 children came to school behind, they failed and
6 were labeled slow learners and their parents as
7 uncaring.

8 These children, in turn, could not
9 make progress through school, as they were
10 continuously given reading materials at their
11 frustration, rather than their instructional,
12 levels. And the cycle continued, and continues,
13 from generation to generation.

14 In the reading field, we call this the
15 Matthew Effect, from the Biblical Matthew, as the
16 rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

17 Six years ago, I joined the faculty of
18 a public instruction, West Chester University,
19 rooted in teacher education, with a program focused
20 on inner-city literacy. I knew from study and
21 direct experience that if the proven principles of
22 literacy learning and instruction were applied that
23 inner-city children could become as literate as
24 their suburban peers.

25 The School District of Philadelphia

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 had newly established what they call the Balanced
3 Literacy Framework for its elementary schools.
4 This framework was, and is, based on the proven
5 principles of literacy learning and instruction.
6 In my six years here, we have
7 established an on-site masters in reading for
8 teachers in Catharine and Longstreth Schools in
9 Southwest Philadelphia, schools which serve some of
10 the lowest-income families in the city. There West
11 Chester professors not only hold graduate classes
12 after school, but we work with the teachers in
13 their classrooms each day.
14 We also use these schools and our
15 masters program teachers' classrooms as a training
16 ground for our undergraduates who wish to become
17 city teachers.
18 We have kept careful track of the
19 progress of the school children in these
20 classrooms. The hoped-for progress in reading in
21 suburban schools, given everything they have, is a
22 year per year. At Catharine and Longstreth
23 Schools, in the classrooms we have been working
24 with, the progress of the students has averaged
25 over a year's growth each year.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I have read Edison's report on the
3 status of Philadelphia's schools and, as others
4 have reported here, find many accurate findings and
5 logical recommendations. However, in the area of
6 literacy, I believe their finding to be incorrect
7 and I have grave reservations about their
8 recommendations.

9 , Edison's finding was that the city's
10 schools lacked a uniform reading program. This
11 simply is not true. The Balanced Literacy
12 Framework is a District program. Within this
13 program many different sources of reading material
14 can be used, but there are common, all-important
15 threads.

16 First, each teacher must directly
17 assess all of her pupils four times per year to
18 determine each child's reading and phonics needs.

19 Second, instead of one basal series
20 being adopted and used in accord with grade level,
21 which is the practice that has caused such poor
22 reading achievement in Philadelphia and other urban
23 areas, that the school purchase for each grade a
24 range of reading materials in accord with their
25 pupils' needs and that the teachers level these

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 materials and use the range needed for
3 differentiating instruction in their classrooms so
4 that they can get optimal growth.

5 Third, teachers within their
6 heterogeneous classrooms group children for small
7 group and independent work according to their
8 assessed needs.

9 To pull this off has required, and
10 will require, a great deal of professional
11 development work to give teachers the skills and
12 support they need, as well as the material.

13 However, fitting a wide range of
14 children with appropriate material according to
15 their wide range of needs is not just one way to
16 promote literacy for all. It is the only way.

17 None of us has become literate without
18 this condition being met. It is just obviously far
19 easier to accomplish when the children are on grade
20 level and when the class size is small, as is true
21 in suburban schools.

22 Edison's recommendation is that one of
23 three unnamed reading programs be used universally
24 across the city. It is important to understand
25 that Edison itself has no reading program of its

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 own. And they do not claim, rightfully, expertise
3 in literacy learning and instruction.

4 When a system or school contracts with
5 Edison, the reading program is farmed out to one of
6 three providers. One provider is the Open Court
7 basal reading program.

8 When this is the choice, all children
9 are placed in the grade-level basal and the teacher
10 follows the script in the manual -- exactly the
11 approach which has resulted in such widespread
12 failure in the past and which is in conflict with
13 the basic principles of literacy learning and
14 instruction proven by research and agreed to by
15 authorities in the field.

16 Edison's second option is the Reading
17 Mastery program. I believe they've got that going
18 in Chester. This is a retread of the old DISTAR
19 program, which has been around since the 60's. It
20 is heavily scripted and includes little contextual
21 reading and lots of skill-in-isolation work.

22 The type of skill work it promotes has
23 been widely accepted to be inappropriate, to the
24 extent that for years Title I money was not even
25 allowed to be spent on it.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 Edison's third option, though, Success
3 For All, is a more interesting program. Success
4 For All was created by Dr. Robert Slavin of Johns
5 Hopkins University. Dr. Slavin is a psychologist,
6 not a reading specialist, but he realized the power
7 of placing children in reading material according
8 to their true reading levels, rather than by grade
9 level.

10 However, Success For All itself has
11 serious deficiencies when compared to
12 Philadelphia's Balanced Literacy Framework.

13 To its credit, Success For All
14 requires that the 90-minute daily reading and
15 language arts block class size be reduced to 15
16 pupils. However, to do so, paraprofessionals,
17 aides, librarians, physical education teachers, et
18 cetera, have been required to reach these 90-minute
19 blocks. Therefore, the program has had to depend
20 on a very detailed, scripted manual to provide
21 instructional guidance.

22 It is well documented that only a
23 knowledgeable instructor can produce optimal gains
24 in literacy. If good instruction could be
25 scripted, we would have no need for teacher

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 training and I, for one, would be writing scripts
3 rather than studying and working with current and
4 future teachers in Southwest Philadelphia.

5 If scripts were the best way to go,
6 why aren't suburban teachers using them, instead of
7 their judgment and expertise?

8 For all intents and purposes, Success
9 For All invests nothing in teacher training and
10 professional development. The premise is that the
11 teachers in failing schools cannot learn what is
12 needed to meet their pupils' needs and, therefore,
13 must be given teacher-proof materials.

14 Universally there is no such thing as
15 teacher-proof materials. Our teachers can meet our
16 students' needs if their needs for support are met.

17 Further, to Success For All's credit,
18 it does group children, students, by their
19 instructional reading level and provides reading
20 material at their instructional rather than grade
21 level.

22 However, this is done by what is
23 called the Joplin Plan, wherein children are placed
24 in instructional level groups regardless of their
25 age, a practice with obvious problems.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Further, instruction is accomplished
3 by the teacher teaching to the whole group at once,
4 again a practice believed not nearly as effective
5 as small group instruction.

6 How then does Success For All make the
7 gains which it can demonstrates? It has made them
8 in areas where the past practice has been to place
9 the students in grade level, rather than
10 instructional level, materials.

11 If Philadelphia were still doing that,
12 I would be the first one to say to consider Success
13 For All as an option. But Success For All is a
14 program of last resort. It is a concession when a
15 school district has given up on being able to give
16 its students the same opportunities suburban
17 children have.

18 And my next sentence here I wrote
19 says, "This is not the case in Philadelphia," but
20 to be honest with you, I don't know. Bernard, is
21 it the case in Philadelphia? Do you know what I
22 mean? I don't know. Are we still committed to do
23 that, to do the right thing, to get our children
24 the same quality education as suburban schools
25 have?

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I would welcome the opportunity to
3 compare the progress of the children in a
4 well-developed Balanced Literacy Framework setting
5 with similar children in Success For All.

6 Why, then, hasn't our Balanced
7 Literacy Framework shown results? Well, in fact,
8 it has.

9 First in the slow, very slow, but
10 steady, rise in SAT9 scores and, more importantly
11 and dramatically and accurately, in the more direct
12 and accurate measures of informal reading
13 inventories, running records and spelling
14 assessments in the classrooms that do have
15 instruction in accord with the core literacy
16 learning principles and the Balanced Literacy
17 Framework.

18 Again, I have seen results in literacy
19 growth which far exceed what Edison's report or
20 Slavin's report in Success For All.

21 There are significant problems in
22 showing the immediate and dramatic growth on the
23 SAT9 and PSSA measures that everyone so wants.

24 First, it must be remembered that the
25 Balanced Literacy Framework is relatively new at

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 six years old. In a time of severely restricted
3 funds, which, of course, is the bottom line to all
4 of this, massive professional development efforts,
5 by their nature longitudinal, have had to be
6 implemented and maintained.

7 Second, huge numbers of new and varied
8 books have had to be purchased. For a student, any
9 student, to make a year's progress in reading in a
10 year, that pupil must read with the teacher's
11 guidance at least three stories each week.

12 In addition, the student needs to read
13 three additional stories that week independently,
14 at their independent level, like with the 500 Books
15 Challenge program, as provided materials. That
16 comes to that student to over 200 stories a year.

17 With so many students at so many
18 different levels, the task and the time and the
19 commitment from the highest levels are needed just
20 to procure and organize the materials, and that
21 problem becomes apparent.

22 Third, in addition to the need for
23 time to procure books and provide professional
24 development is the problem of the SAT9 and the PSSA
25 measures themselves.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Again, most of Philadelphia's
3 inner-city school children enter school far below
4 grade level. By third grade, most are two years
5 behind. I have data that shows children making
6 over a year's progress per year. However, both the
7 SAT9 and the PSSA only include grade-level passages
8 when they test.

9 Therefore, if a child is a
10 second-grade reader at the beginning of the fourth
11 grade, but makes a year's progress that fourth
12 grade level, the end of the year measure consisting
13 only of fourth-grade-level passages will show none
14 of this growth.

15 It is a fallacy that this improvement
16 would necessarily move this child's score from,
17 say, below-basic-2 to below-basic-1, or vice versa.
18 When the test is at your frustration level, where
19 your score falls is more due to chance than any
20 improvement you've made towards the goal.

21 We must, and will, retain grade-level
22 achievement as our goal, but we must have true
23 measures of growth so we can judge our instruction
24 and programs in accord with the progress made from
25 fall to spring each year, from where the children

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 started to the end of the year.

3 Fourth, and most importantly, there is
4 a problem of class size. In suburban schools folks
5 expect a year's growth per year when the class size
6 is 17 to 20, not the 30 in our city.

7 (Applause.)

8 DR. GILL: And they have trained
9 aides, plenty of books and a goodness of fit
10 between the level of materials and the true reading
11 levels of the students.

12 I have worked with many teachers and
13 students in your city in traditionally
14 low-performing schools. Your children have the
15 same capacity and eagerness to learn as my
16 grandchild, and no child is smaller or more eager
17 to learn than she is.

18 Your teachers are among the most
19 dedicated with whom I have ever worked. It has
20 truly been moving to work with these brave,
21 courageous people. Your administrators are bright
22 and educated. So much has been invested in the
23 right things. But what I have seen at all levels
24 is good people stretched too thin.

25 The Governor made a very moving

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 statement. He said that we should all treat the
3 children of Philadelphia as if they were our own.
4 Is Edison, then, being given charge of suburban
5 schools? Is Success For All used in affluent
6 areas? No.

7 What is the solution, then?
8 Philadelphia has the right reading
9 program, but needs the time and support and will
10 and plan to actualize its promise. Tired of
11 promises, aren't you, Bernard? For this to happen,
12 make no mistake about it, real reform is needed.

13 We must study carefully and seriously
14 the recommendations of the Edison Report. There
15 are many good suggestions there that can and must
16 be done. However, as impressive and as important
17 as computers and painted schools are, they are not
18 sufficient for what is needed for Philadelphia's
19 children to become literate.

20 Here is what is needed and
21 nonnegotiable and which must be put in place if our
22 children are to become literate.

23 1. The reduction of class size. Not
24 new news, but until it happens --
25 (Applause.)

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 DR. GILL: Until it happens, folks,
3 Edison can't do it successfully and nobody can do
4 it. If Edison can afford Success For All to do
5 this in impoverished school systems, then certainly
6 we can find a way, but only if new money is
7 invested and used properly.

8 2. The full implementation and
9 extended support for embracing the principles of
10 literacy learning and instruction, principles that
11 are currently embodied in Philadelphia's Balanced
12 Literacy Framework. The materials needed can be
13 determined by the formula earlier discussed about
14 how many books a child need to read in a year.

15 Every school should receive the books
16 needed in a timely and equitable basis. In the
17 classrooms where the supported materials have been
18 provided, we get the gains. But there are far too
19 many classrooms and schools where the means to
20 reach these ends have not yet been provided.

21 3. Systematic, ongoing professional
22 development to support the teachers. There are
23 more universities concentrated in and around
24 Philadelphia than any other metropolitan area in
25 the United States. A panel of university and

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 school system representatives could work out
3 coordinated support, which utilizes those many
4 teachers throughout the District who have very
5 successful classrooms.
6 Now, remember, too, with some of the
7 implementation, the Balanced Literacy thing has to
8 be implemented. And I'm working with pockets where
9 I see it implemented. Bernard and the parents, too
10 many parents, don't see it implemented.
11 They're about to give up. These
12 community folks are brave. They care only about
13 one thing, and that's the quality of education for
14 their children, from the Johnson family to
15 Ms. Paine to all these folks. They've let me into
16 their homes. They've let me into their
17 communities. They've had it.
18 Therefore, Number 4 will have to be
19 the most important if we're going to pull this off
20 and base this promise. I know Bernard is sick of
21 me promising things in the future. It will come.
22 We've got the right plan.
23 I was supposed to be on the bus with
24 them Thursday, but then I was asked to come here,
25 to go see -- in Baltimore. See, what they saw was

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 some action, and that's what they want. They want
3 to see some results. They want to see people
4 moving things forward for their kids than obvious.
5 And I will join you all in Washington on Wednesday.

6 (Applause.)

7 DR. GILL: But, Number 4, for this to
8 work, then, most crucial, there have to be included
9 community groups and student representatives, as
10 well as teachers, in the planning at all levels.

11 As part of our program of teacher
12 training in Southwest Philadelphia, future teachers
13 contact the parents of the children they are
14 tutoring. I've been doing this for six years.

15 In six years, not one, not one of my
16 students, has reported that they found a parent who
17 didn't care or one who had given -- or a child who,
18 given appropriate instruction, didn't make growth.

19 As one of my undergraduates said, "No
20 one will ever be able to lie to me about these
21 children and their families again." The parents
22 care. The students care. They are not the
23 problem. The parents and the students are an
24 essential part of the solution.

25 Quickly -- I know I'm out of time.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Yes, you
3 are.

4 DR. GILL: I appreciate it.
5 Call on the Governor to make good on
6 his promise; raise salaries; keep good teachers.
7 I've asked Representative Curry to see if the
8 Legislature could re-enact the thing where, if
9 students become teachers in the city, that then
10 they can have some loan renewal. We need to keep
11 these folks.

12 And to remember that public schools
13 are our most sacred public institution. Our charge
14 is not to make money. Our charge is to spend
15 money, every penny available, on our children's
16 education -- not to be a profit.

17 (Applause.)

18 DR. GILL: And last -- and I hope we
19 can pull this off -- don't be satisfied with any
20 results other than full literacy for all. Don't
21 concede the programs of desperation because folks
22 in power say that they are all we can afford.

23 You represent the underrepresented,
24 those who do not have the coin of the realm to pay
25 for representation for themselves. You must be

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642
2 their true persistent advocates.
3 Thank you.
4 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: Thank you.
5 (Applause.)
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: We're going
3 to try to end these hearings at 2:00, so we're going
4 to be like five minutes and no extensions.

5 Ms. Beard, would state your name?
6 Ceatrice Beard, educator and community advocate.

7 MS. BEARD: Right. I'm Ceatrice Beard,
8 an educator in the Philadelphia School System at
9 Martin Luther King High School. I'm president of
10 the neighborhood organization and a committee person
11 in the 22nd ward.

12 I'm not going to elaborate a lot on what
13 has already been said about Edison's horrific record
14 in so many places in the United States. When I hear
15 presented names like that of Representative Charlie
16 Reingold, the previous mayor David Dinkins, Al
17 Sharpton, and the Acorn Organization of New York
18 object to Edison, I take note. And that's exactly
19 what I did. I researched them for myself. I
20 downloaded about 400 pages from the Internet. Most,
21 at least 83 percent of which, was very negative on
22 Edison. So I'm sure you've heard all the statistics
23 about what they're taking in, how much they owe, and
24 the fact that they're almost going out of business.

25 What I am going to say is that

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 admittedly the system needs improvement. However,
3 Edison is not the entity to perform those
4 all-important tasks.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. BEARD: And I can feel for people
7 who want Edison to come in. I know Carol. I know
8 Bernard. I've work with them. They are serious
9 people. They didn't come out of the woodworks. But
10 what I researched this and I trust my research.
11 From what I've read and heard of Edison, they lack
12 pedagogical expertise which shows a total lack of
13 respect for education of the children of this City.
14 I am a business and technology teacher so I
15 understand the profit margin all too well. And
16 other than being taught in the classroom, there is
17 no education for a profit margin.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. BEARD: As it is, Dwight Evans,
20 Kenny Gamble, Anthony Williams and the Edison
21 Corporation remind me of Ma Barker's boys, only
22 instead of robbing banks and trains, they are here
23 to rob the black children of an education.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. BEARD: I must disagree with Mr.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Merlino and some of the people that I heard coming
3 on Mr. Hornbeck. The previous Mayor Ed Rendell
4 started this ball rolling when he brought Mr.
5 Hornbeck in here. Mr. Hornbeck then created a very
6 volatile situation. Mr. Eugene Hicock who was the
7 Secretary of Education under Mr. Ridge weighed the
8 educational requirements for Mr. Hornbeck. Mr.
9 Hornbeck is an attorney and a preacher; he is not an
10 educator. I looked up Mr. Hornbeck's background,
11 researched him along with the Coalition of Education
12 Advocates, and Mr. Bivens, Dr. Bivens were there,
13 too. We found that he came from a setting where he
14 was likely to do this. When he left Maryland,
15 privatization came in big time. We came to the
16 Board with this. We came to the Board of Education,
17 we told them this. We protested many of the things
18 that he was doing in the school system. No one
19 listened. I interrupted City Council when I was
20 told I could not speak; I took that chance and I
21 spoke anyway and reminded Council when they were
22 about to recess for the Christmas holiday that they
23 should come in the schools and see about the
24 children. I told them things were going on that
25 shouldn't be going on under Mr. Hornbeck. So while

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Mr. Hornbeck preaching racism of the legislators in
3 Harrisburg, he himself was right in there with them.
4 He was a part of it.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. BEARD: I watched this man put Judge
7 Doris Smith's order aside. I watched the Supreme
8 Court Justices of Pennsylvania set that case aside
9 and no one said anything. They set it aside for
10 three years, long enough for Mr. Hornbeck to destroy
11 the system. He made a mockery of Judge Doris Smith
12 in her courtroom. I know because I took off school.
13 A personal day, by the way, Mr. Ramos. I took off
14 school and sat in that courtroom and saw him making
15 a mockery of that judge, pretending he was looking
16 for papers all under the chair, crawling all around
17 on the floor. It was most embarrassment. I don't
18 know how she stood it. And I'm glad it was not me
19 because today I would be a judge in jail because I
20 have paddled him with that mallet. He was most
21 embarrassing.

22 Now, despite my educational expertise,
23 holding a Bachelor of Science in business education,
24 a Master of Science in adult and continuing
25 education, a Master of Education in education

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 administration, and a principal certificate, my
3 pleas have gone unheard. It was a drastic mistake
4 for City Council not to have put this question on
5 the ballot. More people would have come out to vote
6 and you would have seen what people really think of
7 Edison. Even people haven't research it have heard
8 enough to know that they are not the people to solve
9 this problem. Also, we wouldn't have had seven
10 judges out of the Republican and camp. Now look
11 where we are.

12 I do agree that management must change.
13 I see Mr. Hornbeck's practices continuing as much as
14 possible. Judge Doris Smith's order is in place,
15 but it cannot be used in schools with block
16 rostering. And I have that here so you all can
17 understand what this block rostering does to the
18 black schools. It's only in the black schools.
19 They've been really set up.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. BEARD: Hiring and promotion
22 practices continue to be very unfair. Something has
23 to be done. All of these people have to go. They
24 can't seem to shake Mr. Hornbeck. And why is he
25 still hanging around town? You think it's possible

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

he's on Edison board maybe. I'm sure he helped to bring them in here.

Governor Ridge and Governor Schweiker could have given that \$2.7 million to the Philadelphia Public School System. Most of the teachers in the public school system told you this. We already knew this.

To Edison, I would like to know how much you donated to Governor Ridge's campaign. They seem awfully insistent upon getting you in here. And Mr. Ridge seemed very happy to run on out of here to Homeland Security, whatever it was created for him -- I don't care where he went, so long as he stays away from here.

Also, I would like to know who Edison stockholders are. If you have ever had an IPO, and how much in debt you are. What is your exact deficit? I've heard so many numbers, I know that you're in debt, but I would like to know the exact deficit.

To Mr. Cooke and Mr. Doyle, I believe they've both left, Mr. Cooke of Local 634 and Mr. Doyle of Local 1201. I do feel safe in the building now when I come before school starts and after

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 school ends when I stay, I feel very safe in the
2 building. I don't know these people that Edison
3 might bring in. They haven't really given us any
4 plan. I don't know these people that Dwight Evans
5 know and all these people who are for this. I don't
6 trust him, so I can't trust anyone that they might
7 bring in. There's a lot of favoritism going on
8 here.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. BEARD: And lastly -- Representative
12 Curtis Thomas left, but someone spoke about
13 vocational education and Representative Curtis
14 Thomas really tried with that vocational education.
15 In fact, he invited me to Harrisburg and I sat in on
16 those hearings for two or three days listening to
17 who was then the head of vocational education, Moody
18 for the State of Pennsylvania, talk about how all
19 the money was being allotted to suburban school
20 districts. I worked in a suburban school district
21 that was No. 1 in the State of Pennsylvania. No one
22 asked me how to fix this system, because I could
23 tell you.

24 Also, points of interest. The students
25 are feeling this. They're acting out. They are

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 becoming more and more aggressive. This is really
3 affecting them. They see themselves as being up for
4 sale. So this slogan "It's a done deal" that Ridge
5 and Schweiker administration have, "It's a done
6 deal," it's not a done deal. It is not a done deal.
7 It will not be a done deal. And I don't care what
8 Ted Kirsh says about giving teachers more pay. See,
9 these teacher are just waiting. You don't know the
10 number of them that will walk if Edison comes in
11 here. I know many of us in our school have already
12 checked out suburban school districts. I know how
13 many of us have checked out the districts. So
14 they're quiet, but you better take note of that.

15 So Ted Kirsh, I don't know what he's
16 doing. He might be waiting for a payoff. I don't
17 know what he's doing, but he doesn't represent most
18 of the teachers that I know.

19 Point of interest also. The
20 Pennsylvania Legislature established public
21 education in the State of Pennsylvania in 1834. And
22 it wasn't inclusive, necessarily inclusive of
23 African-Americans at that time nor of Hispanics
24 because Hispanics weren't here at that time, but it
25 wasn't inclusive of them or of any group of people,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 as a matter of fact, other than white. Slavery is
3 supposed to have been abolished in 1865 in
4 Philadelphia, Mississippi, and this is Philadelphia,
5 Pennsylvania. A bit of critical thinking, think
6 about that. What is the State Legislature doing to
7 education now to include African-Americans and all
8 people? And does slavery really end in the City of
9 Philadelphia?

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Ms.
12 Beard.

13 Next we have James Pierce. Is James
14 Pierce her? After James Pierce, Bernard Johnson.

15 Good afternoon. Please state your name
16 for the record.

17 MR. PIERCE: Good afternoon, City
18 Councilmembers, School Board Administrators, fellow
19 parents, also Members of the State Representatives.
20 My name is James Pierce and I've been elected as
21 executive board president for the parents of a
22 Comprehensive Early Learning Center formerly known
23 as Comprehensive Day Care. Basically, I represent
24 the parents of the most important citizens in this
25 city; the babies.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I am a single parent with three sons
3 enrolled in a Comprehensive Early Learning Center
4 Program. For seven years I have volunteered for
5 this program. I have attended many the PCCY
6 meetings, that's Philadelphia Citizens for Children
7 and Youth, where other child care providers meet and
8 brainstorm on how to provide service for families.
9 I also communicate regularly with employees from the
10 PCCR, which is the Philadelphia Child Care
11 Resources. Their job is to assist parents with
12 child care issues. Both of these groups have
13 repeatedly told me on various occasions that the
14 Comprehensive Early Learning Center Program is one
15 of the better child care programs in the City. For
16 those who do not know about Comprehensive Early
17 Learning Centers, it is not only the largest child
18 care provider in this City, we are the largest
19 provider in the State, providing pre-K care for over
20 2500 families. Comprehensive Early Learning Center
21 parents, not under mandate, work or volunteer over
22 14,000 hours per year. At our Monday meetings, we
23 have a 60 to 70 percent turnout. We are the only
24 educational program in the school system that has a
25 fee. Our copayment averages \$51,000 a week.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 The parents that I represent are very
3 concerned about the future of our school system and
4 our program. For seven years, and Mr. Ramos can a
5 test to this, I have with other parents have
6 testified in front of School Board members an effort
7 to keep our funding current. Year after year, our
8 program has been cut due to lack of funding from
9 this state's Department of Education. This year, we
10 face a new challenge. The parents of Comprehensive
11 Early Learning Centers have know idea of how the
12 Edison School, Inc., views early childhood
13 education. I have attended several public hearings
14 in recent months with the Edison corporation they
15 have chaired, and I have yet to hear anything from
16 them regarding early childhood education or parent
17 involvement. This concerns us because in this
18 state, early childhood education is not mandated.
19 Fortunately, we have a school board that knows the
20 importance of early childhood education and have
21 three under its auspices: Head Start, Comprehensive
22 Early Centers, and Parents Co-op Nurseries.

23 Did you know in the United States there
24 are only nine states that do not any type of
25 mandated state funding for early childhood

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

education? And there are two on the east coast; one is Mississippi. You want to take a guess what the other one is? Pennsylvania.

In the State of Georgia, the state lottery supports the early childhood education program. It is called Universal Pre-K where they start with three- and four-year-olds by offering a fundamental appreciation for learning and an all-important social atmosphere and provide fully mandated parent.

It is already known that the State will not give Philadelphia County proper funding per child that it gives other Pennsylvania Counties. The same State claims not to have funding for our district and for early childhood education programs have already given Edison \$2.7 million to study the School District and is preparing millions more. We all agree that some changes need to be made, but parents need to know what changes are planned before our tax monies are allocated. Any early childhood specialist will tell you that a child's mind develops the most between infancy and age 5. To ensure our children have a firm foundation on the future for our neighborhoods and City, it is

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 essential that early childhood education programs be
3 funded. Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Bernard. After
7 Bernard, we have Reverend Marilyn Matthew Burse
8 (ph). Is she in the room?

9 MR. JOHNSON: At some point I would hope
10 that Council -- that this joint committee might find
11 the opportunity to move this kind of forum into the
12 neighborhoods so that our youth could have an
13 opportunity to speak with you, and untampered
14 opportunity, if I might say.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, that's why
16 we had it on Saturday. But don't forget to identify
17 yourself for the record.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am. I will. Good
19 afternoon, my name is Bernard Johnson and I am a
20 parent of a 10th grade student who attends the World
21 Communities Charter School. My oldest daughter is a
22 graduate of Parkway Gamma High School. I come
23 before you today discuss my view on educational
24 reform and how positive reform can benefit our
25 children and enhance the quality of life for all of

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

us who reside in Philadelphia and the neighboring counties.

Let me say that the debate about who operates schools should be in the context of what the needs of the students are and how we as Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians can best meet these needs. It is clear to me, and I believe to you, that our students deserve a world-class education. I also believe we have a distance to go to achieve that goal. I believe that students and staff should be able to attend a school that is clean, well-lit and free of environmental hazards, to include fresh drinking water and staffed with a nurse daily or a qualified health aid. I believe that students should attend schools on time every day. They should be fully prepared to receive a quality education from well-trained teachers. Students and teachers and other staff should have access to the most advanced learning material and technology.

Over the past 16 years, many of us have been advocating for these type of educational instruction and services. We have also provided many hours of services to students and families of

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 the District. Philadelphia, under the leadership of
2 then Council President Street, increased local
3 funding to the School District, adding a penny to
4 the state tax and by increasing the tax on liquor by
5 the drink. We have not been able to track the use
6 of those funds and its impact on education and other
7 services directed to the students. And that's
8 critical to me, that year after year we come back to
9 this Council -- we counted it. This is the 16th
10 year that we've been in front of this Council. The
11 first time in front of a body like this, and asked
12 where do the dollars go? What do you use the
13 dollars for? And we're constantly told, "We
14 appropriate the dollars, we follow them." It's time
15 to start following dollars. I'll leave my free
16 comments to later.

18 We have not been able to track the use
19 of the funds and its impact on education or other
20 services directed toward students. We have
21 struggled with teachers, principals on some
22 occasions and have supported them on others. We
23 have attended school reform conferences under at
24 least three administrations, at least three we've
25 talked about reform over a period of 16 years. And

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 we're still here talking about reform.

3 I'm going to come to your office next
4 week and tell you in debt some of our experiences
5 about reform and the talk. It's time to stop
6 talking and start doing something.

7 Today when find ourselves with charter
8 schools, which have began to address the needs of a
9 small number of children. Many of those schools'
10 impact is the still in question. My daughter's
11 school, the World Communications Charter School is
12 in on probation. I serve on that board. I'm not
13 sure what the plan is sitting here right now today
14 that is due on the 15 and I serve on the board.
15 We've got the monitor what we do a whole lot better.

16 The question of privatization, people
17 making money on our children, is not new. Look at
18 Tenet Health Care who evaluates the behavior of 90
19 percent of the students of the Bartram Cluster.
20 Guess where they refer those students to after
21 their? Into their profit-making health care system
22 where too many children at the Tilden Middle School
23 are standing in line every day taking Ritalin.
24 Councilwoman Blackwell and myself, along with
25 others, about four or five, six years raised a whole

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 question of Ritalin. I sat on the sub committee to
3 the Board of Education the health, subcommittee when
4 Christine Matruea (ph) was chair and we discussed and
5 created policy that said a teacher couldn't tell a
6 student and a parent that you can't go into my
7 classroom unless your child is put on ritalin.
8 That's how serious this situation is in this City.
9 At this that time everyone talk Councilwoman
10 Blackwell was crazy for listening to us and calling
11 hearings, and now it's a national issue. We've got
12 to do better by our kids.

13 I'm not even going to read the rest.

14 You know, two weeks ago, we look at a
15 resolution passed by this Council to give Wadsworth
16 Behavior Health Company several million dollars to
17 manage schools in this district, 230,000 dollars to
18 an outside agency to manage two classrooms in the
19 Mitchell Elementary School in Kingsessing section of
20 the southwest, in the Bartram cluster, one of the
21 depressed neighborhoods in this city. \$230,000 to
22 manage two classrooms because this District couldn't
23 identify teachers to teach those children. That's
24 a disgrace. And not only did they do that, but they
25 did it five times over in other schools.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 How dare the union representative to sit
3 here and say that Shaw School is clean when, in
4 fact, the Health Department, my organization and
5 parents, your staff with MJ from your environmental
6 office toured the school. He wrote a 5 page report
7 on suspected asbestos in the cafeteria. Treat it
8 like asbestos. Five pages of a report talking about
9 the quality of air in that school. Five pages of
10 report about what's going to happen a year from now
11 to correct those problems in that school. And the
12 union rep sits here and fools its constituents,
13 fools his members and tells them they're working in
14 safe places. They're not.

15 I'm getting ready to close by saying
16 this: Last Monday we had the privilege of meeting
17 with Mr. Goldsmith to talk to him about our concerns
18 about the lack of quality drinking water in the
19 schools. We, again, we again asked counsel to
20 reconvene its public hearings around lead in the
21 water in Philadelphia schools. Mr. Goldsmith was
22 gracious enough to go to Turner Middle School to see
23 what we were talking, and immediately on the spot
24 ordered fresh drinking water, because I believe he
25 was appalled that our students, over 300 students

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 and staff in one part of the building couldn't get
3 fresh drinking water because the water had been
4 turned off in that part of the building because of
5 dangerous amounts of lead.

6 I want to close up by saying this: Yes,
7 we went to visit Edison Schools because it was on
8 the table. I think each and every one of you should
9 have sent a staff person to look at their schools
10 and not take some times the racist opinion of
11 newspapers and how they twist the facts.

12 Let me tell you what I saw in Edison
13 schools in Baltimore. I saw -- my daughter wants
14 to do that and then we're finished.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon,
16 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. Hi, my name is Ina
17 Johnson. I'm a 10th-grader at World communication
18 Charter. I attended two tours of Edison Schools.
19 One was in Baltimore City and the other in Chester,
20 PA. What I saw was students learning books,
21 supplies, computers in the classroom. Teachers
22 wanted to teach and students were behaved. Clean
23 bathrooms, clean lunch rooms, clean school
24 buildings, a world class education for all students,
25 world language starting with grade K. Also classes

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 in arts, music, drama, including with science,
2 reading, math, language arts, physical education. I
3 also saw where teachers cross-teach and working
4 together as a unit. Where third graders and higher
5 are given a computer to take home after the parents
6 and students are trained. Where the students is
7 evaluated, tested every month to see if the
8 student's on track or maybe there was something have
9 to be again. Where they are quarter learning
10 conferences that parents must attend. Where there
11 is parents involvement all the time.

12 I myself want f a world class education,
13 too. I deserve it also. It's the students' time to
14 get an education. Ya'll already had ya'lls.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. JOHNSON: So the apple really
17 doesn't fall far from the tree.

18 I'm going to close by saying this. All
19 we want is reform. All you need now at that table
20 is the Governor and the Mayor. That's all you need
21 and you can work through this. This power play
22 that's going down in this town has got to stop. The
23 only reason we asked these young folks -- and we
24 formed an organization of young people and on the
25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 19th of this much at St. John's AME Church at 6
3 o'clock, we invited Representative of Edison, we're
4 going to bring parents from Baltimore, we're going
5 to bring students from Baltimore in district,
6 Representative Waters. We're going bring students
7 and parents from Chester that we met. We're asking
8 you to come. We're going to ask the Mayor to come.
9 We're going to Governor come. We're going to be
10 busy over the next few days, and we don't any money
11 to do it; we ain't getting paid. We're going to ask
12 you guys to come and we're going to open community
13 dialog about the crisis in Philadelphia public
14 education. We've got to settle this and settle it
15 in public. I'm going to tell going to Edison, the
16 problem you made when you came to this town was that
17 the only people you tied yourself to was the
18 politicians. And now you got a real problem in
19 identifying who you really are. But we're going to
20 give the students an opportunity to tell what they
21 saw. We're going to bring your folks together, and
22 we're going to tell a story.

23 I'm going to say this: These lies.
24 These vicious lies have to stop. I went to Chester.
25 Juan Bond is a friend of mine.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Bernard, your
3 time is up. We have more people.

4 MR. JOHNSON: With all due respect, I'd
5 like to do this and then finish, if you don't mind.
6 Juan Bond is a friend of mine. Juan Bond is from
7 Media. Juan Bond was the principal and basket coach
8 at Darby Township High School. Juan bond was the
9 principal, basketball coach, and superintendent of
10 Chester High School. When we went to Chester
11 yesterday, Juan Bond is also now the leader of Learn
12 Now in the schools in Chester High School. The
13 principal in Chester High School is a Chester
14 native. The vice president of Chester high school
15 is a Chester graduate and we are throwing stones at
16 our own people; at our own people. You got to
17 research, people. You can't just take it for what
18 people tell you. You got to really research it.
19 Thank you.

20 (Interruption.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me. We
22 want to proceed with our hearings. We've been here
23 since 10:00 a.m. letting everyone speak. We have
24 Reverend Marilyn Burse, 50th Ward, 25th Division,
25 Democratic committee person.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 Good afternoon. I just want to remind
3 you of the time.

4 REV. BURSE: President of City Council,
5 community leaders, speakers, parents and children.

6 I may cry every once in a while, not tears of joy --

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me,
8 reverend. We need you to state your name for the
9 record.

10 My name is Minister Marilyn Mathews
11 Burse. I'm with the 50th Ward, 25th Division. I'm
12 here to speak about the schools. We want our school
13 system back. We're not giving anything up to
14 Edison. We're going to fight. I maybe out now as
15 far as retirement, but as far as I'm concerned, I
16 gave 15 years of my life working with kids at Martin
17 Luther King High School, Edmonds -- you name the
18 schools in the Northwest, I've been there. When
19 those kids didn't have, I was there. And they still
20 call me after the 15 years. These students that
21 were once King students have kids that are in the
22 system. And I promised them that I will fight for
23 them no matter how hard it takes or goes, I'm going
24 to be there for them because that's what it's all
25 about. If I'm not for them, then I might as well be

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 against them. I am a product of the public school
3 system. I graduated William Penn High School. Went
4 from William Penn High School to Temple University.
5 And now I am a minister and I go on and on and on.
6 There's a lot to be said about our schools. I am a
7 product of Mr. Bivens, Dr. Bivens, he was my 8th
8 grade teacher. So it's just to show you what the
9 public schools consist of. Okay?

10 (Applause.)

11 REV. BURSE: They're all that and more.
12 I'm telling you. I look at it if they get Edison in
13 there, where will we go? We're only going to go
14 downhill. I have been a mother. The kids call me
15 mom. 2500 kids, you count them per year, 15 years,
16 tell me what you get a total of. That's about
17 37,000 kids, I'm sure. And I'm there for every last
18 one of them. I'm not going to let Edison come in
19 and take over because I feel about the unemployment
20 for those people that work in the cafeteria, those
21 people that work as school police, those teachers
22 that are working overtime, taking money out of there
23 pockets buying different paraphernalia for the kids,
24 xeroxing if they don't have any books. They are
25 there for the kids, and I am too.

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 And then I think about our tax dollars.
3 Where are our tax dollars going to go if Edison get
4 in there. They may start with grants now, but what
5 will happen later? Where will our kids go? What
6 would they do? Everybody don't have money to give
7 away and fork out. It's not about that. It's about
8 our kids. Kids are our most important product, and
9 we all should take a stand because we all were once
10 there; we were once children, too, so we got to
11 stand up for the children and do what's right. I'm
12 all about that.

13 When I sit down to think about it, I
14 think Edison group what do you think Dr. Martin
15 Luther King fought for. He didn't fight for just
16 nothing. He fought about peace, solidarity, jobs,
17 education. That what's it's all about. And if we
18 can't do that and work with our kids to try to get a
19 better education for them and not sell them out,
20 then we're at fault. We're at fault. Because it's
21 too many of us that have gotten our doctorates, our
22 masters, our BS's our BA's and all the rest. And
23 what have they given back to the schools? It's a
24 lot that are not giving back. But if they all
25 joined together as one and do like Dr. King said,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 when shall go offer come. I know we're going to
3 overcome because I will stand up and I'll be proud
4 and I'll show nothing but unity with all of our
5 kids. And that's what's it's about.

6 And the State Reps, Council, the whole
7 bit, we're fight it. I'm down; I'm going all the
8 way down.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

11 Is Dennis Barnaby still here? After
12 Dennis Barnaby we have Janet Fishman. And our final
13 witness for today will be Emanuel Freeman from the
14 Germantown Settlement. I don't believe we've missed
15 anyone that's on the list.

16 MR. BARNABY: Good afternoon. I want to
17 thank you very much for these hearings. As other
18 people said, it's nice to have a place to talk about
19 this. There has not been talk about it. It's been
20 behind closed doors and I think we're all sick of
21 it.

22 My name is Dennis Barnaby. I am a
23 teacher at Germantown High School, a parent of three
24 children, all graduates from the schools. I counted
25 up this morning the schools between myself, my wife,

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 and my children,I think it comes to 14 schools we've
3 been involved in one way or the other in my career.

4 I want to just quickly speak about the
5 situation that we're facing. It's been addressed
6 here, and I think it's very unfortunate this
7 conflict that occurred just now happened because
8 we're now at the point of fighting each other
9 instead of real enemy. And I think it's real
10 important to keep the real enemy in mind here.

11 I teach at a so-called comprehensive
12 high school that was assessed by the Middle States
13 Evaluation System last year and was warned that we
14 might not get a credential because of a number of
15 things. They complemented the staff. They were
16 very impressed with the ability, the quality, the
17 dedication of the staff. They interviewed students
18 who spoke well of many of their experiences in the
19 school, but they looked at the school building and
20 said, this is not a building that student should be
21 going to. The library completely inadequate. There
22 is too much that's not quality material in this
23 building. This year, in response to this or lack of
24 response to this, we don't have a librarian. We
25 have an assist librarian. We don't have a music

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 teacher, haven't had one for 12, 15 years. This
2 year we don't have an art teacher. This year we
3 don't have the one voc/ed program that we had before
4 functioning, a culinary arts program, because that
5 teacher was need to teach a full roster. You can't
6 teach a full roster and run a restaurant program at
7 the same time. We don't have any other voc/tech
8 programs in spite of a wing of the building that was
9 built in the 1970s for that purpose. We don't have
10 the computer labs that were promised to us when we
11 created a reform model of the school because the
12 district didn't have the money this summer to put in
13 those computer labs and move them to where they
14 should have been moved.

16 Now, I'm saying all of this because you
17 would think that those of us in the situation would
18 be welcoming this new proposal that Edison is making
19 because they're promising that all these things,
20 these problems we face, will be addressed.

21 Far from it. We know that these kinds
22 of promises are only that, that they're only
23 promises. And when you don't attach some dollars
24 figures to what you want to do, there are no
25 solutions. And edison has no solutions except

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 dollars figures for themselves as far as we can
3 tell.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. BARNABY: In a study that took them
6 less time to do than my seniors spend on their
7 senior project, they have now told us what the
8 solutions to our system are. And I'm sorry, we
9 don't believe them.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. BARNABY: I don't think any of us
12 should. We really are tired of ghetto model school,
13 and that's what we're dealing with. We're dealing
14 with lack of resources, lack of financial support
15 for what we know needs to happen. We know how to
16 run schools. We don't need to have people come and
17 act as if they do when they don't have the
18 facilities to do it.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. BARNABY: I have experienced at
21 Germantown when we finally fought and won a
22 tremendous amount of money to redo much of the
23 facilities a number of years ago. Unfortunately, we
24 had to contract out many of those things. That was
25 the -- I can tell you I was the building rep and I

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 had to deal with what it meant to contract out to
3 those contractors that once they put in the door
4 knobs wrong, once they put in the elevator upside
5 down, claimed to have fixed the heating system that
6 still is misfunctional. We can't get them to be
7 accountable because then they no longer are ours;
8 they're not part of the system. They contracted,
9 they did their work, and they left. It's not a
10 solution. It's not a solution. It's not something
11 that brings accountability to the system. It
12 removes accountability for the system and we need
13 call it for what it is.

14 We need solutions. We don't need
15 non-solutions and that's why we're opposed to this
16 whole scenario which is insulting to all of us
17 teachers, parents, students, the whole City of
18 Philadelphia and we should just simply reject it.

19 I come with only one proposal, and I'm
20 not giving you more paper because you all this, I'm
21 sure, someplace in your file if isn't on your desk
22 already. Judge Doris Smith's report from seven
23 years ago. This is the solution to the Philadelphia
24 problem. It's here. It's been studied. A panel of
25 experts. They talk to the people. They spent all

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 spring, all summer going to schools, talking to
3 students, talking to parents, talking to teachers.
4 We went, we had the hearings. They wrote a report.
5 Now, unfortunately, it wasn't what Harrisburg wanted
6 to here because in this report it calls for an
7 immediate infusion of \$300 million of the School
8 District as of 1996. It calls for the medicine
9 reduction of class size to 15 in the lower grades.
10 It calls for the immediate reduction of class size
11 25 in the high schools, because those are solutions
12 that make sense.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. BARNABY: Harrisburg doesn't want to
15 hear those, and they're weak-kneed spineless
16 activities which are unwilling to deal with the real
17 problem of how schools are funded in this State has
18 to be addressed.

19 Now, unfortunately, we're the ones that
20 have to address it. And I appreciate your
21 leadership in this and I'm going to ask you to
22 provide the leadership because you don't have to
23 worry about people not following at this point.
24 You've heard it Thursday, you've heard it today.
25 People are looking for leadership. If we need to

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 sit in, so be it. If you need to walk out, so be
3 it. If we need to protest, so be it.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. BARNABY: We cannot let this happen.
6 If it happens here, you know what the next step it.
7 Five years from now, the corporation called Edison
8 has met its profit margin. Five years from now,
9 they don't have to be here. They can go someplace
10 else. Five years from now, they will have their
11 reputation established so that they can take over
12 some other school district some other God-forsaken
13 place that hasn't funding they need. We don't need
14 to get them to get thier profit off of us. We don't
15 need to be their source of success. We need to say
16 no. And I'm sorry, there's nothing else that needs
17 to be said except no. Thank you very much.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mr. Barnaby, if
20 you have an extra copy, we'd like you to submit the
21 copy of Judge Doris Smith's finding so we can use it
22 as a part of the record.

23 Janet Fishman. Good afternoon, Ms.
24 Fishman.

25 MS. FISHMAN: My name is Janet Fishman.

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 I have taught in Guyana in West Africa. I've taught
2 in Paris in France. I've taught every age level in
3 the Philadelphia area from elementary school to high
4 school to college university level. I've taught in
5 8th and Lehigh, Bartram, Nebinger at 6th and
6 Carpenter and suburban schools out in Paoli as a
7 playwriting workshop leader with Philadelphia Young
8 Playwrights Festival. At present I'm also reading
9 with children at the shelter in North Philly. And
10 who will do what we need? I'm not sure, but one
11 thing is very simple, and that is reducing class
12 size. It's the most vital simple thing to help
13 children learn. And I've seen it at the shelter.
14 All the kids want to read. And it's not because I'm
15 some amazing saintly person, but they get one-on-one
16 attention. They want me to read to them, they want
17 to read themselves. Now, that is a feasible but
18 certainly 33 is just not an ideal situation for
19 children to learn. I've seen it work in some
20 classes where teachers are amazing, students can
21 manage, but many children come to school not in --
22 they're not ideally situated to start with and they
23 need the best. Why do parents send their kids to
24 private physicals schools because get that smaller
25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 faculty student ratio. And so certainly, we should
3 not experiment with the neediest children, rather we
4 should give them they clearly need. I don't see how
5 education that is set up to turn a profit can do
6 this. What will happen when Edison starts losing
7 money? Will there been 40 kids in a class just to
8 cut cost? Will they mainstream kids who need
9 special attention and put them in a class with
10 everybody else. My child went to a really good
11 public school Bache Martin and someone went back and
12 visited and said the teachers having problem because
13 they're mainstreaming kids and they just cannot give
14 all the kids the attention that they need.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. FISHMAN: In '96 there was the big
17 question of whether or not music and other subjects
18 should be cut from the public school system. And we
19 had a meeting Bache Martin. Councilperson Ortiz was
20 there and a teacher spoke from a middle school in
21 North Philly, a young teacher who I wonder if he's I
22 still in the public school system. And he said what
23 I can do to teach my students is -- that's a
24 ungrammatical sentence. I need small class size to
25 teach my students effectively. It's as simple as

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

that.

Why are there vacancies in the public school system? There are jobs for teachers; why aren't people taking them? I think that many people who are qualified do not want to feed themselves to the wolves. They know that you need to be extraordinary, extraordinary person to manage a large class of kids who have very intense needs and who need a lot of attention. I think that parents, teachers, are the people who should be heard from and they should tell the School Board what they need. And I'm very impressed with the knowledgeability of the people who have spoken day. I feel that my testimony is very simple and I'm going to end it with something simpler which is a fairytale. I think many of you know the story of the emperor's new clothes where the emperor calls in consultants to find him the most absolutely beautiful clothes marvelous clothes in the world. And of course they're consultants from somewhere else so nobody really knows who they are and they keep bring in imaginary material which costs a lot of gold doing all of these marvelous cuttings which cost a lot. Anyway, in the end, a child says in the

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 parade that the emperor doesn't have any clothes on.

3 And I think the answer is as simple as what that

4 child saw and the question is do we have the will to

5 do it. I hope we do.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

8 Emanuel Freeman from the Germantown Settlement.

9 MR. FREEMAN: Good afternoon. My name
10 Emanuel Freeman. I'm president and CEO of
11 Germantown Settlement and Family of Agencies. And
12 my colleague is...

13 MR. MONTAGUE: Dennis Montague,
14 Germantown settlement.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You weren't here
16 this morning when we laid out the time restraints.
17 You have 5 minutes to do a presentation, so you
18 might want to condense this. This morning we were a
19 little bit more relaxed with the time. But right
20 about now we're trying to wind down. Thank you.

21 MR. FREEMAN: Well, I'm going to be
22 brief. To honorable Councilwoman Miller and
23 Honorable LeAnna Washington, distinguished Members
24 of City Council in the house as well distinguished
25 Members of the Board of Education.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 I'm delighting to be here. And first
3 let me first give honor to God and all for in these
4 difficult times of war, poverty, and social unrest.
5 We must trust in him because only through faith and
6 determination will we be able to deliver a state of
7 peaceful tranquility.

8 I'm delighted to be here today and to be
9 before you distinguished people to talk about some
10 of the issues and concerns relative to the matter of
11 today. Today, I come before in the state of
12 readiness. Today, I come here before you during a
13 period of crisis. Today, I come before here before
14 this esteemed legislative body with a sense of
15 urgency. I come here knowingly placing my entire
16 agency and myself at risk, the risk of giving the
17 appearance of taking one side over the other, the
18 risk facing possible political retribution. So I do
19 so not out opportunity, but I do so because of the
20 many years of political struggle that compel me to
21 dare to struggle to dare to win.

22 I do so and I come here day because it
23 is extremely important to me and the entire City of
24 Philadelphia that we come to terms with the reality
25 that we are at a state of war, and I'm not talking

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 about Afghanistan thousands of miles away. I'm
3 talking about the war that's taking place in the
4 halls and in the streets surrounding places like
5 Germantown High School, Wister, Fulton, Picket
6 Middle School, just to name a few.

7 Today I come before you as a member of
8 neighborhoods for better schools whose theme is
9 education with community control. I come here as an
10 individual, as a manager of one of Philadelphia's
11 most comprehensive neighborhood-based organizations
12 grounded in grass roots struggles and for a hundred
13 17 years. I come here today as someone who is
14 clearly convinced and all that it is imperative for
15 us to step to the table. I come here today as
16 someone who brings to the table 30 years of
17 experience struggling in every conceivable way in
18 every conceivable level at the neighborhood level.
19 And so today, my friends, I come here also out of
20 frustration and anger of the current state of
21 affairs at our schools and among our children. I
22 come here today because it is act and not to react.
23 I come here today to extend my hand and my resources
24 to partner with you in this great City and Mayor, to
25 end the discourse and begin rebuilding our schools

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 and the very people who depend on you and I and many
3 of us.

4 In 1998, working with a group of more
5 than 20 community-based organizations and
6 institutions, German Settlement embarked upon an
7 ambitious effort to develop alternative approaches
8 to education. This discussion emerged out of
9 countless discussions with parents who are dismayed
10 and disenfranchised with local schools. This effort
11 led to the planning that gave birth to Germantown
12 Settlement Charter School. Now in our third year of
13 operations serving 512 kids from grades 5 to 8, we
14 have adopted an approach to academic learning
15 referred to Micro Society.

16 This approach combines real life
17 learning in a classroom setting so that kids acquire
18 the tools needed in the real world. The operations
19 of court systems, banks, postal services, businesses
20 and, yes, legislative bodies like here today give
21 kids an opportunity to learn about the reality of
22 the real world.

23 I want to tell you from firsthand
24 experience that educating our children is more than
25 just a notion. It certainly has more to do with

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 just mastering what goes on in the classroom. It is
2 an extended process, which must permeate every
3 aspect of community life, every aspect of
4 development. In every family, in every home. It is
5 a process that brings together responsibilities, not
6 just for the school, but for the community. If
7 public education is such a fundamental undertaking,
8 then why would anyone want to take on this
9 challenge? And we contemplate this issue all the
10 time.

12 Schools in Northwest Philadelphia
13 continue to represent serious concerns for the
14 parents who have no other alternatives and options.
15 Of the 13 schools in the Germantown Cluster, 10 of
16 them are functioning below the State standards
17 during 1998 and '99. The statistics speak for
18 themselves. They are among the 176 lowest
19 performing schools in the Commonwealth of
20 Pennsylvania. These schools have an average of 40
21 percent of students who can't read or write at the
22 State standard proficiency levels. We see children
23 and youth every day. Many of them can't fill out a
24 job application or even read a simple newspaper.
25 They can't express themselves. They are devoid of

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1 the fundamental and basic skills that I and you take
2 for granted every day. Yet everyone seems to be
3 focused on who will manage as opposed to how and
4 what must be done in our schools. The reality of
5 this is that, yes, we should be protesting. We
6 should have been demanding change a long time ago,
7 change at the status quo. We should be demanding
8 that the Mayor and the Governor engage in a serious
9 and sincere dialog. When faced with the reality of
10 political change, we must assemble our wagons around
11 our children to protect them from the evil forces.

12 For many of us, the reason that we
13 remain involved and resolved is very simple. We
14 are losing the battle of public education and it is
15 time that we step forward to directly expand our
16 responsibility for the education of our own. The
17 debate and struggle is being decided in places that
18 have in many ways do not involve and engage the real
19 people who are most affected, and these are the
20 parents, the students. The fact that now some
21 private company will generate a return on their
22 investment and a return on the public investment is
23 no new development. Do any of us think that over
24 the past 10, 20 or 50 years that nobody has made a
25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 single dollar off of \$1.7 billion? We would be
3 fooling ourselves if we did.

4 Have you ever examined the number of
5 school district contracts which go directly to
6 minority firms? Have you ever asked a business who
7 attempted to get access to professional serves
8 within the School District? Where do the firms live
9 who do business with the District and what do they
10 do with the funds that they generate? Do they
11 reinvest those dollars in the neighborhoods where
12 the schools exist?

13 These are important issues for us to
14 examine. And while we do not hold the present
15 system accountable for the dismal failure of so many
16 thousands of kids, which we in essence should be
17 talking about. You, City Council and the House of
18 Representative are in a unique position to utilize
19 this period of transition to establish some new
20 standards. You are in a position to engage the
21 government and others.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me. Could
23 you just summarize the ending? We will submit the
24 entire written report for the record.

25 MR. FREEMAN: I certainly will do that.

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 A part of what we are attempting to do,
3 a Coalition for Neighborhoods for Better Schools is
4 to develop a comprehensive approach that moves
5 towards community control and community forum.

6 What I wanted to do is just summarize
7 the posture and the position of Germantown
8 Settlement and I would like to read that statement
9 that basically represents our view towards the
10 current state of affairs.

11 Germantown Settlement and Family of
12 Agencies is a minority managed and controlled
13 corporation with more than 117 years of experience
14 and service. Our mission is to rebuild our
15 community and its people and to empower them to
16 directly drive decisions affecting our lives. We
17 seek to rebuild the schools within our community,
18 and the first foremost, engage parents, students,
19 residents, teaches and elected officials in this
20 process. Our primary focus is to establish schools
21 which practice high economic standards world class
22 standards, technology based outcomes, multi-cultural
23 learning, and strong discipline resident engagement
24 and teacher and administrative accountability. And
25 we will do this through an approach which engages

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 and facilitates of integration of human services and
3 physical development within our neighborhoods.

4 We are prepared to work with the
5 Governor, with the Mayor, with the City Council,
6 with the House of Representatives, with Edison, with
7 the residents, with neighborhoods, and with whomever
8 it takes in order to get the job done. Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you. I know
11 we got everybody today. We're going to recess this
12 hearing to the call of the Chair. Thank you.

13 Representative James has an
14 announcement.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you, Madam
16 Chair. I was talking to Chairwoman LeAnna
17 Washington. It's important because of the
18 communication that's going out that we extend a
19 number of days where we can receive written
20 testimony from other community people, organizations
21 or groups, and I didn't know what that time period
22 would be. It would be up to you. So that we can
23 still get the material as part of the record.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Anybody that wants
25 to submit written materials or additional testimony

11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

1
2 to go into these records, please do so by Friday of
3 the upcoming week which I believe is November 16th
4 at 5:00 p.m. You can send it to my office, Room
5 312, City Hall. Or out in the neighborhood offices,
6 all the State Representatives have offices out in
7 the neighborhood and it might be easier for you to
8 get to them. And those offices are listed in the
9 telephone directory under that particular state
10 rep's name. They have offices citywide. And then
11 Representative Washington will make sure that
12 they're then delivered to her office.

13 Thank you, and thank everyone for
14 coming. It's been very interesting. Thank you.

15 (Council adjourned at 2:45 p.m.)

16 - - -

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 11/10/01 - EDUCATION - RES. 010642

2 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

3
4 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
5 proceedings of the Council of the City of
6 Philadelphia of November 10, 2001, were reported
7 fully and accurately by me, and that this is a
8 correct transcript of the same.

9
10
11
12 RE: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
13
14

15 _____
16 Susan Avetta, Court Reporter
17

18
19 _____
20 Lisa C. Bradley, RPR
21 and Notary Public
22
23
24
25