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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, March 5, 2007, 1:25 p.m.

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10 Resolution 070095 - Calling for hearings
before the City Council Committee on
11 Education to explore the relationship between
neighborhood development and capital
12 improvements to School District facilities.

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COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

15

Jannie L. Blackwell, Chair

16

Donna Reed-Miller

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Frank Rizzo

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
3 afternoon. Thank you for your
4 patience.

5 The Committee on Education of
6 City Council is now convened. We thank
7 Councilman Rizzo for being here.

8 And this is with regard to
9 Resolution No. 070095 that the clerk
10 will now read.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution 070095,
12 a resolution calling for hearings
13 before the City Council Committee on
14 Education to explore the relationship
15 between neighborhood development and
16 capital improvements to School District
17 facilities.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much.

20 Mr. Kevin Hanna, we're going
21 to ask you, if you would, to start us
22 out.

23 (Witness comes forward.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: While
25 he's coming forward, let me state for

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2 the record welcome to all of you. This
3 is a very, very important subject. We
4 invite those who are in the building
5 and those who are in their offices, we
6 ask you to please tune in carefully.

7 This is a very, very, very
8 important subject. We believe that we
9 hold the key to making Philadelphia a
10 first-class City in every sense of the
11 word.

12 And the area that I represent,
13 the Third Councilmatic District, as
14 well as City, of course, by being chair
15 of this committee and chair of the
16 Finance Committee and chair of the
17 Committee on Housing, Neighborhood
18 Development, and the Homeless and
19 ex-officio on all committees as well as
20 a City resident, we believe this --
21 having said all of that, we believe
22 that this hearing is important because
23 it allows us, and especially in the
24 Third District that I represent, to
25 create a model to be used citywide that

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2 makes the difference in our city being
3 what we read about in college called
4 "Utopia."

5 We have the opportunity to
6 have -- we have wonderful facilities,
7 educational facilities. I represent
8 Penn, Drexel, the University of the
9 Sciences, and Community College. I'm
10 using myself as an example 'cause we
11 can create a pilot there.

12 I represent many hospital
13 institutions: Children's Hospital of
14 Philadelphia, Hospital of the
15 University of Pennsylvania,
16 Misericordia Hospital, or Mercy
17 Catholic Medical Center, and many other
18 medical centers and many other rehab
19 and treatment centers and many senior
20 centers.

21 But what we're focusing on
22 now, now we have the housing
23 development -- we fight for it. My
24 colleagues think there's something
25 magic. Those who think that the Mayor

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2 just gave it to me -- Kevin Hanna, do
3 not I fight all the time?

4 MR. HANNA: You fight all the
5 time.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
7 so we have development in our district
8 because of the partnerships we have
9 with institutions and private
10 individuals and government facilities,
11 so we do have more housing development
12 than anyplace, but we fight all the
13 time, and we're always trying to
14 solicit more partnerships and more
15 investments.

16 And now, today, we want to --
17 before the Council budget, before we
18 hear it at the end of April, Mr.
19 Vallas, we wanted to have the time to
20 in a more informal way talk about
21 projects in various areas of the City,
22 and we invited, my colleagues and those
23 who are on this committee, to do the
24 same so that we don't have budget books
25 and we're not talking broad-based, but

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2 we have had the opportunity to talk
3 about neighborhood schools, how they
4 affect neighborhood development.

5 And it is obvious to me that
6 once we solve the elementary, middle
7 school, and high school phenomena,
8 those issues, then we will have
9 everything we need to be number one in
10 every sense of the world.

11 And we're there in my area.
12 We have the opportunity to improve
13 schools. We have the University of
14 Pennsylvania and Drexel involved in
15 closing University City High School to
16 make an international school. We want
17 to talk a little bit about Sulzberger
18 being a magnet high schools, as we
19 talked about in meetings between PHA
20 and Mr. Vallas so that when University
21 High School closes, people have
22 someplace to go.

23 And in other neighborhood
24 schools; about Martha Washington
25 becoming a K-to-8 facility and about us

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2 having a community facility in the
3 middle, a Lucien E. Blackwell Community
4 Center, to allow youngsters who go to
5 Sulzberger to have a gym. And the men
6 of Mill Creek and neighborhood people
7 to have a place on nights and weekends.

8 All these things are possible.

9 In addition for me, a new
10 Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia
11 High School that we talked about and
12 talked about a turnkey program and how
13 we can initiate these things.

14 So we think this is an
15 exciting day, it's an exciting
16 opportunity for us to have discussions
17 about what is possible about programs
18 such as Jane Golden and the Mural Arts
19 brings, and we welcome all of you and
20 thank you for being here.

21 And with that, now that I've
22 made all that long speech, we will call
23 on Mr. Kevin Hanna, Secretary of
24 Housing and Neighborhood Development,
25 to make his testimony.

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2 MR. HANNA: Good afternoon,
3 Councilwoman Blackwell and Councilman
4 Rizzo.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
6 afternoon.

7 MR. HANNA: Again, my name is
8 Kevin Hanna, and I serve as Secretary
9 of Housing for the City of
10 Philadelphia. I'm here to provide
11 testimony on Bill No. 070095 and on the
12 Administration's view of the
13 relationship between public schools and
14 neighborhood transformation and
15 restoration.

16 In 1995, the City of Atlanta
17 commissioned a study by the McKinsey
18 Consulting Group which looked at why
19 that city -- that is Atlanta -- was
20 losing population, losing its middle-
21 income households to neighboring
22 suburbs. That study found that there
23 were four primary reasons for this
24 phenomenon.

25 Number one, public housing and

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2 the blighting influence it was having
3 on many of that city's neighborhoods.

4 Number two, the lack of
5 affordable housing for middle-income
6 families.

7 Number three, public safety
8 and the perception that it was unsafe
9 to live in the city.

10 And, number four, public
11 schools and the perception that public
12 schools were better in the suburbs.

13 I submit that the findings of
14 that study done over ten years ago
15 still apply today to the City of
16 Philadelphia.

17 Though I don't think the Mayor
18 knew of the study at the time, the
19 initiatives which he has undertaken and
20 implemented go straight to the heart of
21 these concerns. It was not by
22 coincidence that NTI, Project Safe
23 Streets, the overhaul of public housing
24 and city/state partnership formed or
25 reformed Philadelphia's public schools

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2 were all launched at about the same
3 time.

4 This administration recognizes
5 and fully embraces the idea that
6 transforming our neighborhoods depends
7 as much upon removing blight as it does
8 improving schools. Further, once
9 neighborhoods do begin to, quote, turn
10 the corner, end quote, one of the most
11 important factors in whether they reach
12 their full potential is the quality of
13 its public schools.

14 Consider the following: There
15 is a clear relationship between the
16 quality of local schools, or at least
17 the way they are perceived, and the
18 value of housing and the willingness of
19 residents to make new or larger
20 investments in housing.

21 While there has been no formal
22 study, residents of University City
23 generally believe that houses within
24 the Penn Alexander School Catchment
25 area are worth at least \$50,000 more

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2 than comparable properties just outside
3 of the catchment area. Families are
4 willing to pay a premium to be able to
5 send their children to a public shool
6 with a good reputation. New public
7 schools can create islands of
8 opportunity in neighborhoods that have
9 overgone disinvestments.

10 The newly constructed Hunter
11 School in Norris Square will anchor
12 newly-constructed affordable housing
13 opportunities created through public
14 investment by the Office of Housing and
15 Community Development and the
16 Commonwealth.

17 The School of the Future is
18 another example of tying education
19 investment to other community
20 revitalization. Situated in the
21 centennial district, this new
22 state-of-the-art facility is adjacent
23 to other institutional investments by
24 the Zoo, the Please Touch Museum, and
25 the Mann Center.

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2 Taken together, they are
3 stimulating the residential and
4 business markets in the Parkside
5 community.

6 The investments made in the
7 physical structure and surrounding
8 property of the school has an impact
9 upon that community's quality of life.
10 Thus, the School District's campaign to
11 create green campuses were carried out
12 has spurred community revitalization.

13 School facilities often serve
14 as centers of community life in a
15 neighborhood. In addition to serving
16 school-aged youth during the day, they
17 often provide active recreational
18 facilities, adult learning centers, and
19 even provide passive green space for
20 the neighborhood.

21 Finally, the success of the
22 local school in educating a young
23 person and providing him or her with
24 future employment or higher educational
25 opportunities directly impacts the

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2 earning potential and wealth creation
3 of a community.

4 The only way to fully
5 transform our neighborhoods is through
6 the ongoing cooperation with, and of,
7 the Philadelphia public school system.

8 The Administration looks
9 forward to continuing and improving our
10 relationship with the school system in
11 an effort to see to it that our
12 neighborhoods reach their full
13 potential.

14 If anyone has any questions,
15 I'll be around for another half an hour
16 or so before I need to take off for
17 another important meeting, but that
18 concludes my testimony at this time.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you.

21 That really gets to the heart
22 of what we're talking, about because we
23 know we have a direct correlation.
24 Members of the public look around their
25 communities and they say there's a lot

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2 going on here, there's blight here, we
3 need a school here.

4 But they -- but it is our
5 responsibilities and our jobs to make
6 that happen, and so that is why we're
7 having this.

8 People -- you know, sometimes
9 a community doesn't see what it takes,
10 but we here on the inside have a
11 responsibility to certainly do what we
12 can to make sure that the correlation
13 is intact and that we rise together.

14 Are there any questions for
15 Mr. Hanna?

16 (No questions.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very much.

19 MR. HANNA: Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you for coming.

22 (Witness comes forward.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
24 Mr. Paul Vallas, CEO, School District.
25 Thank you so much for coming, and we

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2 thank you for taking the time. We know
3 these are busy days 'cause we in
4 politics are just worried about getting
5 our petitions in today. So we are
6 okay. That's another issue, though,
7 that we can't discuss here, but we're
8 working hard on it, aren't we,
9 Councilman? That's right.

10 MR. VALLAS: You've got a lot
11 more to work on too. I don't envy you.
12 Obviously, anyone who has a problem or
13 an issue, they're going to call their
14 elected official first sometimes --
15 sometimes before they call 9-1-1.

16 So we appreciate everything do
17 you and we certainly appreciate the
18 opportunity to come before you, Madam
19 Chairwoman.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you.

22 MR. VALLAS: And we also
23 appreciate the strong support we've
24 received from the City Council, having
25 had an opportunity to work with

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2 Councilman Rizzo on so many issues, and
3 we want to thank you. And we want to
4 thank you for not only supporting us,
5 but also for understanding some of the
6 challenges that we face in the district
7 and your patience with us.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you.

10 MR. VALLAS: What I would like
11 to do is, I've provided some testimony
12 that I've submitted to the chair. It's
13 a summary of the -- or it's a -- I'm
14 going to try to summarize the testimony
15 I've put out here. So if you can just
16 indulge me as I look at the highlights.

17 And then obviously, I have
18 some time to spend. The Mayor's going
19 to be swearing in the current truant
20 officers at 3 o'clock, so we certainly
21 have some time up until then to answer
22 any questions or concerns that you may
23 have.

24 I'm going to ask -- who's
25 going to volunteer to come and join me

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2 here. Come on, don't raise your hands
3 all at once.

4 I'm going to ask Fred Farlino
5 to join me. He's our chief operating
6 officer.

7 And I'm going to ask Pat
8 Henwood to join me too. Pat is our
9 point person on school construction,
10 probably the most maligned person in
11 the administration. He can't make
12 anybody happy despite the fact that
13 he's really done a superb job with
14 limited resources.

15 Let me start off by really
16 summarizing the scope of the Capital
17 Plan. And, as you know, in the last --
18 really every year since at least the
19 present administration took
20 responsibility for the district, we
21 have worked to inform Councilmembers
22 about the projects in their individual
23 district, and I think that the staff --
24 my staff has done a pretty good job of
25 doing that.

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2 But it is now, of course, Year
3 5 of what I affectionately refer to as
4 "Phase 1 of the Capital Plan," meaning
5 we would like to have a Phase 2 and
6 Phase 3, and I'd certainly like to just
7 summarize what that plan consists of.

8 Phase 1 of the Capital Plan is
9 a \$1.5 billion construction plan, and
10 while the construction of new
11 elementary schools and additions as
12 well as new high schools gets a lot of
13 the focus, believe me when I say that
14 well over 80 percent of the money that
15 is spent is actually being spent in
16 renovating, doing repairs, doing
17 critical renovations, doing rehabs,
18 because there's been a lot of deferred
19 maintenance that has created -- that
20 has deteriorated the building stock in
21 this school system.

22 In fact, there are many
23 schools that I simply cannot repair and
24 that I'm searching for alternatives.
25 Let me give you an example.

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2 The Wanamaker Building would
3 have made a great small high school as
4 part of our middle-school conversion of
5 high schools. You cannot imagine how
6 disappointed I was when the architects
7 told me, Yeah, you can renovate it for
8 \$35 million because it's got a crack
9 down the middle of the building and the
10 facade is separating from its
11 foundation.

12 Bok. Bok would cost
13 \$37 million to renovate, so we're
14 seeking out a replacement building
15 there. You know, we've actually
16 talking about eventually moving Bok
17 into Barrett and then Barrett into the
18 Childs School, a school that we're
19 planning on closing.

20 So we have a lot of instances
21 like that.

22 Overbrook, for example. To
23 repair Overbrook long-term will cost
24 \$50 million. For that amount of money,
25 you're just better off building a new

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2 school.

3 So there are those challenges
4 that we're facing.

5 You know, we've been talking
6 to the -- the Pierce Phelps property is
7 for sale; it's an 11-acre site, and
8 we've been looking at perhaps that
9 property somewhere along the line as
10 perhaps providing a suitable campus
11 alternative to Overbrook.

12 We haven't made any decisions
13 and I'm certainly not trying to make an
14 announcement here, but the bottom line
15 is, we have some critical, critical
16 needs because some of our buildings,
17 because of decades of no maintenance,
18 simply cannot be repaired, or they're
19 beyond physical repair.

20 So a lot of --

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

22 Excuse me, Mr. Vallas.

23 MR. VALLAS: Yes, ma'am.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Point
25 of information for Mr. Rizzo.

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2 MR. VALLAS: Sure.

3 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,
4 Madam Chairwoman.

5 Mr. Vallas, just a question.
6 In the total plan, if you do plan to
7 close the schools that you just
8 mentioned because they're so expensive
9 to repair, would they be razed, would
10 they be demolished, or will we just
11 have another boarded-up building in our
12 community?

13 MR. VALLAS: Well, we're
14 planning -- as you know, the --
15 probably there are some prominent
16 boarded-up school buildings that we're
17 currently trying to sell -- the old
18 Clemente School and the Deburgos
19 School. And we're -- hopefully, we'll
20 be able to dispose of those building
21 shortly.

22 But no, we plan on tearing
23 down, we plan on tearing down whatever
24 we board up.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And that's

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2 expensive in itself.

3 MR. VALLAS: Absolutely,
4 that's right, that's expensive.

5 But, you know, keeping a very
6 tall, pretty-much abandoned building
7 smack-dab in the middle of a terrific
8 neighborhood is just very
9 counterproductive.

10 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well,
11 thanks for being a good neighbor
12 because that's important.

13 MR. VALLAS: Absolutely,
14 absolutely.

15 The School District's
16 \$1.5 billion construction plan does
17 focus on new elementary schools,
18 additions to relieve overcrowding,
19 building some new and replacement high
20 schools, improving school campuses with
21 green space, modernizing buildings,
22 modernizing libraries, modernizing
23 classrooms.

24 But let me point out that
25 despite the size of the Capital Plan --

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2 and this is the largest capital plan in
3 the School District's history -- we
4 address about 35 percent of our
5 long-term needs, and I'm just being
6 honest with you.

7 I mean, that's -- in effect,
8 it's going to cover about -- it's going
9 to cover about a third, a little over a
10 third of what the long-term needs are.
11 Just to maintain our buildings and to
12 keep them from deteriorating requires
13 upwards to \$150 million in capital
14 renovations in a year.

15 In order to get ahead of the
16 curve and to reduce kind of our
17 emergency repair and renovation costs
18 would cost us about \$220 million. In
19 other words, we would need a Phase 2 of
20 the Capital Plan to get ahead of the
21 game.

22 Right now, we're just trying
23 to play catchup, but to get ahead of
24 the game, it will require that type of
25 capital.

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2 And, you know, I'm not here
3 pitching or requesting support for an
4 expanded school construction program,
5 but we've identified the District's
6 long-term capital needs as being in
7 excess of \$5 billion.

8 And if you look at what the
9 State of New Jersey is spending on
10 Camden; or for that matter, what the
11 state and the city are spending on the
12 reconstruction of New York's public
13 schools; or what we spent in Chicago --
14 close to \$4 billion; clearly it's -- we
15 have a long way to go.

16 That said and done though, the
17 \$1.5 billion school construction
18 program, I think, is going to -- is
19 going to make an appreciable
20 contribution in terms of improving the
21 School District's overall building
22 stock. Let me just give you some
23 examples.

24 (Addressing colleague.) What
25 was the number of repairs and

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2 renovations?

3 There's been -- just the
4 Capital Plan along with our general
5 operating dollars, just the last five
6 years alone, that includes -- this
7 year, there's been over 228,000 work
8 projects in effect that have been done
9 -- repairs, renovations, some major,
10 some more minor -- just through the
11 Operations Department just since 2002.

12 So it gives you kind of a
13 sense of the scope of the amount of
14 work that's been done and also drives
15 home the task before us.

16 The -- but let me give you
17 some highlights. In the area of new
18 construction, as you know, these are
19 projects -- by June of this year, we
20 will have either completed, started, or
21 started -- and when I say "started,"
22 contracts let, permitting is done --
23 we've had a groundbreaking, the hole's
24 being dug in the ground. So projects
25 that are going to become a reality.

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2 But the new Fels replacement
3 high school in Northeast Philly and the
4 Lincoln replacement high school,
5 already broken ground on. Audenried
6 already under construction. Microsoft
7 already complete.

8 We're waiting to finalize the
9 contract for the construction of the
10 new Kensington High School. As you
11 know, we broke up Kensington into three
12 small high schools, and we're adding a
13 fourth, one of which we're going to
14 build.

15 So those buildings will be
16 under construction hopefully before
17 June.

18 The only major construction
19 projects that are currently in the
20 Five-Year Plan that we have not begun
21 or we have not committed the contracts
22 to is the new West Philadelphia High
23 School, although the West Philadelphia
24 High School will be in this year's
25 budget.

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2 And we're -- and Dobbins. And
3 we're going to need to secure new money
4 if we're going to build a new Dobbins.

5 But in addition to Fels,
6 Lincoln, Audenried, Microsoft,
7 Kensington, this week we'll begin
8 construction on the new (indiscernible)
9 building. We've already begun
10 construction on the new Gamp building.
11 Gamp building.

12 So there are a lot of major
13 projects under construction.

14 In addition, we've contracted
15 out with Mastery Charter to convert
16 three middle schools to high schools,
17 and to do a total of, it's close to
18 \$40 million in renovations in those
19 schools.

20 If you go visit South Philly,
21 they've done a marvelous job with
22 Thomas Middle School, completely gutted
23 and renovated the building; it's
24 marvelous. They're doing -- Shoemaker
25 is their second project. And the

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2 School Reform Commission just approved
3 their third project.

4 We now have 19 charter high
5 schools and 33 small high schools. The
6 charters -- the small charters are
7 among those 33 small high schools. And
8 the Pickett, Shoemaker, Thomas are
9 really three of our new gems.

10 And what they're doing is,
11 they're dramatically expanding school
12 choice.

13 We're not neglecting
14 elementary schools in the process. As
15 you know, the Newberry is under
16 construction, and we have finally been
17 able to secure property for the new
18 Willard School -- finally, after -- I
19 think the Willard School's been kind of
20 on the books for ten years. We have
21 secured the money and now we have
22 finally secured the property. So
23 hopefully, within the next 12 months,
24 we'll begin construction on the
25 long-awaited, long-promised, long-

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2 overdue Willard Elementary School.

3 But in addition to those
4 projects, there are numerous additions
5 and -- elementary school additions and
6 annexes being built.

7 Incidentally, I also failed to
8 mention the new G and Hunting Park
9 Street, the construction of that new
10 school.

11 But new additions are underway
12 at Lawton, at Brown, shortly at Forest,
13 at Ziegler, so there are many, many
14 other projects out there.

15 So, you know, so I think we've
16 come a long way towards -- in this
17 first phase towards getting projects
18 underway.

19 In addition, we've opened a
20 number of new high schools, using
21 leases, leasing out with landlords who
22 then would go in and do the renovations
23 for us. And I cite the National
24 Constitution High School and the
25 Franklin Science Leadership Academy as

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2 just two of the more recent examples.

3 And, of course, we hope to
4 conclude an arrangement with the
5 University of Penn for the -- I call it
6 "the Penn Alexander High School"
7 hopefully within the next couple months
8 or so.

9 So, again --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

11 Excuse me, one moment, Mr. Vallas.

12 MR. VALLAS: Yes, ma'am.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
14 you know I didn't want to interrupt you
15 when you're talking about Penn, who is
16 also here to testify, but we had a
17 point of information from Councilman
18 Rizzo.

19 MR. VALLAS: Yes.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

21 Before you begin, Councilman, the Chair
22 notes that Councilwoman Donna
23 Reed-Miller is here.

24 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Mr. Vallas,
25 that's an impressive list of

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2 construction, but you mentioned about
3 the magnitude of the dollars required
4 for doing some of the things that you
5 want to do.

6 Is there any new approach
7 where developers build a building, rent
8 it back to the School District? I
9 mean, have we looked around? And I
10 know you look around the world when it
11 comes to ideas.

12 MR. VALLAS: Yeah.

13 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Is there
14 any new approach that could get you
15 what you need but not have to have all
16 of that money up front for
17 construction? Has anyone ever built a
18 school and rented it back or leased it
19 back? Is there ever anything
20 considered like that?

21 MR. VALLAS: The -- you know,
22 what you -- well, we're always open --
23 we are always open to those type of
24 partnerships. And, you know, on more
25 than a few occasions, we've approached

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2 certain developers or certain business
3 interests who are getting large City
4 subsidies for the construction of major
5 projects to talk to them about perhaps
6 partnering with us on a school.

7 I'll be more than happy to let
8 you know who they were privately rather
9 than to put them on the spot publicly.

10 COUNCILMAN RIZZIO: Sure.

11 MR. VALLAS: So we're always
12 receptive to that.

13 But I'll tell you what's
14 happened. With the charter school law,
15 a lot of times when you have a new
16 development coming, you see the impetus
17 coming from the community to create a
18 charter. And, as you know, we now have
19 62 charters.

20 For example, there's been a
21 big push for a charter school in
22 Liberty Heights. And in response to
23 that, we've been building an addition
24 to Kearny to make Kearny more
25 attractive, although Kearny is a

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2 wonderful K-to-6 school, and a great
3 job, the principal out there does an
4 outstanding job.

5 So a lot of times what you
6 will see in certain areas is, it's
7 actually easier to go out and to open
8 the charter to address the educational
9 needs as opposed raise \$40 million or
10 \$30 million to build a new elementary
11 school. And that's what you're doing.

12 So when we look at -- for
13 example, when we look at charter
14 proposals, we look at charter proposals
15 through the following kind of template,
16 so to speak.

17 We ask ourselves, is this
18 charter -- rather than just to open
19 charters randomly and say, Okay, great
20 idea, let's open it, it becomes another
21 magnet school. You know, we have to
22 provide the busing, it draws from
23 everywhere in the City. It's not
24 necessarily addressing the specific
25 need.

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2 We have now in the last three
3 to four years in the School Reform
4 Commission's leadership begun to
5 approve charters that, number one,
6 address a school -- a need in a
7 specific community.

8 Many of the new charters have
9 catchment areas, they have attendance
10 boundaries, so we have overcrowding,
11 and we designate a new charter.
12 There's new development occurring and
13 there's a need to expand school choice
14 in the area, we designate a new
15 charter.

16 We've also used charter
17 schools to depopulate our large high
18 schools. In northwest Philadelphia,
19 obviously, Germantown's gotten a lot of
20 attention recently. Unfortunately,
21 despite, you know, some of good things
22 they've done there, the tragedy
23 involving the teacher who was
24 injured -- and I'm happy to say that
25 his surgery has been successful and he

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2 has been walking around and he now is,
3 I believe, at his brother's home, but
4 he still has a lot of rehab to go
5 through.

6 But in that area, we have --
7 we converted -- in the northwest
8 Philadelphia area, we converted Leeds
9 to a military academy high school.

10 We opened an independent
11 public high school -- what we like to
12 refer to as a School District-run
13 charter, which means it's union
14 employees -- the Arcadia High School
15 for Peace and Social Justice.

16 We have the Bale-created
17 charter school. And Mastery Charter
18 has taken over Pickett, they're and
19 converting that from a middle school to
20 a small charter school.

21 And, of course, Lankenau
22 became an independent school.

23 So what -- so I think we are
24 responding for a demand in communities
25 that want more choices, that want

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2 smaller high schools, that want to
3 relieve overcrowding. I think we're
4 responding in flexible ways. And
5 sometimes we're building something new,
6 but more often than not, we're
7 reconstituting something, or in some
8 cases, we're building charters, you
9 see.

10 We are -- you know, in the
11 first two or three years of the charter
12 movement here in Philadelphia, I think
13 a lot of charters were created kind of
14 randomly without an eye towards, how do
15 they fit into the overall scheme of
16 things? But what we've tried to do is
17 to use charters as an asset so that if
18 there's development of overcrowding,
19 you need to break up a large high
20 school.

21 Right now, I'm soliciting
22 charter proposals for alternative
23 schools. We need to set up a network,
24 we need to expand our network of
25 alternative schools for disruptive and

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2 potentially disruptive kids so that we
3 can get them into the more appropriate
4 setting and, at the same time, relieve
5 the neighborhood schools of the
6 additional burden of trying to manage
7 classrooms where you have four or five
8 or six kids who need to be put in
9 alternative placement.

10 And there's at least four
11 charter proposals before us right now
12 specifically to deal with high at-risk
13 alternative school kids. So much for
14 the charters only picking, you know,
15 the best kids.

16 So a long answer to your
17 question, to your very good and
18 important question, and that is: Yes,
19 we have solicited, but what we found is
20 that it's easier to convert a middle
21 school to a high school or to approve a
22 charter school than it is for us to
23 raise another \$40 million to build a
24 school.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZ0: Or use some

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2 of the same concepts that folks have
3 that develop charter schools, looking
4 for appropriate structures --

5 MR. VALLAS: That's right.

6 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: -- that can
7 be converted --

8 MR. VALLAS: That's right.

9 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: -- at a
10 minimum expense. Everyone knows
11 there's no such thing as minimum
12 expense --

13 MR. VALLAS: Exactly.

14 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: -- when you
15 deal with construction.

16 MR. VALLAS: Right.

17 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But maybe
18 that's -

19 MR. VALLAS: Turnkey leases,
20 for example.

21 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: -- the
22 approach that we should take. Exactly.

23 MR. VALLAS: Well, the great
24 thing about the charter law in
25 Philadelphia -- not the great thing for

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2 charters, but while I think our charter
3 funding formula is one of the best in
4 the country, the charters are supposed
5 to secure their own buildings, and
6 that's something that they're required.
7 And you will be amazed at how effective
8 they are at securing their own
9 buildings.

10 What we've tried to do where
11 we really want a charter to be created
12 like -- look, it's no secret that I'd
13 like to depopulate Germantown, reduce
14 the size of Germantown. Fifteen
15 hundred kids go to Germantown High
16 School. Get that population below a
17 thousand.

18 When I was out at the school
19 the other day, the principal and her
20 leadership team told me that 500 of the
21 1500 kids, you know, aren't being
22 raised by their biological parents. So
23 clearly, to have that high a
24 concentration of children with special
25 needs in a single building can

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2 create -- and, you know, our smaller
3 schools are doing a heck of a lot
4 better.

5 Mastery Charter, a terrific
6 models, one of the best models around.
7 You know once Pickett is converted,
8 it's going to be one heck of a public
9 high school.

10 Look at Thomas in South
11 Philly, or look at the great attention
12 that has been drawn to their successes
13 already the first year in Shoemaker.

14 So I think we've got some
15 tools here at our disposal when you
16 consider just how limited our resources
17 are.

18 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,
19 Mr. Vallas.

20 Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
22 You're welcome.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. VALLAS: Let me do this.
25 I can start taking questions now

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2 because the questions may be -- you
3 know, it can frame my additional
4 commentary.

5 Let me just make a couple
6 final comments, though.

7 When we look at opening
8 schools, we look at demographics and
9 enrollment; obviously, we consider
10 these things.

11 You know, we look at the --
12 you know, we look at the needs of the
13 communities. We look at the need to
14 create -- to relieve overcrowding or to
15 create school choice in the community.

16 And a lot of times when we
17 talk about the need to address
18 overcrowding needs, a lot of that has
19 to do with areas that are under
20 development. I mean, we realize that
21 if we dramatically expand school
22 choice, we'll not only keep people in
23 the City but we will significantly
24 improve and increase the number of
25 options for children who don't have any

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2 choice but to go to the public schools
3 'cause a rising tide lifts all boats.

4 Right now in Philadelphia
5 today, we have 84 high schools, not 42
6 high schools, including 7 alternative
7 high schools, including 19 charters
8 high schools. So wherever you live in
9 Philadelphia, you have multiple
10 choices.

11 And we've created those
12 charter options by buying buildings, by
13 doing turnkeys; in some cases, building
14 some new buildings; in some cases,
15 taking closed middle schools and
16 converting them to new small high
17 schools.

18 So we've done -- we've
19 expanded our high school options,
20 created charters schools, we've
21 expanded our high school options in
22 multiple ways.

23 So now -- right now, wherever
24 you live in Philadelphia, you can apply
25 to 1 of 22 open-enrollment high

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2 schools, you can apply to 1 of 19
3 charter high schools, or you can apply
4 to a cluster of regional -- of regional
5 high schools.

6 If you live in Center City,
7 which doesn't only -- it's -- Center
8 City is a part of the -- pardon the
9 Chicago expression -- downtown. It not
10 only is -- but it includes outlying
11 areas -- it used to be a part of --
12 it's part of South Philly, it's a part
13 of central east, it's a part of East
14 Philly.

15 And the Center City region is
16 67 percent minority and 68 percent
17 poverty roughly, so it's just not the
18 downtown area.

19 Ben Franklin used to be the
20 only high school of choice. Well, now
21 you have Ben Franklin, three
22 charters -- two of which are excellent,
23 I might add, Mastery Charter and the
24 Comprehensive High School for
25 Architectural Design.

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2 You have the -- you have the
3 Science Leadership Academy, which is
4 Franklin Science. You have the
5 National Constitution Center High
6 School, you see?

7 So, if you live in South
8 Philly -- South Philly High School used
9 to be your only choice, and God knows,
10 we struggled with South Philly, and
11 South Philly has been a lot quieter and
12 more manageable this year.

13 But now in addition to South
14 Philly, you have Mastery Charter --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not
16 Mastery.

17 MR. VALLAS: You have the
18 Academy at Palumbo, and you have Mass
19 Charter. And so you have more options.

20 I mentioned northwest Philly
21 with the Leeds Military Academy. In
22 Northeast Philly, as you know, in
23 addition to the new Lincoln, we're
24 converting Rush to a CAPA-type high
25 school in the Northeast. The building

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2 has been closed, it's being gutted and
3 renovated, and within a year, that
4 building will reopen.

5 So we've dramatically -- and
6 West Philadelphia. West Philly used to
7 be your only high school of choice.
8 Well, now you have West Philly, you
9 have Microsoft, you have Sayre.

10 And so the approach has been
11 to dramatically expand school-choice
12 options available for kids. And I
13 think you're going to continue to see
14 us move in that direction.

15 But we do need -- we're going
16 to need a Phase 2 of the Capital Plan.
17 In the budget -- in the budget proposal
18 that we'll present to City Council next
19 month, we -- our five-year balanced
20 budget plan, we assume that we're going
21 to have to raise about \$600 million for
22 school construction.

23 And that will help us maintain
24 the present stock -- our present
25 building stock -- in other words, not

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2 allow it to deteriorate anymore and
3 deal with critical emergencies -- and
4 it will allow us to complete
5 construction on the new West
6 Philadelphia High School.

7 But we've got to go beyond
8 that. If there are some critical --
9 our next capital needs need to be as
10 follows:

11 We've got to build a number of
12 annexes and addition in those small
13 high schools and K-to-8 schools that
14 need modern gyms and multi-purpose
15 rooms and cafeterias.

16 We need to do window
17 replacements in the vast majority of
18 schools; we need to pull out the little
19 (indiscernible) and we need to replace
20 it with glass windows.

21 We need to do tuck pointing
22 and roof repairs. And we need the
23 electrification needed to modernize our
24 classrooms.

25 If we're able to do those

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2 three things, if we're able to do those
3 three things, you'll see 80, 90 percent
4 of the buildings transformed, you see?

5 So those are things that we
6 are going to need in the next two to
7 three years to secure additional
8 funding for, things beyond just kind of
9 the core maintenance -- this building's
10 falling apart, it's in need of serious
11 rehab, major rehab, major repair. We
12 need to move beyond that.

13 Annexes and additions,
14 windows, tuck pointing, roof
15 replacements, electrification for
16 classroom modernization -- those are
17 some of the things that we are going to
18 need to secure some additional money
19 for in the next three or four years,
20 okay?

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you, Councilman.

23 Before I ask my few questions,
24 Councilwoman Donna Reed-Miller has a
25 question.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Hi, good
3 afternoon.

4 I wanted to follow up on your
5 statement regarding the depopulation of
6 Germantown High School.

7 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I
9 know that this is something that you
10 and I have discussed for several years.
11 Is there a plan?

12 MR. VALLAS: Yeah. I think
13 the plan has really been underway
14 'cause the population is -- has
15 declined in the past few years.

16 For example, Lankenau was made
17 an independent high school. Leeds
18 Military Academy was opening. Leeds
19 was designed to provide additional
20 choices for children who go to King and
21 to Germantown.

22 The P School on the New
23 Covenant Church campus opened up. And
24 the Gates-funded Bale Charter School
25 opened. And now, of course, Pickett is

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2 being converted to a small high school,
3 and they'll begin that process.

4 And all of those schools --
5 Leeds shares a catchment area with
6 Lincoln -- I'm sorry, with --

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER:
8 Germantown.

9 MR. VALLAS: With Germantown
10 and King, where Pickett's catchment
11 area is Germantown's.

12 But those schools have created
13 additional options, and we think by the
14 time the Pickett conversion is done, by
15 the time they reach their senior year,
16 the population in Germantown will have
17 been reduced below a thousand.

18 But I'll tell you what happens
19 when you open up new schools: You
20 attract kids back to the School
21 District who previously didn't go to
22 the School District. So a lot of times
23 when you open a school, 20 to 30
24 percent of the kids who actually attend
25 the schools are kids who might not have

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2 attended a public school in the first
3 place.

4 So we've seen that happening,
5 we've seen that happening.

6 So consequently, you can open
7 up new schools to depopulate an
8 existing school, but it's not going to
9 be a one-for-one depopulation because,
10 you know, a lot of the kids going to
11 the Leeds Academy would not have gone
12 to public schools had the military
13 academy not been created.

14 And a lot of kids going to the
15 Arcadia University High School for
16 Peace and Social Justice would not have
17 attended a school in their neighborhood
18 had there not been an Arcadia School,
19 so they might have gone somewhere else,
20 but they've decided to now return home,
21 but they're going to send their kids to
22 Arcadia.

23 So I think, the -- you know, I
24 think with the addition of Pickett, I
25 think you're going to see the

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2 population continue to decline. And
3 once the new addition is built at
4 Lankenau, the number of kids at
5 Lankenau will increase, and that will
6 also further depopulate Germantown.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: What was
8 Germantown's High's population prior to
9 --

10 MR. VALLAS: I'll have to give
11 you the numbers.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I
13 thought they were always around 14,
14 1500.

15 MR. VALLAS: They were
16 actually -- they were about 1700,
17 between 16 and 1700.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Because
19 1500 is a large number.

20 MR. VALLAS: Yeah. It's --
21 it's -- you know, we have a handful of
22 large remaining high schools. William
23 Penn is very large, South Philly is
24 large, although that population has
25 been coming down. Lincoln remains very

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2 high.

3 Northeast High School and
4 Washington, schools that -- where we
5 haven't had some of the headaches we've
6 had in other schools. Fels, for
7 example, still remains large.

8 But, you know, the average
9 size of our high schools now, Madam
10 Councilwoman, has gone from -- it used
11 to be 1700, where now the average size
12 of our high schools is about 1100.

13 And by the time the schools --
14 the new high schools have reached their
15 full enrollment capacity, the average
16 size of our high schools will be 900 or
17 less, and about half the high schools
18 currently have fewer than 500 kids. So
19 we're gravitating our way toward being
20 a much smaller district.

21 But Germantown is big,
22 Germantown is big, and it's important
23 that we get that school smaller.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: It is.
25 I was -- you were there Friday

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2 afternoon, I was there Friday night
3 talking to the principal and, you know,
4 the alumni association.

5 MR. VALLAS: Right. I stopped
6 by the alumni association meeting. It
7 was nice, good turnout.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So okay.
9 Thank you.

10 Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 MR. FARLINO: Councilwoman,
12 we're also working with the principal
13 and the faculty at Germantown to
14 discuss the actual closing of a part of
15 that building. She's probably
16 discussed it with you. It's called
17 "The 70s Wing."

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

19 MR. FARLINO: And to close
20 that, it will save utilities, it will
21 make the footprint of the school far
22 more manageable, and help us do a
23 better job in supervising our students.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
25 You need to identify yourself for the

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2 record.

3 MR. FARLINO: Fred Farlino,
4 Interim Chief Operating Officer.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
6 That's for the stenographer.

7 Madam Chair, so that I can ask
8 a couple more questions.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Sure.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Can we
11 have an updated list of what you've
12 done when you talk about classroom
13 renovations?

14 MR. VALLAS: Yes.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I'm
16 not -- I have no idea what classrooms,
17 what schools. You said we have now 84
18 high schools?

19 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Can we
21 have -- we just need a list of all that
22 charter schools.

23 MR. VALLAS: Okay. We have
24 the -- we'll provide you with our -- we
25 have our high school choice catalog,

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2 and it not only gives you a map of the
3 schools, but it also profiles each of
4 the schools, and we'll provide you with
5 a copy.

6 We'll also give the committee
7 a list of the classroom modernization
8 campaign.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All
10 right, okay.

11 MR. VALLAS: We've modernized
12 about a thousand classrooms. When I
13 say "a thousand classrooms," I'm
14 talking about the smartboards,
15 whiteboards, laptop computers, et
16 cetera.

17 We have enough money to do
18 about 2500 more, but -- which will
19 leave us about 50, 60 percent short of
20 modernizing all of our classrooms.

21 So we'll give you an update on
22 that.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And a
24 couple of other questions.

25 One is, that you're right, I

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2 agree. The schools will and does
3 impact the neighborhood and its
4 stability.

5 At some point, we need to
6 discuss community access to these new
7 fields -- you know, the Germantown High
8 field, the Marcus Foster Field, and
9 Northeast High.

10 I'm certainly not familiar
11 with any issues in the Northeast, but
12 certainly at Germantown High and at the
13 Marcus Foster Field, the communities do
14 not feel that they have access, and we
15 understand that when you put \$6
16 million -- we do understand when you
17 put \$6 million in a project, then we
18 have to be a little bit careful, and I
19 know we have to have some guardianship
20 over how the field gets used.

21 But we want people to -- and
22 maybe you're changing the policy.

23 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: --

25 'cause we always wants people to feel

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2 that they have access, but that's been
3 an issue, non-access.

4 MR. VALLAS: We've met -- I've
5 personally met with the community on
6 the Germantown field at the diner in --
7 on Germantown -- on Germantown Avenue.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

9 MR. VALLAS: And I think we've
10 made some progress on reaching an
11 understanding on how to best open the
12 Germantown field to the community and
13 at the same time also to make sure that
14 ten years from now, we still have one
15 heck of a field.

16 But absolutely, we'll give you
17 an update on the use of the super
18 sites.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And we
20 may need to have that meeting with
21 Nicetown and also Marcus Foster.

22 MR. VALLAS: Fine.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Because
24 the communities are absolutely used to
25 using that.

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2 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And the
4 other question I have is that you've
5 done a lot of capital projects in the
6 neighborhoods, and I know in the
7 beginning, there was a lot of
8 discussion around agreements with the
9 unions, okay? And Mr. Nevels took a
10 stand that we were all very proud of.

11 Is there -- do you have some
12 type of a report on how many of those
13 projects have actually been able to
14 employ neighborhood people, job
15 creation, and all of that as it relates
16 to this resolution addressing the
17 information regarding the capital
18 projects and neighborhood economic
19 development?

20 MR. VALLAS: We can give you
21 that. We do monitor that. As you
22 know, we have a very, very aggressive
23 MBE/WBE program which we enforce very
24 rigorously, and our numbers are pretty
25 solid.

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2 But we can -- let us see if we
3 can go beyond that and look at local
4 hiring and things like that.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

6 MR. VALLAS: We'll try to get
7 more specific.

8 You'll see that the MBE/WBE
9 numbers are very high. I mean, it's
10 like in the -- on the professional
11 service architectural design, those
12 numbers are like in the -- it's over 50
13 percent. On the actual construction
14 it's --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's 37
16 percent combined.

17 MR. VALLAS: It's 37 percent.
18 So we've been very, very aggressive,
19 very, very aggressive, but we'll see if
20 we can't break that down and identify
21 what we've done to do local hiring and
22 to reach out to local artisans, okay?

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay,
24 all right. Thank you.

25 Thank you, Madam Chair.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you very much.

4 With regard to your statements
5 about charter schools, we have one
6 class left at Turner School, as you
7 know. After this, there's only one
8 class.

9 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
11 even though it's an existing facility,
12 would it be possible, for example, to
13 have Laboratory Charter School, who's
14 looking for a site, maybe use that?
15 You know, Turner's become a real
16 problem.

17 MR. VALLAS: Yeah. Chip has
18 finally returned. As you remember, I
19 met at your request with the community
20 on Turner, given the fact that we're
21 phasing out Turner. And we had talked
22 about KIP, which, incidentally, the
23 "Knowledge Is Power" program -- they
24 have a school in Baltimore that's one
25 of the highest-ranking academic schools

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2 around. They -- it's 90 percent
3 poverty, and it is not select
4 enrollment, so they go around door to
5 door and try to recruit the kids. And
6 they have schools all over the nation
7 and they're uniformly doing very well.

8 Their KIP school -- they have
9 one school in Philadelphia that's doing
10 very, very well. And they are very
11 interested in opening a K-to-8 school
12 at Turner.

13 You know, we were in limbo for
14 a time because KIP will not commit to a
15 school until they find just the right
16 principal. And believe it or not, I
17 mean, the principals go through a year
18 of principal boot camp.

19 So they are very interested in
20 the school. They would not begin to
21 take over the school until September of
22 not this year but next year because the
23 principal candidate they've selected
24 has to go through a year of training.
25 They take dear, sweet time, you know

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2 what I mean? I wish we could speed 'em
3 up. But the bottom line is, they're
4 very interested in converting it to a
5 K-to-8 school.

6 I mention given the building's
7 design, it -- they may want to have a
8 performing arts emphasis 'cause it was
9 really designed to be almost like a
10 little CAPA.

11 So I think the communities
12 will be very pleased with their model.
13 They're very interested in doing
14 K-to-8, and they're going to be
15 scheduling some outreach meetings with
16 the community. I met with them last
17 week, and they asked permission to go
18 out and do some additional outreach
19 with the community.

20 So I'll give you -- if Lee
21 can -- I'll get you some -- I'll get
22 you an update on where they're at.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.
24 As you know, it would have been a
25 wonderful CAPA before it was destroyed.

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2 With all of the new organization and
3 people coming in from every zip code,
4 it just created a big social fiasco.

5 MR. VALLAS: Wherever they've
6 opened schools, they've been successful
7 because they hand-pick the principal
8 then they hand-pick the staff, then
9 they train them for a year, and it will
10 be quite the school, and I think people
11 are going to be very pleased.

12 And, again, it will be a
13 K-to-8 neighborhood school, you know,
14 so I'm excited -- I'm really excited
15 about getting them to open their second
16 campus here. I'd like them to do more.
17 They're of Mastery Charter calibre.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All
19 right. My other two interests and my
20 last two interests are, of course, I
21 was happy to hear you refer to West
22 Philly High School and then the Lucien
23 E. Blackwell Community Center between
24 Sulzberger and Martha Washington.
25 They're my two concerns.

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2 MR. VALLAS: Uh-huh.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And I
4 was happy to hear you talk about
5 tearing down West Philly High School
6 because maybe we -- you know, had been
7 talking about turnkey programs. Maybe
8 we could do something in both
9 instances.

10 MR. VALLAS: Right.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We do
12 have PHA here to testify as well. And,
13 you know, we're really, really
14 interested in --

15 MR. VALLAS: Right. We have a
16 resolution, Madam Chairwoman, to
17 authorize us to begin negotiating with
18 PHA about an arrangement to build the
19 Lucien Blackwell Community Center,
20 which would be a part of the Sulzberger
21 conversion to a high school.

22 And as you know, that's a part
23 of our plan to begin to depopulate
24 University City. University City High
25 School has to be depopulated, and I'll

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2 tell you why.

3 We have to do major
4 renovations in University City. And if
5 we do major renovations we, have to
6 shut down the school. And we may very
7 well have to shut it down for an
8 extended period of time 'cause you
9 can't do the type of renovations that
10 you need to do without creating a
11 hazard. So -- because once you start
12 tearing down walls and replacing
13 ceilings, you're going to create
14 asbestos problems.

15 So over the next couple years,
16 we're going to need to have
17 satellite -- satellite locations for
18 the University City kids as we prepare
19 to renovate the building.

20 It's going to have to be like
21 Rush. When we renovated Rush and
22 converted it from a middle school to a
23 high school, the type of renovations we
24 needed to do would not lend itself to
25 keeping kids in that building. And

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2 with University City, we're going to
3 have the same problem.

4 So right now, we're looking at
5 alternative sites so that we can
6 continue to have the University City
7 High School so we can shut down the
8 main building we can do the
9 renovations.

10 There's about 20, \$25 million
11 in repairs that need to be done. And
12 in order to do it right and in order to
13 do it in a way that won't create any
14 contamination problems, we need to shut
15 down, clean out the building, and do it
16 once and for all. We just have to do
17 it that way.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well,
19 we have University of Pennsylvania who
20 will testify right after PHA testifies
21 with regard to their work in University
22 City, the EMOs, and all that they do
23 and of our goal to -- certainly we're
24 excite about them rebuilding University
25 City High School, and we know those

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2 high school kids. You know, obviously
3 we support the conversation of
4 Sulzberger to a high school and the
5 creation of a Lucien E. Blackwell
6 Community Center.

7 We talked earlier about the
8 School District operating -- and we've
9 met several times on the School
10 District operating it during the day.

11 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
13 the Men of Mill Creek -- in fact, I'm
14 going to ask them to stand. We have
15 some of them here. Men of Mill Creek,
16 would you stand.

17 These are people who volunteer
18 at the Mill Creek playground now all
19 the time -- weekends, holidays. They
20 volunteer, and they would continue to
21 do so in a new center.

22 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
24 thank you very much. Thank you for
25 taking off from work and being here.

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2 And they would continue to do
3 that with a new center because, as you
4 know, the other is as big as a
5 matchbox.

6 MR. VALLAS: Mm-hmm.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
8 it just doesn't accommodate it.

9 So we're still where we were
10 with the School District operating it,
11 so Sulzberger would have a gym, a great
12 facility, and then we have the ability
13 to have some kind of agreement or
14 turnkey agreement --

15 MR. VALLAS: Right.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: --
17 with PHA so that we can do a Lucian E.
18 Blackwell Community Center as well as a
19 West Philly High School.

20 MR. VALLAS: Well, we're at a
21 point in our relationship where the
22 School Reform Commission has given us
23 the go-ahead to begin to get it done,
24 so to speak.

25 And as you know, I mean, our

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2 plan -- Sulzberger is another middle
3 school planning to be converted to a
4 small high school. And we've had
5 conversations with U.S. Attorney
6 Patrick Meehan about creating a --
7 getting his support and other support
8 from law enforcement institutions to,
9 you know, convert it to have -- to
10 create a high school that has a public
11 safety focus, a law enforcement focus,
12 like law and public safety, et cetera.

13 So there's a lot of interest
14 in that, and so we won't let you down
15 on that. I mean, it's -- if we're
16 going to convert it to a high school,
17 we need a kind of a multipurpose
18 gym/auditorium rec center type
19 situation.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right.

21 MR. VALLAS: So it's to our
22 advantage that that will be done.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you very much.

25 Are there any further

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2 questions?

3 Are you able to stay around
4 for a few moments?

5 MR. VALLAS: Sure, absolutely.
6 Yes, ma'am.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
8 Great, great, great. Thank you very
9 much.

10 Carl Greene, Executive
11 Director, Philadelphia Housing
12 Authority. And we know with him is
13 Michael Johns, Assistant General
14 Manager, Design Division.

15 (Witnesses come forward.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
17 Michael, I got your title right for the
18 first time in history. It still wasn't
19 right, was it?

20 He's general manager, design.
21 I told them, you know, that were that
22 guy.

23 MR. GREENE: He gives himself
24 a promotion every week.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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2 afternoon. Thank you coming to talk
3 about the important subject of the
4 relationship between school facilities
5 and neighborhood-building.

6 MR. GREENE: Good afternoon,
7 Madam Chairman and other members of the
8 Council.

9 First of all, I'd certainly
10 like to open my comments with just an
11 appreciation for Paul Vallas and his
12 great vision because whenever I meet
13 with him, he always has a brand-new
14 concept; they're new to me because I'm
15 not in the school business.

16 But he has great, great ideas
17 and great vision, and I'm just
18 fortunate -- I think we're all
19 fortunate to have the opportunity to
20 work with him 'cause he's such -- his
21 ideas really stand apart in terms of
22 the opportunity to create a new
23 environment for change.

24 And change is a little bit of
25 what I'm going to talk about 'cause I

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2 think what we've seen at the
3 Philadelphia Housing Authority at the
4 completion of our first \$1.2 billion in
5 construction in some of our
6 neighborhoods is a dramatic shift in
7 terms of the pride that people feel in
8 the neighborhood and the opportunities
9 for hope and the opportunities for just
10 optimism and the opportunities for
11 people to feel safe.

12 And specifically in two
13 neighborhoods -- in South Philadelphia
14 at the old Tasker Homes and, you know,
15 Audenried High School used to be there,
16 and we spent about \$200 million there
17 doing demolition and the reconstruction
18 of 554 homes, of which 125 are home
19 ownership.

20 And today, the School District
21 is in the process of building a
22 brand-new high school there, the
23 Audenried High School.

24 And I think a comment on that
25 development from the sense that it's an

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2 opportunity to change the values and
3 the norms in the neighborhood and
4 actually to contribute to social change
5 and help contribute to the reductions
6 in crime.

7 What we've seen is a dramatic
8 reduction in crime, and for us, a
9 dramatic reduction in the operating
10 costs of public housing. So while we
11 have more tenants today in Grays Ferry
12 Estates than we had in the old Tasker
13 Homes, our crime is less than a tenth
14 of what it was then.

15 So we have very, very low
16 rates of crime; very, very high rates
17 of community optimism and pride in
18 where they live. And where we used to
19 have over two dozen maintenance people,
20 we have maybe two maintenance people
21 because the people are taking pride in
22 their homes, and they watch where their
23 kids play, and they're very proud of
24 where they live.

25 And so I believe that

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2 redevelopment of homes and housing in
3 neighborhoods as well as schools helps
4 to create a new framework from which
5 kids to grow and from which parents can
6 manage their children.

7 And I certainly envision a day
8 when parent-teacher associations and
9 home ownership associations and
10 resident councils in rental communities
11 are one in the same, where they have a
12 large group of people who live in the
13 neighborhood who go to the same school.

14 And we have a similar
15 development, as you know, Councilwoman,
16 in West Philadelphia, the former Lucien
17 E. Blackwell Homes. In the former
18 Lucian E. Blackwell Homes, we have
19 another \$200 million in redevelopment
20 and over 500 homes being developed
21 there. And that certainly was formerly
22 one of the highest-crime neighborhoods
23 in the City of Philadelphia.

24 And just the other day, we had
25 a grand opening on Lex Street. We

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2 opened 18 new homes there on Lex
3 Street. And we're very fortunate we
4 had both the U.S. Attorney Patrick
5 Meehan and the District Attorney Lynne
6 Abraham were both there for our opening
7 along with yourself and others. And we
8 had the great, great pleasure of
9 denoting the rebirth of a neighborhood
10 and the stamping-out of what was a high
11 concentration of high crime community
12 and really replacing that community
13 with a neighborhood where people are
14 very proud of where they live at.

15 And we believe that this
16 particular neighborhood redevelopment
17 strategy has contributed to a sense of
18 pride, a sense of the parents in the
19 neighborhood managing their children
20 and being involved in their children.

21 The neighborhood includes two
22 schools: Martha Washington, which is
23 an elementary school; and Sulzberger,
24 which is a middle school. And we have
25 had several meetings with the members

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2 of the School District, Paul Vallas and
3 his staff, and they have shared with us
4 their vision for that community. And
5 we believe once completed, you know, a
6 renovated and reinvigorated Martha
7 Washington and Sulzberger will continue
8 the downward trend in crime and
9 continue the upward trend and the sense
10 of optimism and hope.

11 And the two schools sort of
12 sitting almost like the middle of a
13 campus of sort of newly-built homes
14 presents an opportunity for maybe
15 teachers abound. We've sold some of
16 our homes to School District employees.
17 It presents an opportunity for the
18 parent-teachers association and the
19 resident council group to be very
20 similarly made up.

21 It presents an opportunity for
22 lower cost of operation for us. You
23 know, we have (indiscernible) serving
24 more people. We only had about 120
25 families in the former Mill Creek when

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2 we moved everybody out. And today, you
3 know, we have over 500 families in the
4 community (indiscernible) the old
5 building.

6 And so we feel that the
7 combination of neighborhood
8 redevelopment and new and reinvigorated
9 schools and reinvesting in schools give
10 just like what they have in suburbia
11 America: An opportunity to move into a
12 brand-new neighborhood with a brand-new
13 school with a newly-redeveloped school
14 and have the sense that the public
15 sector really cares, you know, that the
16 public agencies and the community
17 really work together.

18 And doing the Lucien E.
19 Blackwell community, we had a lot of
20 coordination with the Neighborhood
21 Transformation Initiative program
22 oversaw the demolition, the
23 Redevelopment Authority did acquisition
24 of hundreds of parcels, and the City
25 contributed some of those parcels to

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2 our redeveloped area, and the Water
3 Department also developed a new water
4 drainage system to make sure that the
5 creek, the underlying creek, is
6 properly managed and maintained.

7 And so we have an opportunity
8 for people to raise their kids up in an
9 environment to go off to be
10 professionals and to contribute to our
11 society in a positive way and for the
12 parents to have clearly-defined private
13 spaces like wonderful backyards and
14 off-street parking in the rear of their
15 homes and also a safe route to schools,
16 the ability to walk from Lancaster
17 Avenue down to Martha Washington and
18 Sulzberger School and out onto the
19 shopping that exists there.

20 And so we have a number of
21 partners in the neighborhood that are
22 doing redevelopment -- most notably the
23 St. Ignatius folks who are doing the
24 nursing home as well as Angel Court, a
25 senior and assisted-living facility.

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2 And so I do think that these
3 two schools typify what I believe is
4 the great opportunity for the schools
5 and redeveloped housings. While we do
6 not plan together from its inception, I
7 think it's Paul's great vision and
8 commitment that with these
9 transformations of schools, we have the
10 opportunity of getting to the same
11 place and having the same parent
12 benefit from a new home and also for
13 the kids to go to a quality school and
14 also for there to be well-lit streets,
15 well-lined streets with greenscape and
16 new lighting in the community.

17 We're also planning a camera
18 project in the neighborhood, over 20
19 cameras. We were funded by the
20 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to install
21 cameras as well as to do public
22 infrastructure in front of the
23 privately-owned homes. So whereas the
24 PHA new homes have new ornamental
25 lighting, new landscaping, new green

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2 space, new fencing, new signage, we
3 also have a grant to do that same thing
4 for the privately-owned homes in the
5 neighborhood so that you can walk from
6 Salisbury, which is there on 48th
7 Street, and down Brown Street or Aspen
8 or Fairmount, and you could walk from
9 there all the way down to Martha
10 Washington and points north out to
11 Lancaster Avenue to the
12 community-related shopping, and you can
13 feel safe and you can do it at night
14 and you can do it in the daytime.

15 So we believe that in the
16 framework of new construction and new
17 investment and new programs, there's an
18 opportunity for lower cost of doing
19 business of both housing as well as
20 schools, lower cost of maintaining the
21 homes for the parents, and an
22 environment of hope and optimism for
23 the kids and the parents alike.

24 So I think if the vision of
25 public sector both, you know, as

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2 Councilmembers and as public appointees
3 and officials, we have the opportunity
4 to show that government does work, that
5 we can put in new cameras and new
6 lights and the new community center and
7 new schools and new housing, and we can
8 take what was once the highest-crime
9 neighborhood in the City, the
10 neighborhood with the most notorious
11 gangland murder occurred in the City of
12 Philadelphia on Lex Street and put in
13 new homes and have working families
14 agree to move on those blocks, line up.
15 We have a waiting list of thousands of
16 people to move in this particular
17 community.

18 So now that we have thousands
19 of people who want to move back into
20 their former neighborhood of Mill
21 Creek, which we now call Lucien E.
22 Blackwell, that shows the hope and the
23 optimism, and it also shows what Paul
24 Vallas talked about, which he said when
25 you build something new, you get a lot

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2 of people who didn't live in that
3 neighborhood before who want to come to
4 that neighborhood.

5 And so we are enjoying a
6 period of optimism, of hope, a period
7 of confidence in government and
8 confidence and a commitment in public
9 officials.

10 We've been working together
11 with the federal law enforcement
12 agencies under the stewardship of the
13 U.S. Attorney for this area, Patrick
14 Meehan, to partner with the Men of Mill
15 Creek, and he funds them to do some
16 community involvement and also some
17 other groups that receive funding from
18 the U.S. Attorney and Justice
19 Department, and we also receive some
20 funding to put up some cameras as well
21 as to study defensible space and to
22 ensure that our architecture provides
23 eyes on the street, you know, for the
24 parents so you know who lives to your
25 lest and you know who lives to your

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2 right and you know what's in front and
3 back of your house.

4 And that's what Philadelphia
5 is all about, a city of neighborhoods
6 where you know, you know, the people
7 who live near you and you around you.
8 And Philadelphia is the prototypical,
9 you know, eyes on the street, safe
10 community design and architecture. We
11 just need a new rebirth, and we're
12 experiencing that rebirth.

13 And so with respect to this
14 hearing, I believe that it is important
15 for schools and housing to coordinate,
16 and we have a school CEO with a great
17 vision for the future, and we at the
18 Housing Authority, we share in that
19 vision, and we are building new houses,
20 and we are coordinating and we're
21 meeting we're and talking.

22 And I hope to see more of it.
23 And what we're looking to do in this
24 area is to convert Sulzberger as a --
25 which was Paul's vision to convert it

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2 into a smaller high school for public
3 safety, to train people, to remind
4 people of the past and to encourage
5 them to be law enforcement folks, to be
6 firemen, to be airport screeners, to be
7 public inspectors, whatever they need
8 to be to contribute to the safety and
9 robust growth of our communities.

10 At the same time, a new
11 community center would abut the school,
12 and that community center would be
13 available to the community in the
14 evening hours and would also include
15 space, condoed-out space for the PHA's
16 use but primarily to be used by the
17 School District as a gymnasium and
18 auditorium and some classrooms. And
19 the community would get to use it as
20 well.

21 We built some buildings in
22 other parts of town, and what we don't
23 enjoy is the kind of intellectual
24 skills and competencies that they have
25 in the School District for helping kids

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2 grow and learn.

3 And so we're very fortunate
4 that if we can consummate this deal
5 with the School District because we
6 believe that they bring the kind of
7 intellectual resources and educational
8 programs and curricula that, of course,
9 is not in our expertise or line of
10 work.

11 And so, we think that
12 together, the government can do a
13 better job in which two of the City's
14 worst public housing communities and
15 restoring them with new schools at the
16 same time to create a sense of optimism
17 and hope and to create an environment
18 where crime is reduced -- not through a
19 cop on every corner but through a
20 carpenter, an electrician, a painter
21 and a plumber working in these
22 neighborhoods to give parents a chance
23 to have a better quality of life, a
24 better opportunity to raise their kids,
25 to have parent-teacher associations as

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2 well as community resident councils
3 that are made up of the same people
4 that really care about their children
5 and their children's environment and
6 are proud of their home and are proud
7 of their new or reinvigorated school.

8 And it shows that you all as
9 our leaders of our city have really
10 thought things through and that we're
11 working together as public
12 organizations -- both housing, public
13 education, as well as our elected
14 officials and provide a high-quality
15 service to the citizens here in the
16 City of Philadelphia.

17 Michael Johnson, who's with me
18 here, is our chief designer and
19 architect, and he has brought handouts,
20 which we'll pass along to you about the
21 market studies and things that we've
22 done to show that around these areas
23 where we've reinvested in schools -- in
24 this case, where we've reinvested in
25 housing, pardon me, that the property

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2 value has gone up two-and-a-half times
3 the rate of the City as a whole between
4 1999 to 2004.

5 So there is a lot in it for
6 everybody if you redevelop homes,
7 redevelop neighborhoods, and at the
8 same time, work together with the local
9 schools to make them better. I think
10 it gives us a chance to reduce crime,
11 increase property values, and see our
12 kids grow to be contributing members of
13 society.

14 I want to thank you for giving
15 me this opportunity to provide some
16 comments, and I am certainly here to
17 take any questions that you may have,
18 Madam Chair or other members.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you, Mr. Greene. Obviously, I say it
21 all the time. You're a true visionary
22 because coming from the public sector
23 and being able to design neighborhoods
24 and keeping in mind that people are
25 just people, and because some people

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2 have less than others doesn't make them
3 less than that. And we appreciate your
4 vision and being the visionary leader
5 you are in housing.

6 And as our committee knows, we
7 have homeownership as well as home
8 rental, and everybody lives with
9 everybody else. There's no -- there's
10 no separation, and it works in many
11 places. It works very, very well.

12 And we're very, very impressed
13 to hear that property values increased
14 two-and-a-half times their rate between
15 '99 and '04.

16 And as I said then, you know,
17 Lex Street was a -- the Lex Street
18 massacre was the worst killing in the
19 history of our city. And now I'm so
20 impressed that we could stand there and
21 talk about the cameras and talk about
22 new housing and have mothers there and
23 have neighbors there who love the
24 neighborhood.

25 I'm always reminded that the

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2 late Lucien Blackwell used to say his
3 older brother lost his best friend due
4 to a gang war. And Lex Street, for
5 generations, has been a place where
6 people died, and now it's a place where
7 people are happy and they live in
8 wholesome environments, and there's no
9 crime.

10 And all of this is certainly
11 because of your vision. We thank you,
12 thank you Michael Johns, who designs
13 it. That's 'cause he came from my
14 area. He came from nearby, so he
15 understands.

16 But we just thank you for your
17 leadership.

18 Councilwoman Miller, you had a
19 question?

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
22 thank you also. You heard me --
23 Mr. Vallas is back -- where we talked
24 about this possible turnkey program
25 with the school and with the Lucien E.

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2 Blackwell Community Center. And
3 Mr. Vallas said that we're in the
4 budget and that they do tear down the
5 school itself.

6 So we have hope and we are
7 grateful to have this commitment today.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Great.
9 Thank you.

10 And I'd like to ditto
11 Councilwoman Blackwell's remarks. I
12 think PHA has just been phenomenal in
13 helping to turn the City around. I
14 just wish I had more land in my
15 district. And you knew I was going to
16 say that too, didn't you? More land in
17 my district.

18 But anyway, do you still have
19 the apprenticeship program where
20 tenants can get training to be involved
21 with the --

22 MR. GREENE: Yes, ma'am, we do
23 ma'am.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
25 Are people taking advantage of that?

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2 MR. GREENE: Yes. We just
3 started a new class. We originally
4 started with a class of 50 students
5 who, at the time, we paid them a
6 minimum wage doing a 21-week training
7 program.

8 So we typically have a good
9 list of people who sign up every term.
10 And this year, we just started a new
11 class here in January.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay and
13 how many cameras did you say you were
14 going to get or you're going to
15 receive?

16 MR. GREENE: Well, around the
17 Lucien E. Blackwell Community, we plan
18 to put up 20 cameras that are funded in
19 part with some federal funds and some
20 state funds, and so they won't be just
21 on the public housing site but they'll
22 be in the broader general community,
23 which is why we wanted to bring the
24 private -- the old homes together with
25 the new public homes so that it is one

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2 community and that there will be safe
3 walkability between the between the
4 commercial, the education, and the
5 homes between Lancaster and 48th Street
6 and the streets in between.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So in
8 order to get cameras in an area, it
9 ties in -- the criteria would be new
10 housing, newly-constructed housing?

11 MR. GREENE: Well, in this
12 case, you know, we wanted the cameras
13 not to be on the PHA site; we wanted
14 the cameras to include the entire
15 community, and we applied to the State.

16 The State has a couple of
17 programs that we applied for, and one
18 was called "Elm Street" or sometimes
19 they call it "Safer Routes to Schools."
20 And the other was called "Hometown
21 Streets."

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

23 MR. GREENE: And so since we
24 had houses and we had two schools right
25 in the middle of the houses, I think it

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2 makes for a good completion to the
3 project to now make sure that we can
4 preserve the sense of optimism and hope
5 and safety and lower crime rates by
6 being able to monitor and work in
7 partnership with the U.S. Attorney and
8 the Men of Mill Creek and the people
9 who are not public-housing residents
10 and bring the people of public housing
11 together. So that happened with that
12 circumstance.

13 But with respect to other
14 neighborhoods where we have high-rise
15 buildings and things like that, we
16 typically do have cameras, but we don't
17 have the kind of community involvement.
18 We don't have the cameras reach beyond
19 the public housing to include the
20 broader neighborhood because to do that
21 would require some non-public housing
22 funds.

23 And so we think that this
24 camera project is different than any of
25 the others that we have because the

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2 cameras will be in the public
3 right-of-way along with the new lights
4 that we're putting up and new sidewalks
5 and we're paving the streets throughout
6 the community.

7 So it won't be something just
8 for the public housing; it will be
9 something for the combined public and
10 private neighbors that live in the
11 community.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, we
13 have areas in our district that have
14 Elm Street and Hometown Street funds.

15 MR. GREENE: Right, yes.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: In fact,
17 my office wrote a proposal to the State
18 to get some Hometown Street, and we
19 have it, and we're doing another one.

20 So I never thought that we
21 could probably tie in video
22 surveillance cameras --

23 MR. GREENE: Yes. That's what
24 we did. We amended it and --

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- with

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2 safe corridor to schools or whatever
3 it's called okay.

4 Okay. Thank you. I'll
5 probably -- I might talk to you later
6 about that.

7 MR. GREENE: (Inaudible.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: 'Cause
9 we'll probably be submitting another
10 application for Hometown Street
11 funding.

12 MR. GREENE: Okay.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
14 Thank you.

15 Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
17 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown. And then
18 we're bring on Penn, Mr. Vallas, I
19 promise, and we would like you to hear
20 a little bit of their testimony, but
21 that will be before you have to go
22 downstairs.

23 Thanks.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
25 Thank you, Madam Chairlady.

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2 Good afternoon, gentlemen.

3 Let me first underscore the compliments
4 shared by my colleagues for what is
5 indeed visionary leadership and has
6 really put Philadelphia in a different
7 place when it comes to the look in the
8 neighborhoods. We can't say that
9 enough because you have made a
10 difference.

11 MR. GREENE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 And so often, we're quick to be
14 critical of appointed officials when
15 they don't measure up, and I think we
16 need to be as aggressive and
17 enthusiastic and when a lot of good has
18 been done to turn the City around, so I
19 commend you on your leadership.

20 MR. GREENE: Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

22 Following up on Councilwoman Donna
23 Reed-Miller's question regarding the
24 apprentice training, is that limited to
25 just PHA residents?

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2 MR. GREENE: Yes. Our program
3 is limited to both public housing and
4 Section 8 clients. And it's intended
5 to increase the income potential and
6 show -- and it's a part of our economic
7 development because we have such a high
8 concentration of extremely low-income
9 individuals.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
11 Uh-huh. And has recruitment been a
12 struggle for you?

13 MR. GREENE: No, actually it
14 has not. I mean, we typically get an
15 overwhelming response for every class.
16 I think we're about in our 11th class
17 now. We do two per year.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 Okay. What has been the impact of the
20 \$7 million fewer dollars that we're
21 getting from the federal government
22 that impacted other housing agencies
23 here in the City?

24 MR. GREENE: Well, I think the
25 reduction -- what you're talking about

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2 is the \$7 million in the CDBG Program,
3 and we're certainly not funded as a
4 part of that.

5 But with respect to our end,
6 the Public Housing Authority, we have
7 actually lost about \$28 million in our
8 operating budget this year and another
9 \$18 million in our Section 8 budget
10 this year and about another \$10 million
11 in our capital budget this year.

12 So we lost quite a bit of
13 money this year. Our total budget on
14 an annual basis is usually around
15 \$350 million. And so we've probably
16 lost, if we add them all up, maybe
17 \$40 million, so it's getting up there
18 to be pretty close to...

19 So we have lost quite a bit on
20 all of our programs this year under the
21 federal budget cuts. Our staffing is
22 down by 50 percent between 2000 and
23 today, 2007. And in 2000, we had 2500
24 employees; today, we have 1250.

25 And that trend may continue

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2 southward. We are working with the
3 Mayor and the Congress of Mayors, and
4 we are trying to work with, you know,
5 all of the national organizations that
6 represent elected officials because we
7 believe that we need more involvement
8 at the national level, 'cause
9 typically, only the Housing Authority
10 executives do the lobbying of Congress
11 and HUD to try to increase funding.

12 And so I think that we haven't
13 been as effective as we could be if we
14 had more of the national organizations
15 that represent elected officials to
16 help us.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
18 Mm-hmm.

19 MR. GREENE: And so the
20 Mayor's agreed to join us, and we're
21 attempting to get the governors -- the
22 Governor to get the Governors
23 Association to help us out.

24 But -- so through the advent
25 of these other bodies, we were able to

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2 get \$300 million restored, but that
3 still means we got less money this
4 years than we had last year because of
5 HUD's -- I don't know what they're
6 doing with their money. I think
7 they're taking some of it for special
8 operations overseas or something,
9 because it's all not coming to our
10 communities.

11 So we are going through a
12 period of decline in a financial
13 commitment from the federal government,
14 and we don't know where the bottom is
15 because we're kind of in A democratic
16 leadership in the House and in the
17 Senate to help us out, and also, you
18 know, our U.S. senators on the Senate
19 side, Senator Spector, has been
20 helpful, but we need more help.

21 And so with respect to our
22 cuts, the impact may appear this
23 summer. You may see some of our
24 developments deteriorating in physical
25 conditions, you may see higher rates of

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2 crime in public housing this year for
3 the first time, and you may see more
4 abandoned and boarded-up homes this
5 year because the impact of the layoffs
6 hasn't really impacted our operations
7 yet, but we are down, like I said, by
8 50 percent, and we laid off 22 percent
9 on January the 9th.

10 So without support from the
11 City or the State or somebody gets the
12 federal government to do its job and
13 fund these programs here in our
14 country, we will see a decline in the
15 quality of life and neighborhoods as a
16 result of the disinvestment from this
17 current administration.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 So that the Section 8 program, given
20 what you just described, the future for
21 Section 8 is at best dismal if at all.

22 MR. GREENE: Well, the future
23 of Section 8 -- also this year, they
24 funded us at 88 percent for Section 8,
25 which is about \$18 million less than we

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2 need. And the Section 8 landlords we
3 have not provided a rent increase to
4 the Section 8 landlords in four years,
5 and so a lot of them are complaining.

6 But I do think that in the
7 short term through technology, through
8 raising funds in low-income housing tax
9 credit programs, through effective
10 partnerships like we talked about with
11 the School District, we want to
12 continue to invest in our communities
13 but the future is going to be a
14 challenge because under this
15 administration, we've lost money every
16 year in our program, and they continue
17 to move money from the northeastern
18 states to the southern and the
19 southwestern states even when there is
20 money.

21 So we're suffering not only a
22 dramatic reduction in funds but a
23 redistribution to the states that voted
24 for the president.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

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2 Finally, my question is to the
3 partnership that you just described
4 with Mr. Vallas, are there any other
5 potential projects on line like Lucien
6 Blackwell and Martha Washington,
7 Strawberry Mansion.

8 MR. GREENE: Well, we're very
9 proud of -- while we didn't plan it
10 together, we're certainly very proud of
11 what's going on at Audenried High
12 School.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
14 Okay.

15 MR. GREENE: Because we put in
16 554 new homes, and the School District
17 puts in a brand-new high school, and
18 the plans they have for that are
19 really, you know, just great. And we
20 think it's going to create a lot of
21 after-school social-gathering kind of
22 places and recreational activities for
23 kids.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
25 Okay.

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2 MR. GREENE: You know, and so
3 I think that we're -- we think that
4 when a new school and new housing all
5 come together, certainly it's great
6 because you have more people and more
7 people want to attend the school, more
8 people want to move in and rent the
9 houses because they're new and they're
10 safe, and the teachers and, in our
11 case, the property managers who work
12 there all very prideful.

13 We did, in South Philadelphia,
14 rebuild the Martin Luther King High
15 School, and the School District is
16 supposed to be reopening the Palumbo
17 School there -- I assume that's
18 correct -- the Palumbo School.

19 And so that's another case
20 where you have new houses, new people
21 to live in the neighborhood and the
22 schools.

23 So these things have been
24 happening just because of the vision
25 that Paul has for the School District,

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2 and I think that we can work together
3 more, there could be more things where,
4 from inception, we plan together from
5 beginning to end.

6 We were successful last year
7 in getting the State law changed in
8 that the Housing Authority now has the
9 ability under State law to do
10 construction within two miles of any
11 public housing development.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
13 Mm-hmm.

14 MR. GREENE: And so that means
15 that we are -- 'cause we are interested
16 in education and we are interested in
17 services and commercial, and so we went
18 to our legislators and we got a new
19 State law passed, and the Philadelphia
20 State legislators helped us out, helped
21 us get this bill passed last year, and
22 the governor signed it on November 9th,
23 which permits us to do mixed-use
24 community and mixed-use community
25 planning and construction.

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2 And so we're more prepared
3 than ever, and we have the tools and
4 the and we have the expertise to work
5 together with the people doing
6 community-based commercial,
7 community-based education,
8 community-based recreation,
9 community-based and many activities in
10 the neighborhood where we have a lot of
11 housing, we're interested in being a
12 full partner with the School District
13 and other public entities or private
14 entities to ensure the quality
15 construction of those combined set of
16 services that make for a good mixed-use
17 community.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

19 Yes, yes, yes.

20 Lastly, after-school
21 programming. As you plan together with
22 the School District, is that a service
23 becomes a part of the big picture,
24 knowing, you know, that there are still
25 at least 40,000 children that don't

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2 have after-school programming?

3 MR. GREENE: Well, that's the
4 vision that we have. I mean, we
5 certainly believe in the Lucien
6 Blackwell community as well as the
7 Grays Ferry community in South
8 Philadelphia that these are communities
9 that are at risk because, you know,
10 there's not a lot of activities, you
11 know, after school.

12 And so our view is that if we
13 can get this community center built and
14 it can be used by the School District
15 for programming throughout the day and
16 maybe hopefully for a broader use after
17 school that we can provide, you know,
18 plans and programs activities for kids
19 so they can grow --

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

21 Yes.

22 MR. GREENE: -- in an
23 environment where they get to learn
24 from qualified professionals --

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

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2 Mm-hmm.

3 MR. GREENE: -- qualified
4 trainers, qualified teachers after
5 hours or other qualified social and
6 economic development folks who can help
7 them grow to be leading members of our
8 city.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

10 Yes.

11 MR. GREENE: So that's our
12 vision. Our vision is the day when we
13 build new housing, there's also planned
14 programming for activities after school
15 for the kids, because our communities,
16 we built 500 houses in one
17 neighborhood, that's a lot of kids.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

19 Sure is.

20 MR. GREENE: That may be about
21 2,000 persons living in that
22 neighborhood and half them are kids.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

24 Yes.

25 MR. GREENE: And so there are

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2 a lot of kids, you know, that are
3 school-aged kids in this neighborhood
4 because we -- before, we had 124 homes;
5 today, we have over 550 homes in Lucien
6 E. Blackwell, so that means there's a
7 lot more living in this neighborhood
8 than lived there before. And so the
9 risk for crime coming back to this
10 neighborhood is great.

11 And so that's why we believe
12 that a new community center will give
13 some positive activities and a positive
14 role model, and that's why the cameras
15 are important.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
17 Mm-hmm.

18 MR. GREENE: Because if we
19 don't treat the problem before it
20 becomes a real problem, then it will be
21 become a high-crime neighborhood again,
22 and that's our concern.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
24 Okay. Well, thank you again for your
25 important testimony.

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2 MR. GREENE: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much.

5 MR. GREENE: Thank you all
6 very much.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you. Thank you for coming.

9 Cory Bowman, Associate
10 Director, Center for Community
11 Partnerships, University of
12 Pennsylvania;

13 Nancy Streim, Associate Dean
14 of Graduate School of Education,
15 University of Pennsylvania.

16 And let me introduce to you
17 Dr. Van McMurtry who's Vice President
18 of Government and Public Relations.
19 And Dr. McMurtry, thank you for coming
20 and for all of the support. You've
21 been a blessing to us, a blessing to
22 our city and our community and Penn.

23 (Witnesses come forward.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
25 afternoon. Welcome. Thank you for all

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2 that you do.

3 MR. BOWMAN: Good afternoon
4 Councilwoman Blackwell and the special
5 committee.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
7 afternoon.

8 MR. BOWMAN: I'm Cory Bowman.
9 I work at the Center for Community
10 Partnerships at the University of
11 Pennsylvania, and it's a pleasure to
12 talk about this very important topic
13 before this committee.

14 MS. STREIM: Good afternoon.
15 I'm Nancy Streim. I'm Associate Dean
16 for Educational Practice at the
17 University of Pennsylvania's Graduate
18 School of Education.

19 And I'd like to thank
20 Councilwoman Blackwell and members of
21 the Education Committee for inviting us
22 to present testimony on this critical
23 issue of Philadelphia schools.

24 Nothing is more important for
25 the future of Philadelphia than

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2 ensuring the success of our public
3 schools. The civic leadership in
4 Philadelphia has long recognized that
5 public education is a community
6 responsibility, and there are many
7 examples of strong and productive
8 business, philanthropic, and higher-
9 education partnerships with the public
10 schools.

11 No higher-education
12 institution has been more forthcoming
13 or more involved than University of
14 Pennsylvania. Local engagement is the
15 cornerstone of President Amy Gutmann's
16 strategic agenda for the university.
17 Support for education in Philadelphia
18 and especially in our own community of
19 West Philadelphia engages the entire
20 Penn campus, the faculty staff, and
21 students.

22 In the 2005-2006 school year,
23 Penn directed \$11 million of operating
24 budget, externally raised funds, and
25 in-kind support to programs and

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2 services in Philadelphia schools. Penn
3 is recognized as a national model of
4 higher-education investment in
5 communities in K-to-12 education.

6 I'd like to focus for a moment
7 on a couple of ways that Penn is making
8 a significant difference for young
9 people in West Philadelphia and suggest
10 that these models of collaboration are
11 worth expanding as the School District
12 seeks to develop a comprehensive
13 strategy for improving conditions and
14 outcomes in Philadelphia schools.

15 First is the Penn Alexander
16 School. As you know, the University of
17 Pennsylvania, the School District of
18 Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia
19 Federation of Teachers entered into an
20 historic agreement back in 1998 to
21 create a new public school for the
22 children of University City. The
23 result has been the highly acclaimed
24 Penn Alexander School, and we're very
25 grateful for the appreciation and the

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2 acknowledgments that you've already
3 made about the school this afternoon.

4 This neighborhood public
5 school serves 500 students in grades
6 K-to-8, all of whom must live in the
7 defined catchment area to attend. The
8 student body is ethnically and
9 economically diverse, representative of
10 the West Philadelphia community.

11 And counter to much of the
12 misperception that often occurs about
13 Penn Alexander, the student body there
14 is 48 African-American, 28 percent
15 Caucasian, 13 percent Asian, 6 percent
16 Hispanic, and 5 percent other
17 ethnicities. Less than 20 percent of
18 the student body is associated with
19 University of Pennsylvania through
20 their parents.

21 The school has now -- is about
22 to complete its sixth year and it's
23 consistently ranked among the top
24 neighborhood elementary schools in the
25 City. However, it is not just the 500

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2 Penn Alexander students who benefit
3 from the school. The idea of the Penn
4 Alexander School was to leverage
5 improvements in other area schools.

6 And I'm proud to say that Penn
7 Alexander teachers regularly share
8 knowledge and experiences through
9 joint projects with colleagues from
10 our schools, as instructors for School
11 District professional development
12 programs, as representatives on
13 districtwide committees, and as
14 presenters at regional and national
15 conferences.

16 The school has also had a very
17 positive impact on the community, and
18 University City is now one of the most
19 desirable residential neighborhoods in
20 the City.

21 Another model for higher
22 education's involvement in K-to-12
23 schools is represented by Penn's formal
24 relationship with the Henry Lee and
25 Alexander Wilson Elementary schools

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2 under the umbrella of the School
3 District's diverse provider, or EMO
4 model. While Penn does not manage the
5 schools, we assist the principal and
6 teachers at these two schools to help
7 their students achieve at higher
8 levels.

9 The additional State funding
10 provided to Penn to support this
11 partnership has infused \$1.9 million
12 directly into the schools in the form
13 of additional teaching materials such
14 as textbooks, literature, and science
15 kits, and professional development for
16 staff, and in academic enrichment for
17 students, including music and art
18 residencies.

19 Equally important, Penn has
20 also leveraged the partnership to
21 secure additional funds for Lee and
22 Wilson Schools from both public and
23 private sources for things like
24 technology, after-school math and
25 science programming, and other special

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2 programs.

3 After five years of
4 partnership, the results are
5 significant. Lee and Wilson no longer
6 rank in the bottom quartile of District
7 schools. Both schools are safe and
8 orderly. Student suspensions are among
9 the lowest in the District, and teacher
10 turnover has been drastically reduced.

11 Wilson has achieved adequate
12 yearly progress under the No Child Left
13 Behind Act for three of the past five
14 years. And at Lee, one third of last
15 year's graduating class was accepted
16 into selective high schools compared to
17 none five years ago.

18 Penn is equally committed to
19 helping improve the quality of
20 education at the high schools in West
21 Philadelphia. We are already deeply
22 involved at Sayre High School where
23 faculty from the College of Arts and
24 Sciences and the Medical School are
25 assisting in developing a focus on

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2 health careers and health service.

3 And my colleague Cory Bowman
4 will tell you more about Penn's program
5 at Sayre in just a moment.

6 Penn has also been working
7 closely with the School District to
8 establish a new university-assisted
9 high school of international studies in
10 West Philadelphia. The goal here is to
11 prepare young people from the community
12 to thrive in a global society. The
13 school is scheduled to open this
14 September, pending approval by the
15 School Reform Commission.

16 Penn is designing the academic
17 program in collaboration with the
18 School District. And the school will
19 also be affiliated with the Bill and
20 Melinda Gates Foundation's National
21 Network of International Studies high
22 schools.

23 Over 500 students have applied
24 for the 125 seats in the first
25 9th-grade class, and we urge the School

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2 District and the School Reform
3 Commission to make this fabulous new
4 partnership a reality this year.

5 There are a number of elements
6 that make schools successful. These
7 include focused and strong leadership,
8 high-quality teaching, parent
9 involvement, and adequate resources.

10 While leadership and teaching
11 are the most critical, there is no
12 doubt that resources are necessary in
13 the form of clean and safe facilities,
14 well-stocked classrooms, usable
15 technology, and sufficient staffing to
16 meet the students' needs.

17 Though we recognize that
18 adequate funding for Philadelphia
19 schools is an enormous challenge,
20 innovative partnerships with
21 higher-education institutions can
22 provide valuable human intellectual and
23 financial resources.

24 We appreciate the Council's
25 efforts to stimulate strategic planning

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2 for capital improvements in
3 Philadelphia schools through these
4 hearings, and we are grateful to
5 Councilwoman Blackwell, who has been a
6 tremendous supporter of Penn's efforts
7 to strengthen the quality of life and
8 quality of education in West
9 Philadelphia.

10 And we look forward to future
11 opportunities to deepen Penn's local
12 engagement in schools through
13 innovative and formalized partnerships
14 such as the new university-assisted
15 International Studies High School and
16 the continuation of the Penn
17 Partnership Schools Network.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much.

21 We know that we wouldn't have
22 a library at Lee School were it not for
23 your intervention and your commitment.
24 I mention Lee School because that's
25 where I taught in my first life, and I

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2 was very disappointed. I wrote a
3 curriculum and we did a yearbook. And
4 perhaps with your help, they'll get
5 back to these things.

6 But certainly to not have a
7 library was devastating in addition to
8 the garden and all of the work outside.

9 So I challenge -- I challenge
10 my colleagues to have the partnership
11 we have in your neighborhoods to do
12 these wonderful things that we enjoy
13 with the University of Pennsylvania.

14 Thank you.

15 Mr. Bowman?

16 MR. BOWMAN: Thank you,
17 Councilwoman. I have submitted an
18 appendix about a variety of
19 comprehensive approaches that
20 universities and colleges and other
21 anchor institutions, as Councilwoman,
22 you mentioned, health-care institutions
23 might be able to take to partner with
24 schools and facilities.

25 Due to the brief time I will

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2 take, I won't enumerate the educational
3 partnerships; Nancy began doing that.

4 The second area is around
5 college access activities, the whole
6 idea of opening up the schools for job
7 training and recreation and other kinds
8 of community activities.

9 Fourth, social and health
10 services.

11 Fifth, economic-development
12 activities that universities can do in
13 terms of purchasing and contracting and
14 other quality-of-life things that we
15 can be doing such as University
16 District and U.C. Green and Bright.

17 But I would like to focus in
18 particular on the work that the
19 Councilwoman has helped us do at the
20 Sayre School in her district to help
21 create a comprehensive -- a potentially
22 comprehensive model of university
23 school community partnerships that are
24 particularly relevant to this facility
25 as an education program.

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2 Truly democratic partnerships
3 between universities and schools are a
4 powerful strategy for changing
5 communities, schools, and higher
6 education itself. The partnerships
7 described herein represent the fruits
8 of over two decades of collaboration
9 between Penn, community organizations,
10 and the public schools in West
11 Philadelphia.

12 Penn's Center for Community
13 Partnerships, together with Community
14 Partners, have created university-
15 assisted community schools that are the
16 centers of education and engagement
17 that provide a range of services for
18 students, their parents, and other
19 community members.

20 This approach works towards
21 tapping, integrating, mobilizing, and
22 galvanizing the resources of
23 communities, including colleges and
24 universities, to improve the community,
25 the school, and the educational

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2 learning of students.

3 Somewhat more specifically,
4 the strategy assumes that, like
5 colleges and universities, public
6 schools can function as environment-
7 changing institutions, and public
8 schools can become the strategic
9 centers of broad-based partnerships and
10 genuinely engage and coordinate a wide
11 variety of community organizations and
12 institutions.

13 Public schools belong to all
14 members of the community. They are
15 particularly well suited, therefore, to
16 function as neighborhood hubs or
17 neighborhood nodes around which local
18 partnerships and youth programs can be
19 generated and formed.

20 When they play that role,
21 schools function as community
22 institutions par excellence. They then
23 provide and decentralize democratic
24 community-based response to significant
25 community problems and help young

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2 people make positive contributions to
3 the community and learn better through
4 action-oriented, collaborative
5 community-based problem-solving.

6 The program that we're talking
7 about now works with over 6,000
8 children and was begun in 1985 through
9 Penn School's Community Partnership.
10 Each school in our partnership in West
11 Philadelphia engages in different
12 locally-determined activities and
13 partnership, but overall, the students
14 in the school engage in hands-on
15 community, real-world problem-solving
16 not only in the school curriculum but
17 after school, weekends, and summers.

18 Let me speak a little bit
19 about the Sayre School Penn Community
20 School Initiative. The Sayre High
21 School Penn University-Assisted
22 Community School Initiative provides an
23 example of how these principles have
24 been put into practice. The school-
25 based Community Health Promotion and

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2 Disease Prevention Program at Sayre was
3 formally launched in January of 2003.

4 It functions as a central component of
5 a university-assisted community school
6 functioned -- excuse me -- designed to
7 advance both student learning,
8 democratic development, as well as to
9 helping strengthen families and
10 institutions in the community.

11 The program is integrated into
12 the core curriculum and the
13 co-curriculum of the public school and
14 the university, assuring an educational
15 focus of the activities as well as the
16 sustainability of the program and the
17 partnership.

18 To support this aim, Penn
19 faculty and students from across the
20 university now work at Sayre through
21 existing and new courses, internships,
22 and research projects. An outcome of
23 the integration of health promotion and
24 service activities as an outcome of the
25 integration of health promotion and

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2 service activities in the curriculum,
3 Sayre students serve as agents of
4 health care-change in the Sayre
5 neighborhood.

6 For example, Sayre
7 11th-graders, in an intake medical
8 procedures course, work with Penn
9 students, learning how to perform the
10 basics of intake medical procedures;
11 for example, blood pressure, height,
12 weight, glucose, reflex, vision, et
13 cetera.

14 Sayre students also learn
15 about prominent community health
16 concerns such as hypertension,
17 diabetes, obesity, proper nutrition, et
18 cetera.

19 And the students are going to
20 gain clinical experience by operating
21 after school -- and they actually have
22 been for the last year -- have been
23 gaining clinical experience by
24 operating an after-school health-
25 monitoring clinic. When the health

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2 clinic opens during its permanent
3 facility in the summer of this year,
4 Sayre students will work with Penn
5 doctors, nurses, health professionals,
6 students, and community members to
7 provide basic intake services, medical
8 information, and referrals.

9 The Sayre Penn model extends
10 student learning and positive youth
11 development into the out-of-school time
12 as well. Sayre is the site for
13 City-funded beacon and State and
14 federally funded 21st Century Community
15 Center funds, and the building's open
16 to students of all ages to participate
17 in a myriad of academic enrichment and
18 fitness activities, carrying the
19 school-day health focus into
20 after-school health programs, offering
21 a safe space to youth and community
22 members of all ages.

23 A community advisory board
24 oversees these community school
25 activities, and staff from Penn's

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2 Center for Community Partnership help
3 provide the coordination.

4 Sayre represents a unique and
5 highly effective integration of City,
6 community, and university resources
7 that aims to enhance the educational,
8 recreational, and health-related
9 opportunities and to improve the
10 overall quality of life of students at
11 Sayre School, its feeder schools, and
12 the surrounding community.

13 I have submitted to Council a
14 list of activities that involve members
15 of all ages across the community,
16 including a comprehensive K-to-8
17 after-school program that operates 3 to
18 7 p.m. for a couple hundred students;
19 it's been evaluated as one of the best
20 in the City by Philadelphia Safe and
21 Sound. The 9th through 12th-grade
22 after-school program includes early
23 college, a youth job corps. There's a
24 number of evening activities, summer
25 activities that provide academic,

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2 cultural, recreational, and job
3 training activities for all members of
4 the community, recreation programs and
5 comprehensive summer activities.

6 The work at Sayre demonstrates
7 that higher education can become a
8 permanent anchor for revitalizing
9 schools and communities and advancing
10 student learning and development if the
11 vast resources that universities
12 possess -- particularly it's faculty,
13 students, and staff -- are brought to
14 bear in a coordinated fashion. This
15 could be a model for citywide
16 activities.

17 Taken together, there are five
18 integrated initiatives that we can look
19 at Sayre that could serve the
20 educational, professional, and social
21 needs of all residents.

22 First, a comprehensive school
23 day program that connects learning to
24 community health improvement that's
25 improving learning and community

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2 well-being simultaneously.

3 Second, comprehensive
4 after-school, weekend, summer
5 activities for K-to-12 students across
6 the entire community.

7 Third, communitywide
8 programming providing academic,
9 cultural, recreational classes as well
10 as community development, job training,
11 parent-support workshops and seminars
12 for all members of the community.

13 Fourth, being a hub for a
14 comprehensive delivery and services
15 such as the Sayre Health Center linking
16 the resources of Penn medicine,
17 dentistry, nursing, social work.

18 Fifth, the creation of a West
19 Philadelphia neighborhood link. This
20 was designed in conjunction with
21 Councilwoman Blackwell, students and
22 community members. This would be a
23 collaborative effort of government
24 agencies, local higher-education
25 institutions, nonprofit organizations,

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2 and West Philadelphia residents that
3 will improve the conditions and overall
4 quality of life in West Philadelphia by
5 creating a single point of service
6 delivery and referral site, integrating
7 core areas of city and government
8 services, including education,
9 workforce development, housing,
10 municipal, and human services.

11 By activating, educating, and
12 serving all West Philadelphia
13 residents, this link this fifth
14 component, could function as a center
15 for the community to fulfill needs and
16 improve access to central services and
17 information.

18 Replicating this component
19 will support a thriving Philadelphia
20 comprised of strong individual
21 neighborhoods that that also belong to
22 a broader Philadelphia community.

23 In conclusion,
24 university-assisted community schools
25 serve, educate, and activate students,

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2 their families, and other local
3 residents. Students not only learn by
4 doing, but also learn by and for
5 service. Simultaneously, the
6 university benefits from the unique
7 critical opportunities community
8 schools provide for learning, research,
9 outreach, and program development.

10 This opportunity to develop
11 this model provides not only an
12 opportunity for Penn and West
13 Philadelphia but to be replicated
14 across the city and across the country
15 as a national model.

16 To speed the development and
17 advancement of this university-assisted
18 community school idea to help our
19 schools become vehicles for safer
20 communities and improved learning, the
21 City Council could do the following:

22 One, develop and apply
23 innovative funding strategies that
24 provide support to broad-based
25 coalitions, local coalitions that are

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2 designed to help and sustain community
3 schools.

4 Two, create multi-agency City
5 commissions designed to advance and
6 implement university-assisted community
7 schools.

8 And three, strengthen and
9 expand community-based partnerships to
10 help universities comprehensively
11 partner with their communities.

12 I would like to applaud
13 Councilwoman Blackwell, this special
14 committee of Council and City Council
15 in general for holding these important
16 hearings. Thank you very much for your
17 time.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much. Let me thank you too
20 for all the work and certainly both of
21 you, Dr. Ira Harkavey and certainly
22 Glenn Bryant who's out of town and
23 Dr. McMurtry for all that you do in
24 schools and the millions of dollars
25 that you invest in schools across West

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2 Philadelphia.

3 It's very important that we
4 have these programs in so many schools.
5 Obviously, we -- obviously Penn
6 understands the difference and we will
7 see the difference in young people who
8 come out of Sayre and Wilson and Lee
9 and all of the other schools that
10 you're involved in.

11 And certainly again, we say
12 thank you very much.

13 Any questions?

14 (No questions.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you very much.

17 The committee will note that
18 Jacqueline Barnett, Secretary of
19 Education for the City of Philadelphia
20 to the Mayor, was here but she had to
21 leave. Apparently, that truancy
22 program downstairs is pulling our
23 folks, but it's okay.

24 Jane Golden, Director of Mural
25 Arts. Then Dr. Nancy Morgan. I guess

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2 I've lost Dr. Morgan.

3 Jane Golden, Dr. Morgan, Mayer
4 Krain, then Men of Mill Creek, then
5 Vernard Johnson, and we'll go from
6 there if someone else comes in.

7 (Witness comes forward.)

8 MS. GOLDEN: Good afternoon.

9 Thank you so much for inviting me here
10 today and for all of the work that you
11 do.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you.

14 MS. GOLDEN: I'm very grateful
15 to both the Mayor and to City Council
16 for all of their support.

17 As of today, we have 2,752
18 indoor and outdoor murals in the City
19 of Philadelphia, making Mural Arts the
20 largest program of its kind anywhere in
21 the world.

22 But what I think is one of the
23 City's best kept secrets is that as of
24 today, we're serving over 4,000 young
25 people with free, very intensive,

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2 rigorous after-school programs.

3 In addition to our many
4 after-school programs, we have an
5 incredible partnership with the School
6 District and are very grateful to Paul
7 Vallas and to the SRC for improving
8 this contract several years ago, where
9 we are transforming 100 schools and
10 working with young people at schools
11 all over the City.

12 What was most telling was,
13 many years ago, we were at the McKinley
14 School, and the principal there said to
15 us, "Please turn this prison into a
16 paradise." And we realized that you
17 can offer a lot of programs inside the
18 school, but if the school is concrete
19 and barren and uninspiring, children
20 are just not going to feel right
21 because their environment doesn't
22 reflect anything positive.

23 And I think that we can't say
24 this enough: That kids need to be in
25 an environments that are beautiful.

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2 People need beauty. And so we started
3 to think of transforming a school
4 beyond just a mural.

5 So what we did at McKinley
6 School has become a model, where we
7 created murals around the school. We
8 did sculptures, mosaic benches. We
9 created outdoor interactive learning
10 gardens, we made games for the kids.
11 And in effect, it's a different school
12 today.

13 And what the principal did,
14 which was so smart, is she leveraged
15 that project and she was able to raise
16 additional funds, she was able to get
17 the basketball court, the running track
18 her library fixed, a couple of new
19 classrooms, and the cafeteria totally
20 beautified as a result of this public
21 art project.

22 So when we started working
23 with the School District, we decided
24 that that's exactly what we would go
25 for -- major transformations at schools

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2 all over the City.

3 So we are now in Year 3, and
4 every year, we do between 20 and 25
5 School District projects. And every
6 time we go into a school, we go into
7 the school with an intensive 24-week
8 art-education program.

9 Now, many of the schools in
10 Philadelphia sadly have programs that
11 do not include art. And we feel very,
12 very strongly that not only should
13 every citizen have art in their lives,
14 but every child has a right to have art
15 education.

16 And so we're going in with
17 programs that are very similar to our
18 Big Picture Program or our Mural Core
19 Program, which is our program for
20 teens, or many of our DHS programs, and
21 that is that we take the wonderful art
22 of mural-making and we deconstruct it
23 and we look at every step of mural
24 making, whether it's citizenship, civic
25 engagement, budgeting, transfer,

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2 architecture, design work, color,
3 composition, design. It's as if
4 they're going not to just an art
5 school, but we also tie in very much
6 with their academics.

7 And so I'm not just talking
8 about an art curriculum. This is
9 merging both art, social services, and
10 education, and offering kids the best
11 experience possible.

12 We learned, when we were the
13 Anti-Graffiti Network, that in order to
14 make a difference in a young person's
15 life, you need to offer them sustained
16 programs over long periods of time. I
17 think if you're able to offer them
18 rigorous programs and, at the same
19 time, beautify both their immediate
20 environment and the neighborhood as
21 well, then I think that we have a
22 winning formula.

23 I think we also need to take
24 into account that many of our children
25 in this city, the only way they

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2 articulate themselves is through art.
3 And I think that it's -- we cannot
4 offer a well-rounded educational
5 program for them without having them
6 exposed to both art and music.

7 And by introducing them and
8 having them be part of an intensive
9 mural program, what they're doing is,
10 they're learning to not just create a
11 mural for their classroom or the
12 hallway or the cafeteria, but they're
13 also learning what it means to
14 contribute to the life of their
15 neighborhood, and that is what is so
16 important.

17 And moving beyond just the
18 School District, we have a wonderful
19 partnership also with the Department of
20 Human Services where we're working in
21 alternative schools, and we're offering
22 these rigorous programs to kids who are
23 truly at risk, who have fallen through
24 the cracks. And over and over and over
25 again, we see art become a lifeline for

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2 them.

3 Currently, we are a part of
4 the Reintegration Initiative at the
5 Department of Human Services, and we
6 are offering kids amazing programs
7 where we're there during the school
8 day, we're there after school, and we
9 also have the special Saturday programs
10 at the Thomas Aikens House, where we're
11 bringing in well-known Philadelphia
12 artists so the kids can learn more.

13 And in addition to that, we
14 have special programs where we're
15 bringing in guest speakers at schools
16 and residential placements and
17 different social-service providers
18 around the City where they're learn
19 from artists like James Dupree, Sonja
20 Sanchez, Rennie Harris, and I could go
21 on and on and on.

22 We believe that every minute
23 we have a young person's attention, it
24 is up to us to make the most of it.
25 This is not just a job or a

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2 responsibility; I believe this is a
3 moral imperative.

4 And just to give you an idea
5 of some special initiatives that Mural
6 Arts has right now with young people in
7 the City with schools, with
8 social-service agencies, I'd like to
9 just list a few of them.

10 We have a new program called
11 "Cops and Kids Turning a Corner" where
12 we're bringing together police officers
13 and young people to try to break down
14 the barrier that divides them in order
15 to talk about the impact that crime and
16 violence has on the City. How do we
17 make Philadelphia a safer city.

18 We're about to embark on a
19 major restorative justice project with
20 young people in schools in Olney and
21 Logan, with kids at St. Gabrielle's
22 Hall, with the men at the Graterford
23 Prison, and with community members.

24 We're doing a big project
25 about identity at Second and Thompson,

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2 where our young people are painting a
3 mural that is a quarter of a mile long.

4 We're doing a major project
5 about the artist Faith Ringold, and
6 Faith Ringold is actually going to be
7 coming here in the late spring and
8 visiting our kids, and the kids are
9 learning not just painting but also
10 quilt-making, and they're also studying
11 the civil rights movement.

12 We're doing a special project
13 about forgiveness and working with kids
14 who have been victims of crime.

15 We have special
16 intergenerational projects going on.

17 And we have a special project
18 at Graterford Prison where every other
19 Wednesday night, we turn the visiting
20 room of the prison into an artist's
21 studio where the kids, along with the
22 prisoners there, write poetry, do
23 narrative, they paint together, and
24 they talk about how they can make a
25 change in their lives so that they

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2 don't end up in institutions.

3 In addition to those programs,
4 we have many other special mural
5 projects going on. And in their junior
6 year of high school, what we're doing
7 is, we're taking kids to visit
8 colleges, art school, Community
9 College, and trade school. We're doing
10 portfolio development with them in
11 order to help facilitate their next
12 move in life.

13 After that, we also get kids
14 into different high schools. We've
15 gotten many of our young people out of
16 William Penn High School and into
17 charter schools. And we have, I would
18 say, over the last two years, have
19 gotten 50 kids into Saturday sessions
20 at University of the Arts and the
21 Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

22 When young people graduate
23 from thigh school, if they feel they're
24 unsure of their next step in life, they
25 can stay and work at the Mural Arts

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2 Program until they're ready to move on.

3 We love these kids with all
4 our heart, and we will do everything we
5 can to make sure that they are safe and
6 successful. You have my commitment.

7 I personally take being a
8 public servant very seriously. I am so
9 grateful and feel very privileged to
10 have this job.

11 And please know that we will
12 do whatever we can to make sure
13 everyone in Philadelphia has access to
14 art. It is absolutely not a luxury.
15 It is indeed a necessity.

16 Thank you.

17 And I'm happy to answer any
18 questions, and we will make sure that
19 every member of City Council has an
20 accurate listing of all of the programs
21 that we offer around the City. We are
22 now in 70 sites around the City of
23 Philadelphia, and we are turning the
24 Thomas Aikens House into an art center
25 for kids. We are renovating the house

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2 next door that belonged to Thomas
3 Aikens' caretaker. I feel we're
4 carrying the spirit of Thomas Aikens
5 on, and will be a wonderful space with
6 studios and a multi-media lab.

7 And we continue to recruit and
8 train young artists as well. As of
9 today, we're employing about 350
10 artists a year. It's great to give
11 artists a space to show their work.
12 It's better to pay them and let them
13 know they have real value in our
14 society.

15 And even better than that is
16 to connect artists with young people
17 because there's so much great cross
18 fertilization that occurs.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

20 You're absolutely a phenomenal woman.

21 MS. GOLDEN: And now let's
22 paint.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
24 because we know your motto is...

25 MS. GOLDEN: Art saves lives.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: There
3 it is. All right.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
5 Ditto, ditto, ditto.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very, very much.

8 MS. GOLDEN: Well, thank you.
9 And thank you so much for all of your
10 support over the years. It is truly
11 appreciated.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you very much.

14 MS. GOLDEN: Any questions?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No
16 questions. Thank you.

17 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

18 (Witness comes forward.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

20 Dr. Morgan? I was so afraid you had
21 gone.

22 And Dr. Morgan and I worked
23 together. She wears so many hats.
24 She's also Chair of Education for the
25 Mayor's Commission on African and

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2 Caribbean Immigrant Affairs, and that
3 is very, very important to many
4 citizens in this city, to all of us.
5 Thanks for all that you do. Thank you.

6 DR. MORGAN: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
8 Welcome.

9 DR. MORGAN: Good afternoon.
10 My name is Nancy Morgan. I'm president
11 of Bridges International, Incorporated.
12 I service as commissioner on the Civil
13 Service Commission and as well as Chair
14 of the Educational Commission of the
15 Mayor's Commission on African and
16 Caribbean Immigrant Affairs.

17 The reason that I bring this
18 up is, I could testify today to the
19 obvious relationship of effective and
20 efficient school facilities as it
21 relates to raising and educating a
22 skilled and productive workforce in the
23 City.

24 Or in terms of the Mayor's
25 Commission on African and Immigrant

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2 Affairs, I could testify regarding the
3 conditions of neighborhoods and the
4 resultant effect on immigrant
5 populations who come to this country
6 specifically for opportunities and
7 public education and the need for
8 better than equal facilities to enhance
9 their integration into the so-called
10 host community.

11 But today, I wanted to testify
12 mainly from the perspective of being an
13 educator, having been in the School
14 District for 26 years prior to my
15 retirement in 1994, early retirement,
16 and as the parents of three educators
17 who have two educators as parents.

18 I thank you for the
19 opportunity to address this committee
20 on a topic that is both integral to the
21 development of the child as it is to
22 the development of the neighborhoods
23 across the City of Philadelphia.

24 In the midst of what appears
25 to be a tumultuous world fraught with

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2 violence and chaos, we honor the spirit
3 of God and good and are thankful, as
4 our elders have said, we are in our
5 right minds -- or at least we'd like to
6 believe. Now it's the minds of the
7 children we must protect as we enhance
8 that which is positive in our space and
9 time.

10 To bear a French philosopher
11 once said, "The mind is the atmosphere
12 of the soul." If logic follows the
13 soul is within the protection of the
14 mind, then the mind must be in the
15 protection of something greater than
16 that.

17 A practical translation:
18 Consider the environment and/or
19 atmosphere in which we nurture the
20 minds of our youth, our future, what's
21 on and in their minds.

22 Philadelphia City Council
23 Resolution No. 070095 addresses just
24 this issue and challenge, it seems to
25 me. In our society, young people are

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2 truly aware of what is valued by what
3 they see and the ways that adults
4 respond to things.

5 Many young children aspire to
6 become legendary sports figures, and we
7 might wonder why. They are mindful
8 that, apparently, sports are important
9 in our society. A child needs to only
10 come before lush fields and the grand
11 edifices we create and erect for sports
12 events to know the value of the
13 experience.

14 Similarly, when they watch
15 television and they see the Academy
16 Awards programs or any entertainment
17 venues and they see the red carpets,
18 the extraordinary lights, the glamour,
19 the jewels, the wealth, any child would
20 believe that success lies in the field
21 of entertainment rather than academic
22 or vocational endeavors.

23 While it's realistic to
24 believe that education can never
25 command or may never command the kind

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2 of resources that are designated for
3 sports and entertainment, it is equally
4 fair to expect at least a decent
5 representation.

6 When a child spends the
7 greater part of every day in a building
8 where he or she has been told there's
9 something valuable to gain, then the
10 surroundings should reflect that
11 experience.

12 There are those of us who, as
13 children, arrived at old buildings with
14 shining hardwood floors, clean, tall
15 windows, and fine wooden cabinets, and
16 we felt that we were in a place where
17 something important was happening.

18 Of cours, then we didn't know
19 anything about poor lighting or
20 asbestos insulation or inadequate
21 ventilation systems. But also in those
22 days, we did not need the technology;
23 we didn't need to be in a building that
24 supported sophisticated computer
25 systems. We did not need the

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2 capability -- or it wasn't available to
3 us to have the capability to correspond
4 with schools in other countries around
5 the globe.

6 The fact that at least half a
7 century has passed since those
8 buildings were half a century old
9 should trigger a thought. Why is it
10 that neighborhood schools do not evolve
11 to handle change as do office buildings
12 and other places where important things
13 takes place every day -- and not things
14 that are more important necessarily.

15 Thankfully, councilwoman
16 Jannie Blackwell, your leadership and
17 this austere committee on education
18 have apparently given it thought and
19 are now moving to put thought into
20 action.

21 As neighborhood development
22 moves to another level, our priorities
23 must become clear to those we treasure.
24 We have to create for them an
25 atmosphere and environment that

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2 indisputably demonstrates what's
3 important to the growth and development
4 of the greater community.

5 Even if we maintain the
6 exterior facade in a city known for its
7 historical sites, at the very least
8 what's happening on the inside and
9 around the building should be
10 consistent with the many necessities of
11 competing in a global society.

12 And in listening to the
13 previous testimony, we also have to be
14 really careful to keep the beauty there
15 for balance.

16 Capital improvements are not
17 only necessary to provide a more
18 suitable haven for the mind, but within
19 the context of nurturing the mind,
20 student achievement is positively
21 affected.

22 There was specific testimony
23 preceding this from the District, from
24 University of Penn, and from other
25 others. There's data to show that

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2 supports the data that shows greater
3 student achievement when there's
4 parental involvement, for example. And
5 certainly new buildings with facilities
6 for community involvement will bring
7 the parents in and will create some
8 pride.

9 There are also statistics that
10 show greater student achievement when
11 self-esteem is positive and sustained.
12 We spent a great deal of time in the
13 '70s doing professional development
14 that was built around building
15 children's self-esteem.

16 Sitting in a classroom where
17 paint is fresh, the windows open and
18 close, the heating and ventilation
19 systems work properly, the
20 infrastructure is updated, and general
21 surroundings are more consistent with
22 today's standards rather than those of
23 the '50s could better provide
24 incubators for the minds of tomorrow.

25 With little effort, we could

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2 also probably find data that would
3 suggest that often the most
4 sought-after teachers are attracted to
5 facilities that support creativity
6 through technological and contemporary
7 aids. We've lost good teachers to the
8 suburbs and other districts that are
9 able to provide more modern and updated
10 buildings and facilities.

11 Outside of central government
12 offices, or maybe in addition to,
13 schools and churches in every community
14 should be pinnacles of the best of
15 today's society. Unfortunately in many
16 neighborhoods, they sometimes lag far
17 behind the commercial venues. This is
18 another testament to our children about
19 what we value.

20 In summation, once we've
21 established and demonstrated through
22 word and deed the value of education,
23 the world can expand for each of our
24 children not only through the
25 confidence and esteem of the educators

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2 but also the pride of the parents and
3 the realization that the relationship
4 between neighborhood development and
5 capital improvements to School District
6 facilities can perhaps be likened to
7 the relationship of water to fish.

8 It's a scientific fact that if
9 you put a fish in a small bowl, that
10 fish will stay small. If the fish,
11 however, is in the ocean, that fish can
12 grow enormous in size; the fish fills
13 the size of its surroundings.

14 Resolution No. 070095 proposes
15 to view the current environment of the
16 fish and to provide a greater realm for
17 its growth. Not that the bowl must be
18 large but clean, effectively designed,
19 and resplendent with light,
20 possibilities for creativity, and
21 windows to the world.

22 At the risk of following an
23 analogy to its natural, albeit
24 stretched, conclusion, fish do travel
25 in schools.

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2 Finally, let us always view
3 schools as bridges to the future and
4 bridges within the neighborhood and
5 across the City between generations,
6 families, and also between the many
7 diverse thinkers as we nurture the
8 minds of our community.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much, Dr. Morgan. Thank you
12 for your leadership over the years and
13 for taking your time out today and your
14 willingness to come into other hearings
15 that I unfortunately did not inform you
16 about and so we had to catch up.

17 DR. MORGAN: You're welcome.

18 Are there any questions?

19 (No questions.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much. Thank you, Dr. Morgan,
22 for your patience.

23 DR. MORGAN: Also, I'd like to
24 submit a revised testimony that will
25 better reflect the statements that were

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2 made rather than the testimony that was
3 submitted before.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you. Thank you.

6 Mayer Krain, certified public
7 accountant.

8 Men of Mill Creek, Derek Long
9 and Mr. Adams, you're next.

10 (Witness comes forward.)

11 MR. KRAIN: Chairwoman

12 Blackwell and Councilwoman
13 Reynolds-Brown, good afternoon.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
15 Good afternoon.

16 MR. KRAIN: My name is Mayer
17 Krain. My background as a certified
18 public accountant is more of an
19 operating of a business nature than a
20 strict economic nature.

21 If funds were made available
22 through non-taxable interest-bearing
23 bonds for development and capital
24 improvements to our current and new
25 school buildings, it would create jobs,

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2 salaries, and wages to construction
3 workers and profits to the owners of
4 those construction companies. This
5 would create an immediate increase of
6 City tax revenues of the City wage tax,
7 business privilege, and net-profit
8 taxes from those development and
9 capital improvement monies.

10 Those construction workers
11 would be purchasing goods, services,
12 and meals when working in that area.
13 Those areas and their workers will be
14 supplying more goods and services and
15 meals; in turn, paying additional taxes
16 to the City because of their increased
17 economic activities.

18 City Council along with the
19 State legislature should consider
20 providing additional funds to the
21 School District to help eliminate all
22 budget deficits, which may aid in the
23 improvement of the School District of
24 Philadelphia's bond rating, which, in
25 turn, reduces its cost of borrowing for

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2 the entire life of those bonds.

3 The School District of
4 Philadelphia's bond rating was recently
5 reduced by a bond rating agency, which
6 will probably increase the School
7 District of Philadelphia's cost of
8 borrowings.

9 Last year, the School Reform
10 Commission, the SRC, made an agreement
11 to partner with the various labor
12 unions to make union membership easier
13 for Philadelphia public school
14 graduates. It gave incentives to our
15 children to develop into better
16 students with a light at the end of the
17 tunnel. Some of our current graduates
18 may be employed to work on those
19 projects.

20 Businesses seek environments
21 where they can safely earn profits and
22 obtain reasonable return on their
23 investments. They don't usually seek
24 the place of poor, neglected, and
25 blighted neighborhoods. The crime

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2 insurance costs, worker safety, ability
3 to attract qualified workers, and the
4 failure to earn enough money to offset
5 those costs and risks usually make it
6 undesirable to locate their businesses
7 in those areas.

8 They need additional
9 incentives to reduce their expenses
10 like taxes from a KOZ, which is a
11 Keystone Opportunity Zone, which would
12 be the eliminations or reductions of
13 their tax burdens. If it was good for
14 Comcast and the multimillionaires or
15 the Roberts family in the heart of
16 Center City, it should be good for the
17 poor, neglected, and blighted areas.

18 New buildings and better
19 school accommodation make children seek
20 a better environment than they have now
21 to spend their time. However, it is
22 only the physical environment that
23 needs to be addressed. They need to
24 feel safe, have adequate teaching
25 support, school equipment, supplies,

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2 and a career path to follow.

3 As I have testified previously
4 before City Council, the City needs to
5 collect the enormous amount of
6 real-estate taxes due and past due so
7 that the School District will have the
8 necessary funds so it can properly and
9 timely improve the quality of education
10 for our children.

11 The City of Philadelphia needs
12 to attract for-profit companies that
13 pay business taxes. Usually outside
14 businesses that deal with the education
15 of students are nonprofits, and they
16 are exempt from all taxes. Maybe City
17 Council should seek collecting payments
18 in lieu of taxes from these entities.

19 Many of these nonprofits do
20 not maintain their headquarters in
21 Philadelphia. They take most of our
22 tax dollars to their own locale, and
23 according to the tax returns of those
24 nonprofit companies, they are
25 accumulating assets and equity which

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2 comes from their profits because they
3 don't pay any taxes.

4 For-profit companies cannot
5 accumulate excessive assets and equity
6 because taxing authorities like the
7 Internal Revenue Service will step in
8 and demand an accumulative earnings tax
9 or dividend distributions to the
10 shareholders.

11 Economics is always circular,
12 spiral in nature. We do not need to
13 struggle to obtain money into the
14 City's economy only to watch it leave
15 through nonresident, nonprofit
16 companies.

17 And I wish City Council the
18 best in their decisions to improve the
19 environment for the school students,
20 the teachers, City residents, which
21 should be progressive for the entire
22 City of Philadelphia.

23 And I just wanted to add one
24 comment to my actual testimony here.
25 Basically, I've talked to some State

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2 legislators and now City Council, and
3 everybody is basically saying that they
4 have no funds available.

5 And the one major calculation
6 that comes into the School District is
7 from the availability or the assets of
8 the City of Philadelphia for taxable
9 ratables, and we seem to be falling
10 behind; in other words, our increase of
11 our real estate and our revenues from
12 taxes is falling behind the various
13 other school districts.

14 In other words, when the State
15 of Pennsylvania allocates money for
16 their basic budget for the year, for
17 basic education, if the suburbs
18 ratables go up by 7 percent and ours
19 only go up by 5 percent, they're going
20 to be getting a bigger share of that
21 pot continuously.

22 And basically, that's what we
23 have to be looking at, as to what the
24 future is. We just can't keep on
25 accepting what we're doing as a basic

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2 standard because what we're seeing is
3 that the School District of
4 Philadelphia is losing. And because
5 we're not getting our ratables, it's a
6 circular issue.

7 We don't -- we can't pay the
8 teachers as much as we should be paying
9 them, and then they go to the
10 higher-paid school districts, and it
11 keeps on feeding on itself. It goes
12 round and round and round.

13 And I think City Council in
14 its entirety has to sit down and really
15 look at what's glowing on in the City,
16 start to look at the calculations,
17 because if we're going to issue more
18 bonds for funding for construction,
19 that's going to incur more interest
20 costs to the operating budget of the
21 School District, all right?

22 The capital comes out of
23 capital and the interest on those bonds
24 comes out of operating. And that is
25 going to consume more and more money,

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2 and if the State does not allocate
3 money or City Council cannot allocate
4 in those kinds of funds either, the
5 School District is going to be another
6 PGW with bonds issues, and basically,
7 the City of Philadelphia guarantees
8 these bonds.

9 So I think you have to look at
10 the financial issue. I mean, it's
11 great that everybody's doing all these
12 great services and have testified here,
13 and I think it's wonderful.

14 But when it comes down to the
15 dollars and cents and the future of
16 Philadelphia, that's what you really
17 have to look at, okay?

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much, Mr. Krain. Thank you.

22 MR. KRAIN: Okay.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Derek
24 Long, Men of Mill Creek. I'm sorry
25 some had to leave. I apologize for

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2 holding you so long.

3 After that, Vernard Johnson,
4 you're next.

5 (Witnesses come forward.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is
7 there anyone else after these gentlemen
8 who would like to testify?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much.

12 We made sure that the School
13 District and all who were here knew
14 that you were here. As you know, one
15 of the main reasons that we convened
16 these hearings was to talk about our
17 community center, the Lucien E.
18 Blackwell Community Center, and get on
19 board with that with the new West
20 Philadelphia High School, and we wanted
21 to make sure -- you know, we've been
22 struggling for a while now, and you men
23 have done a wonderful over the years,
24 and you deserve a bigger center so that
25 we can service the community we have.

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2 And so we thank you for all
3 the volunteer hours you give, taking
4 time from your families. My goodness,
5 you know, after a while, you get to
6 know the families, you get to know the
7 wives 'cause they're not home; they
8 have to see them at the center.

9 (Laughter.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But I
11 want to thank you for all the work that
12 you've ever done over the years.

13 The food is always good too.
14 They cook good food too, but it's
15 always a wonderful program. Thank you
16 very much.

17 MR. LONG: Thank you,
18 Councilwoman. We thank you for this
19 opportunity to speak, Councilwoman
20 Jannie Blackwell, you know, who we
21 love.

22 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown, I
23 had the pleasure to meet you at the
24 pastors' wives breakfast. I was the
25 caterer there, right, when you was the

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2 keynote speaker.

3 Jannie, God bless you. We
4 thank you for all you've done in the
5 revitalization of our community.

6 As a -- I won't say so much as
7 a victim, but as a person who lost
8 family members in the Lex Street
9 massacre, I think the change that
10 happened was great. I thank who's no
11 longer here, Mr. Green, Mr. Carl
12 Greene, for his vision. It was time
13 something needed to be done.

14 I was born in the Mill Creek
15 housing projects, 7297-A in 1959. I've
16 been there all my life. It was
17 something. I lost my nephew, my sister
18 got shot in the Lex Street massacre.

19 And thank God it was God's
20 infinite wisdom that put organization
21 before that because we knew it was time
22 for a change after that. You know,
23 when young men is getting killed
24 senseless and it's no longer safe to
25 work in the street, it was something

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2 that we could do.

3 So the Men of Mill Creek was
4 established right then, in June of
5 2000 -- Lex Street happened in December
6 28th of 2000. And we started to
7 provide services that we seen maybe
8 they was unconventional, but it was
9 service that was needed to bring about
10 a change.

11 We had to provide a positive
12 alternative to the general negative
13 behavior that was happening in our
14 community for financial or it wasn't
15 resources or it wasn't conventional; we
16 had to provide services that could give
17 our young children a better choice than
18 between a rock and a hard place, you
19 know.

20 So we started to partner with
21 Mr. Vallas, who we spoke to on numerous
22 occasions. Some of our programs run
23 through a school, as Sulzberger when we
24 have our karate program. At Locke, we
25 have our basketball program. We had

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2 our swimming program at University
3 City, but as he said, it was some
4 changes was going to be made. We did
5 the baseball at West Philly.

6 So the collaboration and the
7 partnership and the networks of the
8 housing communities and the school
9 board and the CBOs (the community-based
10 organizations) are very important and
11 vital if we going to keep our community
12 as going on the upper swing.

13 We don't want our community to
14 go back to the projects we want our
15 community to move upward. We've just
16 seen positive gain. We think the place
17 changed, has changed people's behavior
18 in their hearts. People are taking
19 pride in our community once again.

20 The educational system has
21 gone up, students are learning better.
22 As far as requirements for our program,
23 we was at C average, but the children's
24 making that mark and we improved that
25 to B. So it's a partnership.

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2 I think the center is greatly
3 and vastly needed because not only do
4 we serve Martha Washington and
5 Sulzberger, but we serve Locke, we
6 serve James, and Blankenberg, and these
7 are all the children that come from our
8 program. We run about nine different
9 programs and we need to continue with
10 that partnership with the School Board
11 and PHA and the Men of Mill Creek and
12 get this center built. I think it
13 would be a great place to have a
14 community.

15 We could also reach I young
16 men 18 to 25 who are either the
17 perpetrator or the victims of this
18 crime that happens right now. That age
19 group is really nothing to do with
20 (indiscernible) midnight basketball if
21 there's nothing to do that we could
22 talk about.

23 So there's a lot of things
24 that we do and we greatly appreciate
25 it.

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2 And I'm just testifying on the
3 fact that we do need that community
4 center, and we're going to continue
5 partnershiping with PHA and the School
6 Board.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let
8 me say thank you very much. You've
9 been a blessing for years and years, a
10 true sacrifice, and we know and we
11 appreciate that because it's only love
12 and working with our community that's
13 going to end the violence and it's
14 going to end problems.

15 There's nothing magic. It all
16 comes back to loving ourselves, loving
17 our families, and realizing that
18 children become what they see.

19 And so we thank you. God
20 bless you. We're with you.

21 We had this hearing to get
22 there. And thank you very much.

23 MR. LONG: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you.

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2 Vernard Johnson? Is there
3 anyone else here who would like to
4 speak?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
7 thank you very much. This hearing will
8 be recessed subject to the call of the
9 Chair. God bless you all. Thank you
10 and thank you, members of the
11 committee.

12 (Proceedings end at 3:47 p.m.)

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the

proceedings of the City of Philadelphia

Council Committee on Education are contained

fully and accurately in the stenographic

notes taken by me on Monday, March 5, 2007,

and that this is a true and correct statement

of same.

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

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