

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, August 2, 2023
11:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION: 230330

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2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Today is
3 Wednesday, August 2, 2023 and we are
4 prepared to start the Committee on
5 Education. Today's hearing is about
6 the School Building Authority. So
7 with that being said, good morning.

8 I understand that state law
9 requires the following announcement
10 be made at the beginning of every
11 remote public hearing as follows:
12 Due to the current public health
13 emergency, City Council Committees
14 are currently meeting remotely. We
15 are using Microsoft Teams to make
16 these remote hearings possible.

17 Instructions for how the
18 public may view and offer public
19 testimony at public hearings of
20 Council Committees are included in
21 the public hearing notices that are
22 published in the Daily News, The
23 Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer
24 prior to the hearings and can also
25 be found on PHLCouncil.com. I now

1 note that the hour has come.

2 Mr. Maynard, will you please
3 call the roll to take attendance.
4 Members that are in attendance, will
5 you please indicate you're present
6 when your name is called. Also, say
7 a few brief words when responding so
8 that your image will be displayed on
9 the screen.

10 Mr. Maynard.

11 THE CLERK: Chairman Thomas.

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
14 Brooks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
16 (Muted).

17 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
18 Brooks, you're muted.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
20 Present. I was having some problems
21 with my mute button.

22 THE CLERK: No worries.
23 Thank you, Councilmember Brooks.

24 Councilmember Squilla.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good

1 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues.

2 Present.

3 THE CLERK: Good morning,

4 Mr. Councilmember.

5 Councilmember Gauthier.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good

7 morning, Mr. Chair, colleagues and

8 Philadelphia. Present.

9 THE CLERK: Good morning,

10 Councilmember.

11 Councilmember Phillips.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK: And,

14 Councilmember Lozada.

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank

17 you, Mr. Maynard.

18 A quorum of the Committee is

19 present and the hearing is now

20 called to order. This a public

21 hearing on the Committee of

22 Education regarding Resolution No.

23 230330.

24 Mr. Maynard, would you

25 please read the title of the hearing

1 resolution to be heard today.

2 THE CLERK: Of course,
3 Mr. Chair.

4 Resolution 230330,
5 authorizing the Committee on
6 Education to hold hearings
7 investigating the use of an
8 independent authority to bond and
9 manage the school facilities
10 modernization that safety calls for
11 and students, parents, teachers and
12 communities deserve.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
14 you, Mr. Maynard.

15 Before we begin to hear
16 testimony from the witnesses we have
17 for today, everyone who's been
18 invited to the meeting to testify
19 should be aware that this hearing is
20 being recorded. Because the hearing
21 is being recorded, participants and
22 viewers have no reasonable
23 expectation of privacy. By
24 continuing to be in the meeting, you
25 are consenting to being recorded.

1 Additionally, prior to
2 recognizing Members for questions or
3 comments they have for witnesses, I
4 will note for the record at this
5 time that we will only use the chat
6 feature, for those who are logged in
7 the chat feature as part of the app,
8 we will only use the chat feature
9 for Councilmembers to signal that
10 they want to be recognized. In
11 order to comply with the Sunshine
12 Act, the chat feature must only be
13 used for these purposes.

14 Before we call our first
15 panel, I just want to take a couple
16 of moments to offer a few remarks as
17 it relates to our conversation here
18 today. I'm a person who's born and
19 raised in the city of Philadelphia.
20 I'm a product of the School District
21 of Philadelphia.

22 So when we look at some of
23 the issues that we're facing as it
24 relates to school facilities, it
25 especially hits home for me,

1 considering Frankford High School is
2 one of the schools that is in limbo
3 right now. As an alumni of
4 Frankford High School and proud
5 graduate of the School District of
6 Philadelphia and somebody who still
7 works closely with the schools
8 outside of City Council, I still
9 host high school basketball
10 tournaments, I'm the President of
11 the Coaches Association for Public
12 League for Boys Basketball, so I
13 spend a lot of time in schools, in
14 gyms, in facilities attending
15 athletic events and activities.

16 And I can tell you firsthand
17 that this is one of the most
18 pressing issues that we have as it
19 relates to the idea of ensuring that
20 every child has the opportunity to
21 get a quality education. So as we
22 begin to explore this issue, I also
23 want to recognize that as it relates
24 to education and the direction of
25 education in the City of

1 Philadelphia, we have all new
2 leadership.

3 Our Superintendent just
4 celebrated one year as being the
5 Superintendent. The Chair of our
6 School Board was just recently named
7 the Chair of the School Board at the
8 end of the last calendar year, and I
9 was recently named Chair of the
10 Education Committee in the fall of
11 last year.

12 So over the last few months
13 we've all been brainstorming and
14 wrapping our minds not just around
15 issues for public safety and quality
16 education, but issues around
17 facilities as well too. So we ask
18 the public to be patient with us as
19 we explore best practices. That's
20 what today's conversation is about,
21 looking at what other cities have
22 done and what places have been
23 successful as it relates to tackling
24 this issue.

25 With that being said, I

1 would like to take a moment as the
2 Chair of the Committee to recognize
3 Councilmember Brooks, who's the
4 Vice-Chair of the Committee for
5 comments. And then after that we
6 will start with our first panel
7 which will be you, Ms. Kim.

8 Councilmember Brooks.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
10 you so much, Councilmember Thomas.

11 I want to thank you for
12 organizing this hearing today and I
13 want to thank all my colleagues and
14 those who are providing testimony
15 for attending this important hearing
16 today. We know that our schools are
17 in desperate need of repair. And
18 this year we saw six schools close
19 because of asbestos and we saw
20 hundreds of early dismissals and
21 closure because of extreme heat with
22 air-conditioning for our schools,
23 you know, from years away.

24 Every day the children and
25 educators of our City attend schools

1 that are falling apart and lack the
2 environment and services needed for
3 full education. The school
4 buildings in Philadelphia are unsafe
5 and harmful for our kids and our
6 teachers and our staff.

7 And the problems in our
8 school facilities prevent our
9 children from learning as they
10 should. And the school closures
11 that come on hot days when dangerous
12 issues come to the surface are
13 deeply disruptive to families,
14 students and communities. And this
15 is not an accident. This is a
16 terrible situation we find ourselves
17 in as a result of decades of
18 disinvestment in our schools. But
19 all is not lost, and we have all the
20 tools in front of us that we need to
21 climb out of this hole.

22 My oldest daughter is 32
23 years old. And over the past 32
24 years of being a public school mom
25 and grandmom now, none of my

1 children have attended a school that
2 I didn't have to fight for. And I'm
3 not new to this fight. I've learned
4 the only way we win is by working
5 together. We've won before due to
6 cooperation of many of the people
7 that are on this Zoom, and we can
8 win again. We have the resources to
9 begin getting this work done,
10 including a massive state surplus
11 and federal dollars and City funds.

12 We can create thousands of
13 good union jobs by modernizing and
14 constructing our school buildings.
15 We can create green buildings that
16 save us millions, energy costs and
17 provide clean air and water for
18 neighborhoods to serve as a center
19 of climate resiliency.

20 We can create healthy modern
21 spaces for our children, our
22 teachers and our staff that allow
23 for quality education and activities
24 that our children deserve. And we
25 can create schools that are centers

1 of our neighborhood and the bedrock
2 of strong, healthy communities and
3 democracy. And we know that this
4 transformation of Philly schools is
5 possible because so many of these
6 visionary leaders in this hearing
7 today this morning have shown us
8 that it is possible.

9 Before we start this
10 hearing, I want to lay out a few
11 principles that I have learned from
12 decades of working in and fighting
13 for Philly schools. Any effort to
14 modernize our schools must center
15 and be accessible for Philadelphia
16 students, families and community
17 members and educators, but it has to
18 be responsive to their needs.

19 And what we've embarked on
20 modernization of our schools, we
21 must take the opportunity to make
22 our schools green and we can save on
23 energy costs and protect the air and
24 water the community uses and create
25 climate-resilient spaces for

1 students, teachers, staff and
2 neighbors.

3 And finally, the school
4 rebuilding process must be under
5 public control, guided by leaders
6 who are accountable to
7 Philadelphians. And we have seen
8 that putting public responsibilities
9 into private hands can have
10 disastrous consequences for
11 Philadelphians, so we need to ensure
12 that the school modernization
13 process is currently in the public
14 domain. If we believe these goals
15 is the center of our efforts, I have
16 no doubt that we will have a
17 successful and just modernization
18 process.

19 And I'm looking forward to
20 learning from so many of the experts
21 and leaders today and I'm excited to
22 work alongside all of you as we make
23 healthy, green modern schools a
24 reality for Philadelphia.

25 Thank you so much,

1 Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
3 you, Councilmember Brooks.

4 Mr. Maynard, will you please
5 call the first panel to testify here
6 this morning.

7 THE CLERK: Sure. The first
8 witness we'll hear from is Kim
9 Mooers, Executive Director of
10 RIHEBC, an acronym she'll explain in
11 a moment. After that, we'll hear
12 from School Superintendent Dr. Tony
13 Watlington.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
15 you, Mr. Maynard.

16 Please state your name for
17 the record and you may begin with
18 your testimony.

19 MS. MOOERS: Hi. Thank you
20 for having me. My name is Kim
21 Mooers. I am the Executive Director
22 of the Rhode Island Health and
23 Educational Building Corporation.
24 It's important to me that you all
25 understand that I speak only on

1 behalf of RIHEBC. I'm not an
2 elected official. I'm Executive
3 Director of a quasi state agency
4 here in Rhode Island, and I will
5 read from my written testimony.

6 RIHEBC is a quasi state
7 agency that serves as the conduit
8 bond issuer for nonprofit
9 educational institutions, health
10 care entities and other 501(c)(3)s.
11 RIHEBC is also the issuer of bonds
12 for public school construction
13 projects, which clearly is the nexus
14 to your endeavor. The state of
15 Rhode Island does not fund RIHEBC's
16 operations. Rather we charge fees
17 on most of our programs.

18 In this state, the School
19 Building Authority or SBA is the
20 department of -- the state of Rhode
21 Island Department of Education
22 otherwise known RIDE. If the school
23 district in Rhode Island --

24 (Back interruption.)

25 MS. MOOERS: I'm sorry?

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Can
2 everybody please mute yourself. You
3 may continue with your testimony.

4 MS. MOOERS: Thank you. If
5 the school district in Rhode Island
6 wants to receive any kind of state
7 aid for school construction
8 projects, it must have its projects
9 reviewed and approved by the School
10 Building Authority. Again, that is
11 part of the Department of Education
12 here in the state, an independent of
13 RIHEBC, my organization.

14 There are various forms of
15 state aid for school construction
16 projects, but the largest one is
17 called housing aid. And it is a
18 subsidy of debt service on bonds
19 that are issued to finance school
20 construction projects. In order to
21 be eligible for housing aid, a
22 school district must have its
23 projects vetted and approved by the
24 School Building Authority, and it
25 must issue its bonds to the RIHEBC.

1 Otherwise, it will forego the
2 housing aid.

3 In its capacity as bond
4 issuer for school districts and
5 school projects, RIHEBC assists
6 school districts with the selection
7 of underwriters, bond counsel,
8 trustee, other kinds of financing
9 team participants. The resulting
10 financing team works together to
11 draft documents, official
12 statements, set a schedule,
13 et cetera, to bring the bond issue
14 to market and then to close the
15 bonds that finance the school
16 construction projects.

17 In partnership with the SBA,
18 RIHEBC also administers all state
19 aid to school districts. All state
20 aid is funded by either an
21 appropriation of state general funds
22 or an allocation of Rhode Island
23 state GO bonds. All of this aid
24 flows through RIHEBC upon approval
25 from the SBA of a state grant.

1 RIHEBC will draw down on funds
2 received from the state in order to
3 fund the approved grant. This
4 process is audited annually by
5 RIHEBC's financial auditor in
6 conjunction with our regular
7 financial audit.

8 The above funding mechanism
9 for school construction projects
10 evolved over time, in fact since
11 2006 well before I was hired, which
12 was 2018. And this process has been
13 overlaid or was overlaid on two
14 pre-existing independent entities,
15 namely RIHEBC and the School
16 Building Authority. And the two of
17 us have essentially had to make it
18 work.

19 However, if the funding
20 mechanism had been created from
21 scratch, it is my belief that
22 operational and financial
23 efficiencies would have been gained
24 by housing the SBA functions in the
25 RIHEBC public school-related

1 functions under the same entity.

2 That entity would have had the
3 singular goal of approving public
4 school facilities, while personnel
5 of this entity would have job
6 responsibilities that would be
7 aligned to that goal and would
8 report to the same executive leader
9 who ensures that job performances
10 are working towards that common
11 goal.

12 One department of this
13 entity would be the equivalent of
14 the SBA as noted above, including
15 its vetting and approval of
16 construction projects and plans
17 along with the ongoing monitoring of
18 construction projects as they are
19 built through a requisition of
20 approval process.

21 The other area of this
22 (inaudible) financing are assisting
23 with access to the bond market as
24 noted above, closing bonds and then
25 working with SBA to ensure bond

1 proceeds are spent in accordance
2 with the approved project. So
3 again, it's my belief that if this
4 had been conceived a little bit
5 better, the two functions, RIHEBC
6 and the SBA would have been housed
7 under a single entity. So that is
8 my written statement, and I'm happy
9 to answer any questions.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
11 you for your statement. I
12 definitely have some questions. We
13 wanted to allow you to go first
14 because we know you have a time
15 constraint, at least that's what I
16 was told.

17 MS. MOOERS: Yes, I do.
18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: We have
20 our Superintendent up next. He's in
21 a similar situation, so if I can
22 allow the Superintendent to testify
23 next. And then after that any
24 questions from members of the
25 Committee we can ask to both of our

1 panelists, if everybody's okay with
2 that.

3 Dr. Watlington.

4 DR. WATLINGTON: Good
5 morning, Mr. Chairman. With your
6 permission, I'd like to call on
7 Board President Streater. He's
8 going to lead us off as this has
9 been a topic of his Board.

10 Board President Streater.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

12 Absolutely.

13 President Streater, good
14 morning.

15 MR. STREATER: Good morning.
16 Hello everybody and good morning. I
17 want to thank Chair Thomas, Vice-
18 president Brooks and the whole
19 membership of the Education
20 Committee for inviting the Board of
21 Education and School District of
22 Philadelphia to provide testimony at
23 this morning's hearing.

24 This summer the District is
25 actively hard at work preparing our

1 school buildings for a safe and
2 successful first day of school on
3 September 5th. In fact, our Back To
4 School celebration and Bus Tour
5 kicked off this past Monday. Also,
6 last Friday I'm proud to say we
7 graduated more than 350 students who
8 completed their secondary coursework
9 over the summer. We are very proud
10 of these students for meeting the
11 finish line and achieving this
12 monumental accomplishment.

13 However, today we are here
14 to discuss the modernization of our
15 school buildings, which is a
16 critically important priority for
17 the District and for this Board.
18 The issue of facilities is one that
19 takes up a lot of our time, but
20 later in the Superintendent's
21 presentation we are excited to share
22 some substantive updates and
23 timelines.

24 The purpose of my opening
25 remarks are to briefly do three

1 things: One, frame historically
2 some of the factors that have
3 influenced the District's current
4 facility conditions. Two, preview
5 that the District has not sat and
6 will not sit idly by on its hands
7 regarding the facilities while the
8 village comes together because our
9 students deserve pragmatic urgency.
10 And three, proclaim that the
11 District is standing ready to accept
12 any and all productive, constructive
13 public-private partnerships that
14 will ensure that our learners have
15 access to the 21st century
16 facilities we know are a necessary
17 tool to deliver on the strategic
18 academic plan and for what our
19 students deserve and what our City
20 deserves. Above all, we are here in
21 the spirit of optimism and as being
22 a part of the collective village.

23 We know the Commonwealth's
24 unconstitutionally inadequate
25 funding has held the District back

1 from giving our scholars the
2 learning environments they deserve.
3 Unfortunately, this is evidenced by
4 a 2017 report that found more than
5 \$4.5 billion in deferred building
6 maintenance. That is of course in
7 2017 dollars. Planning and
8 construction costs have only risen
9 over the last six years for revenue.

10 However, despite these
11 challenges the District has made
12 strides in upgrading facilities and
13 ensuring safe learning environments,
14 but we know we have much work to do.
15 Our issues are not unique to public
16 education but are a symptom of a
17 national disinvestment in cities and
18 in infrastructure.

19 I think that District
20 buildings should not be isolated to
21 just a Philly District and/or a
22 Board issue, but I think it
23 correlates to the topic of
24 infrastructure in America. For
25 example, according to the American

1 Society of Civil Engineers 2021
2 Report Card, there's approximately
3 \$2.6 trillion in deferred
4 maintenance across the nation. This
5 did not occur overnight.

6 While the operating and
7 capital costs of public education
8 are not included in this estimate,
9 Philadelphia, once affectionately
10 called the Workshop of the World,
11 one of the preeminent manufacturing
12 hubs on earth, had the tax revenue
13 to erect our City Hall and some of
14 our beautiful citadels of learning,
15 such as Overbrook, Frankford, my
16 alma mater Germantown High School
17 and Simon Gratz, just to name a few.

18 You're probably wondering
19 why does this even matter, why does
20 this history lesson matter. I
21 believe it matters because
22 everything we need to supercharge
23 the current public educational
24 renaissance happening right now in
25 Philly has been and is currently

1 substantially right here in the
2 Commonwealth and in our City.

3 It just takes the will,
4 which I believe our Chair and our
5 Co-Chair of City Council is showing,
6 and our Mayor, leadership and, yes,
7 capital to maintain and offer the
8 stellar educational experiences we
9 know our learners deserve via their
10 (inaudible) citadels mentioned above
11 are constructed. We did it before
12 and I know we will do it again.

13 With that said as
14 Superintendent Watlington will share
15 in a few moments, we are waiting on
16 the sidelines for help. In fact, we
17 are hard at work identifying and
18 bringing on the proper internal and
19 external technical and community
20 engagement expertise to deliver on
21 our needs.

22 As evidenced by today's
23 hearing, the Board and District
24 stand ready to participate in any
25 and all opportunities to accelerate

1 the upgrading and management of our
2 facilities. This includes efforts
3 already underway and any new efforts
4 that emerge moving forward. I often
5 say it takes a village to provide
6 our young people with the experience
7 they deserve and desperately need.

8 I would argue that one of
9 the most important things our
10 village will provide our children is
11 a safe, welcoming and happy place to
12 learn. For those unfamiliar, the
13 Board has adopted Goals and
14 Guardrails as the governance
15 framework. The four guardrails are
16 the nonnegotiable conditions that
17 must exist in every school.

18 Importantly, our first
19 guardrail is set on our facilities,
20 because we know and we knew when we
21 created them that buildings should
22 be built for learning as an
23 environment for our students to
24 learn a critical ingredient to all
25 students imagining and realizing any

1 future they desire. Moreover, the
2 Superintendent recently launched a
3 strategic plan Accelerate Philly,
4 and it is in part predicated on our
5 infrastructure, whether it be year-
6 round schools, pools, AP science
7 courses that require labs, grade
8 configurations, our reimagination of
9 those, our buildings matter.

10 In closing, I want to thank
11 the Committee for creating the space
12 for us to come together and imagine
13 and realize deeper collaboration and
14 partnership on this issue. I look
15 forward to the testimony of the
16 other speakers. And at this time I
17 would like to pass it to
18 Superintendent Watlington and his
19 team to provide additional
20 information on the state of the
21 District's infrastructure, some
22 things to consider with the
23 Philadelphia Building Authority and
24 additional models that are
25 successful right here in our City.

1 Thank you so much.

2 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you,
3 Board President Streater.

4 Chair Thomas, I'm joined
5 today -- as the team pulls a
6 PowerPoint deck, I just want to say
7 thank you to you for having us here
8 this morning. I am joined by our
9 Chief Operations Officer, Colonel
10 Hill, and our Chief Financial
11 Officer, Mr. Mike Herbstman. They
12 will assist me in this presentation
13 with this testimony this morning.

14 Next slide please. We're
15 pleased to be here to share
16 information about conversations
17 about an independent School Building
18 Authority related to the hearing. I
19 do want to echo what Board President
20 Streater just said, we have not been
21 sitting idly on the sidelines this
22 summer. We've been working hard to
23 get our schools open and ready for
24 our students on the first day to
25 make sure that our Frankford

1 students have inperson learning on
2 September 5th, the first day of
3 school, make sure our children are
4 welcome to clean and tidy buildings
5 where the materials are ready for
6 them on day 1, so we're excited
7 about the upcoming school year.

8 As we move to the next
9 slide, I want to give you an
10 overview of what we'll share today.
11 President Streater just gave us a
12 very comprehensive and clear
13 overview of why we're here and set
14 the context for this testimony. We
15 are going to share the state of our
16 infrastructure. We're just going to
17 remind you about that Parsons Report
18 that we had several years ago as
19 well as the Facility Condition
20 Assessment where our schools all got
21 a ranking and rating of green,
22 yellow and red marks.

23 We'll talk about some of the
24 challenges, what we're doing over
25 the next five years relative to

1 improving facilities and provide
2 some facilities planning updates.
3 I'll ask Chief Hill and CFO
4 Herbstman to also assist me with
5 some information around
6 considerations for a School Building
7 Authority for Philadelphia, and
8 we'll also share some other models
9 to accelerate improvement.

10 We are pleased to be asked
11 to provide this testimony,
12 Mr. Chairman. While we have not
13 landed on a position on what the
14 District should or should not do, we
15 do know that, A, great organizations
16 do not have high problems and, B, we
17 know that our children and families
18 deserve us taking the opportunity to
19 put all options on the table so that
20 we can figure out what is the best
21 path forward, Mr. Chairman and the
22 best interest of our City and
23 community.

24 Next slide please. I want
25 to spend some time sharing about the

1 state of the School District of
2 Philadelphia's infrastructure. Next
3 slide. By way of background as
4 you've heard from us before, we have
5 some 300 buildings in the School
6 District that were constructed or
7 repaired during a time when it was
8 common for lead-based paint and
9 asbestos to be a part of building
10 materials. That includes floor
11 tiles, pipe insulation, roof
12 flashings and some paint and cement
13 products. I can't stress enough
14 that environmental conditions are
15 now a factor for every facilities
16 department, from funding, training,
17 staffing to making some really hard
18 and difficult choices about how to
19 balance the evergrowing needs with
20 insufficient resources. I also want
21 to just remind you that the average
22 age of our school facilities are 73
23 years old, and you can see some of
24 the fine schools here in the
25 pictures there.

1 Next slide please. I want
2 to remind you about that 2017
3 Parsons Facilities Conditions
4 Assessment Report. It found the
5 overall facilities condition index
6 is 32.4 percent, which indicates
7 that we should be actively replacing
8 systems at these facilities. It
9 pointed to an estimated \$4.5 billion
10 in the building maintenance cost.
11 School buildings are no different
12 than our homes and our automobiles.
13 If you don't keep them up, they cost
14 you more downstream to repair them.

15 85 buildings in the School
16 District should be considered for
17 major renovation, not just cosmetic
18 but major renovation according to
19 that 2017 report. And the report
20 recommended that 21 of our school
21 facilities should be considered for
22 either closure or replacement, and
23 we're currently doing some work to
24 update this 2017 study so that we
25 can validate the data so that we

1 have more current information,
2 although the overall breadth of the
3 information is still very valuable
4 to us some six years later.

5 Next slide please. Every
6 school received the facility
7 condition assessment. In this
8 industry, it's a process where a
9 qualified group of individuals and
10 trained industry professionals
11 conduct a detailed analysis of each
12 school facility, and our school
13 facilities as you know they vary
14 based on age, design, when they were
15 built, what kind of construction
16 materials were used and the like.

17 This comprehensive
18 assessment though of educational
19 facilities and other areas are
20 operated by the School District of
21 Philadelphia. You can see a green,
22 light green, yellow or red rating.
23 It ranges from 90 to below 60. And
24 you can see the facilities condition
25 assessment ranks these facilities as

1 new or like new, good, fair, poor,
2 all the way down to unsatisfactory.
3 Certainly, if you're in the red
4 category, unsatisfactory, the
5 building and the majority of the
6 systems should be replaced according
7 to the facility condition
8 assessment.

9 Next slide. Bottom line,
10 Mr. Chairman, if we ask the question
11 how do we create those safe, health
12 and welcoming school environments
13 that Board President Streater
14 referenced in the Board's Goals and
15 Guardrails, the Parsons Report told
16 us in 2017 that in 2017 dollars the
17 cost to upgrade our school
18 facilities across the board would be
19 \$7.789 billion in at least 2017
20 dollars, and that cost would
21 certainly be higher today.

22 Next slide. I'm going to
23 ask Chief Hill to walk us through
24 some of the environmental challenges
25 and next steps and he'll do Slides

1 No. 9 through 12, and I will come
2 back and jump back in at Slide 13.

3 Good morning, Colonel Hill.

4 MR. HILL: (Muted).

5 DR. WATLINGTON: Colonel,
6 you're on mute, sir. You're on
7 mute.

8 MR. HILL: Good morning,
9 Councilmember Thomas. Thank you,
10 Dr. Watlington and Board President
11 Streater. As Dr. Watlington
12 mentioned, an ongoing challenge the
13 District confronts are the
14 environmental issues that are
15 prevalent in our schools due to the
16 age of the buildings, the materials
17 that were commonly accepted by
18 construction and the historic trends
19 of underfunding our facilities. The
20 possibility of encountering
21 environmental challenges must be
22 considered in every aspect of the
23 facility care and maintenance as
24 well as capital projects.

25 Management of environmental

1 issues require it's ongoing in
2 places in the District's capacity
3 for inspection and management of
4 facility environmental issues,
5 diligence in compliance with laws
6 and regulatory mandates, resources
7 to upgrade technology and staffing
8 requirements and the persistent
9 fear, sense of urgency that is being
10 demonstrated by the District and its
11 collaborative partners at all
12 echelons of government as well as in
13 the private sector.

14 Although the District has
15 improved its proactive posture in
16 identifying environmental issues
17 through refined inspection
18 procedures, the momentum of the
19 response in addressing issues is
20 deliberate and sometimes the pace is
21 slowed to ensure the safety and
22 well-being of the school community
23 as the remediation work is
24 accomplished.

25 As many are aware,

1 environmental issues have resulted
2 in schools being closed temporarily
3 to allow the remediation work to be
4 accomplished safely. In those
5 instances, students have been
6 relocated to an available swing
7 space to continue inperson
8 instruction. The District has
9 developed a swing space master plan
10 to streamline and accelerate the
11 process of returning to inperson
12 instruction as expediently as
13 possible.

14 Next slide please. The
15 District has made significant
16 investments in its facilities with
17 the available resources. However,
18 there is an indisputable
19 acknowledgment that more must be
20 done to address this crisis. Next
21 slide. Over the course of the past
22 10 years, the District has placed
23 emphasis on targeted investments in
24 our facilities to support the
25 accomplishment of academic

1 programming goals in the area of new
2 construction to address capacity
3 challenges and infrastructure
4 deficiencies, which include
5 buildings Solis-Cohen Elementary,
6 Northeast Community Propel Academy,
7 the initiation of construction at
8 T.M. Pierce School and Ethan Allen
9 as well as the project at Lincoln
10 Field. Life safety enhancements,
11 major mechanical systems upgrades
12 and energy-efficiency initiatives,
13 which include replacing fire alarm
14 systems, replacing boilers,
15 chillers, piping and electrical
16 systems have also been undertaken.

17 There have been educational
18 enhancements which include
19 elementary classroom renovations,
20 career technical education
21 programming expansion, science and
22 music lab upgrades as well as
23 playground and athletic field
24 improvements. There also have been
25 modernization of technology and

1 business systems, which include
2 investments and information
3 technology infrastructure for
4 improved networking, school security
5 systems and the modernization of our
6 yellow bus fleet with electric
7 buses.

8 Major renovations have been
9 completed or are in the final stage
10 of completion at Forrest, Pollock,
11 Anne Frank, Mayfair, Richmond,
12 Shallcross, Meehan, Rhodes and
13 Dobbins as well as a host of
14 classroom modernization projects
15 across the District. To address
16 environmental issues, lead-based
17 paint inspections and stabilization
18 projects have been completed in 194
19 schools. And the ongoing and ever-
20 present Asbestos Hazard Emergency
21 Response Act or AHERA three-year
22 inspections have been completed in
23 294 schools, with six-month AHERA
24 surveillance inspections to follow.

25 And to date, we have

1 installed 1,819 state-of-the-art
2 hydration systems to ensure safe
3 drinking water for our school
4 community. This is 82 percent of
5 the District's goal to have 2,219
6 hydration stations installed by
7 2025. As you can see, we are ahead
8 of the pace to achieve that goal.
9 Slide please.

10 The current capital
11 improvement plant allocates almost
12 \$2.5 billion to improve our
13 facilities, which includes the
14 completion of the new construction
15 projects at T.M. Pierce, Ethan
16 Allen, Cassidy as well as new
17 construction program for Thomas
18 Holme and Alternative Middle Years
19 at James Martin.

20 There are more than 30 major
21 renovations, minor renovations which
22 include interior doors, bathroom
23 renovations and science lab
24 upgrades. Also, included in the CIP
25 are electrical upgrades which will

1 enable improvements in heating,
2 ventilation and air-condition as
3 well as a broad range of other
4 facility-enhancing projects.

5 I'll be followed by
6 Dr. Watlington with an overview of
7 the facilities planning process.

8 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you,
9 Colonel.

10 Next slide please. Chair
11 Thomas, you invited us earlier in
12 the spring and asked us to provide
13 an update not just on all facilities
14 planning, but you charged us to make
15 sure that we're moving with all
16 deliberate speed such that we don't
17 continue to kick this can down the
18 road. We heard that feedback loud
19 and clear. We've heard Board
20 President Streater and the Board of
21 Education. And so, we've been very
22 busy this summer. I want to give
23 you an update of where we are.

24 Next slide please. Since
25 the last time we talked to you, I

1 want to tell you what the three
2 phases are that we concluded on to
3 get this project concluded by the
4 close of this upcoming 2023-24
5 school year. Phase 1 of this work
6 for a facility's plan, a
7 comprehensive long-range Facilities
8 Master Plan, was to first develop a
9 strategic plan in an academic vision
10 for achieving the Board's Goals and
11 Guardrails in making sure that our
12 kids, our young people, our scholars
13 get the academic program that they
14 need so that they can go out and
15 participate in the world's largest
16 economy. Does no good to have the
17 best facilities if you can't have a
18 good academic plan to make sure that
19 kids are learning and prepared to
20 participate in the economy.

21 And so, in December we
22 paused the facilities planning
23 process for a time so that we could
24 prioritize getting that academic
25 plan. Understand that there were

1 those who disagreed with whether it
2 was important or necessary to do so,
3 and I certainly respect that
4 feedback that we received.

5 We picked that work up back
6 in earnest during the second
7 semester, and we came before your
8 Committee, Chair Thomas, on March
9 31st I believe it was to provide an
10 update on where we were at that time
11 and more importantly, how we intend
12 to get to the finish line.

13 On June 1st, the Board of
14 Education unanimously approved our
15 new five-year strategic plan
16 entitled Accelerate Philly. When we
17 implement well, this plan will lead
18 us to significant improvement. Now,
19 in year 1 while we were developing
20 the plan, we weren't just asleep at
21 the wheel. And this team of
22 principals, teachers and District
23 staff worked really hard.

24 What were the outcomes? In
25 year 1 even before the strategic

1 plan was complete, student
2 attendance rose by 3 percentage
3 points, that's the percentage of
4 students who are in school 90
5 percent of the year, increased from
6 57 to 60 percent. The percentage of
7 teachers who had 90 percent
8 attendance rate or higher increased
9 from 77 to 84 percent. And the
10 number of students who dropped out
11 of school went down by 265 students.
12 We have a lot of work to do, but I
13 sure want to make sure to commend
14 the staff and the team and our
15 parents of students for the work
16 they did this year to begin to
17 improve outcomes. And we look
18 forward to coming back to sharing
19 the testing data once it's verified
20 by the state in reading and math in
21 the next couple of months.

22 We also put together --
23 since that strategic plan was
24 approved by the Board of Education
25 on June 1, we bought a smaller

1 committee together to really drill
2 down to the academic division to say
3 what are the top three to five
4 things that a project team should
5 keep right in front of them as we
6 think about how to repair, rebuild
7 and improve all of our school
8 facilities here in the School
9 District of Philadelphia.

10 And so, that committee is
11 looking at things like what do we
12 need to do differently with PreK in
13 our buildings so that our kids get
14 the education they need. What do we
15 need to do differently so that the
16 middle grade level no matter where
17 you live in the City of
18 Philadelphia, in middle school you
19 have access to take Algebra 1
20 because we know it's a gateway to
21 who gets into the best math class
22 and who gets into college. What do
23 we need to do differently with your
24 facilities so that all of our
25 schools can offer advanced placement

1 courses. We have 16 high schools I
2 learned this year that have zero
3 advanced placement courses. No
4 matter what we do, we are not
5 preparing all of our children to
6 participate in the economy.

7 And then career and
8 technical education, where do we
9 need to make better investments,
10 where do we need to make different
11 investments in our career and
12 technical education, in our
13 vocational and educational programs.
14 So that team has been working all
15 summer long so that as we launch
16 Phase 2, we will have a finalized
17 academic vision that we can hand
18 right over to this project team.

19 Also, in April of this year
20 we pulled out the Parsons Report and
21 under Chief Oz Hill's leadership,
22 we've been reviewing that data,
23 those facility index scores, for all
24 the schools, red, yellow, green.
25 And we've been building some

1 partnerships with some external
2 experts so that we can validate the
3 data. We're going to validate that
4 Parsons Report from 2017, what still
5 is accurate six years later, what
6 has changed. So we want to make
7 sure we fully understood that, so
8 that's work that's been occurring
9 since April. It's not complete yet.
10 And so, we put the timeline to
11 complete that work as to be
12 determined because we needed two to
13 three more weeks so we can know we
14 can really bring closure to that
15 process.

16 The most important part of
17 this work is Phase 3, which we're
18 launching this month with the
19 project team that will develop a
20 Master Facilities Plan. In this
21 work, Chairman Thomas, I hope you're
22 pleased to know, we're on record
23 now, that we will complete this by
24 June of 2024.

25 Part of that includes

1 staffing up the facilities project
2 team with the internal and external
3 stakeholders. We are currently
4 identifying some of the phases that
5 will need to be subphases and
6 mapping out the work over the next
7 12 months, and we're preparing for a
8 community engagement program because
9 we've heard very clearly from
10 President Streater and the Board
11 that it's committed to make sure
12 that our community understands this
13 work and that they are regularly
14 updated on our thinking. So three
15 phases of work here.

16 Next slide please. As a
17 part of this, Chair Thomas, this is
18 a new graphic that shows you the
19 structure for this project team. As
20 you could see, we've got this
21 project team, will work under the
22 leadership of the Board of Education
23 and the Superintendent. Internal to
24 the District, Colonel Hill will be
25 one Co-chair of this team and then

1 we'll work to identify two external
2 people outside the District to kind
3 of coach here with Chief Hill.

4 We're looking for someone
5 who has really strong technical
6 knowledge about aging facilities and
7 best practices of how you mitigate
8 and respond to those issues. Also
9 looking for an external Co-chair who
10 is well-respected in the City of
11 Philadelphia, who brings the full
12 breadth of experience and a
13 reputation as someone who's trusted
14 in this City who can also be an
15 ambassador for this work.

16 Underneath those Chairs,
17 we'll have a project team of
18 internal, external stakeholders. On
19 one side of the house they will be
20 advised by a group of consultants,
21 as we have existing budgets and
22 resources to enlist the support of
23 those individuals. For example, the
24 topic we're talking about today
25 might be something that consultants

1 can help us think about.

2 On the other side of that
3 project team you'll see advisory
4 groups. The Superintendent has an
5 advisory group of students. We have
6 a teacher advisory group, a
7 principal advisory group. We want
8 to be very thoughtful about how we
9 engage cross-sections of parents
10 across the City, grassroots
11 organizations and others. So we
12 know that how we communicate and are
13 transparent about the work we will
14 be doing this school year is just as
15 important as the outcomes that we
16 reach by June of 2024.

17 So list the charges of the
18 project team: The team's charge is
19 to develop a comprehensive
20 Facilities Master Plan by June 30.
21 We're on the clock and we know the
22 clock is starting. What does that
23 mean? It means that we are going to
24 share the academic vision with the
25 project team and we want the project

1 team to embrace that academic vision
2 as set forth in our strategic plan
3 Accelerate Philly.

4 No. 2, we want the project
5 team to develop the guiding
6 principles for how we will go about
7 the business of designing state-of-
8 the-art learning environments.

9 Three, we want the project team to
10 co-construct a vision for
11 modernizing school facilities
12 throughout the City and we want to
13 do it in a way that we're talking
14 with our community all along the
15 way. So this is going to be an
16 action-packed very exciting school
17 year. And No. 3, we want to
18 reimagine the use of space and
19 physical plan to improve the
20 functionality of schools. So we're
21 not thinking narrow. We're thinking
22 big.

23 So as we think about school
24 facilities, you want to think about
25 what's the opportunity for multiple

1 uses of --

2 (Background

3 interruption.)

4 DR. WATLINGTON: Not limited

5 to just --

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Excuse

7 me. I'm sorry, Superintendent. I

8 really don't want to interrupt you,

9 but please everyone make sure you

10 mute yourself if you're not talking.

11 And since I did interrupt you, let

12 me just take a moment to acknowledge

13 that Councilmember Phillips has

14 joined the hearing.

15 I'm so sorry,

16 Dr. Watlington. I apologize.

17 DR. WATLINGTON: No problem

18 at all, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

19 just know that we are dreaming big.

20 And we're thinking about a number of

21 things that we'll put on the plate

22 of this project team so that we're

23 not just thinking about our

24 traditional schoolhouse anymore.

25 We're thinking about reimagining the

1 uses of spaces so that these schools
2 become true community hubs. And I
3 don't want to get ahead of the work
4 of the project team, but just please
5 underscore that word reimagine the
6 use of space and physical plan in
7 our schools as a part of this
8 project team work.

9 Next slide. As you've
10 introduced the topic earlier, Chair
11 Thomas, we're here to talk about
12 considering a School Building
13 Authority for Philadelphia. I do
14 want to say that we appreciate the
15 opportunity to be a part of the
16 discussion. And I'll say what I
17 said at the beginning, great
18 organizations do not have problems.
19 It's no secret that we've got
20 significant facility challenges in
21 the School District of Philadelphia.

22 On the one hand we have
23 historic underfunding. On the other
24 hand, I want everyone to realize and
25 to acknowledge the work that is

1 occurring. Chief Hill tipped off
2 some really impressive work that
3 folks are doing, so I don't want it
4 to be lost on us that the staff and
5 the operations area is not just
6 sitting on their hands and say what
7 was this. They're out building new
8 schools, renovating spaces and
9 they're doing the best they can to
10 be good stewards of the tax dollars
11 that they have.

12 In fact, Mr. Chairman, I
13 would be remiss if I didn't say the
14 District is doing some things very
15 well. In fact, the Board of
16 Education learned earlier this year
17 that we have not only the best
18 credit rating, credit investment
19 rating that we've had in the past 40
20 years, it was upgraded again this
21 year from stable to positive, so
22 that is a really significant point
23 that I don't want to be lost on us,
24 notwithstanding all the challenges
25 we have.

1 However, given all the
2 challenges we have I am very proud
3 of our Board of Education for
4 willing to be a part of putting all
5 the options on the table because we
6 need to put all those options on the
7 table and we need to vet them even
8 though we're not necessarily
9 endorsing one over the other just
10 yet.

11 Relative to a building
12 authority, on the next slide, there
13 are some issues to consider. I'll
14 just highlight a couple of these
15 before I turn it over to our Chief
16 Financial Officer Mike Herbstman to
17 talk in more detail. Certainly,
18 school building authorities can be
19 successful. They have been
20 successful in some places when
21 they've been adequately and
22 thoroughly funded. There are places
23 that have done a good job of this,
24 and quite frankly in the United
25 States I'm aware of places that have

1 not done as good a job with this.

2 It's like everything else. The
3 devil is in the details.

4 It requires essential state
5 and government partnership, and
6 program oversight is really
7 important. It requires a broad
8 coalition and not this side versus
9 that side because it has to be
10 inclusive of public and private
11 stakeholders. And it can't be
12 subject to political and economic
13 changing winds.

14 There has to be essentially
15 here are some things that we can
16 come together and agree with, and
17 funding has to be allocated for no
18 less, not less than 10 years to
19 include strategic planning and
20 planning around programming of
21 academic needs and the capital
22 construction of new schools.

23 It's an interesting and
24 appropriate topic to be on the table
25 today for testimony. And I'd like

1 to introduce our Chief Financial
2 Officer Mike Herbstman who has
3 experience in Prince George's
4 County, Maryland, one of the largest
5 school districts in the country, but
6 also in third large school district
7 in the country, the Chicago public
8 school.

9 So good morning, Chief
10 Herbstman.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

12 Dr. Watlington, I'm sorry. Before
13 we go into the finances -- first of
14 all, your testimony so far, you and
15 the entire team, has been extremely
16 informative. And I know that the
17 general public appreciates all the
18 information. I know we talk about
19 the stuff consistently, but it's
20 good for the public to hear it.

21 Ms. Mooers, our first
22 panelist of this particular panel,
23 actually has a hard stop coming
24 soon. So I just want to take a
25 couple of moments to be able to ask

1 her any questions that members of
2 this Committee may have before you
3 close out your testimony so we can
4 assure that we don't lose her. Is
5 that okay with you, Dr. Watlington?

6 DR. WATLINGTON: Yes, sir.
7 And then Chief Herbstman is just
8 going to go over a couple of other
9 slides whenever you're ready that
10 gives some context to the School
11 Building Authority.

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: We'll go
13 right back to the Chief as soon as
14 we allow questions for Ms. Mooers.

15 Ms. Mooers, are you still
16 here with us? Are you still --

17 MS. MOOERS: I'm here, and
18 thank you for -- I appreciate you
19 recognizing my time constraint.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Sure, no
21 problem. If any members of the
22 Committee has any questions, please
23 feel free to -- I know I see a
24 couple of people queued up in the
25 chat feature. I'm assuming that was

1 for our Superintendent, but if
2 anyone has any questions for
3 Ms. Mooers.

4 I see Councilmember Gauthier
5 has questions so I'll let her go
6 first. And if there aren't any
7 other questions besides
8 Councilmember Gauthier, I'll close
9 out with a few questions for you,
10 Ms. Mooers. And then we'll jump
11 right back into the School
12 District's presentation.

13 Chair recognizes
14 Councilmember Gauthier.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also have
17 questions for Dr. Watlington, but
18 I'll hold them.

19 Ms. Mooers, I just wanted
20 you to clarify the difference
21 between RIHEBC and the School
22 Building Authority. I was a little
23 confused by that. If you can just
24 clarify what both entities do and
25 why both entities were formed.

1 MS. MOOERS: So RIHEBC was
2 formed originally with the mission
3 of helping 501(c)(3) health care and
4 educational institutions, so
5 not-for-profit universities, K
6 through 12 institutions, hospitals,
7 other health care entities access
8 the tax exempt market. This is
9 under the actual federal government
10 IRS code that 501(c)(3)s must issue
11 through a governmental entity in
12 order to be able to issue tax exempt
13 bonds or benefit from tax exempt
14 bonds. So that was RIHEBC's
15 original mission. We were created
16 in 1966 with that mission.

17 In 2006, the Rhode Island
18 state legislature recognized the
19 need for some financing oversight of
20 school construction projects. So it
21 inserted RIHEBC. So heretofore
22 RIHEBC had only been involved in
23 not-for-profit financings. And then
24 2006 the legislature said, we would
25 like RIHEBC to oversee the school

1 construction, the public school
2 construction financings, not the
3 projects, but the financings.

4 So along the way, and
5 forgive me because I've been in this
6 role for five years so I don't have
7 the history down pat, but the School
8 Building Authority was created in
9 that time frame right around there
10 under the recognition that those
11 school construction projects needed
12 more oversight, that maybe school
13 districts were going a little bit
14 crazy with their school plans, had
15 big dreams but they couldn't afford
16 them. Whatever the case might have
17 been, they needed oversight.

18 So the School Building
19 Authority was created under a state
20 department, and RIHEBC is not part
21 of the state. We're independent of
22 the state. Even though we're state
23 legislated, we are not a line item
24 in the state's budget. The School
25 Building Authority is in the state's

1 budget, part of the Rhode Island
2 Department of Education.

3 So on the one hand, you have
4 School Building Authority with the
5 oversight of the construction
6 projects specifically and on the
7 other hand you have RIHEBC inserted
8 in 2006 specifically for the
9 financing component of the projects.

10 So now the two completely
11 independent entities work together
12 specifically on public school
13 construction projects.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Why
15 wasn't the SBA charged with the
16 financial oversight? Do you know
17 that?

18 MS. MOOERS: I do not.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
20 Okay. Thank you so much --

21 MS. MOOERS: The School
22 Building Authority being a part of
23 the state of Rhode Island and the
24 state of Rhode Island having its own
25 Treasury Department, and that

1 management group could have done the
2 oversight of school construction
3 projects. Maybe you're familiar
4 with weird politics in Philadelphia,
5 but --

6 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes,
7 we are.

8 MS. MOOERS: -- I can only
9 attribute it to some ulterior
10 motive, some strange political
11 agenda that RIHEBC was inserted into
12 that process, but it well predates
13 me.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
15 Thank you for that clarification.
16 That's helpful.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
19 you.

20 Chair recognizes
21 Councilmember Squilla.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
23 you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all
24 for your testimony.

25 And I just had two specific

1 questions that I guess we could even
2 answer these later. But basically
3 was the sustainability plan for the
4 District and how we would propose
5 that and are we looking to
6 transition away from fossil fuels
7 over time as part of that plan?

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

9 Councilmember Squilla, I'm sorry. I
10 wanted to let questions for
11 Ms. Mooers happen first because she
12 has a hard stop. And then we want
13 to allow the District to finish
14 their presentation and then I was
15 going to open it up for some
16 questions in the District. But --

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
18 That's fine.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah,
20 we're over her time. She actually
21 has to go probably as of a couple of
22 minutes ago.

23 MS. MOOERS: I know you had
24 a question yourself. So please, I
25 can take a few more minutes.

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'll be
2 very quick. I just want to know two
3 things: I think first and foremost
4 if you can give us numbers, how much
5 money has Rhode Island spent on
6 facilities and how many new schools
7 have you built? And then also based
8 on the information that you've heard
9 thus far today and based on your
10 experience, what recommendations do
11 you have for us as it relates to the
12 direction that we should go in
13 looking at the facilities crisis we
14 have in collaboration with the idea
15 of assuring that every child has to
16 get a quality education?

17 Clearly we're exploring the
18 idea of having a separate party be
19 responsible for the construction of
20 new buildings. So my two questions
21 would be again, can you give us some
22 information as it relates to what
23 you've been able to accomplish in
24 Rhode Island, and based on what you
25 heard today what recommendations do

1 you have for us?

2 MS. MOOERS: So honestly, I
3 don't mean to sort of cop out
4 but those questions really are
5 appropriately asked of the School
6 Building Authority. They are the
7 ones who keep all the statistics
8 related to how many schools have
9 been built, how much -- we had
10 something conducted called the
11 Jacobs Report, kind of like your
12 Parsons I think it was called, that
13 looked at Rhode Island statewide
14 what needed to be done.

15 I think that the number in
16 there was something like \$6 billion.
17 I don't have any of that memorized.
18 But I do know that RIHEBC since 2006
19 has issued well over \$2 billion in
20 tax exempt bonds to benefit public
21 schools. So that doesn't encompass
22 the total need. That looks back at
23 the history of the program.

24 But I again would encourage
25 you strongly to speak to someone at

1 the School Building Authority on
2 specific statistics on how many
3 schools have been built, what the
4 cost has been and what the current
5 and future need is. They keep track
6 of that. I do the financing
7 component of it so I can speak to
8 the tax exempt market, to the bonds
9 that we've done.

10 And I also feel supremely
11 underqualified to make a
12 recommendation to you all other than
13 to say that my observation in the
14 five years that I've been in this
15 role is that if this program had
16 been originally conceived a little
17 bit better without any political
18 agenda or whatever was happening at
19 the time, that the School Building
20 Authority and the financing
21 component that RIHEBC does for the
22 schools should all be housed under
23 the same roof, under the safe
24 leadership, under the same agency.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Well,

1 that's helpful insight. So thank
2 you for that information, and we
3 appreciate your time, your effort to
4 the children of Rhode Island, and we
5 appreciate you being here today.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. MOOERS: You have a
8 monumental task, but it's worth it.
9 I've seen a lot of improvements in
10 schools in Rhode Island. So I wish
11 you all the very best and thank you
12 for having me.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
14 you.

15 Superintendent
16 Dr. Watlington, I'll pass it back to
17 you.

18 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you
19 very much, Mr. Chair.

20 I'll ask Chief Herbstman to
21 walk us through the last few slides.
22 Chief, morning.

23 MR. HERBSTMAN: Thank you.
24 Good morning. As we discuss the
25 concept of a new facilities

1 authority today, I just wanted to
2 briefly touch on three other models
3 already used by the School District
4 in recent years to accelerate
5 construction of new school
6 buildings.

7 Next slide please. So
8 currently, the School District is
9 collaborating with the Philadelphia
10 Industrial Development Corporation,
11 PIDC. I do understand a
12 representative from PIDC will be
13 testifying later today and will
14 likely provide far more detail than
15 I'm about to.

16 But as you are aware, PIDC
17 manages the Philadelphia Authority
18 for Industrial Development or PAID.
19 In March 2022, the Board of
20 Education authorized the partnership
21 with PAID for three specific school
22 sites, AMY 5 at James Martin, Thomas
23 Holme Elementary and Lewis C.
24 Cassidy Elementary.

25 The intent of this

1 partnership was really to provide an
2 additional efficiency and to help
3 accelerate the timelines of these
4 projects. In this model, the School
5 District continues to own the sites
6 through intergovernmental
7 cooperation agreements. The
8 District leases these properties to
9 PAID through the end of
10 construction. PAID in turn
11 subleases these properties to a
12 developer through a process that
13 includes both PAID and the District.

14 The developer designs and
15 constructs the buildings.
16 Throughout construction, PAID
17 manages invoicing and payment to the
18 developers, and the projects are of
19 course required to meet the design
20 guidelines, educational
21 specifications and technical
22 specifications developed by the
23 School District.

24 In this particular case,
25 these three projects are funded

1 through our ESSER and the COVID-19
2 relief funding to schools. And
3 PAID's total administrative services
4 fees are capped at 1 percent of the
5 project costs. Understand that
6 members are likely familiar with
7 this model, as the partnership with
8 PAID have been used with other City
9 of Philadelphia capital projects.

10 Next slide please. The
11 School District used turnkey
12 developments to build the Northeast
13 Community and Propel Academy, one of
14 the projects Chief Hill mentioned
15 earlier. SDP owned the land
16 adjacent to Lincoln High School. As
17 was authorized to do by the Board of
18 Education in 2019, it sold the land
19 to a developer with the express
20 purpose of that developer developing
21 and building a new K through 8
22 school and athletic fields.

23 There is an agreement at the
24 beginning of the process that after
25 the development is satisfactorily

1 complete, the District would
2 purchase back the property,
3 including the buildings and fields
4 at a not-to-exceed amount. That
5 final amount has to be supported by
6 two post-construction appraisals
7 attained by the District before we
8 did purchase it back in 2021.

9 Construction was financed by
10 the developer through the end of
11 construction. And at the end of the
12 process when it was time to purchase
13 the property back, the District used
14 bond funding for the proceeds to
15 finally repurchase the land
16 buildings and fields.

17 Next slide. In 2019, the
18 School District originally entered
19 into a public-private agreement with
20 Drexel University. Drexel
21 constructed the school building for
22 Powel Elementary School and Science
23 Leadership Academy Middle School.

24 For the construction, SDP,
25 the School District, contributed \$7

1 million to construction. The state
2 contributed \$3 million from the
3 Redevelopment Systems Capital
4 Program, and the rest was paid by a
5 combination of Drexel University
6 with the assistance of some federal
7 tax credits and support of several
8 philanthropic organizations.

9 There's currently a 35-year
10 agreement. It started when the
11 School District -- when the building
12 was finalized and accepted by the
13 School District. It is an agreement
14 where the District leases the
15 building for \$1 per month, and the
16 District continues to pay to fully
17 operate the facilities that we're
18 using currently for Powel Elementary
19 and Science Leadership Academy
20 Middle School.

21 Moving onto the next slide,
22 I will turn the presentation back to
23 the Superintendent for some closing
24 remarks.

25 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you,

1 Chief Herbstman.

2 Mr. Chairman, that concludes
3 our presentation. Again, we thank
4 you for the opportunity to testify
5 today and will be happy to answer
6 any questions.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
8 you, Superintendent. Thank you,
9 Board President Streater and the
10 entire team over at the School
11 District. I do have a couple of
12 questions. I'm going to ask one or
13 two now. Then I'll open it up to my
14 colleagues and I'll close out with a
15 few as well.

16 In the middle of your
17 presentation today you talked about
18 three different examples of how the
19 School District has worked with
20 other parties to provide new
21 facilities in the City of
22 Philadelphia. Your 2017 report said
23 that we needed at least 21 -- that
24 21 schools should be closed, not
25 necessarily saying we need to build

1 21 new schools. Based on
2 populationship and other studies, I
3 think that will determine exactly
4 where and what new schools need to
5 be built.

6 But I did hear three
7 different examples. I heard one
8 model that had a public-private
9 partnership where you worked with
10 Drexel and some philanthropy groups.
11 I heard another model where you sold
12 the land to a developer and the
13 School District purchased the land
14 back. And I heard another model
15 that involved PIDC.

16 I think most folks are clear
17 where I am as it relates to the
18 direction that I think we should go
19 in. To build new facilities, I
20 think the public-private
21 partnerships agree. But with the
22 35-year expiration deadline, that
23 does have a little concern and that
24 lingers over my head when we use
25 that model.

1 I'm a big fan of the model
2 of working with PIDC and having an
3 entity or somebody, the equivalence
4 of them, participate in this process
5 with us because I feel like it's
6 very difficult to ask you to assure
7 that every child gets to school
8 safe, receives a quality education,
9 is safe when they're there, they
10 have a nutritious meal, they have
11 out-of-school time activities after
12 that, and then they transition home
13 from that and you probably have one
14 of the biggest school districts in
15 the entire country.

16 So to add, the idea of
17 building new buildings to all of
18 those responsibilities I think is
19 asking a lot as it relates to the
20 capacity for the District. So with
21 that being said, based on the three
22 models that you presented today,
23 anybody can answer this, it can be
24 our Superintendent, it can be our
25 Board President. What model do you

1 favor and why?

2 DR. WATLINGTON: If I may
3 start, certainly, Mr. Chairman, I
4 recognize that boards of education
5 are responsible for both vision,
6 policy and budgets for school
7 districts. I would never want to
8 get ahead of the Board and the Board
9 President.

10 We've not landed on any firm
11 recommendations that we would offer
12 to President Streater at this point.
13 What we want to do is do a careful
14 consideration and a thorough vetting
15 of all options on the table. What I
16 can say with certainty as we're
17 committed to getting this project
18 team work done and concluded by June
19 30, 2024, I'm not sure exactly what
20 we would recommend at this point.
21 But I will refer to the Board
22 President for further comment.

23 MR. STREATER: Yeah, I'll
24 add my personal perspective. The
25 Board hasn't sat in the room yet and

1 we prefer PIDC, PAID turnkey model
2 as well. But I think if the PAID,
3 PIDC piece works and when it is
4 working, that's something I think
5 that we can build upon as well, and
6 that's me just speaking as an
7 individual Board member. I think I
8 feel the temperature of the Board on
9 this subject of the PIDC, PAID model
10 because it does a couple of things.

11 One, we know that there's
12 experts who know how to build things
13 and it helps the District focus on
14 educating children, work orders, the
15 other things we have to do to make
16 sure that our buildings stay open in
17 the hands of an entity that we know
18 because it's done work for the City
19 as far as capital projects, can do
20 the work. So I think that's the --
21 right now that seems like the
22 optimal mechanism of what we have
23 right now. But that's (inaudible).

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
25 you, Board President.

1 And I just want to be clear
2 for the listening public. The Board
3 President isn't necessarily saying
4 this is the direction we should go
5 in. I think the purpose of today's
6 conversation is to explore ideas,
7 suggestions and recommendations as
8 it relates to an issue that we're
9 facing and what we can do to
10 essentially resolve it, so I
11 appreciate you providing your
12 opinion even though it's not an
13 official opinion from the School
14 Board or School District of
15 Philadelphia.

16 With that being said, just
17 one more question and then I'll pass
18 it to my colleagues. In the 2007
19 report, you talked about 85 schools
20 needing major construction and 21
21 schools that were recommended to be
22 closed. This is just a personal
23 question. Where was Frankford at on
24 that list? Was Frankford one of the
25 85 -- clearly, it had to be at least

1 one of the 85. But I'm wondering
2 was it one of the 21 or at any time
3 was Frankford one of the schools or
4 any school that we're in right now,
5 was any school that we are using
6 right now where people are actively
7 there, where teachers and other
8 staff members are actively there?
9 Any school that was on that 21 list
10 of schools that needed to be closed,
11 are we using any of those schools
12 still right now today some six years
13 later?

14 DR. WATLINGTON:

15 Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to defer to
16 Chief Hill because I don't have the
17 report in front of me. But if my
18 memory is correct, that's always a
19 dangerous thing, I do not believe
20 that Frankford was on that list of
21 21. Does that --

22 MR. STREATER: Let me add
23 some context. Yes, I agree from my
24 memory as well I do not believe
25 Frankford was on that list. But to

1 answer your other question of the 21
2 schools, I believe one of those
3 schools might be on the precipice of
4 being replaced or will be replaced
5 very soon with the rebuild. But
6 there are a few of those schools
7 that's sadly on that list of either
8 closure or replacement.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: And I
10 want to be clear to the listening
11 public, the initial report was done
12 in 2017. Most of the folks who are
13 in the position that they're in
14 right now, we were not in the
15 positions that we're currently in.
16 So this was a report that was done
17 and issues that were created long
18 before any of us got to the seats
19 that we're at. So I don't want
20 folks to think that we're just
21 sitting on our hands as it relates
22 to this issue.
23 We're just trying to rectify
24 this stuff and we talk all the time
25 to figure out what are best plans

1 and practices to try to address
2 this. When you talk about -- you
3 know what, I'll stop right there.

4 Chair recognizes
5 Councilmember Squilla. I'll come
6 back to my line of questions. Let
7 me pass it to some of the other
8 members of the Education Committee
9 to allow them to ask questions that
10 they may have. Chair recognizes
11 Councilmember Squilla and then after
12 that, we'll recognize Councilmember
13 Gauthier -- okay. I apologize.
14 We'll go to Councilmember Gauthier.

15 Chair recognizes
16 Councilmember Gauthier, and then
17 we'll come back to Councilmember
18 Squilla.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Dr. Watlington, I was
22 curious to know, in your
23 presentation you talked about doing
24 sort of an updated review of the
25 2017 Parsons Report. That report

1 gave a \$7.78 billion figure in terms
2 of what we would need to do to bring
3 our facilities up-to-date.

4 Have you gotten to the point
5 in your review where you have a new
6 number?

7 DR. WATLINGTON: We don't at
8 this time have a definitive new
9 number. One of the reasons why that
10 Phase 2 was listed from April
11 through to be determined is because
12 we don't want to say we'll have it
13 definitely by this date and it takes
14 us two days later. We'll have more
15 to say about that as we get deeper
16 into this work over the next four to
17 six weeks. But at this point, we
18 don't have a new definitive number
19 yet for the Council.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
21 Okay. Thanks. And the last sort of
22 slide of your presentation or one of
23 the last slides talked about how an
24 authority would work best. And you
25 stated that one of the things that

1 would help it to work is having 10
2 years of capital upfront. Do you
3 have a sense of what that figure
4 would be?

5 DR. WATLINGTON: I'm not
6 prepared to share a number at this
7 point, but we can certainly take
8 that as a homework assignment and
9 come back and share more details at
10 a later date.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
12 Thank you.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
15 you, Councilmember Gauthier.

16 Chair recognizes
17 Councilmember Squilla if he's
18 available.

19 MR. McMONAGLE: Excuse me,
20 Mr. Chair. The Councilman had to
21 step out for a moment.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
23 As we close out this section of our
24 hearing here today, I just wanted to
25 ask a couple other questions. When

1 you look at some of your Goals and
2 Guardrails priorities,
3 Dr. Watlington, talk to us just
4 maybe for a minute or so about
5 capacity. Thinking about your
6 staff, we understand a new
7 curriculum has been purchased which
8 needs to be implemented, and all of
9 the responsibilities that you have
10 just being in this seat as
11 Superintendent for one year. How
12 has this process been going for you
13 and how much more would you be able
14 to focus on issues related to
15 academic achievement if the idea of
16 facilities were not necessarily your
17 primary responsibility?

18 Because right now at the end
19 of the day outside of, you know,
20 you're responsible for public
21 safety -- I mean, you're responsible
22 for the safety of young people to
23 and from school, academic
24 achievement, climate, culture and
25 curriculum, hiring issues, contract

1 negotiations. I can probably list
2 about 30 other things that come
3 under your jurisdiction.

4 I'm wondering in your one
5 year has how has it been going so
6 far and what in your opinion would
7 it do for your workload if the idea
8 of building new buildings wasn't
9 directly under your jurisdiction as
10 it relates to implementing a plan
11 that the facilities -- I can't
12 remember the exact name you called
13 it, but the facilities coalition
14 that comes up with.

15 So I want to be clear, no
16 one's looking to say that the School
17 District should not have a say-so in
18 what schools should look like, where
19 schools should be built or anything
20 like that. I think that that would
21 be a naive perspective to take.

22 But at the end of the day,
23 the idea of actually implementing
24 the plan is what we're talking
25 about, having a third party being

1 involved with so we don't
2 necessarily have to have that
3 responsibility. We can rely on
4 people who do that every single day.
5 So, Superintendent, the mic is
6 yours.

7 DR. WATLINGTON: Thank you.
8 I'll try to answer that very
9 directly. First, I always believe,
10 and it's certainly proven true my
11 first year as a Superintendent, our
12 greatest resource is our time and
13 how we use it wisely and towards the
14 goals that we're trying to reach.

15 That said, I don't think we
16 get credit for the number of
17 hardworking people who are doing
18 good things. When I looked at that
19 slide that Chief Hill tipped off
20 about, I was very pleased to say
21 that under the Board of Education's
22 leadership, this is just not the
23 company line here. I really mean
24 this.

25 When you look at five

1 schools being built, plans for
2 others, hydration stations being put
3 in and all the things being done
4 notwithstanding all the challenges
5 we have here, it makes me optimistic
6 that we can get better. That said,
7 if I didn't believe that we need to
8 also be thinking about how we use
9 our time wisely, I certainly
10 wouldn't be a part of this testimony
11 conversation today.

12 I think it's worthy of
13 having a conversation about how all
14 of us can do our work more
15 efficiently. And I think all these
16 options are something that merit
17 some real serious consideration,
18 although I don't have a position
19 yet, but I do think that we should
20 be talking about how I can use my
21 time best, the Chief can be using
22 his time best.

23 I equally think we have to
24 have equal conversation about what
25 we're going to do about the historic

1 underfunding because no matter who
2 manages these processes, if we don't
3 get our arms around the historic
4 underfunding I think that we'll
5 continue to be in a not-so-pleasant
6 space. But I hope that's a
7 straight-away answer.

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

9 Absolutely, and I think that we
10 should put an exclamation point on
11 that statement that you just made or
12 highlight it or something. The
13 historical underfunding of our
14 schools here in Philadelphia is a
15 big part of the problem and it
16 created this hole that we all
17 inherited when we received the
18 positions that we have. And at the
19 end of the day, I appreciate
20 everyone's focus on trying our best
21 to address this issue.

22 Last question: I know news
23 just came out recently as it relates
24 to legislation that City Council
25 passed specifically around school

1 facilities. Maybe it's the Board
2 President. Maybe it's the
3 Superintendent. Talk a little bit
4 about what you're legally allowed to
5 say as it relates to this issue
6 being resolved and how we can
7 anticipate working together to
8 ensure that facilities are safe, up
9 to par and prepare for our young
10 people this fall.

11 As you've been examining
12 buildings throughout the course of
13 the summer, give us a brief summary
14 of some of the things that you -- I
15 was also impressed with Mr. Hill's
16 presentation, so clearly a lot of
17 work has been done. But give us
18 specific information around what
19 you've done this summer
20 specifically, right. Because at the
21 end of the day, this problem is so
22 big that there's a chance that a
23 school can be tested in September or
24 October and we find something and it
25 puts us in a position where we have

1 to create some type of alternative
2 plan.

3 And what I don't want is for
4 the listening public to think that
5 we spent our entire summer at the
6 shore or on vacation and we weren't
7 necessarily looking into some of the
8 issues that we already know exist.

9 So just for a second, talk a little
10 bit about what we've done this
11 summer, some of the issues that we
12 found, how we've been able to
13 rectify and how we feel pretty good
14 about where we are as it relates to
15 the legislation and how we're
16 prepared to work together from
17 before.

18 MR. STREATER: Well, I'll
19 take the latter question first and
20 I'll come back to the settlement
21 piece, the legislation, the lawsuit.
22 So we've been hard at work, the
23 District, the Board as well as it
24 relates to swing spaces. So we were
25 thinking that we don't want to get

1 caught in a situation where the
2 facilities plan is coming to
3 fruition and there might be some
4 (inaudible) and environmental
5 concerns or other things that can
6 cause a school to close and we don't
7 have appropriate spaces for children
8 to go to, so be on the lookout for
9 that.

10 There will be a swing place
11 plan coming out where we stick the
12 City in quadrants where parents and
13 communities will have access to a
14 growing list of swing spaces. While
15 there's work to be done on some of
16 them, there are some spaces more
17 ready to go more now than before.
18 So that's something that we're
19 working on.

20 I think -- I would hope that
21 that would be something that we all
22 can be proud of so that we don't
23 have a repeat of what happened at
24 your alma mater where we were kind
25 of figuring out where to put

1 students and things like that, but
2 to have something in the front end
3 where parents and families and
4 schools actually have before there's
5 even one that's necessary to know
6 where children are going to go.

7 Also, this whole idea of
8 facilities planning process, right,
9 this takes a lot of work, a lot of
10 work. And make no mistake, this is
11 not -- what we present today might
12 evolve a little bit. We're
13 definitely going to reach out to
14 stakeholders for suggestions and
15 things like that. But we do think
16 it's our role to kind of lead and
17 take ownership of an issue that is
18 ours in a way, but also look at the
19 villages as well as helping us with
20 adding capacity and things like
21 that.

22 But as it relates to the --
23 also for Frankford, I actually went
24 to Frankford myself and saw the work
25 that the District did to get the I

1 think D wing of the school up and
2 away where I believe the 10th, 11th
3 and 12th grade will be located there
4 and where our 9th graders will be
5 located at the Clemente.

6 And then I got a chance to
7 see the gym and I got a chance to
8 walk around and see some of the
9 history and the culture which I
10 think is very important, and when
11 you go into the school to see why
12 that school is a pillar of the
13 community as well. So that's some
14 of the work that we've been doing.

15 Around the lawsuit, I think
16 that even though litigation did
17 start, I'm happy to announce I think
18 that's a press statement coming out
19 that the City and the School
20 District of Philadelphia, and the
21 City includes City Council and the
22 Mayor's Office, this is not just the
23 Mayor's Office running shot here,
24 under the representation of the City
25 Solicitor, and we were able to

1 figure out how to get from Point A
2 to Point B.

3 And I'm very proud of the
4 fact that we have found a way to
5 talk about sustainability as it
6 relates to keeping up with what's
7 required under the law. We
8 clarified some things that might not
9 have been clarified at the outset,
10 but also create shared language,
11 shared understanding and shared
12 ability and capacity to be ever
13 transparent as well. So I think
14 that should not be something we
15 don't take -- not a lack around the
16 field and say we did it, but I think
17 that this can be the foundation for
18 even more village-oriented work that
19 can be done as we continue on this
20 public education renaissance.

21 So that being said, I think
22 that kind of covers it. And I just
23 want to say thank you Isai -- not
24 to call you Isaiah in this space,
25 but Chair Thomas, Council President

1 Clarke, the Mayor, the Managing
2 Director, for keeping this what it
3 has been, a family dispute, where we
4 were able to work something out. I
5 am very hopeful that we won't ever
6 have to go down that route again,
7 and I'm looking forward to how this
8 evolves to evergrowing collaboration
9 with the City and then obviously the
10 state as well.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
12 you, Board President. We appreciate
13 it.

14 I also want to take a moment
15 to recognize that Councilmember
16 Lozada has joined us in this hearing
17 today. Thank you, Councilmember.
18 We appreciate it. And I also want
19 to take a moment to acknowledge the
20 presence of State Rep Morgan Cephas
21 who's the Chair of the Philadelphia
22 Delegation who was a part of our
23 conversation earlier and plan on
24 returning as well. So thank you
25 both for being a part of this

1 important conversation.

2 At this point, I would like
3 to open it up to members of the
4 Education Committee to see if anyone
5 has any other questions for the
6 School District of Philadelphia as
7 it relates to our Superintendent,
8 his entire team as well the
9 President of our School Board?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Seeing
12 nobody in the chat and hearing no
13 further questions, I want to say
14 thank you all for your presence here
15 today. Thank you for the work that
16 you do for our children, and I look
17 forward to our next conversation,
18 which I know will be happening
19 sooner rather than later. Thank
20 you, everybody.

21 Mr. Maynard, will you please
22 call the next panel as it relates to
23 our topic here today.

24 THE CLERK: Sure. In order
25 to deal with hard stops, we're going

1 to call Cynthia Smith from Baltimore
2 City Public Schools next, and ask
3 Mary Filardo to follow immediately
4 afterwards.

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
6 you. Please state your name for the
7 record and you may begin with your
8 testimony.

9 MS. SMITH: Good afternoon.
10 I'm Cindy Smith. I am the Executive
11 Director of Facilities Planning,
12 Design and Construction for
13 Baltimore City Public Schools. Been
14 in this particular role for about a
15 year, but I've been here for about
16 nine years. So a good part of the
17 21st Century Buildings Program,
18 which is what I'll talk about.

19 And I just wanted to say on
20 a personal note I actually went to
21 college in Philly, and my husband,
22 where I met my husband at college
23 who is a graduate of Frankford High
24 School, so we have something in
25 common. But I will be reading from

1 the written testimony that I
2 submitted.

3 So I'm very encouraged to
4 see Philadelphia schools looking at
5 a rebuilding program similar to the
6 21st Century Buildings Program that
7 Baltimore City Schools embarked on
8 just about a decade ago. We have
9 very similar issues, especially in
10 regards to seeing what the School
11 District has presented, very similar
12 issues.

13 Similar, we had and still
14 have actually the oldest buildings
15 in the state of Maryland. In
16 addition, City schools have a
17 declining population, also in the
18 District have underutilized
19 facilities that we also have to deal
20 with. And like many districts,
21 particularly us urban districts,
22 City Schools have been historically
23 underfunded in regards to capital
24 and maintenance funding for decades.

25 For example, currently we

1 receive \$243 million less per year
2 than we should to support our
3 facilities appropriately. We are
4 funded almost completely by the
5 state for our capital needs versus
6 other districts in Maryland who have
7 a larger tax base in their local
8 areas and, therefore, receive
9 additional funding. So I think
10 those relate to a lot of the same
11 issues and problems that
12 Philadelphia has as well.

13 In approximately 2012, City
14 Schools embarked on a Facilities
15 Condition and Educational Adequacy
16 Assessment, resulting in a report
17 that we referenced as the 10-year
18 plan or also the Jacobs Study
19 because we have one of those too.
20 This plan included every school in
21 the district, the results from the
22 assessment and a recommendation for
23 the school and the building.

24 These recommendations
25 included everything from colocations

1 to closures, replacements and
2 renovations. Everything was also
3 assigned a year in the plan based on
4 the need of the particular school
5 building. City schools shared that
6 plan with all of the communities in
7 the city under a large community
8 engagement effort.

9 The next step of course was
10 the funding for this plan. The ECLU
11 worked with us to gather communities
12 and we marched on Annapolis to
13 demand funding. Obviously, the
14 capital funding we were receiving
15 was not going to support this kind
16 of rebuilding effort that was
17 necessary and identified in the
18 10-year plan.

19 Ultimately House Bill 860
20 was passed to provide bond funding
21 and the expected amount of \$1.1
22 billion to do what was supposed to
23 be the first half of the 10-year
24 plan. Remember, this was also about
25 a decade ago. Construction funding

1 was a little bit less expensive than
2 now. The bill also created a four-
3 party MOU with City Schools, the
4 state, the city of Baltimore and the
5 Maryland Stadium Authority, MSA for
6 reference in the future.

7 MSA, who is a quasi public
8 agency, had the ability to float
9 bonds which City Schools did not
10 have. The bill required a
11 contribution of \$20 million each
12 from the city, the state and City
13 Schools for a total of \$60 million
14 each year to the Financing Fund
15 established in the bill to back the
16 bonds that will be sold. This will
17 continue until all of the bonds
18 related to the program are fully
19 paid off or retired, which is to be
20 30 years from the time of issuance
21 of the final MSA bonds. I do
22 believe the last bond was issued
23 last year for the final school in
24 the program.

25 The MOU also placed MSA in

1 charge of the design and
2 construction as well as the final
3 say on the funds allocated to each
4 project with City Schools having
5 authority over the educational
6 programming in the buildings. I
7 just want to add here that this was
8 not to say that the operation teams
9 at the City Schools here wasn't
10 doing our work and wasn't doing good
11 work. This was about the funding.
12 The MSA being the entity to be able
13 to float the bonds, they wanted them
14 in charge of the design and
15 construction.

16 Capital funding remained and
17 still a portion of the state budget
18 that we still received, and all of
19 our normal systemic upgrades, like
20 HVAC systems and a couple of
21 projects that operations was doing
22 also to replace schools continued.
23 So this was basically operated as a
24 separate construction program in
25 addition to the existing capital

1 funding that we received.

2 Once the program started, of
3 course it was determined that \$1.1
4 billion would not do half of the
5 district. It would actually only
6 fund 23 of 28 school buildings. In
7 2022, City Schools refinanced part
8 of the bond requiring us to put in
9 another 10 years of payments, but
10 obtaining funding for a 29th school
11 in the program.

12 To date, City Schools has
13 replaced or renovated 26 buildings.
14 We still have -- under this program
15 we have replaced or renovated 26
16 buildings. We still have one in
17 construction and the last two are in
18 design. At this time unfortunately
19 there's no talk of additional
20 funding to continue through the 21st
21 Century Buildings Plan to update or
22 replace the remaining approximately
23 100 buildings. So we are back to
24 our underfunding annually and trying
25 to do everything with approximately

1 \$30 million a year. Which does not
2 do much.

3 Along with the other
4 stipulations, the House bill also
5 required City Schools to close and
6 consolidate 26 schools and obtain
7 the utilization rate of 86 percent
8 across the District by 2022.

9 Working closely with our
10 communities, we have made the very
11 difficult moves to close the 26
12 schools and we did achieve the
13 utilization target required.

14 But what I kind of want to
15 focus on though are the lessons
16 learned that we have kind of grasped
17 throughout this process that may
18 benefit others embarking on similar
19 endeavors. Number one, the four
20 school closures as part of their
21 requirement has strained
22 relationships with City Schools and
23 the communities we serve. These
24 communities went out and fought for
25 the funding for the schools. They

1 marched on Annapolis for them and
2 then turned around and had several
3 schools close within that their
4 communities.

5 Even though the schools
6 where the students were redistricted
7 to renew or renovated and there was
8 a tremendous amount of engagement
9 efforts to bring the communities
10 together when that happened, but
11 there was a significant sense of
12 loss within these communities that
13 were still receiving feedback and
14 pushback on to this date. So that
15 has been a very difficult part of
16 this process.

17 We would encourage the
18 development of ed specs and minimum
19 design standards prior to embarking
20 on a program. It was relieving to
21 hear that the School District
22 already does have something. I
23 would suggest at least reviewing
24 them to update. The ed specs that
25 the ed program and the required

1 spaces to support the educational
2 program for the school per the
3 legislative action we were under,
4 this was the only part in which we
5 had oversight and control. The ed
6 specs should be tight and should be
7 held to maintain as the absolute
8 requirements.

9 In our experience, many of
10 our schools were underbudgeted by
11 MSA as they were setting the
12 budgets. And as the entity studying
13 the budgets didn't understand school
14 design and construction particularly
15 in the beginning as well as the
16 needs of a school district. Then
17 City Schools was held to that budget
18 for the project which often meant
19 cutting educational spaces. This
20 has compromised many of the school
21 programs that we need to run.

22 In addition, design
23 standards set the minimum
24 requirements for the building system
25 and materials. In the absence of

1 design standards at the start of our
2 program, MSA was able to exhaust
3 some systems and materials that are
4 going to end up costing us to
5 maintain over the lifespan of the
6 building.

7 Once we did get our design
8 standards in place, they still
9 pushed on it since that was what
10 they had already done. And in
11 addition, since we were already
12 bowing the budgets that had already
13 been set, we were forced to give
14 into systems that are now what we
15 want in our buildings and are going
16 to be very difficult to maintain and
17 operate over the life cycle. The
18 district should know what their
19 minimum needs are to be able to
20 operate and maintain the buildings
21 and needs to hold to those
22 throughout the process.

23 Since MSA was in charge of
24 the funding authorizations, their
25 priority was first cost, not life

1 cycle cost. I would encourage any
2 program to include language about
3 analyzing the life cycle cost and
4 requiring that as a factor for
5 decision-making during the design
6 and value engineering decisions.
7 This is a good architectural and
8 engineering design practice anyway.
9 But this is going to cost us
10 hundreds of thousands of dollars, if
11 not millions, over the life cycle of
12 our buildings as we have to operate
13 and maintain systems that are not
14 the ones that we are familiar with
15 or the ones that are necessarily
16 best used in the school environment.

17 I would also encourage
18 language that gives school system
19 the authority to deny any decisions
20 that will be detrimental to the
21 operation of the school during its
22 life cycle. House Bill 860 did set
23 up two required bodies for reporting
24 out on the progress of the plan.
25 The first being called the

1 Coordinated Committee, which is led
2 by the city and centers around
3 partnerships with the city to
4 support the schools, such as safe
5 passage school, bike lanes,
6 redevelopment opportunities,
7 et cetera. This has been a great
8 partnership with the city.

9 The second one, the
10 Executive Committee is primarily a
11 reporting entity, which meets
12 quarterly in which the public can
13 attend to ask questions and to hear
14 the status overall of the program.
15 We would encourage both of these
16 types of entities, something
17 similar. The partnership with the
18 local agencies are important in
19 regards to supporting the schools'
20 effort and the public wants to hear
21 the progress of the plans, not just
22 necessarily about their particular
23 school but the overall.

24 We are also required to
25 provide the annual report to the

1 Board of Public Works that outlines
2 the status, the community
3 engagement, the funds spent,
4 et cetera, to keep everybody on
5 track, and let the public aware of
6 what's going on. Community
7 engagement is a large element of the
8 21st Century Buildings Program as a
9 whole. We have a community
10 engagement team just dedicated to
11 supporting the community meetings
12 during the design and construction
13 to support the closing school
14 process, to support our ribbon-
15 cutting activities to bring the
16 communities together and the merging
17 situations, et cetera. They're an
18 actually fairly large team and very
19 busy just to continue to support
20 this program throughout its
21 endeavors.

22 So I will admit that our
23 communication with MSA has been
24 contentious at times. It was a
25 forced partnership that wasn't

1 necessarily our choice but required
2 for the funding to be obtained, so
3 it was worth it because we needed
4 that money. We have often been at
5 odds because our mission is very
6 different than theirs.

7 A partner in this type of
8 program needs to understand that
9 schools aren't just a different type
10 of office building or commercial
11 building. The purpose of the
12 schools is very different and the
13 infrastructure needs to support the
14 purpose. Without that
15 understanding, it is a battle for
16 every step.

17 In addition, constant
18 communication outside of the design
19 and construction meetings is
20 essential. We hold an executive
21 meeting monthly between MSA and City
22 Schools to talk over outstanding
23 issues that come up that need
24 decisions, cooperation between us,
25 et cetera, that haven't been able to

1 come up or that aren't necessarily
2 related to a design or construction
3 project in particular.

4 Additionally, my counterpart
5 at MSA and I meet weekly where we
6 address things that have popped up
7 on one side or the other that are
8 project managers or warranty
9 managers need support on to be
10 addressed and to make sure that
11 they're resolved. Sharing these
12 responsibilities and creating a
13 professional working relationship
14 has helped to eliminate some of what
15 was previous arguments and
16 ultimately allows us to create
17 better buildings for our students
18 and staff.

19 The program has ultimately
20 allowed us to complete what will be
21 29 buildings for our students.
22 Unfortunately, we still have many to
23 go. But it has been very useful and
24 beneficial and it has been helpful
25 to us.

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
2 you. That was excellent testimony,
3 a lot of great information,
4 phenomenal feedback. I know I have
5 some questions, but I would like to
6 let our next member of this
7 particular panel provide testimony,
8 and then I'll circle back around
9 with questions.

10 So please state your name
11 for the record and you may proceed
12 with your testimony.

13 MS. SMITH: I apologize. I
14 do have a firm stop at 1:00, so I
15 just want to make sure that that's
16 out there.

17 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
18 you. Thank you for that
19 information.

20 THE CLERK: Would Mary
21 Filardo if you are connected, would
22 you please begin your testimony.

23 MS. FILARDO: Yes. Hi.
24 Good mor -- I guess good afternoon
25 now. I'm Mary Filardo. I don't

1 know, David, if you can put the
2 written testimony into the chats and
3 other people can reach it in that
4 way, that would be great.

5 So I'm Mary Filardo. I'm
6 Executive Director of the 21st
7 Century School Fund, which is almost
8 a 30-year-old nonprofit that's been
9 working on local, state and federal
10 policy associated with public school
11 infrastructure. My roots are in the
12 District of Columbia Public Schools,
13 and that was where I first cut my
14 teeth. So many of these
15 conversations are extremely familiar
16 to me from the public-private
17 partnerships and the other kinds of
18 authorities that all of this work
19 is, you know, what I've lived in for
20 the last 30 years.

21 So I have testimony about
22 bravery and how important it is to
23 be brave in this work. But I want
24 to actually skip what I've written
25 and I would like to share my screen

1 if I could just for a moment. Can I
2 do that without -- can you give me
3 the permission on that?

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

5 Mr. Maynard, Tech, is that okay?

6 MS. FILARDO: Yeah. So
7 while you do that, I'll keep going
8 so not to take too much time. What
9 I am a little bit concerned about is
10 I listened to different governance
11 models for school construction, and
12 school responsibilities is
13 essentially being clear on what --
14 can you see now, this beautifully-
15 colored green and orange document?

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yes.
17 The writing is a little small, but
18 we can see the document.

19 MS. FILARDO: Let me see. I
20 can make it bigger. How about that?

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Much
22 better.

23 MS. FILARDO: So one of the
24 things I wanted to focus on is that
25 it really actually doesn't matter

1 and we had done a study back in 1999
2 actually with the World Bank Group,
3 whether you're managing it inhouse,
4 whether you're privatizing the, you
5 know, kind of contracting out the
6 entire management system of your
7 facilities or your capital program
8 or whether you have some hybrid of
9 it.

10 It really means -- what's
11 important is that you have these
12 essentials for a capital program and
13 really what it means, and this is
14 what I think is so important, that
15 the Council is looking at this, that
16 frankly you have to have laws and
17 policies in place for governance and
18 decision-making around your public
19 infrastructure, for funding around
20 your public infrastructure, for the
21 management even, what are going to
22 be procurement laws and decision-
23 making and planning around the
24 facilities management, the planning
25 and the data and information

1 management and the transparency and
2 then accountability.

3 So these are the sort of key
4 elements that have to be in place no
5 matter who's responsible for your
6 facilities, whether it's the School
7 District of Philadelphia or whether
8 you turn it over to a school
9 construction authority like in New
10 York City or the DGS, which is who
11 does it in Washington, D.C. It's
12 under the mayor. It's kind of a
13 city agency responsibility. Again,
14 a little bit of a hybrid. But these
15 elements have to be in place.

16 And I think what is
17 important for the Council and
18 community to understand is that this
19 work has to have policy and code
20 associated with it. It isn't just
21 about management. And so, one of
22 the things that I would urge the
23 Council to do with its partners in
24 the community and at the School
25 District is really identify what are

1 the biggest obstacles to why you
2 have not actually implemented a
3 major modernization program prior to
4 this time.

5 And I will tell you that in
6 the District of Columbia we started
7 this process because we were
8 involved in the first Facility
9 Master Plan back in the mid '90s and
10 there was no vision to modernize
11 every school in every neighborhood.
12 It just didn't exist. We were
13 reacting to in our case it was fire
14 code violations. In your case it's
15 been mostly lead and asbestos. But
16 the district was on an entirely
17 reactive kind of management model.
18 And so, we put forward a proposal.
19 It was from the community to the
20 city council and to the school
21 district to do an educational plan.

22 Now, I have to say when I
23 listened to Superintendent
24 Watlington talk about the plan that
25 they're envisioning, it sounds like

1 an architectural plan. It doesn't
2 actually sound like the plan that
3 you need, which is going to be a
4 very difficult plan that says who
5 gets what resources and where. And
6 I think that it's important to
7 listen to Stephanie from Baltimore
8 on the school closings.

9 The sense of loss that you
10 get from losing the school,
11 particularly in a low-income
12 community, particularly in
13 communities that have been redlined
14 and discriminated against over
15 decades and decades, that now you're
16 going to take their public school is
17 just incredible. We're seeing this
18 not just in the urban areas.

19 There's a school district in
20 Kansas, a rural district, I think it
21 was something like 40 kids in the
22 high school. And the school
23 district decided to close that high
24 school, and the community is so
25 furious that they have divorced

1 themselves from their school
2 district, right. So the sense of
3 loss and the importance to work with
4 the communities on what are their
5 schools is absolutely fundamental.

6 So the issues of the
7 politics, you know, for anybody to
8 say, oh, we're going to take
9 politics out of this, I would not
10 work with them, it is political. It
11 is legitimately political and it has
12 to be dealt with, with the
13 constituencies as legitimately
14 political, who's getting what when,
15 so I'm going to stop there because
16 this stuff upsets me a little bit
17 because it is fundamentally going to
18 be who's going to pay and who's
19 going to get what.

20 And I would argue one last
21 thing. On the revenue side, you
22 have got to identify revenue. You
23 have to look at getting revenue from
24 universities. You have to look at
25 getting revenue from so-called

1 nonprofit hospitals. You have to
2 look at where the money is in your
3 city and they have to be able to
4 provide a revenue stream that
5 actually brings back to the city
6 some of what they got from the city
7 over many years.

8 In the District of Columbia,
9 what we use to finance what's been a
10 \$6 billion program for 50,000 kids
11 is the commercial transfer tax
12 revenue, so there's a tax whenever a
13 commercial building sells and that
14 revenue has been dedicated to paying
15 for some construction. So there's
16 got to be something in Philadelphia
17 that's going to have a robust
18 ability to pay because you're
19 looking at \$10 billion to \$12
20 billion over the next probably 10
21 years, if you were really going to
22 address the level of need that you
23 have in the city. With that, I'm
24 going to close.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank

1 you. Thank you both for your
2 testimony. I think it was extremely
3 powerful. I think it was extremely
4 informative.

5 I do want to go back to
6 something that was an issue that
7 Mary raised that I think you talked
8 about personally that relates to the
9 community pushback. Can you
10 elaborate a little bit more on what
11 took place in the midst of that
12 process that put you in a position
13 where you received significant
14 community pushback even though you
15 were looking to build new spaces?

16 MS. FILARDO: For Cindy,
17 yeah.

18 MS. SMITH: Yeah. I mean, a
19 lot of our communities really
20 centralize themselves around their
21 schools, right. And I think that is
22 the case in particularly a lot of
23 places in the urban setting. So
24 even though -- I will say our first
25 year and our second year of our

1 program we really focused on because
2 we had to meet that utilization
3 target in the closures, we focused
4 on receiving schools, the schools
5 that would be receiving students
6 from a closure or merging schools,
7 those were the schools we focused on
8 getting completed in the 21st
9 century plan in the first two years.
10 But even with the fact that students
11 would be going to a school that was
12 newly renovated or brand new period,
13 it's not necessarily the ones in
14 their community then.

15 So what we did, because we
16 don't have a lot of property, right,
17 there's not a lot of vacant property
18 that we can purchase, we were
19 focused on -- I'm just going to pick
20 two schools. So if we were closing
21 West Side Elementary School and all
22 of the students would then go to
23 Dorothy I. Hite. Now, we were well
24 within the mile, well within walking
25 distance, that school is waiting to

1 get a major renovation plus a
2 significant addition to house the
3 additional students, it still is a
4 loss of West Side Elementary School
5 and the community that centralized
6 around West Side Elementary School
7 then really suffered and felt that
8 loss.

9 And since we did all this,
10 of course through a community
11 engagement process, and the school
12 board still had to vote on all the
13 closures despite the fact they were
14 outlined in the 10-year plan. Every
15 time as soon as we started the
16 process, we had a lot of people
17 showing up to school board meetings
18 to say, hey, you're really affecting
19 our community, this is the central
20 hub of our community. It's not the
21 same. Even going to a new school,
22 it's not the same. So that was
23 really a lot of that pushback and
24 feedback and harm that's been done
25 to those communities because it is a

1 loss. It's definitely a loss to
2 them.

3 And even though the students
4 are then going to a better building,
5 a new school and we have a lot of
6 activities to merge the communities
7 together to attend that school, it's
8 still a loss for that original
9 community.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
11 you. Thank you for that response.
12 I very much appreciate it.

13 Mary, you were pretty
14 passionate about politics not being
15 involved, and I understand as it
16 relates to communities and community
17 input, but can you elaborate a
18 little bit based on your experience
19 doing this work of why you think
20 that's something that is inevitable
21 as it relates to dealing with
22 bureaucracy and politics when you're
23 trying to address issues like we are
24 as it relates to facilities?

25 MS. FILARDO: Well, I think

1 what I'm saying is that politics is
2 involved and it's legitimately
3 involved. And in some ways I see it
4 as a way to try to keep communities
5 and stakeholders out of the process
6 by saying, oh, it's not political as
7 though somehow it's just technical
8 and you should just leave it to the
9 so-called consultants and experts
10 and if parents are involved and if
11 community members are involved in it
12 or other kind of interest groups,
13 then somehow, oh, they're making it
14 political and it's really not
15 political. But in fact, these are
16 public properties, these are public
17 buildings, these are public
18 responsibilities.

19 And even as you're looking,
20 Council Thomas, at the three models
21 that were presented, those are
22 actually not -- those are like
23 apples and oranges and bananas.
24 They're not the same kind of options
25 at all. Your public-private

1 partnership that's a development
2 that's sort of a way to use a piece
3 of land to raise revenue. The kind
4 of sell lease back is also sort of a
5 revenue-related one, but the PIDC is
6 just like the Massachusetts -- or
7 not Massachusetts, the Maryland
8 Stadium Authority is just a
9 financing vehicle. So they're not
10 actually -- you didn't have three
11 options of the same type that were
12 presented. They were quite
13 different.

14 And in fact, all of them
15 like the Maryland Stadium Authority
16 as Ms. Smith was talking about,
17 they're like financing entities.
18 They're real estate, they want to
19 get a project done, they want to get
20 it out the door. They don't have to
21 operate and maintain either those
22 communities frankly or those
23 buildings over time. So they are a
24 very different entity.

25 So part of what I felt

1 concerned about in the description
2 of your planning process is that
3 your planning process isn't just
4 looking at the design of the
5 buildings to support the academic
6 vision of Philadelphia public
7 schools. That's one part of it and
8 it's an important part of it. But
9 it's also how are you going to
10 manage not only the construction,
11 but the operations and maintenance
12 of these over time. How are you
13 going to pay for it. How are you
14 going to ensure that you've got
15 stable funding, not just on the
16 capital side but on the operating
17 and maintenance side.

18 So all of these things
19 together are really a part of your
20 plan. And it doesn't sound like
21 what you're going to get on June
22 30th is going to be nearly as
23 comprehensive enough or engaging
24 enough to move you to where you need
25 to be. I felt concerned actually as

1 I listened to the School District
2 talk about what they've got planned
3 for June 30th when frankly I looked
4 at their strategic guidepost and
5 things. I don't think it's going to
6 get you there.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You
8 really did your homework. We
9 appreciate it. I know we have some
10 hard stops at 1 o'clock. But I
11 think you just challenged us
12 honestly on the City Council side to
13 push the School District to think
14 about this a lot more critically
15 than what was communicated in
16 today's hearing, looking at life
17 after the building has been built,
18 not just from the community
19 engagement perspective but from a
20 fiscal perspective as well too.

21 I listened to Ms. Smith talk
22 about 86 percent of the facilities
23 have to actually be filled as it
24 relates to capacity. I know that
25 that's an issue that we have in the

1 City with our changing population,
2 right. We have certain parts of the
3 City that's way more people than
4 what it had when this original
5 structure was first designed. So we
6 have to think about population
7 change, conditions of buildings,
8 community input, you're right.
9 You're right, it's a heavy lift.
10 And after this and to you and
11 comparing some of the things that
12 you've done to their testimony, we
13 do have a lot more work to do.

14 I do appreciate you both
15 working with my office and my team
16 and having a number of conversations
17 with us leading to this hearing. I
18 know there's a hard stop at
19 1 o'clock, so I would just ask that
20 if you don't mind that your door
21 stays open for us to be able to
22 reach out and consult with you
23 throughout the course of this
24 process, so some of the gaps that
25 you communicated today we can use

1 you as a resource hopefully to try
2 to fill those gaps and make sure
3 that we're moving in the best
4 interest as possible for the
5 children and the families and all
6 the stakeholders who are involved in
7 our schools.

8 MS. FILARDO: Absolutely.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. SMITH: Absolutely for
11 me too, yes.

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: This is
13 great. Thank you. Thank you so
14 much. We appreciate you being here
15 today and we appreciate your passion
16 and dedication to the children not
17 just of Philadelphia but all across
18 the country based on this dialogue,
19 so thank you.

20 MS. SMITH: And if there are
21 further questions afterwards after I
22 have to jump, please feel free to
23 send them over. I can respond back.
24 It's not a problem.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank

1 you. That's great.

2 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
4 you both.

5 Mr. Maynard, I think that
6 was very informative. I think we're
7 having an amazing conversation thus
8 far. Can you please call our next
9 panel of witnesses to essentially
10 testify on today's topic.

11 THE CLERK: Of course,
12 Mr. Chair. The only thing I'll
13 point out is Councilmember Gauthier
14 has a hand raised. I don't know how
15 you want to acknowledge --

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: That was
17 from --

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: No,
19 it's new.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Oh, I'm
21 sorry. Chair recognizes
22 Councilmember Gauthier.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: No,
24 no. It's a new hand.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm

1 sorry.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: It's
3 okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 First, I want to say how
5 much I really appreciated the last
6 panel, especially Ms. Filardo's
7 testimony. It was just really
8 honest and informative. I have a
9 question. I'm not sure if anyone
10 who testified can answer it, but I
11 wanted to put it out there.

12 Since the state provides the
13 bulk of our public school funding, I
14 wanted to know if there are any
15 opinions on the role that a new
16 authority should have with the state
17 or the role that the state should
18 play with regards to a new School
19 Building Authority? I don't know if
20 there's a comment on that from
21 anybody who testified today.

22 MS. FILARDO: So,
23 Councilmember, I can take a stab at
24 it. One of the things that the 21st
25 Century School Fund does is we work

1 with state facility offices all
2 across the United States, including
3 Rhode Island's Building Authority,
4 but also with state officials and in
5 fact have worked with Pennsylvania's
6 sort of anemic state program, which
7 at one time was much, much stronger.

8 And part of what has really
9 fallen over the last decade is the
10 state participation and funding for
11 school facilities nationally. Now,
12 there's some states -- Delaware
13 actually pays over 50 percent for
14 any project, about 60 percent
15 almost. Wyoming pays it all.
16 There's a lot of variety, but it's
17 an area that states have to do much
18 more.

19 And I think this is where
20 the -- and to some extent this has
21 happened with your court case, that
22 it's got to be a rural-urban
23 partnership because the rural
24 districts and the high-need urban
25 districts are the ones struggling

1 the most. But the states have
2 absolutely not stepped up to the
3 responsibility, and it's something
4 that I think should be priority for
5 the school district in making sure
6 that the state does its share.

7 And when you look at how
8 they fund on an operating side, on
9 average about 47 percent is state,
10 45 percent is local, this is
11 nationally, and only about 8 percent
12 is federal. At the average for
13 state funding is about 16 percent
14 for capital. This is nationally.
15 So they're way low. And frankly, in
16 Philadelphia -- I mean in
17 Pennsylvania they're even lower than
18 that. They're not doing 16 percent
19 for capital.

20 So I think it's an area that
21 communities have to make their
22 voices heard in their state
23 capitals. But I believe that that's
24 what's going to happen and that will
25 make a difference.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: And
2 do you have an opinion on if we were
3 to form this at the local level, is
4 there structure in relation to the
5 state or a policy in relation to the
6 state that we should be trying to
7 adopt to achieve that optimal
8 funding level?

9 MS. SMITH: I mean, in a
10 sense the state has a little bit of
11 the same problem as you do as a
12 city, which is they're going to need
13 data. They're going to need a
14 governance. They're going to have
15 to decide who gets what and why,
16 which districts get what.

17 You're looking at which
18 schools, but this is going to be
19 what districts get what. So that
20 sheet that I did on those six
21 elements, they're going to exist at
22 the state level as well. The
23 management is a little bit different
24 because they're not managing the
25 actual construction or the

1 maintenance. But on the governance,
2 on the data, on the decision-making,
3 on the oversight and on the funding,
4 those are going to be really
5 critical and there needs to be
6 policy associated with that.

7 And I think that was in 2018
8 a state in Pennsylvania -- a state
9 committee that made a bunch of
10 recommendations for stated roles and
11 responsibilities. And I know that
12 Senator Hughes has been a real
13 champion for school facilities at
14 the state level. But there is going
15 to need to be a real push by
16 communities and by -- this is the
17 politics of it, right.

18 The politics has got to be
19 aligned at the state level because
20 that will be that state and city
21 partnership that's going to
22 primarily push this. We're actually
23 working to get some federal dollars
24 targeted to these highest needs
25 districts, but that's, you know,

1 it's politics on that too.

2 But I think it's actually
3 important for the Council to have a
4 position, for the Council to be
5 supporting policy change at the
6 state level as well as getting
7 policies in place at the City level
8 to support really what's going to be
9 probably a \$20 billion over 20-year
10 investment for the City of
11 Philadelphia.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
13 Thank you so much.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
16 you, Councilmember. I appreciate
17 those questions. And I appreciate
18 your answers.

19 Are there any other
20 questions from members of this
21 Committee for this particular panel?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Hearing
24 none, thank you everyone for your
25 participation. It is very much

1 appreciated.

2 Mr. Maynard, can you please
3 call the next panel.

4 THE CLERK: The next witness
5 listed to testify is Art Steinberg,
6 the President of the AFT.

7 Mr. Steinberg unfortunately had an
8 emergency. His written testimony
9 was circulated to all of the
10 Committee members.

11 And we apologize, but we'll
12 move on to Tony Wigglesworth,
13 counsel for AFL-CIO.
14 Mr. Wigglesworth, are you connected?

15 MR. WIGGLESWORTH: Yes, I
16 am. Thank you very much for the
17 opportunity to provide this
18 testimony. I'm going to paraphrase
19 and augment the written testimony
20 that I previously submitted. I am
21 the Director of the Philadelphia
22 Area Labor Management Committee. We
23 operate the local labor management
24 programs for both the Philadelphia
25 Building Construction Trades Council

1 as well as the Philadelphia Council,
2 the AFL-CIO. And I'm going to focus
3 my comments on what Philadelphia has
4 done given this set of circumstances
5 in the past, and then talk about
6 lessons learned regarding that
7 activity and then end with the
8 future.

9 In 2006, the School District
10 of Philadelphia issued a bond for
11 \$2.1 billion for new construction.
12 The current Superintendent at that
13 time was Paul Valas. Mr. Vallas was
14 more of a builder than he was an
15 educator and decided what he wanted
16 to do was build 10 new schools in
17 the City of Philadelphia and
18 accomplished 30 major renovations in
19 the City of Philadelphia.

20 To do this, he hired
21 approximately 35 employees within
22 the School District of Philadelphia
23 dedicated to construction called the
24 Philadelphia School Improvement
25 Team, and they partnered with an

1 outside architecture construction
2 management firm, URS, to proceed
3 with a campaign of capital
4 construction. The likes of which
5 quite honestly had not been seen in
6 Philadelphia.

7 The program took place from
8 2006 through 2011, which extended by
9 one year. We did deliver 10 schools
10 on time and on budget. We also as a
11 result of the commitment from the
12 Building Trades Council memorialized
13 in a partnership agreement signed by
14 the Philadelphia Building
15 Construction Trades Council and the
16 School District moved 750
17 Philadelphia school graduates into
18 our local apprenticeship program.

19 The program worked because
20 it had constant communication. My
21 organization's role in it was to
22 implement a worksite communication
23 process so that School District
24 employees and School District
25 representatives met with contractor

1 personnel on a weekly basis in order
2 to make sure that progress was
3 achieved. And in order to model
4 behavior, we actually let a senior
5 executive, a former construction
6 manager from the private sector,
7 assist in the effort.

8 I'll jump to the back end in
9 2012 early on. We convened a
10 lessons learned. And our lessons
11 learned pointed to some things that
12 we could have quite honestly done
13 better. One was we kind of hid
14 behind the skirts of the existing
15 School Reform Commission. Remember
16 that's what we had, and did not
17 engage in the community as much as
18 we should have or could have.

19 The second lesson learned
20 was that we had 10 construction
21 projects with 10 architects and 10
22 construction management firms, and
23 there's a better way to do work than
24 to have 10 separate projects. A
25 group of us investigated Detroit,

1 Michigan, which was engaged in a
2 capital program starting in 2010.
3 What they did was come up with a
4 common model. They pursued that
5 common model and they managed to
6 shave off by their estimation 30
7 percent of the construction costs by
8 replicating the same design build
9 process throughout the activity.

10 The other thing that we
11 learned was that there's real
12 strength in partnership. We had a
13 very close working relationship with
14 the School District, with URS, with
15 our contractors and with the
16 Building Trades Council. Flashing
17 forward to now, we have new
18 leadership as you know both in the
19 Superintendent's office as well as
20 within the Building Trades Council.

21 We embarked on negotiations
22 late last year to develop an
23 agreement between the School
24 District of Philadelphia and the
25 Building and Construction Trades

1 Council, which was signed earlier
2 this year. It incorporates a lot of
3 lessons learned from our last
4 experience, but it also enhances the
5 pipeline process between the School
6 District of Philadelphia and our
7 apprenticeship programs.

8 Most importantly, it commits
9 the Philadelphia Building
10 Construction Trades Council to
11 cooperate with the career technical
12 education aspects of each
13 Philadelphia high school and even
14 middle school to ensure that what's
15 being learned in those settings is
16 appropriate for apprenticeship
17 engagement. We're just beginning
18 that work. We convened a group last
19 month of apprentice coordinators and
20 some School District representatives
21 in order to pursue that work.

22 So the Building Trades
23 Council, its constituent contractors
24 and association stand ready to help
25 with this undertaking. But I want

1 to throw out a note of caution. And
2 the note of caution is that there is
3 a great deal of construction demand
4 in the marketplace right now. Upon
5 request from the Philadelphia
6 Construction Building Trades
7 Council, my organization has been
8 engaged in trying to develop a local
9 network, data-driven network of
10 demand over the next 10 to 12 years.
11 We're working with Everybody Builds,
12 (inaudible) to the West Philadelphia
13 Consortium, we're working with the
14 City's office of Infrastructure
15 Capital Programming and we are
16 working with the School District of
17 Philadelphia.

18 And right now taking all of
19 those entities into account, we are
20 looking at total construction demand
21 approaching \$18 billion over the
22 next 10 years and \$9 billion over
23 the next 5 years. We need to figure
24 out where people are going to come
25 from. We need to use that in order

1 to inform the apprenticeship process
2 to make sure that our local
3 residents are availed the
4 opportunity of being involved in our
5 apprenticeship programs and get the
6 work on School District projects.

7 I'll end there. If anyone
8 has any questions, I'll be happy to
9 answer them. And I want to thank
10 the Committee for allowing me to do
11 this. It's been very informative to
12 me as well.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
14 you for your testimony. It's very
15 much appreciated and I think it's
16 very important that you offered a
17 perspective that hasn't yet been
18 offered as it relates to the
19 construction side, the job side.
20 And you gave a lot of viable
21 information about what happened in
22 the past, but I think a key
23 component of what you said is making
24 sure that we understand the skill of
25 what we're going to be looking to do

1 so we can assure that we have the
2 capacity to hire people local, put
3 folks through the proper
4 apprenticeship programs, training
5 the right way so that it can also
6 help spark the local economy and
7 address some of the issues that we
8 have as it relates to jobs and
9 poverty. So you're absolutely on
10 point and we appreciate that
11 perspective.

12 Are there any questions from
13 members of this Committee for this
14 particular witness?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
17 Hearing none, I want to thank you
18 for your testimony. I had a couple
19 of questions myself, but I'm going
20 to pass because I know we're running
21 a little bit short on time. And you
22 know, Mr. Tony, I can give you a
23 call and we can talk about this
24 stuff indepth any time. This is
25 what we love to do. So thank you

1 for your time. I appreciate it, and
2 we appreciate all you do as it
3 relates to helping the construction
4 industry as well as the labor
5 industry here in the City of
6 Philadelphia. So thank you for your
7 service.

8 MR. WIGGLESWORTH: Thank you
9 for the opportunity.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: We
11 appreciate it.

12 Mr. Maynard, will you please
13 call the next witness to testify
14 here today.

15 THE CLERK: Sure. Due to
16 scheduling issues, we're going to
17 call Rachel Pritzker for public
18 comment and then jump to other
19 witnesses.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: No, no,
21 Mr. Maynard. Let's finish the panel
22 first. We'll finish the panelists
23 and then we'll go to public comment.
24 Let's finish the panelists first.

25 THE CLERK: Yes, sir. I

1 apologize. That's my bad.

2 The next witness we'll hear
3 from is Ms. Edmonds from UNITE HERE.
4 Ms. Edmonds, are you connected?

5 (No response.)

6 THE CLERK: Okay. We'll
7 try -- Ms. Edmonds, is that you?

8 (No response.)

9 THE CLERK: Okay. We'll
10 swing back to Ms. Edmonds.

11 Joan Dupree from Frankford
12 High School is listed, but Joan is
13 unfortunately having cell phone
14 issues so we're going to skip her
15 for now.

16 Sam Rhoads, are you still
17 here with us?

18 MR. DUPREE: I'm here.

19 THE CLERK: Oh, there we go.
20 Joan, would you please begin your
21 testimony. I apologize.

22 MR. DUPREE: Sure. Hello,
23 everyone. I'm Joan Dupree. I'm a
24 senior at Frankford High School. I
25 want to start off by saying the

1 school to me means more than just a
2 physical place that I would go to
3 every day for school. This place in
4 all reality was a home whether we
5 saw it that way or not. And quite
6 frankly, I want to go back to my
7 home. I want to have fun and live
8 life like I used to in Frankford.

9 Although I didn't know what
10 to think of Frankford at first when
11 I got to be in the building for the
12 first time, I soon found my way to
13 meeting some amazing people,
14 students and teachers included. It
15 wasn't all rainbows either.

16 Inevitably in life you have bad
17 encounters, but what amazed me was
18 thanks to the school I had people
19 who had my back and this was a nice
20 new experience for me seeing that
21 everybody was stuck at home for a
22 year and a half.

23 We all lost touch with the
24 idea of how to be people and how to
25 interact and socialize, but

1 Frankford took the time to not only
2 get us to interact with each other,
3 but they did what they could to
4 bring us back to a feeling of
5 normalcy. This is why I want my
6 last year to be at this school,
7 whether that be online or in person.
8 I just want to be in the place that
9 I know and feel comfortable at.

10 And honestly, I want the
11 management of our schools to be a
12 little better because not all kids
13 my age or younger are understanding
14 and agreeable. They are hard-headed
15 and reckless, and they don't feel
16 like fighting or trying to keep a
17 place like Frankford open without
18 good reason. And with all due
19 respect, this shouldn't have been an
20 issue having to deal with asbestos
21 and the school closing. On top of
22 that, reporters looking around our
23 school and field looking for
24 information, that is not helping the
25 environment we need because no

1 matter what anybody says or how
2 grown up we feel or how many
3 responsibilities we have, we are
4 still kids and we will be kids until
5 the day we graduate. And all we
6 want is a safe space to learn but
7 ultimately to be kids for the last
8 couple of years of our childhood we
9 have left.

10 I have one year left. I've
11 done my time and I've lived what
12 I've had to live. But what about
13 the other kids who need a place with
14 substance and structure, who needed
15 what I needed after COVID. Although
16 Frankford gets a bad reputation for
17 idiotic reasons, it can't hide the
18 fact that it's still a good school
19 with a good staff and a real good
20 place for kids to come into and be
21 themselves and express themselves,
22 and I truly believe that in a school
23 like this is where you find yourself
24 or you become who you truly are.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank

1 you for your testimony. That was
2 powerful. That was amazing. Just
3 for the record, clearly I have a
4 bias. I'm a Frankford High School
5 grad myself. But when you started
6 high school, what year were you in
7 and how were you as it relates to
8 the pandemic?

9 MR. DUPREE: I started high
10 school in 2020. It's --

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So right
12 at the height of the pandemic. So
13 you've been in and out of school
14 pretty much your whole high school
15 career. And you're Class of 2024;
16 is that correct?

17 MR. DUPREE: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So the
19 Class of 2024 has had a very unique
20 experience as it relates to your
21 high school journey. Thank you.
22 Thank you for taking the time to
23 testify today. Thank you for making
24 yourself vulnerable and sharing our
25 story. And I guess before you close

1 out, what do you think we can do as
2 elected officials, specifically for
3 young people at Frankford who had to
4 start their year in the pandemic --
5 I mean, start their high school
6 journey in the pandemic and is
7 forced to end their high school
8 journey this way?

9 How can we as government --
10 we have folks from the School
11 District listening. What can we do
12 to make your journey in your senior
13 year special as it relates to you
14 closing out your high school
15 experience?

16 MR. DUPREE: Speaking for
17 myself, I would just want to be at
18 Frankford. I started there. I did
19 my time there. I just want to
20 finish there with the people that I
21 know, the people that I came to
22 know, that I came to grow with
23 because we all know the pandemic was
24 a hard time, so it would be amazing
25 to close out a long journey with the

1 people that I've endured that
2 journey with.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: That's
4 great. Well, again thank you for
5 your testimony today. Thank you for
6 being brave and coming on here to
7 talk to us about how it feels to be
8 you because none of us knows that.
9 And I think that that narrative is
10 important as it relates to this
11 conversation that we're having. So
12 thank you so much. We appreciate
13 it.

14 MR. DUPREE: Thank you for
15 having me.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: No
17 problem.

18 Mr. Maynard, will you --
19 Chair recognizes Councilmember
20 Brooks -- oh, okay. Sorry.

21 Mr. Maynard, will you please
22 take a moment to call our next
23 panelist to testify today.

24 THE CLERK: Is Ms. Edmonds
25 from UNITE HERE available?

1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Okay. Not
3 hearing from her.

4 Sam Rhoads from PIDC, would
5 you begin your testimony.

6 MR. RHOADS: Thank you.

7 Good afternoon, Chairman Thomas and
8 Vice-Chair Brooks and members of the
9 Education Committee. My name is Sam
10 Rhoads and I'm the Executive Vice-
11 president at PIDC and offer this
12 testimony on behalf of PIDC. I want
13 to start by thanking you and the
14 Committee very much for holding this
15 hearing and hosting a number of very
16 important perspectives today on
17 arguably what has been the most
18 important issue confronting the City
19 today.

20 Our primary intent to
21 testify is simply to confirm that
22 the authority-based model does exist
23 in Philadelphia and is actively used
24 with a track record of successful
25 implementation of civic projects.

1 This accommodated and can
2 accommodate the range of projects
3 that are contemplated by these
4 hearings.

5 PIDC is the City's economic
6 development hub. It is formed as
7 the nonprofit partnership between
8 the City of Philadelphia and the
9 Chamber of Commerce for Greater
10 Philadelphia in 1958 with a mission
11 to spur investment, support business
12 growth and foster development that
13 creates jobs, revitalizes
14 neighborhoods and drives inclusive
15 growth to every corner of
16 Philadelphia.

17 PIDC manages the
18 Philadelphia Authority for
19 Industrial Development or PAID as it
20 is known. PAID is a governmental
21 authority. It was formed in 1967 by
22 an ordinance of City Council under
23 Pennsylvania's Industrial Authority
24 Developmental Act, which is now
25 known as the economic development

1 financing arm. PIDC and the City
2 rely on PAID to provide a wide
3 variety of functions that are
4 eligible under its enabling statute
5 and are consistent with our economic
6 development mission.

7 These functions include
8 issuing tax exempt financing as
9 we've heard in earlier testimony for
10 Philadelphia-based nonprofits and
11 small manufacturers, acting as a
12 conduit for a variety of
13 Commonwealth or city-driven
14 financing activities, and also
15 selling or holding title to real
16 estate on the City's behalf such as
17 the Navy Yard or other industrial-
18 based real estate.

19 These kind of powers enable
20 PAID to partner with the City or
21 other public bodies such as the
22 School District to facilitate
23 significant civic projects. With
24 respect to the schools for example,
25 PAID is partnered in the past to

1 sell excess real estate that is
2 identified by the School District
3 and is currently very proud to be in
4 partnership with the District to
5 construct three new schools as the
6 School District identified earlier.

7 This arrangement works much
8 as contemplated under these hearings
9 and allows the School District to
10 offer to more effectively manage
11 construction of new state-of-the-art
12 schools for Philadelphia's children
13 while accomplishing multiple goals.
14 Specifically and as an example, the
15 School District's construction of
16 these schools through PAID allows it
17 to incorporate goals for diversity
18 and the development and construction
19 of these facilities while
20 maintaining property ownership and
21 full control over design and
22 construction.

23 The current partnership
24 provides for the new construction of
25 three new schools that include the

1 Lewis C. Cassidy Plus School in
2 Overbrook, the AMY James Martin
3 School in Port Richmond and the
4 Thomas Holme Elementary School in
5 Torresdale. The Cassidy project is
6 under construction, about 15 percent
7 complete at this point. And the
8 Holme and AMY Martin projects have
9 completed the RFP process.

10 In closing, we're proud of
11 our relationship with the School
12 District and want to reiterate that
13 the City created PAID as an
14 authority in 1967 with a track
15 record of successful implementation
16 of these types of projects. We
17 thank you again for your vision in
18 supporting school development, and
19 we appreciate the opportunity to
20 provide our perspective on how a
21 governmental authority might support
22 the School District to most
23 effectively accomplish its
24 objectives and provide a positive
25 and supportive learning environment

1 for our school children. I'm happy
2 to take any questions.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
4 you. Thank you for your testimony.
5 I'm not going to be longwinded
6 because I know we're a little
7 behind, actually a lot of behind at
8 this point. But you spoke about
9 schools and projects that already
10 exist, which means there's already a
11 working relationship there.

12 If we were to scale up and
13 say you know what, PIDC, we want to
14 give you \$2 billion over five years
15 to build new facilities from a
16 capacity perspective, would you be
17 able to handle that or what would it
18 take for you to handle a project
19 like that?

20 MR. RHOADS: I'll give you
21 two levels of answers. The first
22 answer of course is we'd have to
23 think about it and plan for it and
24 \$2 billion is a lot of money and we
25 would need to put together, sit down

1 with you and members of the School
2 District and plan for it.

3 I think the second level
4 answer is that it depends on the
5 role that we're being asked to play.
6 So in these roles that we play for
7 civic projects and for the school,
8 it can be everything from as little
9 as being effectively a conduit for
10 the financing, as I think some of
11 the testimony indicated, and that
12 would be the lightest touch. And
13 even at that touch, there are some
14 benefits for being a conduit for the
15 construction contracts and the
16 financing that I highlighted, like
17 being able to meet goals for
18 diversity and so on, which are a
19 challenge for the School District on
20 their own.

21 If we were to be more
22 engaged in terms of active
23 construction management and others,
24 if that were to be taken out of what
25 the School District does currently,

1 that would be an additional scope of
2 work that we don't currently
3 provide, so that would require more
4 time to think through how that would
5 best operate.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
7 you.

8 Are there any questions from
9 members of the Committee for this
10 particular panelist?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
13 Hearing none, I want to say --

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I have
15 one.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Oh.
17 Chair recognizes Councilmember
18 Brooks.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I have
20 one quick question real quick.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Sure.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Can
23 you tell me a little bit more about
24 the PAID program and who sits on the
25 Board and who appoints the Board of

1 that, the governing structure?

2 MR. RHOADS: Yes,
3 Councilwoman. PAID was created in
4 1967 by an ordinance of City
5 Council. So there's a various
6 number of acts at the Pennsylvania
7 level that allow for various
8 authorities, and ours was created
9 pursuant to an ordinance. Pursuant
10 to that ordinance, the Mayor
11 appoints our Board. The Board meets
12 regularly.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
14 you so much. That's it.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
16 you, Councilmember. Thank you,
17 colleague. Thank you again for your
18 testimony. We are excited to have
19 you as a partner. And I just want
20 to say on the record again that I'm
21 a big fan of PIDC, being the folks
22 that help us lead this process
23 because we know from a capacity
24 perspective it's asking a lot for
25 government to be responsible for all

1 the things that we're responsible
2 for, and you are already showing us
3 as we speak right now that you have
4 the capacity to do it and the
5 resources are there and we've
6 listened to a ton of testimony,
7 clearly if we plan it the right way,
8 it's something that we can execute.

9 We can do something that has
10 been a cloud over the City of
11 Philadelphia, at least all of my
12 life and I bet a life before mine as
13 well too. So thank you, sir. We
14 appreciate your testimony today and
15 we appreciate the work that you do
16 for the City of Philadelphia.

17 MR. RHOADS: Well, thank
18 you. Thank you very much for the
19 opportunity and look forward to that
20 conversation.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
22 you. Looking forward to working
23 together.

24 Mr. Maynard, can you call
25 our next witness to testify.

1 THE CLERK: Our final two
2 witnesses are Ms. Edmonds from UNITE
3 HERE if she's available, and
4 Professor Rodriguez from the
5 University of Pennsylvania.

6 Ms. Edmonds, if you can hear
7 me and can speak, please do so.

8 (No response.)

9 THE CLERK: Okay. Professor
10 Rodriguez, if you will take over,
11 the hearing is yours.

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
13 Hi, everyone. I know that we're
14 running short on time. Can you hear
15 me?

16 THE CLERK: We can and we
17 appreciate your patience.

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Oh, yeah.
19 No worries. In the interest of time
20 I do have written testimony, but I'm
21 going to kind of skip around it
22 because a lot of it is redundant. I
23 did want to --

24 THE CLERK: Professor,
25 before you get too deep, could you

1 close the blinds behind you. We
2 can't see you at all.

3 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Oh, okay.
4 Sorry about that. Maybe I'll
5 just --

6 THE CLERK: No worries.

7 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'm
8 traveling right now so.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

10 Mr. Maynard, you assumed that the
11 Professor wanted us to see her. You
12 never know.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: No, it's
14 cool. It's cool. Hi, everyone.
15 So, yeah. Karen Rodriguez. I'm
16 Assistant Professor, City and
17 Regional Planning at the Weitzman
18 School of Design at Penn. I wanted
19 to very briefly lift up the
20 testimony that was provided by Mary
21 Filardo in particular, directly
22 engaging and being aware of some of
23 the politics of school resource and
24 facility allocation across the City.
25 I'll touch a bit upon that

1 in my testimony, but I do think it's
2 very important that we acknowledge
3 the histories of disinvestment and
4 the sort of racialized outcomes of
5 school resource allocation in the
6 City of Philadelphia when we are
7 planning for future school
8 facilities.

9 So in the multiple years,
10 groups and neighborhoods in interest
11 that I've conducted research on
12 around school facilities in
13 Philadelphia, one thing remains
14 clear. There's a critical need to
15 include and center the voices of
16 school users in the school
17 facilities planning processes.

18 Further, this inclusion must
19 show the consideration of historical
20 inequities that create (inaudible)
21 and racialize disparities across and
22 within school facilities. When I
23 began my research with the Friends
24 of Neighborhood Education Group,
25 there was a growing interest from

1 school-based groups to mobilize
2 their fundraising capacity and
3 political capital to include the
4 facilities of all public schools in
5 Philadelphia.

6 It was clear from their past
7 activities that investments in
8 public schoolyards, libraries,
9 afterschool care and activities and
10 arts and music programming were
11 vital components to increasing
12 enrollment at traditional
13 neighborhood public schools. Since
14 1990, nearly 75,000 students have
15 left the neighborhood public schools
16 and that number continues to decline
17 in spite of overall population
18 increases in the City.

19 Many of the reductions in
20 staff and programming such as
21 custodial and maintenance staff
22 being cut by 50 percent and the
23 District currently having only four
24 full-time librarians across 216
25 school facilities were the result of

1 state budget cuts in 2009. Even
2 with the recent ruling from the
3 state for the funding lawsuit which
4 will provide additional resources to
5 the School District, that that gave
6 a disinvestment, and deferred
7 maintenance will be difficult to
8 overcome without careful planning
9 and increased advocacy from elected
10 and appointed officials.

11 Following the closure of 24
12 schools in 2013, many of which were
13 concentrated in majority Black and
14 majority Latinx neighborhoods,
15 entire communities were destabilized
16 as its anchor, the public school,
17 was either converted to new uses or
18 abandoned entirely.

19 These past decisions were
20 made without equitably and deeply
21 engaging communities that were
22 impacted most and testimony from
23 school board meetings since these
24 closures highlight the public's
25 dissatisfaction with this process

1 and its resulting outcomes.

2 From my research in
3 communities and community meetings
4 with the public on the topic of
5 school facilities, there are several
6 priorities the School District needs
7 to balance. The first is publicly
8 accessible data. The School
9 District of Philadelphia offers a
10 robust open data website that
11 provides critical information about
12 demographic school performance and
13 parent and staff surveys. This
14 information is also reserved in a
15 dashboard format that's easy to
16 read, standardized and simple to
17 translate using web browser
18 translation services.

19 This is not the case for
20 facilities data. Across all the
21 environmental hazards, asbestos,
22 mold, lead, vermin and their
23 disparate programs to remediate and
24 remove them, information is
25 scattered across the website often

1 in PDF or Google Drive format and
2 not legible or accessible to the
3 public. Without transparent and
4 accessible data, there's no way to
5 properly assess the equity,
6 comprehensiveness and legitimacy of
7 the District Facilities Plan.

8 Undoing the harms of the
9 last date budget cuts, the loss of
10 librarians, arts, music, recreation,
11 maintenance and administrative staff
12 such as vice-principals and guidance
13 counselors are contributed to the
14 disinvestment and declining
15 enrollments in our public school
16 facilities.

17 The closure and/or
18 consolidation of our middle schools
19 has also destabilized our public
20 schools as evidenced by the dramatic
21 outclose of students after the 4th
22 grade. In any new facilities
23 planning process, we must prioritize
24 in doing these harmful rollbacks in
25 order to improve overall school

1 quality for learners and educators
2 and attract more students and
3 teachers.

4 Ongoing and equitable
5 community engagement for planning
6 design to implementation: As noted
7 earlier, the lack of inclusion of
8 teacher, staff, caregivers and
9 community partners has weakened the
10 trust between these stakeholders and
11 the School District and delegitimize
12 decisions made without them.

13 The School District has many
14 models around creating stakeholder
15 groups that not only make plans but
16 also oversee their implementation
17 such as the lead, paint and plastic
18 agreement. Stakeholders are
19 concerned their participation in
20 advance may be solicited, but are
21 not legitimately heard or included
22 in the planning decision-making
23 processes.

24 From the CSPR to the FPP to
25 the ongoing Facilities Environmental

1 Advisory Council, minutes from these
2 meetings suggest stakeholders are
3 confused about these gatherings
4 overall purpose, are not getting
5 their questions answered in a clear
6 or timely manner and are burned out
7 from redundant processes and plans
8 that are never implemented.

9 The District needs to build
10 out permanent community engagement
11 capacity of staff that spends time
12 in communities, work with existing
13 groups and fund new groups that can
14 build capacity, trust and buy-in.

15 No further school closures:
16 Finally, the District cannot
17 permanently close any additional
18 school as a means in reducing its
19 operating budget. Research
20 demonstrates these cost savings are
21 minimal and that the impacts of
22 consolidation and closures are
23 harmful to students, educators and
24 communities.

25 School facilities are public

1 assets. And as the City grows
2 through greater investment in its
3 existing school facilities, so too
4 will the demand in need for quality
5 schools and facilities. Schools
6 that are in need of modernization
7 require swing spaces, other public
8 organizations need additional space
9 such as Parks & Rec and the
10 libraries, and the media has written
11 extensively on the life of swing
12 spaces that are safe for the City's
13 youth.

14 The District must be
15 creative and can serve these
16 facilities, as closures only
17 decrease enrollments, neighborhood
18 populations and staff retention.
19 These priorities require investment
20 that may exceed the capacity of the
21 state and City's current budgets for
22 public schools.

23 The budgets are and always
24 have been moral documents. If we
25 want to improve the future of the

1 City, we must invest in public
2 schools as a critical
3 infrastructure. Between its worker
4 and its students, schools serve
5 about 15 percent of the City's
6 population. We cannot afford to
7 ignore its impact on the City any
8 longer. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
10 you for your testimony.

11 We're going to let
12 Ms. Edmonds from UNITE HERE who had
13 a hard time connecting testify next.
14 And then we'll open it up for
15 questions for both panelists.

16 Ms. Edmonds, we apologize
17 for the technical issues you had to
18 face, but we're glad you're here.
19 Please state your name for the
20 record and you may begin with your
21 testimony.

22 MS. EDMONDS: Good
23 afternoon. My name is Tanya Edmonds
24 and I am here, UNITE HERE Local 634
25 Trustee and a Food Service Worker 3

1 at Henry Houston Elementary School,
2 which is in the 8th District, on
3 behalf of Local 634, which
4 represents 1900 food service and
5 climate staff employees who feed and
6 protect students in Philadelphia
7 public school buildings each and
8 every day.

9 I want to thank the
10 Committee on Education, and
11 especially Councilmember Thomas for
12 the opportunity to provide
13 testimony. I am here today to
14 testify about safety and security.
15 We can all agree that many of our
16 schools are in disrepair. Students
17 and staff alike face dangerous
18 conditions.

19 I applaud City Council's
20 willingness to explore innovative
21 solutions such as using the
22 independent authority to manage the
23 school facility modernization
24 process to ensure that school
25 buildings are healthy, safe and

1 clean. UNITE HERE Local 634 is
2 willing and eager to be part of the
3 process and will continue to be loud
4 advocates for funding school repairs
5 and construction at the local and
6 state level.

7 Since the Committee on
8 Education is here today to consider
9 ways that we can work together to
10 ensure that our public school
11 buildings are the safe havens that
12 students and families deserve. I
13 also want to give this Committee an
14 overview of process that Local 634
15 has made in negotiating a new
16 contract with the School District of
17 Philadelphia.

18 As you know, a majority of
19 our Union members are Black and are
20 women. Unlike other School District
21 employees, 95 percent of Local 634
22 members live in the City of
23 Philadelphia and have children and
24 grandchildren who live with us to
25 attend public schools. Yet for

1 decades we have been treated as the
2 stepchildren of the School District
3 of Philadelphia.

4 As a reminder, when the
5 School District laid off thousands
6 of nonteaching assistants in 2013,
7 it saved money off the bat of
8 students, climate staff, employees
9 which paid significantly less.

10 These employees made just \$14 per
11 hour in 2020 and will make just
12 \$15.50 by the beginning of the new
13 school year.

14 Unlike school safety
15 officers, teachers, principals, bus
16 drivers and maintenance staff, none
17 of our members have steps. Meaning,
18 that those employees make \$15.50
19 regardless of how long they have
20 worked for the School District.

21 When all is said and done, we are
22 the people who feed School District
23 students and keep them safe, but do
24 not make enough to feed our own
25 families and to keep our own

1 children safe.

2 I am here on behalf of my
3 Local 634 brothers and sisters to
4 say that one job should be enough
5 and it's time for change. When all
6 is said and done, all our Union
7 wants is for everyone who enters a
8 school, students, families and staff
9 alike to feel safe and secure and to
10 be safe and secure.

11 While our Union applaud this
12 Council's effort to make our school
13 buildings safe and modern, our Union
14 needs a (inaudible) that guarantees
15 the School District, food service
16 and student climate staff, economy,
17 security and basic tools to ensure
18 school safety.

19 We ask that this Committee
20 and all City Council members stand
21 with us and support our commonsense
22 proposals as we continue to try to
23 reach a fair contract. I, along
24 with my Union UNITE HERE Local 634
25 brothers and sisters are happy to

1 meet with each of you to further
2 explain what we do, what we have
3 proposed and how those proposals are
4 part of our work to make our schools
5 healthy and a safe place to learn
6 and work. I appreciate you giving
7 me this time to give this testimony.
8 Thank you so much.

9 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
10 you for your testimony.

11 Are there any questions from
12 members of this particular Committee
13 for this panel who just testified
14 here today?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
17 Hearing no questions from the
18 Committee, I want to say thank you
19 to this panel. Professor Rodriguez,
20 thank you for your perspective and
21 your insight. We will definitely
22 consider all of your recommendations
23 as we move forward. And of course,
24 thank you to the hardworking members
25 of UNITE HERE who are the backbone

1 of our School District who help make
2 sure that our young people have the
3 support system that they need. So
4 thank you very much.

5 With that being said, I
6 believe there are no other panelists
7 to testify on this particular
8 resolution, so we will now open it
9 up to public comment.

10 Mr. Maynard, will you please
11 call the first person who signed up
12 to testify for today's public
13 comment around our resolution here
14 today.

15 THE CLERK: Of course,
16 Mr. Chair.

17 The first person on public
18 comment is Rachel Pritzker.

19 Ms. Pritzker, if you're connected,
20 you can begin your testimony.

21 MS. PRITZKER: Thank you.
22 Can everyone hear me?

23 (Background
24 interruption.)

25 THE CLERK: Yes, we can hear

1 you.

2 MS. PRITZKER: Okay.

3 Thanks. I think the prior person is
4 talking still.

5 THE CLERK: Ms. Edmonds --

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: If
7 everybody can just mute themselves.
8 Please mute yourself. If you're not
9 testifying, please mute yourself.

10 Council Tech Support, can
11 you help us a little bit please in
12 making sure everybody is muted?
13 Council Tech Support, can you help
14 us a little bit please to make sure
15 everybody's muted?

16 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: We
17 can do that. Thank you.

18 (Background
19 interruption.)

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Council
21 Tech Support, can you help us a
22 little please because I don't want
23 to ask -- I mean, folks have
24 technical difficulties so we kind of
25 need you to do it.

1 Mr. Maynard, you can call
2 the first person for public comment.

3 THE CLERK: Ms. Pritzker, if
4 you're ready.

5 MS. PRITZKER: Yep. Thank
6 you. Good morning, Chairman and
7 members of the Committee on
8 Education. For those who may not
9 know me, my name is Rachel Pritzker.
10 I'm the CEO of Pritzker Law Group,
11 the City's only certified woman-
12 owned real estate law firm. I'm the
13 youngest female Board member of the
14 Building Industry Association, who
15 I'm not here representing just to
16 make that clear.

17 I'm here to testify in
18 support of Resolution No. 230330.
19 I've been in the real estate
20 industry for over a decade, and I
21 can tell you how complicated,
22 capital-intensive, specific and
23 specialized it is. For those who
24 are not actively participating in
25 development, it may not seem that

1 complicated. You would be
2 misguided. It only gets more
3 complicated when you're dealing with
4 an aging infrastructure, zoning and
5 permitting, community outreach,
6 education, structural issues,
7 remediation, health and safety
8 considerations, a fluctuating
9 interest and lending environment,
10 and the list goes on.

11 Now, let's add the fact that
12 we're building structures or
13 renovating structures that are to be
14 in most cases inhabited by humans.
15 And in this case, the majority of
16 which are our City's children, among
17 other resources built with taxpayer
18 money.

19 For these reasons alone, our
20 City should require or in this case
21 demand oversight and be strategic
22 and thoughtful about including only
23 the best, most qualified, competent,
24 unbiased and experienced individuals
25 advising and working on these

1 buildings and these plans.

2 Unfortunately, that has
3 historically not always been the
4 case. You've all heard the
5 bureaucracy of government and quasi
6 government organizations. Lack of
7 transparency and political
8 considerations doesn't always lend
9 itself to ensuring that the best and
10 brightest are at the helm of major
11 very specific and specialized
12 projects or functions that require
13 that they be. And that when brought
14 to the table, their suggestions and
15 guidance are not always implemented.

16 We should expect no less for
17 our City and its children, and I
18 think that is what this legislation
19 seeks to establish, and with
20 hopefully, thoughtfully planned
21 oversight with actually experienced
22 individuals not be some political
23 considerations alone would and
24 should call for.

25 We have a brain trust of

1 some of the smartest, sophisticated,
2 willing and highly experienced
3 individuals in the real estate
4 industry in our City with the actual
5 knowledge, skill set and desire to
6 help our City and its schools. I
7 wholeheartedly support this
8 legislation. I commend Councilman
9 Thomas and this body for this
10 important step and request sincerely
11 that our industry is included as a
12 partner in helping move this
13 forward. It is just the right thing
14 to do.

15 I worked in Council back in
16 2015 to '17. This was the most
17 interesting hearing I have seen in a
18 while. This is incredibly
19 encouraging, and it makes me really
20 proud that this body has come
21 together in such a profound way. So
22 thank you so much, Councilman Thomas
23 and City Council members. And thank
24 you for allowing me to testify
25 today.

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
2 you for your testimony and your
3 willingness to help with this
4 initiative. We definitely
5 appreciate it.

6 MS. PRITZKER: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
8 Mr. Maynard, will you please call
9 the next witness.

10 THE CLERK: Who do we have
11 on the line for public comment?

12 MR. STEINKE: Hello. This
13 is Paul.

14 THE CLERK: Hi, Paul. This
15 is Philadelphia City Council.

16 MR. STEINKE: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: You wanted to
18 offer public comment on Resolution
19 220330.

20 MR. STEINKE: Yes, I would
21 please. Thank you.

22 THE CLERK: Please begin
23 when you're ready, sir.

24 MR. STEINKE: Okay. This is
25 Paul Steinke, Executive Director of

1 Preservation Alliance for Greater
2 Philadelphia. Thank you, Chair
3 Thomas and the Education Committee
4 for giving me a couple of minutes to
5 share my testimony today on
6 Resolution 230330.

7 The Preservation Alliance is
8 concerned over the state of the
9 properties owned by the School
10 District of Philadelphia, the school
11 buildings that is. The majority of
12 the buildings are listed on the
13 National Register of Historic Places
14 or are eligible to be listed through
15 two state surveys conducted by the
16 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

17 Over 150 built prior to 1938
18 are listed on the National Register
19 with about an additional 100
20 eligible to be listed built between
21 1938 and 1980. These buildings are
22 made of durable materials and
23 architectural value that cannot
24 easily be replaced if they're lost.
25 However, in recent times we have

1 lost a handful, the James Martin
2 School in Port Richmond. Demolition
3 is scheduled to begin very soon.
4 That building was built in 1894.
5 The Thomas Holme School in the
6 Northeast is slated to be demolished
7 this year, built in 1950. And the
8 Lewis C. Cassidy Elementary School
9 was taken down in 2022. That
10 building was built in 1924. And
11 Solis-Cohen Elementary School was
12 taken down in 2018.

13 We're also facing the
14 uncertainty about the future of
15 Frankford High School and the
16 reported possibility of demolition.
17 We realize that these buildings have
18 problems due to deferred maintenance
19 and hazardous materials like
20 asbestos. However, these are
21 problems that can be solved, and we
22 believe these buildings are assets
23 to the School District. They have
24 great community value. And in many
25 cases, alumni groups are passionate

1 about their preservation.

2 So the independent agency
3 management that this resolution gets
4 behind would allow for more bold and
5 creative solutions for the
6 renovation and reuse of these
7 historic school buildings and
8 provide hope for a better
9 preservation outcome with this
10 management structure, because it is
11 often and usually really cheaper to
12 renovate current buildings and bring
13 them up to modern standards than to
14 demolish them for new construction.
15 It's also more environmentally
16 friendly in an age when we are
17 grappling with climate change. So
18 to disregard these buildings and
19 throw them away is a waste of
20 resources, which we really cannot
21 afford.

22 In cases where it's not
23 possible to renovate, then we
24 recommend the School District sell
25 the building to avoid demolition,

1 and that has been done successfully
2 in places like the Bok School in
3 South Philadelphia, which I'm sure
4 everyone is familiar with, and also
5 the former General John F. Reynolds
6 School in North Philadelphia, which
7 has recently been renovated with
8 historic tax credits and low-income
9 tax credits by Help USA for
10 affordable housing for formerly
11 homeless veterans.

12 The Preservation Alliance
13 for Greater Philadelphia is and can
14 be a resource to the School District
15 and to the City to help reimagine
16 the future of the School District's
17 valuable real estate portfolio.

18 That concludes my testimony and I
19 thank you again for the opportunity.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
21 you for your testimony and thank you
22 for all the work that you do. We
23 appreciate your perspective and your
24 services. Thank you.

25 MR. STEINKE: Thank you,

1 Mr. Chair, and have a good day.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You too.

3 Mr. Maynard, will you please
4 or, Tech Support, can you please
5 call the next witness to testify.

6 THE CLERK: Our next and
7 final witness for public comment is
8 Jim Lewis. Mr. Lewis, are you
9 connected?

10 (No response.)

11 THE CLERK: Jim Lewis, are
12 you connected, sir?

13 MR. LEWIS: Hello.

14 THE CLERK: Hello.

15 Mr. Lewis?

16 MR. LEWIS: Yes?

17 THE CLERK: You are
18 connected with Philadelphia City
19 Council. You wanted to testify on
20 Resolution 230330?

21 MR. LEWIS: Yes.

22 THE CLERK: Please state
23 your name and begin your testimony.

24 MR. LEWIS: Yeah. Good
25 morning, Chairman Thomas and members

1 of the Education Committee. My name
2 is Jim Lewis. I am a lifelong
3 resident of Philadelphia, a proud
4 graduate of Frankford High School.
5 And upon my retirement at the
6 Philadelphia School District, I was
7 the Senior Vice-president for
8 Facilities and Operations.

9 It was with deep interest
10 when Chairman Thomas first spoke
11 about creating an authority to
12 oversee the facilities at the School
13 District. While I favor this
14 Committee's willingness to create
15 such an authority, I am sure this
16 Committee understands the issues
17 that confront the School District.

18 Everyone involved in the
19 education business understands that
20 every budgeted operating dollar is
21 targeted towards the classroom
22 affording Philadelphia students the
23 best education that they can
24 receive. While that is understood,
25 what the public does not see is the

1 operating budgets for the School
2 District's facilities and
3 operations.

4 There is little to no
5 preventive maintenance. Ongoing
6 maintenance issues in Philadelphia
7 schools are addressed by staffing
8 levels that are not consistent with
9 industry standards. As I stated
10 earlier, I support this Committee's
11 effort in creating this authority.
12 It should free up the
13 Superintendent's time to concentrate
14 on the most important job, working
15 with staff and providing a quality
16 education for Philadelphia students.

17 I have always felt that the
18 top educator at the School District
19 should not be punished with negative
20 press for the shortcomings of the
21 school facilities. This proposed
22 authority could work closely with
23 this City Council, the Mayor and
24 other City divisions in creating a
25 framework that will change the

1 facilities for the good of our
2 students and staff.

3 The latest headlines
4 concerning school closings is a
5 wake-up call, and I'm sure it is the
6 core reason for today's hearing.
7 Having spent my whole career at the
8 School District 33 years, I look
9 forward in seeing a different way in
10 which to manage our school
11 facilities.

12 I know there are a lot of
13 good-working men and women that work
14 in facilities and operations as well
15 as the capital program office.
16 These fine men and women have
17 watched how inadequate funding has
18 caused a decline in the
19 infrastructure of our schools.
20 Hopefully, this Committee's
21 intervention will be a new way to
22 bring our schools back to safe
23 state-of-the-art classrooms.

24 When I was tasked with
25 managing our schools facilities and

1 operations, our mission statement
2 was this: To provide a clean, safe
3 environment to ensure our students
4 can achieve at high levels. Thank
5 you for your time and attention.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Well,
7 thank you. Thank you for your
8 testimony, your perspective as well
9 as your service to the City of
10 Philadelphia. It is greatly
11 appreciated. Thank you.

12 MR. LEWIS: Thanks.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
14 Mr. Maynard, was that the last
15 person for public comment?

16 THE CLERK: That was indeed,
17 Mr. Chair.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
19 Are there any other questions or
20 comments from members of the
21 Committee?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
24 Councilmembers?

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I want
2 to thank everybody for being a part
3 of this conversation today. Today
4 is another step forward in trying to
5 put ourselves in a position to
6 address the facilities crisis that
7 we're facing here in the City of
8 Philadelphia.

9 So with that being said, I
10 appreciate everybody for
11 participating in today's
12 conversation. I know I learned a
13 lot. I hope other folks learned a
14 lot as it relates to how can we
15 address this issue.

16 With there being no further
17 questions or comments from members
18 of the Committee or no other
19 witnesses to testify, I will ask
20 that we get ready to conclude the
21 business of this Committee, and we
22 will now recess this hearing at the
23 call of the Chair. Thank you
24 everybody and have a good afternoon.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank

1 you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
3 you, Mr. Chair. Have a great
4 afternoon. Thank you, colleagues.

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
6 you, colleagues. Thank you for
7 hanging in there with me. I know
8 this was a long one but an important
9 conversation. Thank you.

10 (Hearing concluded at
11 2:00 p.m.)

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

I, hereby certify that the
proceedings and evidence noted are contained
fully and accurately in the stenographic notes
taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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