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

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, March 6, 2000
10:00 a.m.

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BILL 7 - Authorizing the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate within the City of Philadelphia.
Bill 8 - Further authorizing the Board of Education to impose a tax on the use or occupancy of real estate within the School District of Philadelphia.
Bill 9 - Further authorizing the Board of Education to impose a tax on net income from real property, tangible, and intangible of property of residents of the School District of Philadelphia.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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

The Chief Clerk will please read the titles of the bills.

MR. MCPHERSON: Bill No. 7, an ordinance amending Chapter 19-1800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," by amending Section 19-1801 to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate within the City of Philadelphia.

Bill No. 8, an ordinance amending Chapter 19-1800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," by amending Section 19-1806 to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the use or occupancy of real estate within the School District of Philadelphia.

Bill No. 9, an ordinance amending Chapter 19-1800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," by amending Section 19-1804 to further authorize the Board of

Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the net income from real property and tangible and intangible of property of residents of the School District of Philadelphia.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Miss Kahn, I understand you will be the first individual to testify?

MS. KAHN: That's correct.

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

MS. KAHN: Good morning, President Verna and Members of City Council. I am Debra Kahn, the Secretary of Education for the City of Philadelphia, and it is a privilege for me to be here this morning on behalf of Mayor Street to lead off the presentation of the School District of Philadelphia's Fiscal Year 2001 Budget.

Joining me at the table are the President of the Board of Education, Pedro Ramos; Vice President Dorothy Sumners Rush, and Superintendent David Hornbeck. And all of us are delighted to have in the chamber today the members

of the Philadelphia Board of Education, and I would be honored if you would allow me to introduce them to you now.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Would you, please.

MS. KAHN: Sure. Members, please stand to be recognized as your name is called.

First, please meet the Student Representative to the Board of Education, Jason Kleinman, who is a senior at George Washington High School.

And now the seven newly-appointed members of the Board are:

Mr. Martin Bednarek,

Reverend Ralph Blanks,

Miss Helen Cunningham,

Miss Sandra Dungee Glenn,

Miss Christine James-Brown,

Mr. Michael Masch,

And Dr. Emilio Matticoli,

the Board of Education.

(Applause.)

MS. KAHN: These special citizens of Philadelphia were recommended by the Educational

Nominating Panel and appointed just last week by Mayor Street, pursuant to the expanded authority that the voters granted to the Mayor in the November election. Mayor Street has wholeheartedly embraced the challenge to assume greater responsibility for the School District. And these women and men, with their dedication to children and their broad range of skills and experience, will provide invaluable service to this city as we work together to reach the goal of providing the opportunity for every Philadelphia child to attend a first-quality public school.

Since starting my job only two months ago, I've never felt so personally the power of the Chinese proverb "May you live in interesting times." For those of us who toil in the field of public education and believe in its possibilities to raise children to terrific heights, the times are interesting indeed.

In the first instance, we are fortunate to have the Mayor of our city who has unmistakenly placed children and their rights to receive a quality public education at the top of his priority list. It is a priority that we know is

shared by Members of this Council, and it is why we want to work in partnership with you, to help forge solutions to problems that confront us in these interesting times.

Let us be clear: More than 213,000 of Philadelphia's children attend a public school system that, despite enormous obstacles and continuing problems, has documented significant progress in student achievement over the past several years yet is also a system that remains undervalued by far too many people who matter.

The progress that has been achieved is the result of very hard by School District employees, students, and their families. It is also the result of financial investments that the District has made for services that students and teachers need. The School District has demonstrated that sound spending can lead to improved educational performance. But unless we obtain sufficient funding to operate our public schools, continue improvement, which is so necessary, will be threatened.

The situation here is not unique in Pennsylvania. The chronic and now critical

funding shortages faced by the Philadelphia School District are increasing being recognized as problems that exist statewide. Suburban, rural, and small city communities are feeling the squeeze of trying to support quality public schools through too much reliance on local tax dollars.

It is in this context that the Street Administration and the School District are attempting to serve the school children and families of Philadelphia by reaching out, by speaking openly and thoughtfully about the difficulties we face and by listening to new ideas in the search for real and responsible solutions.

We will continue our advocacy on behalf of the children who, if provided with quality education now, will most assuredly produce better futures for all Philadelphians. But we will also make every effort to find common ground with those who can help. That is why we're encouraged by the Mayor's meeting with Governor Ridge last month and why we are continuing to take steps to discuss our mutual interests.

In fact, just this morning, I was able to confirm that the Commonwealth of Education

Secretary, Eugene Hickock (ph.), will be coming to Philadelphia this Friday. Together, we'll be visiting the schools, and afterwards, we'll meet to talk about ways in which we can work together to help our children and our schools.

And that's why we are pleased with the growing participation and enthusiasm being generated night after night among the teachers, administrators, parents, and students who have been attending the Mayor's cluster meetings. If we are going to succeed, everyone must believe and behave as though real change is possible for our schools. And it is certainly why we are grateful to the President and Members of this Council for your willingness to open the budget dialogue this morning in a manner which is different from years past, a manner perhaps befitting these interesting times.

There are two reasons for our need to have an abbreviated budget hearing today. First, you are all aware that the School District has had problems with its new computer system. Those problems have resulted not only payroll errors and delays, which are largely corrected, but also in

delays in producing the detailed spending information that is necessary to build an accurate budget.

But even more important, the new members of the Board of Education, who were sworn in just on Friday afternoon, have simply not had the opportunity to review the financial status of the School District or to consider various budget options. Yet this Board will have the responsibility of shaping and improving what may well be the difficult budget in the recent history of the School District.

Board President Pedro Ramos will now explain how this Board will proceed to carry out its duties in this area, as I thank you once again for your attention and commitment to our children.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. RAMOS: Good morning, President Verna.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

MR. RAMOS: Councilwoman Miller and Members of City Council.

My name is Pedro Ramos. I am the President of the Board of Education. On behalf my

new and returning colleagues on the Board of Education, I thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide you an overview of the fiscal realities facing the School District of Philadelphia and the 213,000 children it serves.

First, I want to acknowledge the multifaceted support that Council has provided our children, our schools, and the School District over the last year. We appreciate that partnership and look forward to continuing and building upon it. We also realize that while we all may on occasion differ on the details of how we get there, we also generally share a common goal: to prepare young people with the knowledge and skills repaired for college and the workplace and to provide the foundation upon which they will become lifelong learners in a quickly changing world.

The Board of Education knows it has a lot of hard work ahead, but we are focused, committed, and determined to do the best for our children, with your help and support. Today, we are presenting a preliminary lump-sum statement of anticipated revenues and obligations for the

upcoming fiscal year ending June 30, 2001 and an explanation of the principles guiding our decision-making process as the new board proceeds to craft its actual budget for the next year.

The legislation that would reauthorize current City funding to the School District for next year has already been submitted, and we would, of course, ask for your approval.

For the current fiscal year, the fiscal year ending 2000, we anticipate a $97.3 million gap between revenues and expenditures in our operating budget, with a fund balance deficit of $39.3 million. If we adopt a carry-forward budget for the next fiscal year, Fiscal Year 2001, meaning a budget that does no more than this year, the gap between projected revenues and expenditures will grow to $137.4 million, with a projected fund balance deficit of $175 million, absent additional revenue enhancements or obligation reductions.

One alternative to a carry-forward budget would be to fully implement those educational services that our children need to be competitive, such as smaller classes for

kindergarten and 1st grade, summer school, after-school programs, nurses, librarians, and technological literacy, services which we refer to as "Fair Opportunities to Learn." The effect on our Operating Budget of implementing these Fair Opportunities to Learn is that our gap would grow by an additional $155 million to $330 million. You will hear more about the Fair Opportunities to Learn from Superintendent David Hornbeck.

The new Board of Education will review and considerate and consider the Fair Opportunities to Learn proposal and apply its judgment as to our ability to move forward. I will ask our new board to be guided by five objectives during our budget deliberations?

First, we will not cut school-based services to children;

Second, we will make every effort to further maximize the efficiency and productivity of district management and operations;

Third, we want to keep schools open and operating;

Fourth, we want to make the downpayment on the Fair Opportunities to Learn Program so that

we can maintain the high standards for children that we have adopted;

Fifth, we will continue to work with the City and State leadership in developing short- and long-term solutions.

While our tasks will not be easy, I can assure you that this new Board of Education will roll up its sleeves and go right to work.

Finally, I want to note the new amendments to the City Charter for the structure and opportunity for closer collaboration between City Council and the Board of Education. We believe that such collaboration has the potential to be very powerful, and we look forward to it. With your advice and your support, we will continue to push improvements in the City's educational system until we provide the world-class education that our children deserve.

Thank you.

I'm now pleased to introduce the Superintendent of Schools, David Hornbeck.

DR. HORNBECK: Good morning, President Vern and Members of the City Council.

In 1994, our School District embarked

on a comprehensive systemic strategy for change, called "Children Achieving" -- and they are.

Today, we find ourselves in the enviable position of our students having made more academic progress than virtually any other big district in the United States. That progress is confirmed by a State system of evaluation that awarded our schools $3.5 million extra dollars this year, a nearly 30 percent of all the awards made across the State, even though we only have 12 percent of the students.

Our teachers, principals, parents, and students have worked hard, they are beating the odds. Thanks to extra and more effective training for teachers, added supports for pupils, including full-day kindergarten, and administrative cuts yielding savings in management, test scores in reading and mathematics have improved dramatically. And they have improved throughout the City -- in low-income and in higher-income schools and in racially-isolated schools, and in schools where most students are non-native English speakers, and in schools with concentrations of native English speakers. But there is still much

to do before we reach the goal of a system that prepares 95 percent of our students to achieve success throughout their lives after graduation, and that's where Fair Opportunities to Learn comes in.

In June, 1998, the Board of Education took three wise steps. First, it mandated the end of social promotion for students. Second, it increased graduation and promotion requirements. And then the Board adopted Fair Opportunities to Learn, Philadelphia's plan to close the achievement gap for all of its children.

The members of the Board determined that it would be unfair to hold students accountable for demonstrating higher levels of achievement unless students and teachers received the instructional and social supports that give them a fair chance to meet those higher standards. The Fair Opportunities to Learn Plan is anchored in tried and true practices proven successful in improving student learning. It is our road map for delivering the school services that will meet our responsibility to our students and give families even more reason to live in

Philadelphia.

The Fair Opportunities to Learn Plan that I recommended to the previous Board of Education, and which I will recommend to the new board for the 2001 Budget, includes:

Quality preschool for additional 4-year-old's and eventually for all 3- and 4-year-olds;

Summer programs for grades 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, and eventually for all grades;

Smaller classes to a limit of 17 in kindergarten and the 1st grade, and in the following years for grades 2 and 3;

Extra help for children who are struggling academically;

Additional support for the development of teacher quality;

A nurse in every school;

Good libraries and technology;

Support for students whose first language is not English;

And after-school programs.

We don't want more than other districts have. We simply want to give our children their

fair chance.

We already have made a solid start. We've restored some summer programs last year, after nearly ten years with none:

We've established full-day kindergarten and reduced class size for kindergarten and the 1st grade in about 60 schools this year;

We've collaborated with other City and private agencies and institutions to offer needed family services to our students;

We will continue to increase our savings through better management and to identify savings that can be used in instructional programs.

I look forward to working with the new board, under the leadership of Mayor Street and in partnership with City Council, as we address the financial issues of the School District. I know that you, Madam President, and Members of City Council are as committed to education as we are. You appreciate that our children's best hope for a bright future are schools that work for every one of them. I appreciate your support for our schools' continued overall progress.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr. Hornbeck.

Mr. Hornbeck, can you elaborate, if you will, about the disciplinary school.

MS. KAHN: Excuse me, President Verna. Before he does that, I just need to clarify for the record that, on behalf of the Mayor, I am also asking for the Council's action on the bills that are before you for reauthorization of the taxes.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

DR. HORNBECK: You're referring to the new school that's been in the news --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.

DR. HORNBECK: -- over the past several months?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes. I don't have too much knowledge about that so I would like to you give us any and all information you may have for the record.

DR. HORNBECK: I'd be glad to and will be glad to follow up with some additional written material that will lay it out.

We became aware of the community education partner school that has been operating the last three years in Houston and in the last couple of years in Dallas through visits that were originally taken there by several members of the State legislature, and I had the opportunity to go down and visit the school in Houston that they are operating for the Houston Independent School District last spring.

It is designed to address the needs of seriously disruptive students and youngsters who are two or more grades behind grade level. And in -- surprisingly, in nearly every single case, those two things go together, because we find over the years that the kids who are seriously behind are frequently the youngsters that engage in disruptive activity.

And we were really quite impressed, both those legislative leaders that went, and from my own observation, and since then, members of the Board, members of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, parents groups, and various groups have gone down to eyeball this thing because it's -- it is a different approach.

But it also seems to be, according to evaluations that have been done by people like Diane Ravitch (ph.), who's the former secretary Assistant Secretary of Education for the United States, and based on, for example, Houston Independent School District records about disruption, indicating a 25 percent reduction in violent acts in the School District since they put the CEP Program in place, something that is very much worth exploring.

The Board has authorized our beginning to develop a contract with CEP, and we are in negotiations around that contract right now. The parameters that we're looking at at the moment would have about 600 of our youngsters in the school at the opening of school in September, growing over the course of about the first semester to around 1500 kids.

And so we are -- that's -- that's at least an overview of both why we're looking at it and the objectives, the results we think that would be achieved if we were to have that same opportunity.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Do you anticipate

this school being open for September?

DR. HORNBECK: We think that if we can complete this process within the next month, that it can be open in the fall.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: With that being said, would we be abolishing the able academies?

DR. HORNBECK: There would -- we would be using them differently, and some of the kids that have been going to the able academies would be going to this school.

Regretfully, there are, in fact, probably, we estimate, 4 or 5, maybe as much as 6,000 of our kids who need the extra help, and so we don't see this as a simple replacement, either for the able academies or the RD schools, but a place where some of those youngsters might be better served, but also an expansion of opportunity in the School District as a whole to better serve kids that are facing some unusually strong challenges that result in their disruption. And that interferes, of course, not only with their education, but with the education of kids that are in the classrooms where they

would otherwise be placed.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What is our present teacher shortage?

DR. HORNBECK: We opened the school year this year having needed about 1200 teachers, with about 200 vacancies. That was happily down from 300 vacancies, when we needed only 900 teachers the year before.

We have been running something in the neighborhood of 125 to 150 vacancies on a daily basis all year. And those vacancies historically, as you've heard in testimony previously in City Council, were concentrated in three or four areas like special education or in physics or in higher levels of math.

Unfortunately, what is impacting on Philadelphia and what is impacting on school districts all across the country is that we can no longer say that the vacancies are limited to three or four areas. Indeed, there are places in Philadelphia where we actually have vacancies in the grades, which is an unusual, at least historically, an unusual occurrence. But that's the spread at the moment.

The other thing that we're hit with that is related that is that we don't always have the number of substitutes that we need to fill not long-term vacancies but current vacancies -- I mean, the daily vacancies, when somebody is sick. And one of the reasons for that is that some people who have been substitutes for some years are people that we've been able to equip and move into the classroom to fill some of the permanent vacancies, and so that's reduced them from the substitute role.

But the issue of vacancies is -- is a huge one.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I know it's a national problem.

DR. HORNBECK: It is a national problem.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And I was hoping that with some of the initiatives that we took last year, that it would have addressed part of the problem.

DR. HORNBECK: And it did. And that's the reason that we were able, in effect, to hire 400 extra people, having only 200 vacancies, with

1200 slots -- in contrast to the 300 the year before, with only 900. But didn't close it altogether.

And, indeed, I must say that as the Mayor often points out in these cluster meetings, the likelihood of our ultimately addressing that problem fully will depend on dealing with issues of pay parity as well, because our teachers, as a new teacher, a teacher starts $3300 behind their counterparts in the suburbs. And on average, they end their careers about $10,000 behind.

So we find ourselves in the unenviable position of having to offer a slot to a teacher where they will have as much as a third more children, a third to a half, children than face a good deal more challenges, and they get to be paid 10 to 25 percent less than their counterparts.

So it's one of the major issues that loom for us and one of those important financial issues.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madam

Chair.

Good morning.

DR. HORNBECK: Good morning.

MR. RAMOS: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I have a couple questions, right now anyway. And this question's for Debra Kahn.

What specifically is the role, or the charge, of the Secretary of Education as it relates to the Mayor and his taking greater responsibility for the School District?

MS. KAHN: Um --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Can you describe it?

MS. KAHN: Sure.

Well, in the first instance, I think that the fact that the Mayor decided to create a cabinet-level position for education is a signal of his commitment and the priority that he has placed on the issue. As he's described it many times, we're a team sitting up here, you know, with the Mayor, myself, the Superintendent, the members of the Board, and the Board Leadership. We're a team.

What I try to do, and because I bring many different experiences and perspectives to the role, both as a previous Board member, for example, and as a parent in the system, as somebody who's been involved in government in the private sector, is to help with strategy, to help with, you know, particular issues as they arise. I think that we are going to be very much be creating the role, but I think -- you know, and so those specific duties and specific tasks that I take on will come.

But, I mean, for the immediate moment, what we are really focussing on are the priorities. And one was, of course, the development and appointment of the new Board of Education. Secondly, we'll have a role, and have had a role, in helping to define the issues, for example, in the negotiations underway with the teachers' contract. And thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, in the whole financing area for the schools, in making sure that we can, in fact, fulfill the principles and the objectives that the Board President laid out.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

And this next question is to Mr. Hornbeck. And what I'd like you to do is describe what a "quality public school" actually is. And when you use the word "quality," we could all be talking about something else, and I think people need to be clear on what our goal is -- to make schools first quality. What is a first-quality school?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, let me describe it in two ways, one in terms of results and one in terms of my judgment about some of the inputs.

You will know you have a quality school when virtually all of the children are performing and reading and doing math and science at levels that will ensure that they can be successful, either on the job or in college, when they leave school, and that they progress through the grades in a timely fashion and graduate on time. And if you don't have that happening, then you do not have, in my judgment, a quality school.

Now, the ingredients that make up a quality school include the following:

It would be a school in which the principal and the faculty are clear about the

standards that students are expected to meet, the knowledge that students are expected to know, the skills they're expected to have.

Secondly, a quality school would be one in which there is significant opportunity for the faculty and the school to consult with one another about the curriculum, instruction, and individual children, and that those children and those faculty and the parents of the children have an opportunity for an ongoing, in a sense, support conversation around each individual child, that children are not anonymous in the process.

A quality school is one that, in the framework of that conversation, identifies early on the problems that children are having, so that you don't have to get to a point where a child is two or three or four years behind in reading, or a child is engaged in really dangerous, disruptive behavior before there is intervention with the child, and that there is a process to pick that up. We happen to call that "the Comprehensive Support Process" in the School District.

A quality school is one in which the faculty routinely are engaged in intensive

sustained professional development, learning how to be better teachers in a routine way.

A quality school is one that has sufficient instructional materials and books and, I believe, a computer-student ratio of at least one computer for every six children.

I think a quality school, at the elementary level, is also one that whose children have had the opportunity of a quality pre-kindergarten program, at ages three and four. In our society today, the only children that don't have pre-kindergarten opportunities are poor kids. Ninety-nine percent of all other children, anybody with means, has some kind of an early education experience for their kids or their grandkids by the time they're three or four years of age.

And, finally, I would say that a quality school is one that is in a decent facility. It doesn't have to be a brand-new facility. Goodness knows, there's quality education going on in some schools that are not brand-new, in a school system where the average age of the school being 60 years of age. But we have too many schools with too many maintenance

problems, we have too many schools that are grossly overcrowded, we have too many schools that the electrical system doesn't have the capacity that would permit us to plug all the computers in when we get them. So, I mean, we're working this thing in tandem.

And, actually, the last thing that I would say, which I've implied before, but I want to explicit about is, a quality school is one that opens its arms to its parent population.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. This is a follow-up. The schools that we have here in Philadelphia, the public schools, what percentage would you say is already, if not at, but near the quality school level? So that we understand the tasks, you know, the volume of the tasks here to create first-quality schools.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, let me say, so I'm not misunderstood, that the faculty and principals and parents in the vast majority, 90 percent of the schools, and it's reflected in this dramatic improvement in test scores, have over the last five years done an extraordinary job of moving us in the right direction. And, indeed, on a

system-wide basis, they have done so well, that is we look to that extraordinarily high 12-year goal, the school system is ahead of the trajectory that it needs to be on.

That said, I would have to say to you that there are very few schools in Philadelphia that reflect all of the ingredients of a quality education that I've described. Almost none have a computer-child ratio of 1 to 6. We have 7800 4-year-olds without pre-K and about 16,000 3-year-olds without pre-kindergarten. We do not have the support for the continued professional development of staff that is necessary. We do have a faculty and administrative leadership that largely are aware of what kids need to know and be able to do.

But there are very major missing ingredients. I wasn't explicit about it but, for example, we've got several grade levels who to this point have not even been able to have summer school. And, you know, what self-respecting school district can't even offer summer school? As much as kids may not like it. You've got to be able to respond.

We have very limited capacity to provide after-school tutoring. We have dozens and does and dozens of schools who are unable to serve their children in after-school programs and thus put issues of safety and security at risk.

So I would have to say to you that there is virtually no school in Philadelphia that I can say has all of the ingredients of what will be necessary over the years ahead to meet the standards of a quality education.

And let me emphasize something that I said in my testimony. This is not about producing schools that are in the upper 1 percent of opportunity in the United States. What I have described to you is a set of opportunities that, in more affluent districts, are normative, they're routine. We don't want more than what other people have; we just want our fair share.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Superintendent.

I may come back to this whole issue 'cause I would think that if nothing else, the High School of Creative and Performing Arts would be the closest thing to a first quality, from what

I've heard, you know, that it is state of the art.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I think that we have some -- CAPA is a wonderful example. Masterman is, in fact, the first -- in terms of test scores, the best in the whole state of Pennsylvania. I think that what Saul brings to -- there's certainly no agricultural school better than Saul. And I can go on down the line -- Central and so on. And I think that those schools are as good as exist.

But it is also my belief that the objective is to ensure that, in effect, all 259 schools that you don't have to travel on a bus for an hour and a half, that you don't have to go across town to have opportunities of excellence, and there are -- which are really terrific over these last years -- is that in every single -- for example, to stay in high school, a comprehensive high school in the City, we are beginning to see small learning communities that do excel.

But in many instances, it's what I meant by "beating the odds." In too many schools across the City, in order to achieve excellence, in order to succeed, faculty and principals and

parent and kids are required to beat the odds in order to do that. And Philadelphia's kids ought to have the same chances that other kids have.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All right, okay. Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Hornbeck, you mentioned CAPA.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And a bell went off in my mind.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: A couple months ago, I read an article in the paper and it indicated that we were accepting students from outside of the City. Why should our children be denied, and why would we accept children outside of the City? Are they paying tuition if they do come from outside the City, and why would be doing that?

DR. HORNBECK: They do pay tuition. And as a consequence of that same newspaper article, we have reviewed that and we are prepared to, in fact, put that in front of the Board of Education and to -- the staff will make a

recommendation that we begin to phase that out. And what I mean by phasing it out is that there are some kids there who are seniors and they have been there for four years, and we don't want to toss them out, but arrive at a point where --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How many students at CAPA do we have that do in fact live outside of the City?

DR. HORNBECK: It's my understanding that we have about 12 or 15 each year spread across the four grades, that three are over the X-number of years, going back even before they were in the new wonderful building.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I just feel very strongly that children who live in the City should certainly be given every opportunity to attend CAPA.

DR. HORNBECK: We agree with that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Ramos, Miss Rush, Miss Kahn, and Mr. Hornbeck.

3/6/00 - OPERATING BUDGET CONT'D - SCHOOLS

First Mr. Ramos and Miss Kahn, if I could ask if you could engage in some dialogue both with the Mayor and the Council President regarding one of the somewhat overlooked provisions of the ballot initiative that the voters approved which, naturally, resulted in the Mayor to make immediate appointments to the School Board was a provision that has the School Board, the Council, and the Mayor meeting twice a year to talk about the state of public education and a wide variety of issues that are laid out in that particular provision. And if you could, at some later point in time, share with us what you think the timetable for something like that would be, I would greatly appreciate it.

MR. RAMOS: Thank you, Councilman Nutter.

As you noted, I wrapped up my comments by referring to that type of meeting, and we would look forward to doing that sooner rather than later. We think that it was a well considered part of the charter amendment and couldn't begin at a more critical time.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, thank you.

3/6/00 - OPERATING BUDGET CONT'D - SCHOOLS

Let me go back to your testimony, Mr. Ramos. On the front page, you make reference to, if you adopt a carry-forward budget for the Fiscal Year '01, you say that the gap between projected revenues and expenditures will grow to $137.4 million with a projected fund balance deficit of $175 million.

If we could start out with just a basic explanation of why that happens with a carry-forward budget. What causes the rather rapid expansion from a $39 million deficit to 137?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Ramos, could you pull the microphone closer to you, please.

MR. RAMOS: Well, I can start and ask the staff to jump in when I get into trouble, Council.

My understanding is that there are -- some piece of that, of course, is salary increases that are already in existing contracts. There are inflationary numbers in there that I understand, after cross-examining staff, are real hard numbers.

And that -- and it also, I have to add,

is really a netting out. The increased -- you have increased expenditures and you also have some offsets with that. But you have a -- those are two of the pieces. I would also ask -- we also anticipate an increase in the enrollment of charter schools where we budgeted an increase of 4200 students.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry, Mr. Ramos, I don't mean to interrupt you, but you're going to have to pull the microphone closer to you so that the stenographer and we can hear you.

MR. RAMOS: I think I should start looking forward instead of at the Councilman.

I was mentioning that the other items, in addition, you have salaries, you have hard inflationary costs, and expansion of charter schools currently budgeted -- to be budgeted to be 4200 students. And I believe those are the big-ticket items.

DR. HORNBECK: Just to put some numbers into the categories:

About 36.8 million in contracted salary increases;

24.7 inflation, including a 10 percent increase in medical insurance, which accounts for 15 million all by itself;

3 million, which is a 7 percent increase in mandated tuition payments, mandated by the State to schools where we have to send kids that we can't serve;

4.2 million in utility increases;

22 million in extra charter school payments;.

And a loss -- this is sort of a different notion. A loss of $11 million in Annenberg Challenge money, because it runs out on June 30th.

If you added all that stuff up, it would come in the neighborhood of 95 million of it. And then the balance of it is just a whole lot of other stuff.

There are some offsets there as well, like the $36 million that we got from the State in extra. But those are the kinds of big-ticket items that are involved in it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. You made -- someone made reference to it in their testimony,

to the issue regarding your computer system, which, I assume, is why we don't have -- we usually get at least, one possibly two large books. Is that why we don't have those books at this time?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Is there any, I guess, concern by the District that as you go through this, does this potentially affect your ability to make a case to the State as to what the true financial picture is with the School District?

DR. HORNBECK: No. We are at the -- the main thing that it affected, for purposes of the budget, were salary projections. And since salary is such a huge part of our budget, it delayed the preparation of the book.

The book, with all of that in it, with 99 percent-plus accuracy, because all of this is now being brought up to date, is scheduled to go to the printer on March the 9th and come back from the printer several days later, which is why we will be in a position by roughly the third week in March to provide it to anybody.

So it's been the back end catching up with the front end. But, no, it's -- we are now within sight, even on that level, of going all the way down to the most -- to the finest details.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

MR. RAMOS: Councilman Nutter, I would also add that when you get those books, I would ask that you recognize that the Board is only -- the new board is only beginning its budget deliberations, and we will be guided in those deliberations by the five principles outlined in my testimony.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. But, I mean, you also understand that it has some impact on us as we try to even conduct our business or our involvement in this particular process.

MR. RAMOS: Yes, Councilman, and that's why we want to get those books to you, but it also increases the need for communications so that we know in the interim where we are.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

Superintendent, on Page 2 of your testimony, a couple of the bullet points, you talked about quality preschool for additional

4-year-olds and eventually for all 3- and 4-year-olds. What did you mean by additional 4-year-olds?

DR. HORNBECK: The recommendation that I will make to the new board is that between one-third and one-half of the unserved 4-year-olds would be served in '01.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: This is only under Fair Opportunities to Learn, though?

DR. HORNBECK: This is under Fair Opportunities to Learn. There are presently 7800 unserved 4-year-olds, so someplace between a third of that and half of that. And depending on, you know, whether we could do this in different ways, but then phase in the balance of the 3- and 4-year-olds over the next -- the subsequent two to four years.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The second bullet point was smaller classes, to a limit of 17 kindergarten and in the 1st grade and in the following years for grades 2 and 3.

Can you discuss with us -- there is no mention in any of your testimony that I've read here this morning that we were given any real

discussion about the state of either overcrowding in many of our school buildings or the general condition of the buildings. No one touched on that in any of the testimony or the documents that I have here.

DR. HORNBECK: I can. And overcrowding is a very serious situation. We probably don't have more than, I don't know, six clusters in which overcrowding is not a serious issue. And so we are unable to approach the issue of reduced class size in what has come to be the normal way.

So that last year, when we gratefully, but unexpectedly, had an appropriation from the federal government of almost $13 million to reduce class size and wanting to take advantage of it sort of a year ahead of schedule, and in the plan, we realized that there are two basically worldwide strategies for improving reading, something called "Success For All" and something called "Reading Recovery," that rely on, in effect, having two teachers in the same classroom.

And so we conceived -- and now the U.S. Department of Education is using it as a kind of model to tout around the country -- a process in

which, as real teachers, we engage what we refer to as "literacy interns." And the literacy intern, who's not an aide -- and I want to emphasize that -- but is a teacher and treated like a teacher, two people are in the same classroom. And we implemented this in about 60 schools this year, in about 260 classrooms this year.

And we began it last summer with what was a very unusual and very successful training program for four weeks, where we brought together the senior teachers with their literacy interns and did this training session, and then the training has continued during the course of the year. And we propose, as we lower class size in the rest of kindergarten and the 1st grade and then 2nd and 3rd grade, we would propose to pursue that model.

And, indeed, in lots of instances, from our experience this year if this were a place where we had the choice of non-overcrowding and the traditional "put-17-in-this-one-and-put-17-in-that-one," we would not necessarily at all go to that model, because the benefit that we see that

is arising in lots of different ways from the literacy intern is really quite compelling.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I guess one of the components of my question was, it seems that there are two elements that you need to lower class size. One, you need more space, possibly, unless you choose to follow the model that you did or -- and -- it's really not an "or" -- and you need more bodies.

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct. Let me address that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What is our ability to either increase space in an already overcrowded situation and recognize we're already having a teacher shortage? How do we do this?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, what I said before addresses the space issue, and so we're continuing to pursue that, we're okay on that front. We're not okay on space.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: We face -- in fact, going back to your previous question of pre-kindergarten, we face serious space issues, we've got space issues all over the lot. But for

purposes of reduced class size K to 3, that's the approach we're taking and it's working.

With respect to the bodies, and going back to President Verna's question earlier about vacancies, the one area where we didn't have a problem this year with vacancies was with the literacy interns. And it looks like we're needing even more next year, that because you can't just up and go out and get people overnight, we started advertising for these folks a month ago.

And let me give you last year's concrete experience, but it's unfolding the same way and in even greater numbers this year. Last year, we had about 1100 inquiries. We ultimately got 800 applications, and we were -- we hired about 320, even though we needed only 260, in a sort of airline over-booking way, because our experience is that some people take off on us late in the summer, and lo and behold, they didn't. And so we found ourselves uncommonly rich in people, and we had to go to some of our folks and persuade them to take some of the other positions where we had vacancies.

So it's been real extraordinary, the

response from people wanting to -- so while we have lots of challenges in that area, it looks like being able to find sufficient numbers of quality people for this role does not present a problem.

MR. RAMOS: Councilman Nutter, I would just add that, as the Superintendent said, personnel is probably doable, space is tight but probably doable. The third piece is revenue, money, to do it, and that will be the tougher of the -- among the three.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right. Well, even by my own calculation, I know that I'm probably over my time, so I'd like to come back to the revenue issue and the general status of the school buildings in the School District. And Madam Chair, I'll come back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning.

MR. RAMOS: Good morning.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Could we move back

for a moment to the computer system. Just for some background information, how long ago did we begin the process of engaging in this computer overhaul, refurbishment, whatever -- how long ago and what was the exact mission of the contract and the whole process?

DR. HORNBECK: It was about three years ago, three and a half years ago, and we approached it with two objectives. One, we had to do because of Y2K, and that was to ensure that all of the codes for all of the stuff we did across the District was in order. We took advantage of the money that we were going to have to spend on that to simultaneously upgrade several of our systems, including Human Resources and Purchasing and Finance, because some of the money -- instead of simply rewriting code in an old system that would still be old after you finished it and which, long ago, had proven its inadequacy, we decided to overlap the two things so that we would come out both Y2K-compliant and we would have a system that was capable of a lot more after we finished.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So it was a pretty major overhaul.

DR. HORNBECK: It was a very major overhaul.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What was the process that was engaged in an effort to determine the specs required for the contract? And walk me through the selection of the contract.

DR. HORNBECK: We could certainly give you also -- I'm == I'm going to do this a little from memory, but if you want it, we could do it in more detail.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yeah.

DR. HORNBECK: It was one of wide consultation within the District between both the technical people on the one side, lead by the then-CIO Greg Vincent and the then-Managing Director Clay Armbruster (ph.) and also the users -- that, is the people in Finance and the people in Purchasing and Human Resources. Out of that emerged some specs that resulted then in proposals from at least two companies -- I can't remember whether there were at one point more than the two or not.

Then a team of people representing both users and the technical people and the Managing

Director's Office went out and visited on site places where these were in operation. And the result of that whole process was initially to offer a contract to one of the companies because the proposal, the picture they painted, the opportunities that they seemed to be offering, were considerable and very exciting to us.

In the course of negotiating the contract, we concluded that most importantly, that they were simply unable and had never delivered what they had offered us, and that ultimately lead, after repeated attempts, to continue to pursue what we thought we were getting in the first instance, the other company, which has, I guess, more of these kinds of programs in place across the United States than any other.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What were the names of the two companies?

DR. HORNBECK: Oracle, and AMS was the one then that we ultimately contracted with.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did the committee of technical people -- I guess it was sort of a selection committee -- did they make a recommendation to the Superintendent's Office or

to the Board at any time as to which should be selected?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes. Originally, as I said, they recommended to me that we pursue the Oracle contract. We did. We even secured the authorization from the Board to go forward with that contract. I very much wanted -- because the sort of layman's picture of what it was going to permit us to do was very attractive. It was only subsequently when it proved to be impossible to complete that that that we switched.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did that technical committee agree with the assessment that AMS was, in fact, in reality, a better choice than Oracle? Or was that a decision made by the Board or by the Superintendent's Office?

DR. HORNBECK: No. They -- after -- it was always the technical people, together with the Managing Director, who did all of the negotiations, and it was they who finally concluded that we would be unable to secure what we had thought we were going to be able to get, and therefore recommended reluctantly that we had to go in the other direction.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So that was a formal recommendation from that committee to choose AMS as opposed to Oracle?

DR. HORNBECK: It was a formal recommendation from the Managing Director and the CIO who were charged with leading that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So what it did was, then the contract was then awarded to AMS?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And what was the initial amount of the contract that was awarded?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't have those details in front of me, but I can certainly get them for you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does anybody here on your staff have any idea of what the original amount was?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't think anybody is here today that could give you that detail, but we can certainly supply it to you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Can you give me a ballpark? Was it above or --

DR. HORNBECK: I -- I just don't --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Was it 1 million or

was it 30 million or was it somewhere in between or was it --

DR. HORNBECK: I think it was somewhere in between.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: It was certainly not 1 and it wasn't 30, but I don't remember the precise number.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman, did you want to know that number now?

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, I mean, I think it's a pretty big contract so I think somebody would remember what --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think the Superintendent could make a phone call or perhaps someone on his staff might call --

MR. RAMOS: Councilwoman, I can give you even bigger caveat and give you a ballpark of my recollection. It was in the ballpark of 25 million.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. So that was the original number of the contract -- oh, I mean, you could give me the documentation later on what exactly the number was, but your recollection was

the Board originally approved a $25 million contract for AMS to do this work?

MR. RAMOS: It's a long story and it's hard to remember where began, but that's my recollection.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.

MR. RAMOS: And I apologize if I'm wrong, but we'll get you the documentation.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When was the contract awarded to AMS, do you remember? When was it?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I think it was -- I think it commenced -- there's something in the back of my mind that tells me it commenced 21 months before. About last August or September, so whenever that was.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So they began to do their work?

DR. HORNBECK: Correct.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When did they complete the contract, or did they ever come to a point where they actually completed the work?

DR. HORNBECK: No. They're still working with us today, and it is at least our

staff's hope that they will continue to work with us for sometime into the future.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have they exceeded the original amount of the contract? And if so, by how much?

DR. HORNBECK: They have exceeded it. We've had to go become to the Board on two occasions? -- I think on two occasions to ask for additional funds for that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How much was that?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't remember the details of that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does anybody who voted on it remember?

MR. RAMOS: (Shakes head.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No?

MR. RAMOS: No. In the first round was a significant increase in the staffing that it was going to take because we had overestimated -- or the CIO's office originally had underestimated -- or overestimated how much the School District's personnel time was going to be available and committed to the project. So the big chunk of money that was added for that shift.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you remember how long ago that request, or requests, for additional funding were made to the Board? I mean, was it within a year ago, less than a year, more than a year ago?

MR. RAMOS: It was probably more than a year.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: More than a year? And you think it was a -- I don't mean to characterize it. Was it an insignificant amount or was it a large amount?

MR. RAMOS: Councilman Kenney, I can't speak for the entire Board on what their feelings are or the District. I can tell you that it's been a frustrating experience for everybody.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: An additional frustrating and a very expensive experience.

MR. RAMOS: Well, I think, compared to similarly-situated districts, I'm not sure that it's more expensive. In fact, we've been told otherwise, but --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: By who?

MR. RAMOS: But I believe -- I mean, I, you know, frankly, I believe that from the very

beginning, from just, you know, a Board member's perspective, there was some range of opinion on which way to go, and I think a lot has gotten accomplished to deal with the problems that have arisen and to get such a huge overhaul done.

If I were to identify two areas where I think there have been -- where I've had significant concerns, they've been in the area on how good of a job we did in advance of training people for the new system, and I think, more fundamentally, how good of a job was done on bringing everybody that needed to be involved in the system on board. I think it's been -- I think there's been lack of a sense of team because of the difference of opinion hurt the project.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Wasn't training a part of the original contract with AMS? It's my experience that when a company is given that kind of contract, part and parcel of what they're supposed to do is train people to use it once they've put it in place.

DR. HORNBECK: Training was a part of the contract, and I do think that Mr. Ramos's observation that the job we did on training was

inadequate.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry, you said "we." Is the company "we" or is the --

DR. HORNBECK: Well, the company played a major role in delivering the content, but the District bears also responsibility for organizing the time, of having done it in enough time.

I mean, one of the mistakes I think we made is that we ended up attempting to do this in 21 months, when other places that were not even as ambitious have taken 48 months to do it. And it's that date, and it comes from AMS. But it's a matter of public record that other places with similar efforts have taken twice the time and a lot more in expense than we have.

But we still made -- I wish, in retrospect, we had taken three or four years to do it and that we had done a better job of training.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The problems that have been reported in the press related payroll and other types of payment problems, and I guess the computer -- I mean, the lack of budget detail today, they're all related to the problems that have resulted by implementing this contract and

moving, are they all computer-related problems?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I -- my assessment is that they are largely training problems, not computer problems. And they're not the fault of the people that didn't get the training; they are the fault of those of us who didn't provide the framework for the training that was adequate.

And the system itself, the software, the system has largely worked the way the system is supposed to work, and has worked in dozens of places. And the problems that we've encountered are not all that dissimilar to lots of other places that have encountered problems.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have we been required to go out and to contract with other types of firms, other types of companies to do, for example, payroll work or to do other types of work that the lack of training and/or the inability of the company to perform has required us to go out and hire other people outside of AMS, to kind of advise us or deal with these problems?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I'm -- we -- I don't think we've had to go and like subcontract pieces, at least to my memory.

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There are two areas that may be related to what you are asking. Because of some of these input issues that I was talking about, we have hired -- I don't know that we have many still on board, but there was a time four months ago when some of these problems were at the peak, and we just had to, we just could not face a situation in which employees didn't get paychecks.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Right, right. I agree, I agree.

DR. HORNBECK: These people were trying to get from Friday to Monday and --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I guess what I need to know, and if no one here knows it, I need to know the original amount, the amount that we've spent so far to date, and the amount that we've had to spend so far to date on the AMS contract and --

MR. RAMOS: Could you start again 'cause --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry. There's a lot of pens moving behind me and I want to make sure that we get your questions.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry. Need to

know what the original amount of the contract was. I'd like to see a copy of the contract, if possible.

I need to know what we've spent in excess of the contract and what other -- I don't know whether it works by change order or similar to different kinds of different -- I need to see copies of the change orders as to what was being done.

And I also would like to know how many firms and how much money we've spent outside of the AMS contract to kind of advise, consult or fix or help us fix some of the problems.

And I guess the most important question I need to know right now is, does it work yet? I mean, are we done spending money on this project and are we in order?

DR. HORNBECK: As I had suggested in response to the question to Mr. Nutter a while ago on the issues that prevented us from giving you a board book today, besides the fact that it would not have been attended to by the new board, which, in some ways, was the most important piece, that is largely done and fixed, as you would put it.

That is -- that is also true with the payroll process.

There continues to be, there will always be, there will be ten years from now -- and there were more two years ago -- problems with payroll on a biweekly basis than there are today. But we are back to a place where there are fewer problems today than there were two years ago in spitting out payroll for 30,000 employees.

We do expect to bring to the Board, as we've said to the old board on previous occasions, what would be a fifth statement of work with AMS.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry, could you explain what that is? I'm --

DR. HORNBECK: It means a fifth bunch of stuff that we want AMS to do.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Stage or --

DR. HORNBECK: "Statement of work" is what I said, an identification of what needs to be done.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry. Is this a part of the original contract or is this additional dollars?

DR. HORNBECK: It's additional. It --

there is a basic system and then there are additional modules that we did not buy in the first instance that get added on, that permit us to use the system more productively and to greater advantage.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do these additional modules have to be purchased as a result of something that wasn't done as a result of the first contract?

DR. HORNBECK: No, no. This is to be able to simply do more and better things with the same system. In fact, it will end up -- like with Purchasing, we've been able to reduce the Purchasing staff significantly because of the implementation of the AMS program because it permits the online purchase of things that used not to be possible. We want to continue to move things out of administration and into the classroom to be able to fund things, as we have been out of administration, like kindergarten.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know I'm going on. I just have one final question. As we sit here -- and I want to come back again.

As we sit here today, is this computer

system that we contracted with AMS to provide these services doing its job? Are the problems resolved? And will there be any additional requests for money? Or, again, problems are unforeseen, but do you expect that there's going to be any more difficulties with the system? Besides the new modules that you may buy, as based on the original contract, are there any other problems or any more requirements or requests for additional money above the ballpark figure of 25 million and then whatever else we spent as a result of problems?

Are we done as far as the original contract?

DR. HORNBECK: The original contract, plus the add-ons --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry, the add-ons for problems or the add-ons for new modules?

DR. HORNBECK: No, no, no. We went back to the Board, as was stated a moment ago --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: -- for additional money to do things that we thought that the original

contract would have taken care of.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: And there may be issues there, and I don't know for sure what that will be, where we will have to, in a sense, clean up the end of that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does that mean more money?

DR. HORNBECK: That would mean more money.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Is there --

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know the answer to that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you find, or does the staff find that in any way, shape, or form that AMS did not meet the requirements of its contract? Even though we may recognize the need to pay for things to fix them 'cause people aren't getting paid, do we believe in any way that the company is in some way responsible, fell down on the terms of their contract? And are we seeking to recover any money from them?

DR. HORNBECK: We have, in fact, already secured from AMS additional AMS

assistance, for which we will not make payment, as we resolve some of these issues. I would not characterize those in a -- with "breach of contract" kind of language, 'cause I don't believe that's what's happened.

But, yes, there will be instances in which, through negotiations, we will say, We believe you have a responsibility to do X, Y, and Z because of A, B, and C, but this additional set of ours are ones that we think we have an obligation to pay for as we seek to have done these things.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay, I yield now and I --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No, I yield and I apologize for the length of time that I took.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And, Mr. Hornbeck, you will be returning on Wednesday, at 2 o'clock. So I would appreciate it if you would have the information to the questions that Councilman Kenney has asked you today.

DR. HORNBECK: Madam President, I will certainly have it by Wednesday. I would ask your

indulgence. I'm supposed to be in a briefing with the Mayor and the Board at 2 o'clock, and was going to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: On Wednesday?

DR. HORNBECK: On Wednesday. And I was going to ask Miss Ingram to come and represent me for a period of time until that briefing is over. But under any circumstance, we will have the information for you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Have you informed the Mayor that we were having public hearings?

DR. HORNBECK: (Confers off the record with staff members.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I don't know what your conversation was. Would you share it with us?

MS. KAHN: Yeah, we knew that you were starting later in the afternoon, and we're planning to start very early in the morning, so there's only an overlap right now of one hour, and we can adjust that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We have other

witnesses that want to testify on Wednesday and we will start our hearings promptly at 2 o'clock, so I would like you to keep that in mind, please.

MS. KAHN: Fine. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think that every Member has his or her light on. So in order to give everyone an opportunity, I will give everyone five minutes, and then we will have the second go-around.

Councilman Ortiz, your light is on but you're not next.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It's not on.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman Blackwell?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Ortiz, you are on the list, your light was on.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Superintendent Hornbeck, the Opportunities to Learn Program lists many things

that are very important, like nurses full time and smaller class sizes and remedial tutoring for children when needed and summer programs and so on and so on.

How does that fit into your budget?

DR. HORNBECK: If the Board and the Mayor determine that those things on that list should be in the budget, it would increase the size of the gap that we face for 2001 by about $155 million. If we phase those things in over a 3-year period, it would require $155 million more dollars in Year 1. If we were to phase them in over a 5-year period, it would require an additional expenditure of about $120 million.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So the 330 million that Mr. Ramos, you have in yours, is for what period?

MR. RAMOS: Well, Councilwoman Blackwell, the -- we laid out for your benefit the carry-forward costs and then the costs of the Fair Opportunities to Learn, as originally presented by the Superintendent. The Superintendent's now laying out a variation of the second alternative in my testimony, which is spreading out those Fair

Opportunities to Learn over a longer period.

The Board has not yet begun its deliberations on the budget and -- which I do have to emphasize because of the -- we do -- while we know all the Fair Opportunities to Learn are programs that our students need, we do have to proceed through the budget process responsibly and looking towards -- and with the benefit of the whole Board and the community according to the five principles that I outlined in my testimony.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Superintendent Hornbeck, you mentioned in the Fair Opportunities for Learning Plan alternatives for disruptive students. Is that part of the CEP Program?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Now, there are those who say that it would be more cost-effective to re-train and move teachers. What is your opinion on that as opposed to forming a whole 'nother structure for students?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we know that the experience in Houston resulted in an actual reduction in costs by engaging CEP, and the

authorization that the Board has given us for negotiating a contract would call for our expending no more than the amount per pupil for our regular expenditure, which is $6969, looking to a commitment that the State has made for making up the difference between that expenditure for a regular child and what this would cost.

So, in fact, by going in this direction, we will have placed ourselves in a position of serving more students for less money.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Another question in that regard is, I think I read some time ago that this program was for students who were not only disruptive but for those who were academically behind and for those who, quote/unquote, just didn't fit in? Is that in fact true?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And how do you reconcile children who are academically behind? And what do we mean by "kids who just don't fit in" along with kids who are just disruptive?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I don't know that I -- I don't usually use the phrase "just don't

fit in," unless you mean, for example, this would be one alternative place to put youngsters for a while as a transition as they return from incarceration. But I would explicitly say kids who are returning from incarceration for whom this might be an appropriate placement, not just don't fit in.

With respect to academically deficient, we're talking about youngsters whose performance tells us that they are more than two years behind their grade level. And the --

(Five-minute timer goes off.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I just got started, Madam Chair.

All right. Would you finish the answer and then we'll move on.

DR. HORNBECK: Only to say that one of the things that is very clear to us is that there is almost always a connection between academic deficiency and disruption. We almost never have this -- almost never -- we do have, but not very often, instances in which we've got a disruptive kid who is doing real well in school.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right, I

have several questions, but I'll --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Keep your light on and I will keep your name on the list. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

Good morning.

DR. HORNBECK: Good morning.

MR. RAMOS: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I think I'll come back to the money issue second. I want to get some other things in 'cause we don't have a lot of time.

On Page 20 of your briefing book that we received, there is a section regarding teacher training, and you talk about staff development, professional development, and I'm interested in knowing where and what areas the staff development is in, and I'm concerned about technology, the ability to have teachers understand and use computers so that they can be more effective with our students.

DR. HORNBECK: There are a -- of

course, a spectrum of places where professional development takes place. The specific reference there highlights the program during the summer, where almost 5,000 teachers and faculty participated in what we refer to as "Content Institutes," and those are week-long and two-week-long intensive programs during the summertime. In fact, they have grown over these last years. From the first year I was here, I think there were about 900 in to -- in fact, this past summer -- I think this is not entirely accurate. I think it's over 5,000 that participated this last summer.

And it is a combination of content on one hand, with focus on English, math, and science, to pedagogy -- that is, how to teach better, teaching strategies.

So that's a very, very important piece of the professional development.

What we've discovered is that, you know, that the Wednesday afternoon, you get off an hour early and you stay for two hours kind of professional development is far less desirable than being able to have teachers or principals, or

whomever it is, together for more sustained periods of time.

There are, then, other more targeted elements of professional development. I think, for example, of the system-wide need to do training around sexual harassment this last year. And what we do when we do that is to craft, in a sense, a particular training program and then work out a schedule so that all those who need to have that experience have it.

On the technology front, we have moved over the last five years from 1 computer for every 30 kids to 1 for every 10 kids.

We also, by the end of this calendar year, I think it is, will have all of the schools wired. I think I'm right now that -- I know I'm right that every school has a connection to the Internet. I think I'm right that every school now has six locations that are connected to the Internet, and there are some with a good deal more than that.

And we are methodically attending to the issue of professional development that supports faculty use of computers, because just to

have technology doesn't do anything. You got to -- you got to help people know how to use it intelligently. So that has grown significantly as well.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You're saying that by the been end of this year, all of the schools in the system will be wired?

DR. HORNBECK: I -- I think that's right. I will confirm that, but I think I'm right about that timetable.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Mm-hmm.

DR. HORNBECK: We have been able to successfully take advantage in the last two years of something called "the E rate," which is a national program under the Federal Communications Commission, which has given us tens of millions of dollars -- I think we're up to over $20 million now -- the primary purpose of which is to wire schools. So we've been on a very aggressive timetable for implementation under the leadership of both Ron Daniels, our acting CIO, and Bob Westall, who is specifically charged with that responsibility.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Could you tell me,

what is your policy in accepting computers from corporations or any entity that may be interested in donating computers, used computers, to the school system?

DR. HORNBECK: We have numerous instances in which we have accepted them, and we've accepted them for two different purposes along the line. In one instance, they've been sufficiently new -- that is not to say new, just sufficiently new, that they still have life left in them, and we actually use them in schools and classrooms.

In other instances, we've been very successful in a number of schools in developing computer repair programs. And so there have been instances in which we've accepted computers not to use them as computers but to use them as parts so that students are able to develop skills that way.

And that's actually fed into what has been a terrific series of new initiatives. The one that comes to my mind is a partnership we have with Cisco (ph.) now where in a number of our high schools, we have full-fledged Cisco certification

programs where youngsters over a couple of years go through this very highly technical, complex program and come out the other end with a certificate that permits them to go immediately to work, if they wish, upon graduation at very nice salaries as a consequence.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So -- okay, if we had someone who wanted to contribute computers to the District, who would they contact?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, start by calling me, and I'll make sure that we accept them with dispatch and put them to proper use.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sorry, Councilwoman, your time is up. We'll go to the second go-around.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good morning, Chair. Good morning.

DR. HORNBECK: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me first start out by thanking Debra Kahn for the response to

questions that came before this body during the budget hearings. I appreciate that very much. And I want to start up with some follow-up questions that were posed by Madam Chair and Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller on the Community Education Partner School.

First I'll ask that I -- and I can't speak for Members of this body -- would like you to keep us in close touch with the developments. I know it's in a formative stage, but there are a lot of questions that I will have and I'm others will have as we go down this path. One speaks to the notion of initial enrollment. You said 600 by September 1, with a goal of 1500 young people. What is the reimbursement structure for that?

DR. HORNBECK: We haven't completed that yet completely, but the approach to it is one that would tie two things together, and that is payment with attendance.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: So that there would be a payment of X-dollars for each day, in effect, that a child is present. And if the company is able to increase significantly from a base, a child's

attendance, they would get, in effect, a bonus. And if they fell short of the base, there would be a deduction.

So that there is an accountability that centers around attendance --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: -- good.

DR. HORNBECK: -- built into the structure.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The arrangement. So it's "performance-based," for lack of a better word?

DR. HORNBECK: It's a performance feature.

In addition to that, though it not, in our thinking at the moment, tied directly to payment in the first round, we have built in certain accountability features with respect to performance in reading, math, and science that would inform us when it came time to renew the contract. So that there is that second academic-performance feature that we're building into it also.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, that's encouraging because then there is an opportunity

for a young person to find their way out and back into a regular classroom --

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: -- based on improvement and academics.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Accepting the fact that typically, there are more males than females in this kind of environment, do you have any say in the hiring of teachers, and specifically male teachers, for the Community Education Partner School?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't think at the moment that has entered into the negotiations, but I appreciate the observation, and we'll take a look at that issue.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I think it matters when it comes to young men having role models.

If you had to follow up on Donna Reed Miller's -- Councilwoman Reed Miller's question, if you had to I.D. the top three compelling issues facing the School District, what would you say they are? And, a follow-up, where would school safety and school violence rank?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I -- I -- that's tough that you give me only three. But I think that safety and security has to be one of the top issues. A second top issue is that we have done an increasingly good job -- and better than other big school systems -- of getting larger numbers of children sort of to grade level or to what we call basic.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mm-hmm.

DR. HORNBECK: But what neither we nor anyone else in the United States has done successfully yet is to get large numbers of students beyond basic to genuinely higher levels of achievement that we believe are going to be required for youngsters as they compete for jobs in the early part of this century. So I would say that understanding how to get kids beyond basic would be a second.

And the third -- well, let me say about beyond basic, a whole lot of those Fair Opportunities to Learn things go to that issue.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, move it there.

DR. HORNBECK: And then the third thing

I would lift up, and these aren't necessarily in order because I could put any one of these first, second and third, is the need to recruit and maintain increasingly larger numbers of quality teachers.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I overlooked an issue that I am concerned about too, also raised by Councilwoman Blackwell. For sure, students who are performing poorly academically most often are disruptive. And have you discussed in this pending contract parameters in place or assurances in place that children who are academically slow because they're academically slow are not misplaced?

DR. HORNBECK: Now, that's very important. And, in fact, just to that point, you would not be able to get into this school without going through a very difficult process --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good, very good.

DR. HORNBECK: -- of examining your individual needs for being in that school.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Let me move to one other area before my time is up.

3/6/00 - OPERATING BUDGET CONT'D - SCHOOLS

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry, Councilwoman, your time is up.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It is up?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Ortiz?

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

There's a great difference between this hearing and the hearing we had the other day. First of all, it's less crowded, there's much less shouting, and the issues are about kids and education. So the passion is not there about building new stadiums. And so, Madam Chair, it's a welcome change.

I want to congratulate the Board, my friends who have been retained and those who have come on.

Mr. Superintendent, could you tell me what the average age of the schools are?

DR. HORNBECK: About 60 years of age.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: That's the average age of the schools in Philadelphia?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Do you know what the age of Vets Stadium is?

DR. HORNBECK: I do not.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It was built in 1972. Do you know what the cost of the new stadium is going to be, of one?

DR. HORNBECK: I -- I'm afraid I'm not informed on that.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It's close to $400 million.

Could you estimate what the capital needs are in terms of money for the school system?

DR. HORNBECK: In order to bring our present plant structure, the envelope that exists now, without building new schools, up to where it needs to be, we estimate it, as a consequence of the facilities audit we conducted about three years ago, that at that time, it would have cost about $750 million.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I have a news release from your office that states that about $765 million is needed to bring the District

facilities in compliance with building standards. Does that sound right to you?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes, in 3-year-old dollars.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Do you have any schools that are over 100 years old?

DR. HORNBECK: We have -- I think it's five that are over 100 years old.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And children are attending currently, and those schools are generally overcrowded. Is Sheppard one of them?

DR. HORNBECK: I think Sheppard is one of the 100-year-old ones. It's certain one of the overcrowded ones.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Sheppard currently has a heating system that is, I think, run by coal, is it? Or has the boiler been changed?

DR. HORNBECK: I think that we have finally dispensed with all of the coal furnaces.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Do you know what the heating system in a sky box is at Vets Stadium?

DR. HORNBECK: I do not.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It's not coal.

Do you know how much money the owners

of the Phillies and Eagles get from a Vets Stadium box?

DR. HORNBECK: I do not.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It's not a small piece of change.

Of those facilities and of the needs that we currently have, how do you project that we are going to go about bringing these schools up to code?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: So we can give our kids at least a decent place to learn.

DR. HORNBECK: We -- what we have done over these last five years, which is not often known, is that in the last five years, we have increased the capital expenditure to an average of $117 million a year, in contrast to the $42 million a year that we spent on average in the 5 years before that.

And our -- the Capital Budget is a very serious thing. We are -- we're not making much headway in getting on top of that, although I must say that we have built, I guess, it's four new schools, and we've bought six parochial schools

and put them into service in the last five years, and I think we're up to six of those little schoolhouses now.

And I think it's fair to say that on the maintenance front, including the computerization of work orders, we're doing a much, much better job.

But we are not on a trajectory in which we would either bring all of our schools up to the standards that they need to be, nor are we, for sure, on a trajectory in which we would alleviate the overcrowding that we have.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And these schools that we have that are 100, 80 years old, 60 years old, when you go out to rewire them in order to be able to make them accessible to the Internet and computerization, isn't the process of rewiring these old schools much more expensive than if we had world-class facilities in the first place?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Because we were told that we need world-class sports facilities.

DR. HORNBECK: It is very difficult to wire an old school that doesn't have drop ceilings

and other things that permit you to do it more easily.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And the wiring is at least 80 years old in some of these schools also, isn't it?

DR. HORNBECK: I would -- I would expect that it's old. Whether there are any that are still actually 80 or 100 years old, I'm not sure.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I just wanted to put the debate into perspective, Madam Chair. We had 500 people here the other day, and it seems that the absence of those 500 -- I wish they were here in order to hear about the debate of what really a world-class city is all about, which is children and schools.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Councilman. Your time is up.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. It's almost there.

I have a question referencing the briefing document as it relates to kindergarten eligibility for 5-year-olds, and we're currently now able to offer that to every eligible child, every eligible 5-year-old. You're to be commended.

MR. RAMOS: For the record, that was a "yes," Councilman.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Have we had to phase that into existence based on the resources, or did we do that all at once?

DR. HORNBECK: With respect to kindergarten, when I came here some years ago, a really good base had been established by former Superintendent Clayton and her staff. And then we made a decision -- I guess it was the first year I was here, I think -- that we were going to make it universal. And in the first year, we were able to do it full-time in all but, as I remember, 26 schools.

And we focused in the first instance on those schools where the greatest concentrations of low-income children were. And then in the second year, which would have been, I think, the '95-'96

school year, we made it universal in 100 percent.

And we've been able to do that largely for two reasons, 'cause we've gotten per pupil less money since then. One is that we have been able to -- we've pretty successful, probably more than any other school district in the United States, in raising money from private and special grant sources.

But the other reason is that because of administrative savings that we've undertaken, we have, in the aggregate, achieved over $200 million during this period, and we've plowed that money back into the classroom. And kindergarten is a very good example of where we put it.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. So in most instances, when you have to phase in a new initiative, I mean, how do you address that? I mean, is there a particular guideline or a policy relating to what locations, what schools, what areas, what geographically, income levels? How do you do that?

DR. HORNBECK: In some instances, we will do something so that all parts of the City get it in a kind of an equitable way. In

something like kindergarten, and the reason we've focused on low-income kids is because the research tells us that the kids who benefit the most from early childhood education, whether kindergarten or pre-kindergarten, are, in fact, low-income kids.

And so we made the decision in that instance, as we do in other instances. We would do that with the pre-K also is to -- if we're forced to phase in, to give some greater attention to those parts of the City that have concentrations of low-income children.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Also in your briefing document, you make mention of the 364 administrative positions that have been eliminated. You say it's a myth that we're over-staffing administrative positions currently. I have a question about the cluster program. When did that come into effect?

DR. HORNBECK: It began -- the first six clusters were put into effect in -- I think it was in the spring of '95, and then the subsequent 16 a year later.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And what are the staffing associated with the clusters?

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There are on average around -- well, there are three positions -- an administrative assistant, a confidential secretary, and a cluster leader -- that are the administrators of the cluster. And then you have an average of ten or twelve other individuals, like psychologists, people who work on the professional development that we talked about a little while ago, special-education supervisors, who are also attached. There are fewer of those than one for every school, and so they become attached to the cluster office.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So you essentially categorize that the three individuals that you spoke of initially would be the administrative level and the other individuals who would be more service-delivery directly to the student.

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So how many administrative-level individuals do you have throughout the clusters?

DR. HORNBECK: If you count the 3, then we'd have 66.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Sixty-six. And so

if you add those 66, the numbers of administrators would be reduced in terms of the numbers that you reduce your overall staffing levels? When you talk about the 364 administrators, I'm assuming they're not from the clusters, correct?

DR. HORNBECK: This is -- the reduction to which you referred originally does not include the 66.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So it's really not 364 when you talk about it generally?

DR. HORNBECK: It is 364.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'm saying you've added an additional 66 administrative positions.

DR. HORNBECK: The 364 is a net.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. So that's incorporated into --

DR. HORNBECK: It's comparing 1401, I think it was.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right.

DR. HORNBECK: I don't remember the exact number and 1100-and-something.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay, so that's --

DR. HORNBECK: So it's a net, yes.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay, all right.

It didn't reference that in here and I just wanted some clarity on that. Okay, thank you.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Oh, one other question.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You've got 35 seconds.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is my time up?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You've got 35 seconds.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right, 35 seconds. Family learning centers, I happen to have one in my neighborhood, and my understanding is it's not doing as well as was anticipated. Can somebody kind of speak to where we are with those and what changes we're making?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we could give you some feedback on the particular center, which I'm not familiar.

But generally speaking, the family centers have been made a terrific contribution to neighborhoods. We are now up to -- I think it's 14 of them across the City that are jointly funded and run and so on by DHS and us and the Department

of Health and so on. They operate in our buildings in all but, I think, one instance, but they are under the administrative responsibility of DHS.

And if there are issues or questions that arise in your particular one, I would be glad to get somebody to follow up on that with you.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President. I don't mind waiting.

Good morning, Mr. Ramos, Mrs. Rush, Secretary Kahn, and Superintendent Hornbeck. My question is probably very direct and it may be one that you're unprepared to answer, but what are your goals with teacher-contract negotiations? And what reform measures do you think need to be included in those contracts in order to actually achieve your goals?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, the way I frame that is twofold, without going to particular provisions, because we're not really in a position

to negotiate the contract in a public setting. But I think it's very important that the specific provisions of the contract affirmatively contribute to creating classrooms and schools where kids being able to read and do math and science is more likely, and that goes to the issues around work rules.

And, secondly, I think it's very important that the contract provide -- have provisions, including pay provisions, that will result in sufficient quantities of quality teachers.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: The American Federation of Teachers, the AFT, which is meeting here this summer, has laid out measures for negotiations in terms of changes that they've asked for nationally. Are those the type of goals you would be looking for in teacher-contract negotiations without specifically negotiating a contract here?

If you don't know what goals you're looking for in terms of actual reform, if you can't share with this Council what goals you're looking for, then aside from issues of financing

and test scores, there's no need for us to believe that those schools that aren't already good schools will become good schools.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I'm very encouraged by Sandy Feldman's position on collective bargaining, and I think the AFT is providing some very good leadership in articulating those things.

I think that Sandy is clearly still focused on issues of wages and hours and conditions of employment, sort of traditional trade union areas of focus, but she has become very clear that faculty are a necessary partner in the quest for improved performance too, including, I might say, issues of accountability.

I was privileged to be invited to the two summits that have been held with the governors and the CEOs up in New York over the last couple of three years, and she was at them also. And particularly in the second one that happened just a few months ago, she and Bob Chase, who is the President of the other national teachers union, spoke very eloquently and powerfully to the issues of accountability and to the importance of that as

it relates to improving instruction so kids learn more. So I'm very hopeful that that kind of leadership will contribute to the overall climate in which the Federation and we move forward.

I must say that in the early days of this conversation that I have found the Federation very much wanting also to arrive at a contract that's very positive for kids.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I guess where I'm really going with this is, I am proud of public schools. I guess that's because I attended Masterman and Central, and Masterman started out as a laboratory and demonstration school several years ago. We know that that demonstration project has worked. And it has not just worked because of the level of funding, it hasn't just worked for a number of other reasons, but there are specific reasons why it has worked.

Without giving each school -- or before giving each school charter school status, what type of flexibility do schools have in terms of designing their own curriculum and managing their own human and financial resources?

DR. HORNBECK: Over these last several

years, the flexibility for a school staff faculty, the principal, and even including parents, to play a major and increasing role in making those decisions has really expanded. In fact, it's been now about over five years ago that we started with Title I monies, where we just allocated them out on a formula, and then, by and large, schools had the flexibility to design the expenditure patterns themselves. And then I guess it was about two years ago, three years ago maybe, when we went to an allocation formula for operating money that went out.

There are constraints that arise from law and contracts. The contract provides the process that's a relatively rigid one for how teachers end up in particular schools, so that flexibility is not there. But beyond that, there's a very wide flexibility in the expenditure of money.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'll continue with this in the second round, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you, Madam

Chair.

I'm not sure I understood the question and answer that we just dealt with from Councilman Goode, but it struck a note that has been in the back of my mind. Were you discussing the possibility of an average school, any school anywhere being just like a charter school or having the ability to, in effect, turn itself into a charter school?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, it wasn't so much likening it to a charter school, as I was simply reflecting my own belief that the Board and the Superintendent ought to set standards of what kids ought to know and be able to do and attend to issues of assessment and accountability and equity. And within that framework, there should be broad flexibility at the school to design the particular approaches in that school.

There are 259 schools different, and different communities bring different strengths, different school have different strengths among faculty. And it's my own belief that faculty working together and faculty and the principal working with parents can construct powerful

learning studies.

And so all I was speaking to was my own endorsement of a significant amount of flexibility in how they accomplish the standards, with very little flexibility in what the standards themselves are, for reasons of equity.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I think that would be a great direction to go in. I think that would help us attain the goal of every school in the City being a school that parents want to send their kids to.

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And feel that, you know, their kids are getting something out of it. I'll watch that carefully. I don't think parents understand that anywhere, and I don't know whether the faculties do or not. But I'm convinced that overwhelmingly, the faculties are sincere and want to do the best possible job with whatever resources they're given. And I think that's a great way to go.

Now, let me raise a question. You mentioned in your testimony that this year, sort of for the first time, I gathered, you were having

a problem with ordinary substitutes, that on some days, you didn't have enough substitutes. I've been getting calls in my office from some people who have in the past acted as substitutes and say that they are running into difficulties, that there seems to be a new system for authorizing substitutes. I'm thinking in particular of one person who whose certification, I think, was vocational education, but for many, many years, he's acted very frequently as a substitute in other courses.

And, apparently, there are lists where substitutes are put on certain lists, like they can teach different courses, but they're limited to those. And he says he's now being told that since there's a better checking system available, they have found that he's certified for vocational education, and he gets refused now unless there's a vocational-education opening, although for years, he's taught many other classes.

Could that be the problem that you're suffering? Is there -- are there people who have been treated as very capable substitutes and who are now being ruled out from positions that they

filled maybe as substitutes for many years? Could that be a cause for the shortage?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't think so. I'm not familiar with the type of situation that you're describing and would be glad to hear from this individual, because we do need -- we do need good people.

But that -- and I didn't mean to suggest this was the first year we've faced a substitute problem; we've faced a substitute problem, I think, since time began. But it is more acute, I think, this year as we, as I say, moved some of the substitutes into regular teaching positions.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: You don't know of any general change?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know of a -- two or three years ago, three or four year ago, when we put this so-called herbs system in, there were some changes that took place because the contract calls for the placement of substitute teachers on the basis of seniority. And previously, when it was all being done by hand, nobody could quite track all of that.

And then when we automated it, all of a sudden, we could track it, and that one disrupted the flow some. But that's been solved now for at least a couple of years, and I don't know of any other --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, let me bring this to your attention and perhaps your staff can look at it.

DR. HORNBECK: Yeah, thank you.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: One other question. In the issue of school tokens, we have been -- some of us in City Council have been questioning the role of SEPTA in failing to provide public transportation. We carefully refrained at the SEPTA hearings from raising the question of the responsibility of School District.

But it seems to me that I haven't heard any outcry from the school system about the failure of children to be able to get to school because the families can't afford the tokens. We know that you give -- that you buy school tokens at the regular retail price that anybody else could get in Philadelphia if they bought far fewer tokens -- I think maybe just even a week's

supply. And we understand you give them a commission, you pay $1.15, I understand.

DR. HORNBECK: We subsidize.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And you make them available to the kids at 90 cents, we understand that.

But I would think that the school system would be out in front, demanding free transportation for kids. Why should any poor kid stay home from school? You talk about wanting to educate the kids. We're spending all this money and all of this energy, we got a new fresh School Board coming in full of vim and vigor, and hopefully are really going to change a lot of people's attitude.

But what I'm interested in is, why hasn't the School District been complaining about kids being unable to go to school?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we have sought, Councilman Cohen, repeatedly to make the observation that the $9 a week that it costs kids to have to pay to get to school, in fact, ends up forcing some families into a posture of having one kid go this week and another kid go to school the

next week, which is absolutely outrageous, in our mind. And we note almost every year that fact and, indeed, in some of the material you've got this morning in your book, it notes it again, and it's on that Fair Opportunities to Learn list.

The issue, as with so many others, is the issue of money, it's the issue of equity. And it's -- whether it's SEPTA paying for it or our paying for it, somebody's got to come up with the 15 million bucks to do it. And at least to this point, the State and others simply have not -- have not done that, and poor kids having to pay to get on a bus, being the only place in the entire State of Pennsylvania in which that's so.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Why don't you --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Cohen, please make this your last question because your time's up, and we'll have a second go-around.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Very good.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Madam Chair, I'm sorry, would the Councilman consider yielding on that point?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman

Cohen, Councilman Nutter is requesting for you to yield.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'd be happy to yield. I thought my time was up.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Your time is up.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILMAN COHEN: But I'll yield whatever time I have.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Councilman, I appreciate it.

Just on that particular point, it's in Tab 2, Page 4 of the book that we received. Mr. Superintendent, are you talking about the-- you have an item of transportation, free tokens. There's more -- who benefits, key features. And at the end of that chart is the $15 million figure SEPTA.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I don't know if my colleagues are prepared to go down this particular path, but that number seems to match up perfectly with the one-time grant that I think we've provided four times in a row to the School

District and whether the School District's given any consideration in terms of targeting that particular grant for this particular purpose to try to solve this particular problem.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we have not because to do that is the proverbial robbing Peter to pay Paul. We could not have as much kindergartners or we could not have as much books or we could not have as much computers or, you know, whatever.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, is the $15 million from the City targeted to anything in particular? In previous budget hearings --

DR. HORNBECK: No.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: In previous budget hearings, I've never gotten the particular impression that that 15 was targeted for anything in particular.

DR. HORNBECK: It's for current expenses. It's -- if we took it away from the Operating Budget, which is basically what it goes into, then the deficit, the gap, whatever you want to call it, that we've been talking about would just get $15 million bigger. So it's --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So you really want 15 more.

DR. HORNBECK: Well actually, we want 330 million more.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand that.

DR. HORNBECK: Or someplace between 174 and 330 million.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But for that particular item, it's a net new 15.

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, all right.

Councilman Cohen, thank you so much for that yield. I greatly appreciate it.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Superintendent Hornbeck, your comments about technology and wiring the schools for computers. I guess I have to ask this question. Have you developed a criteria of what is available to the students on the Internet? Is there unlimited access? What kind of oversight has been

given the installation of computers?

DR. HORNBECK: We have not issued the policy, but we have -- what do we call that policy? What's the policy called that we're developing to control access to the Internet and computers and. . .

(Superintendent Hornbeck confers with colleagues off the record.)

DR. HORNBECK: "Acceptable use," that's it, I knew it had a name.

We have a draft of an acceptable use policy that we have not yet issued that goes to that question of trying to govern, manage, monitor access.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, that's good to hear that that's on the drawing board. And it will be implemented how long?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, it shouldn't -- we ought, sometime in the next two to three months, we ought to -- it's a very complex thing, as you might guess, because on the one hand, you want to monitor it and you want to limit it, but on the other hand, you want to give the youngsters opportunity to use the Internet. And figuring out

exactly how to put those blocks in there on certain kinds of things is one of the challenges we face.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Reading one of your bullets, "Spending Tax Dollars Responsibly," I'm curious, have you tried to accomplish some joint efforts with the Administration? Example, the Procurement Department tells me that they could provide a service to the School District and do a lot of purchasing for you because they buy similar items that you purchase. I've been told that that's never been explored.

The area of Fleet Management, a joint effort in that area.

All of these areas that I just mentioned have -- what are you doing to try to streamline things, to join hands with parties like the Administration in City government that are basically doing the same things that you do, maintenance --

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we've done some of that. We've done some of it in collaboration, I think, for example, of the 117 places that the Rec. Department and we jointly provided

after-school programs.

It's my understanding that there are also some purchasing areas where we have purchased off of a City contract, and I think I'm right in saying that there have been some instances in which the City has purchased off of School District contract, because there are times when our price is better than the City's price.

So we are very open to doing that kind of collaboration where it ends up saving either one of us money in the process.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Another example is -- and I've said this before -- is the fact that the City is installing a new communications system, a mobile communications system, and I know that the School District spends a substantial amount of money each year for our communications system, and I believe that you rent. I don't believe that you own it, it's a rented system. This would be a perfect opportunity for you to join into this communications network and possibly be able to save a substantial amount of money.

So for things like that, sometimes I think people --

DR. HORNBECK: No, I think those are very be ideas. That's great.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And the Procurement Department -- I'm pleased to hear that maybe you're going back and forth and utilizing those opportunities.

Thank you very much.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Superintendent Hornbeck, we've got several -- we've received several calls from parent, particularly those parents of high-schoolers, and issues around the lack of a math teacher, algebra teacher, etc.

We all know that algebra is very important. It impacts a student's ability to do well on SATs, on your standardized tests and to perform well in college.

Can you tell us what the need is just

in regards to algebra or math and science teachers? And if there is a shortage, which I believe there is, is there going to be some type of mechanism in place to help these youngsters gain the competencies that they need to gain in math in order to go forward?

DR. HORNBECK: There is a shortage. And our thinking goes in three ways. One is to try to approach this in just a continuing, traditional way to increase recruiting. And it goes to the issue -- of vacancies like this will inform some of our conversations with the Federation, for example. They certainly will inform our need to achieve pay parity. So the normal straightforward way, we've doubled our recruitment staff in the last year in that way.

But we're also looking at some, I guess you'd characterize it as non-traditional ways, too. For example, we've been exploring with the Retired Teachers Association the -- we started by asking retired teachers -- they can work 95 days a week without affecting their retirement. So we said, Would any of you like to work halftime, which would be 95 days, to do this? And the

answer basically was, We're retired, we don't want to work 95 days.

And so we have gone back and said, What about one period a day? Because if you get down to an individual algebra class, you can take care of a problem with 30 kids just by one period a day.

And I don't know what the answer to that is, but we're coming at it in that way.

The second non-traditional way that we're looking at it is that I -- think it's the University of Kansas that actually has developed a full-fledged virtual high school; that is to say, developed an electronic way of teaching courses that lead to credits.

And so one of the things that we're looking at is the content standards -- are the content standards that are reflected in such courses in hard-to-fill positions to explore, at least on an interim basis, whether we can bridge this gap. And we're looking at places like this university-sponsored virtual high school because they've already gone through the accreditation process that has led to a determination that the

quality of what's going on in there is up to standards, as opposed to -- and they've put a fair amount of money into it and to the, you know, the TV settings and that kind of thing. So we're looking at every level that we can.

A third non-traditional way that the H.R. Department is looking at is going to some of the universities and colleges where they have graduate-level programs and exploring the possibility of bringing, for like one period a day again, a graduate student who is studying for his Ph.D., for example, in mathematics, into that kind of setting.

Those are not all that satisfactory. It's not the way we want to do that business, but the situation you described is forcing us to look at every possible avenue, and we would welcome from you, Councilwoman Miller, or other Members of Council any additional ideas of how we might meet that need.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yeah, because right now, the need is not being met. And I just wonder what's going to happen to these young people when June comes and they get a report card

and maybe they fail, maybe they don't fail, but they're going to move onto next grade and still just have that deficiency. And math is so important and, of course, so is science. But I know specifically most of our calls have been from parents whose children are not receiving adequate instruction.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I think you underlined something by referencing June. One of the reasons -- not one of the reasons, the reason that the Fair Opportunities to Learn, including issues of pay parity with teachers, are so important is that we -- the Board has increased the requirement for math and science, just in terms of the number of credits kids have to accumulate. They've also increased the rigor of the content inside of the credits.

And we simply can't say to kids, Well, you guys have got to jump over this bar that we've raised up, but we're not going to help you to do it. And so that's the reason that there is some emphasis on what we're referring to as "Fair Opportunities to Learn."

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I'd be

interested in being kept updated on where we are, particularly as it relates to math. I mean, kids in middle school -- math is important everywhere but, you know, maybe they time for the research with the university project to be completed, but the high-schoolers that are there now, trying to get out of high school and go on --

DR. HORNBECK: That's right.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- they're really in a big dilemma.

DR. HORNBECK: You're quite right.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: A really big dilemma.

My time is up.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Superintendent, I'd like to go back to what I left off with in the last go-round, which had to do with the state of the buildings and any plans for significant upgrades and improvements. Councilman Ortiz had raised the issue of the Perks-Ruder (ph.) study. This was from August of

1996, which laid out the age of the buildings, at least at the time, and the condition and the dollar amounts and the like.

Now, it's my understanding that of the estimated $765 million that Perks-Ruder estimated at that time to get the buildings up to a minimum standard, all of those dollars weren't necessarily capital dollars and that some were actually more in the line of maintenance; is that correct?

DR. HORNBECK: Correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What's the estimate on the actual capital dollars that are needed to get the buildings up to a minimum standard?

DR. HORNBECK: Between 350 and 400 million.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Now, you responded to a question earlier and I thought I took the figure down, but I'm not sure. What was last year's capital borrowing?

DR. HORNBECK: What I referred to was the average of 117 million per year in each of the last five years, but last year -- that was spent, yes.

Do you remember last year, Tom? It was

higher than that. We've grown from below 100 five years to about 150 last year, 1-5-0.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And is there a long-term plan to, in a relatively short period of time, get to the kind of numbers that we know are needed to get the buildings up to standard? We know that what you borrow generally takes care of more recent things, and as you fix things, other buildings get older. And, I mean, whatever you fix is generally broken somewhere else.

What's the long-term game plan?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we have, as we've moved from average $42 million up to this average $117 million, pretty well maxed out our ability to do two things. There are two things in combination that control this level. One is our ability to go to the market.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right, and that was going to be next question. What is your debt limit and what is our capacity that's used at this point?

(Superintendent Hornbeck confers with colleagues off the record.)

DR. HORNBECK: We have -- we have about

800 million left of capacity.

But the other piece is bringing these projects on line, and --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What's the problem with that?

DR. HORNBECK: Numbers of -- getting the design, the architecture, the whole nine yards done.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Is that a function of how many people you have doing the work?

DR. HORNBECK: Yeah. Being able to pay for it on the one hand and then just getting the work done. And as I say, we've tripled it.

But I think it's fair to say from the paying-for-it point of view that it's going to be very difficult unless or until the President's construction initiative, which they've repeatedly tried to do, the $8 billion nationwide thing and/or the change in State formula around construction were to take place, we would be very hard-pressed on our own here in Philadelphia to do what needs to be done.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Why is that?

DR. HORNBECK: 'Cause we don't have

enough money. I mean, it's mostly a money thing.

The other thing that I should share with you is that I truly believe, although we haven't -- in the last year or so, we've been sending people to places where they've been doing it and we're doing the initial planning, and I personally think we're going to have to go there, but it's going to be a heck of a culture change for people to go to year-round school, which is, as you know, if you do a certain approach to it, each kid would go to the same amount of school that he goes to now, but you would, in effect, increase your capacity by a third by extending --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Sure.

DR. HORNBECK: And I think it is inevitable that we have to do that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Let me for a second, though, go back to the borrowing issue and the work issue, and this is not a comparison on performance of two different school systems, but a comparison by way of activity. And from some research in the past and a package that I've been waiting for that literally just came in about an hour ago, in the city of Chicago over the last

four years, they embarked on a capital improvement program that has resulted in $2 billion in construction activity in the Chicago schools. We're, I think, a little less than about a half the size of Chicago. I think they have 491,000 students, we have 213?

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: They have 630 buildings, we have 259?

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The result of which has been 10 new schools, 23 additions, 309 new roofs, and 1,000 other renovation projects, and they've borrowed these dollars either on the school district by itself, some in conjunction with the city of Chicago and the school district, and taking advantage of some alternative financing opportunities as well developed by their financial as advisors in Chicago. And I'd be glad to share any of that information, if the District doesn't already have it.

Who is the financial adviser for the School District?

DR. HORNBECK: The financial advisor?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mm-hmm.

DR. HORNBECK: Rod Johnson, Fairmont Capital.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. And do they work with the District on alternative financing proposals --

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- for capital improvements?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. And is there a plan in place?

DR. HORNBECK: And have been for ten years or maybe even more.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. But this is n what you've normally done, the normal borrowings?

DR. HORNBECK: Both capital and other borrowing, and they've helped us triple the amount that we've done in the last five years, but I would be delighted to see what Chicago has done.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yeah, as I said, this just came in about an hour or so again.

DR. HORNBECK: That would be great.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I had been in touch with them and --

DR. HORNBECK: I don't -- I know that their state, when they changed the law, did give them a fair amount of extra money in the process, and maybe there's something in that book that tells us how to get that done, but in any event, I'd love to see the book.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The wonders of books.

And what did you say your percentage of debt capacity is used at this point?

DR. HORNBECK: Percent used? We were talking about unused, which is 800 million. The percent of debt capacity is not an issue, if I understand it correctly. I'm told that is not the issue.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: It's always good to be able to go into unlimited debt.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I'm not sure about that.

DR. HORNBECK: But I think as a legal matter, that's true, but I think as a practical

matter, I think it's a little bit different.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yeah. It's the story of our life.

MR. RAMOS: We may have the credit line, Councilman, but I don't know that we have the cash to pay off the credit card.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand. I've been in that situation, too.

Lastly in this particular area, is there a detailed analysis specific to the various recreation facilities that the District owns and operates -- football fields, baseball fields, if we have any soccer, basketball?

DR. HORNBECK: Is that broken out independently?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Track?

DR. HORNBECK: We can certainly put that together. I mean, we know what we have. Whether there's a thing labeled "baseball fields" or not, we can put that together for you.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And an assessment of present status or condition -- good, fair, poor, or decrepit.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, some of that would

have shown up even in Perks-Ruder, I think, and we've been attending to some of those things too as we've gone along, as we are attempting to, as you know, in creative ways at Roxborough.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But some of our facilities are also related to recreation and not good shape as well.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Lastly, Madam Chair, in that regard, I'm sure some of the discussion over the past few months has not necessarily escaped you. I know you try to primarily stay focused on education, but with regard to facilities and who has what facilities and what the condition of what those facilities are, and Councilman Ortiz asked some questions in that particular area.

But as an educator, I would have to ask you, in this particular debate, is it more important to have world-class school facilities versus world-class sports facilities?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, in my view in terms of the fundamental health of a city, there is nothing more important than all of the

necessary elements of public education. If you have a good, solid, quality public education system that has the characteristics that Councilwoman Miller framed a little while ago, whether it's books or facilities or otherwise, all the other things in the city -- issues of violence, issues of jobs, and the whole nine yards, I think, by and large, will take care of themselves.

And if you don't have a quality public education system, including facilities, then you will end up with a soft underbelly that will finally do you in.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Thank you.

I'll come back, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to direct these questions to Secretary Kahn. Superintendent Hornbeck and I have had this conversation a number of times, probably more than either of us would like to have, but I want to see if I can get some new

views from, I guess, the freshest face at the table and the person most responsible, I would assume, for the line of questioning I'm moving towards.

On Page 19 through 21, "Realities Converge, Meeting Major Goals," there's a number of things, many of which I would agree with, regarding some of the improvements to the school system. The one thing that's noticeably lacking is our relationship with Harrisburg. And I know that's going to be one of your, or should be one of your major, major efforts. On Page 10, which is Chart 2-C, there is a graph that depicts the gap in per-pupil expenditures in Philadelphia, with a suburban average, then highlighting Jenkintown, Lower Merion, or Radnor. Believe it or not, I won't even argue with the number presented in the gap, I think the gap exists.

My question, I guess, is, what do you think creates the gap? And how do people in Lower Merion, Radnor, or Jenkintown provide the extra revenue necessary to get themselves and their students above $6969 per year? I mean, where does the extra money come from in those communities?

MS. KAHN: I think that's two questions, and I'm not going to tell you that I'm an expert on municipal finance, you know, or in those areas.

But we do have -- and there's other charts in this document that look at Philadelphia's tax burden and the comparison between Philadelphia and the other areas, and I think, you know, that accounts for a portion of it.

The other very important thing, which I know that you know about Philadelphia, is that we share the county burden in addition to the municipal burden.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Correct. But I guess my question to you is, do you believe that the gap in those suburban communities comes directly from the difference in real-estate taxes that are paid in communities like Radnor and Lower Merion as compared to real-estate tax levels in Philadelphia?

If you're funding -- my point is that if you're funding -- if the basis of your funding of the schools is support from Harrisburg and the

real-estate tax portion of each community's contribution to the system, I would think -- and I may be wrong -- that the larger numbers of real-estate taxes paid in those communities is what directly affects the real gap between Philadelphia per-pupil spending in those communities.

MS. KAHN: It also has to do with increasing property values, I think, as well.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But what I'm saying is --

MS. KAHN: I have honestly not personally looked at what goes into each of these and looked at the varying contributions from the varying tax sources.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Harrisburg -- people in Harrisburg claim -- some people in Harrisburg, the Governor, the Secretary of Education claim that Philadelphia receives about 60 percent of its budget from Harrisburg. Is that a number that disputed or a number that we all agree with?

MS. KAHN: It's approximately, okay.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How then and what

strategy do we employ to convince those legislators -- not only just the Governor, but those legislators who live in the surrounding suburban counties and in other areas of the State and those Senators that, in fact, there exists an inequity that they need to resolve, that they need to fix?

MS. KAHN: Well, I think the first response to that is, not everything can be captured in one statistic or, you know, on a chart. And so I think that the dialogue that we have been having to some extent and that we will continue to have and that we will broaden is going to be necessary.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The dialogue with whom?

MS. KAHN: With the various -- whether it's members of the Governor's administration and members of the legislature.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have there been meetings with leadership in the legislature and the Senate over this issue of school funding?

MS. KAHN: There have been some conversations, but they will now pick up steam, no

question. I mean, we had to do some homework ourselves in order to -- and I certainly personally needed to do that, and to identify certain specific maybe funding sources and to identify principal needs in the system that we think that we can go to them with.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I think just a year ago, and maybe longer, but I think it was about a year ago, State Representative John Perzel sat where you're sitting and was asked a question as to whether or not the School District of Philadelphia should expect large amounts of additional funding over the next year or two years. And I think his answer -- and I'm paraphrasing -- was, "Not a chance." I think Councilman Ortiz asked the question. I believe it was "not a chance," so to speak or whatever terms he used.

If we have to convince 76 legislators from outside of Philadelphia, if you look at the 102 votes needed to pass any budget bill or any bill in Harrisburg, if we need 76 votes from outside of Philadelphia, and we haven't been able to convince the Majority Leader of the House that

we need additional dollars, we have our work cut out for us. And why isn't that one of the goals we've been working on?

And, again, I'm asking you this at your disadvantage 'cause you just got here, but why isn't this something we've been working on over the last numbers of years? I mean, shouldn't we have made more progress to date?

MS. KAHN: Well, whether it's been worked on and whether there's progress that's been are two different things. And I don't know whether Mr. Perzel would say the same thing right now sitting here or not.

But I think that there have been some changes in the environment. I mentioned in my testimony that this is not just a Philadelphia problem. Needless to say, our numbers are larger simply because of who we are, but the fact that it is increasingly being recognized as a statewide issue, you have communities across the State, there are now at least two pieces of legislation that have been introduced in the legislature that each have bipartisan support that would, in fact, raise the State's share of funding for schools,

and to some extent, give the ability to change the way in which schools are funded.

So the environment, I believe, is changing.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What are we doing, or what have you done differently in -- directly differently or specifically differently in dealing with these legislative leaders and people from outside of Philadelphia?

MS. KAHN: Well, first of all, I think, number one, that -- and again, not just me personally, but that the position exists that the Mayor's Office and this administration intend to be personally involved in that and in this team approach. I, for example, one of the things that I have done is, I coordinated, I guess it was last week, had a meeting in my office of the various representatives of various State associations that have been involved in the school funding issue over a number of years, to try to get an update. We intend to find out what the schedule, the hearing schedule is on some of these bills and to go and testify, and to do that in a way that's, again, not just Philadelphia, but to do that in

partnership.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have we made a formal and specific request for additional dollars from Harrisburg? Have we told them exactly what it is we want?

MS. KAHN: Not yet.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: In any formal way?

MS. KAHN: Not yet, but it's coming.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When will we?

MS. KAHN: I think shortly.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. And what happens if we don't get what we're asking for? What happens in September?

MS. KAHN: That's one of the questions on the table. As the Board President identified, it is our objective to be able to maintain and certainly keep schools open and operating. And that's what we're going to try to do.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay, I'd like to come back. Thank you.

Is my time up?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, it is.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Your

questioning's so interesting that I didn't want to interrupt you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Hornbeck, on the information that we received Friday, I see that there's to be an assignment of a facilitator for each school. How does that position differ from the position of a principal or a vice principal?

DR. HORNBECK: The hope downstream for an instructional leader, a coach of that kind in each school, would be an individual that is devoted exclusively to improving instruction in the school. And the duties of the principal and the vice principal are far, far broader than that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have facilitators in any of the schools presently? If so, how many?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, originally, the Children Achieving Action Design called for one in each school, but we've not had the money to do that. And as a consequence, we have an average about three in each cluster now. And that's made a major contribution to this dramatic improvement

and achievement.

But evidence from around the United States where there have been facilitators located in the school tell us that we can get even more powerful results if we're able to do that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I know there was a great furor about three years ago about children not having school books. Today, can we say that the children have ample books that they need?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we can say two things. We can say that there is no financial reason that children should not have school books. As you can see from another chart in the book we gave you, we've grown during these years we have been having this discussion from an expenditure level of, if my memory serves me right, $9 million, when I first came here, to in excess of $23 million now. Again, that ability is arising out of grants we've received and administrative savings that we've been able to take.

So the issue now is not so much the money; it's getting people to use it correctly and

to break a culture that has been decades in the making. And we've been doing lots of thing things to that end, including a survey that we have recently done and which is being compiled now and which we can make available to Council within the next week or two, of the parents throughout the City. We decided that in addition to the surveys we had been making of administrators and others of teachers, that we were getting to reach out to parents and say, How much do you know about what books and other instructional materials your children ought to have? And do your children bring the books home, do they have enough, do they have homework each night? etc., etc.

And we have returns of that from about 25,000 parents across the City representing something in excess of 30,000 children, and something in excess of -- I don't remember the numbers for sure 'cause we haven't gotten it all together yet, but something in excess of 75 percent of the cases, parents attest to knowing what the kids are supposed to have, and that it's their belief that they have it, and that, in fact, homework is being assigned and so on.

Further analysis will begin to -- will begin to identify some of the deeper reasons behind both the good and the bad. I mean, it's good that 75, 80 percent do, but that still means that 20 or 25 percent either don't know and/or believe that their children don't have what they need. And we need to get behind that, even though we've made lots of progress.

MR. RAMOS: Madam President, there are probably a couple of other noteworthy developments. One is recent Board policy enabling schools to hold parents and student accountable for the book supplies and materials that they receive.

And the other is that this board, although only a business day old, at the installation of the Board, committed to visiting schools in some systemic way. And I would ask Board members as we visit schools that one of the things on our checklist be to take the next step of doing our own book checks, just as we've asked parents, we're holding parent and teachers accountable, we've provided the money, and I think it's important now that all of those supports are

out there that eventually we turn up the heat a little bit when those books are either not being provided in the classroom or being provided and students are not being allowed to take books home.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to get back to the CEP Program and -- well, really not the CEP, the Providing Fair Opportunities for Learning Program, where it's included and the whole issue -- Councilwoman Brown spoke about it too -- about students who are well behaved but not good achievers. How do these students really not end up in the CEP Program? I know that you said they would be well screened, but what's being done to acquaint parents with the requirements for promotion and graduation.

And also, why aren't we doing more publicity on that, especially if we want to open a school or schools like this in September?

And the third part of that is -- I'm

doing three parts so I can get something in.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Are teachers preparing students for the new requirements?

DR. HORNBECK: These -- there have been massive mailings and publications to parents, including the really wonderful calendar that you may have seen, that got sent home to every parent this last year, the first time we had done that, and we sent them calendars before, but these are things that frequently get put up in homes, and we included the various standards that kids are supposed to meet in that for the first time. But there have been repeated efforts to outreach on the graduation promotion front.

Many of those Fair Opportunities to -- all of those Fair Opportunities to Learn are directed toward giving kids the kinds of supports -- giving teachers the kinds of supports that they need to equip the kids to graduate and be promoted. And very, very -- just a small fraction of it, in fact, goes to the kind of disruptive child, the CEP-eligible child, if you will.

More importantly, for example, is the

fact that last month, every elementary school identified those 4th-graders that they thought were in danger of not being promoted this summer, which is the first class that is facing the elimination of social promotion. And the reason they identified them last month is that they are focussing increased attention on them between now and June, in an effort to try to avoid their failing. We want them to succeed, not fail.

But then, in that Fair Opportunities to Learn list, looking to next year, are three different things that respond to those youngsters.

One is the reference to summer programs in there, and so they would be available to those kids who are judged to only need a little bit to be up to speed by September, and they can go ahead and be passed.

The second thing that's in there, it's called "Transition Programs" in the little piece of paper that you have there. And that's a -- that's a new initiative that would place youngsters who are facing really serious academic deficiency problems of the kind that the two of you have been referring to, never mind disruptive

kids, just kids who can't read well or do math or science.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right, exactly.

DR. HORNBECK: And what we would do there is, they would begin their 2000-2001 school year not in September but in July, and they would be assigned to the teacher that is going to be their teacher for the whole year in July, and that teacher would only have, on average, 15 to 18 kids. So we would be offering them something radically different in response to their academic needs than has previously been the case.

Then the third thing that is in that same list that speaks to this issue is what is referred to as "an extended time program," and that's sort of our educational jargon for giving kids like extra tutoring help. And what we have estimated is that because of the higher standards, because of the more rigorous graduation and promotion requirements, that about 30 percent of our children will, in fact, need that kind of extra assistance that may come during the daytime, but it also may come before school and after

school. And, as you all may know because you're so deeply involved in the community, it's even already beginning to mean Saturday classes, in some instances.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So we're talking, then before, in the summer, possibly before and after school and weekends for children? And during the school year, a smaller class as opposed to other kids who are on up to --

DR. HORNBECK: Correct, and year-round. An 11-month school year and smaller classes, that's correct, for those youngsters that are most challenged academically.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam President, I want you to know that I only got one question in, a three-part question.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, please proceed.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank goodness I asked it a three-part question in one or I wouldn't have gotten one in.

Okay, I'll wait for the next go-round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No, please proceed.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, thank you very much.

Where are we on the school bus attendants? Even for -- I know this is an ongoing issue and I know that I've talked with you twice personally on it, but it seems to me, in some areas especially we have had problems, in schools where we have had problems, that we really, really do need to revisit the issue.

DR. HORNBECK: Two things. The Board just authorized last meeting or the meeting before that, at a recent meeting anyhow, the installation of 200 more cameras in buses -- real ones, not the black boxes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: And, secondly, we are presently looking at the issue not of putting in any sense bus attendants back on all of the buses, but recognizing that at any given moment, there are only six or eight routes that are serious problems, of looking at the possibility of having a, I guess, an itinerant bus attendant, a group of individuals who, under certain circumstances, can, for an indefinite period of time, be put on buses

in those small number of cases where they might be necessary.

That would, if we are able to do that, permit us to continue to secure the very substantial savings that have resulted from not having bus attendants on every bus but still maintaining a focus of attention in the handful of areas where there is a problem.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: In terms of having a person there?

DR. HORNBECK: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's great.

As you know, we had hearings, I guess before you were here, though, in the early '90s on Ritalin and on behavior-altering drugs before the issue was discussed as widely as it is across the country. And I believe that part of this program is to have nurses in every school, which is very, very important.

Will there be some special training or focus or training on these behavior-altering drugs? They're a real, real issue. And as you know, when children reach middle years, middle school age, a lot of times the drugs have to be

changed or altered or they could flip and do just the opposite, make kids more hyper. It's a really, really important issue and one that even the CEP Program doesn't address.

Is there any special programs with the nurses or anywhere in the District to deal with this serious issue of behavior-altering drugs?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we've tried, in part, in consultation with your own interest in this over the years to increasingly emphasize how important it is that we not make the determinations about the administration of drugs and dosage, but that we really look to the child's own physician, or wherever it is he's getting medical assistance, for that, and that that includes our not going to the physician and saying, Please prescribe drugs for this child. That that ought to be a medically-derived judgment that is good for some kids and not good for other kids.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yeah. A report -- it's 100 percent better than it was than when the issue was first brought up by this Council. I believe that we still need a focus. I

agree that we've done much better in terms of who prescribes it and that a kid has to go to a doctor or to a health center.

But we still need a real, real review of what happens in schools and how kids behave and how that fits into education. Because still, where I've met with grandparents who've said they don't want their children to take them, and then, of course, the School District says, I can't help you and that's your problem. So we still have problems in that area, and I would hope that we could focus again on behavior-altering drugs.

Auditors. I understand that the Board has considered to fund auditors again. Where are we on that? Internal auditors, where are we on that issue?

DR. HORNBECK: One of the things that the Board has decided -- in one sense, it was the old board, but it was the Board President, and I think that it makes eminent good sense to have an audit committee that reports directly to the Board. As any well-run institution in the private or the public sector, that's an important thing to have. And as soon as the Board gets organized and

so on, that's going to be put into place.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. I see that and I'm glad to have this board now dealing with the issue of books. Will we be able to get an update before we get past the budget on just what the plan is to deal with books in the School District?

DR. HORNBECK: We can give you an update that includes most notably these two new things that Mr. Ramos and I have each mentioned. One is the new policy that the Bored adopted about student responsibility for taking care of books and the responsibility for -- the financial responsibility for them.

And, secondly, we will get you a copy shortly of this survey to which I referred.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Great, great.

Two last questions. Academies. She said I could have one. High school academies are really exciting programs. I've learned that in my area, West Philadelphia High School has won national awards for their aviation and the automotive program and are on line to do another.

Do students know -- do we advertise

them well when they get ready to enter high school and do parents know that they exist? Because I think that these are very, very exciting programs, especially -- and also do a great job since they reduce -- reportedly, they reduce the dropout rate by a third of those students who would have been considered dropouts.

DR. HORNBECK: Yeah. One of our proudest accomplishments is our School-To-Career Program, of which the academies play a role for about 5,000 of our kids, and then there are another 12 or 15,000 youngsters in school-to career programs that are literally the national model in the United States.

And what we find is that youngsters that are in these programs, both the academy ones and the non-academy ones, do attend at a higher rate, graduate at a higher rate, make higher grades. And one of the wonderful examples is the Automotive Academy out at West Philadelphia. I was just reading another thing about it this morning. It's been featured recently in a national magazine called Techniques, because as you probably know, they literally built an

electric car last year. And if you haven't ridden around in their electric car, you haven't lived.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, we want to honor them in Council. I'm waiting for details.

DR. HORNBECK: It's really quite a wonderful thing, and they are hoping this year to build another one, and there's apparently an electric car competition nationally, where they race these cars that they want to be able to do that.

But, no, there are some -- there are outstanding programs of that kind. And the U.S. Department of Labor routinely sees to it that we get at least our fair share of the funding because they know that what he we do under the leadership of Mary Jane Clancy and Cassandra Johns is the best there is in the country.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: If the School District, Mr. Hornbeck, will publish the SAT-9 scores in the newspapers, could we not also publish the requirements for promotional graduation, do a big thing as we do the SAT-9 scores?

DR. HORNBECK: I think that might be a really good idea. We've put it out there a whole bunch of different ways, but maybe having some kind of -- maybe we could get the Inquirer and the Daily News and the Trib to do a special insert or something that would not only address the requirements but would also address these supports that we need to help kids meet the requirements.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely. And my last comment, Madam Chairwoman, is regarding the language program. I understand that -- we talk about the ESAU (ph.) programs and also native English speakers learning foreign language both ways, but I've been advised that the 20-minute experiences 3 times a week just won't do it, won't make a big difference. If maybe we could make maybe 45 minutes or in some way change the time another way for -- use the same amount of time and break it up in a different manner, it might make a difference. But the way it is now, it just won't make a real, real difference in learning a foreign language.

DR. HORNBECK: That's an important observation. And you are clearly right when you

get to secondary school. And twenty minutes a day is --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: For three days a week won't --

DR. HORNBECK: We might just as well not do it.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: At the elementary school, as this program, as directed, this pilot program --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

DR. HORNBECK: -- there is some evidence that those introductory opportunities for kids back in the early grades do begin to set a good stage. But unless we follow it up with 3-, 4-, 5-day a week, 45 minutes, then it won't go where it needs to go.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Sure. Even in charter schools where I've seeing that they start out with the youngsters learning a second language, they really focus on it. And even if you focus on it longer periods or a shorter period more often, they're like sponges at a young age when it's -- everything's harder when you get

older.

DR. HORNBECK: That's true.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But I think we could make a big difference if we want our kids to learn a second language if we do a little more focus on it. So I hope you will consider that.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

Councilwoman Brown?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Back on the issue of textbooks. Your answer to the question that there should be no financial reason for children not to have school books would suggest that principals have a responsibility and a stake in this as well. So is there a policy in place where not only students, rightfully so, and parents, rightfully so, should have some accountability? What exists for principals to do the right thing and make sure books get in these kids' hands?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, it has increasingly emerged as one of those things that between cluster leaders and principals and between

us and cluster leaders is a focus. And it involves not only the purchase of books, but the issue around the policy of being able to take books home.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: One of the strongest cultural barriers that we have faced is that because there was such a long period of time where there was not enough money, the culture in the schools grew to the point where kids didn't get to take their books home because the teachers were afraid that they wouldn't bring the books back 'cause they would lose them.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: And then there would be no way to replace them and so, therefore, they sorted of hoarded them. And now the reason for that no longer exists, but it's tough to break people out of that process. And principals have to take a strong role in helping their faculty break out of that historic sort of position.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Transportation, SEPTA. You should be aware that a number of questions were raised around SEPTA's role in

moving towards a solution regarding tokens. And a discovery we learned was something called "PennPass," so we've made it clear to SEPTA that we expect the stakeholders to come to the table and stop talking about it and move into some alternative where we answer the question and who pays for it, and we're looking to the Chair of Transportation, W. Wilson Goode, who has it on his itinerary to pull those stakeholders together to that we can do something different next year.

DR. HORNBECK: We will participate in that enthusiastically, and there are not only those of us who are sort of agencies and have official responsibility, but one of those creative thinkers in all of this is Ms. Yanoff, who's sitting back here too, and she has persistently put, I think, really creative thoughts in front of us for how we can approach this.

And I just have to believe that there is a way in which we can arrive at a point where Philadelphia's children are not the only children in this state that have to pay to go to school.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

Lead in drinking water. I got a lot of

discoveries during the Budget hearings of other City departments, and one revealed by the Health Department and the Water Department is that lead continues to exist in the drinking water of some of the school buildings.

Could you speak to that and what strategy might be in place to address that?

DR. HORNBECK: I can. There's actually quite an elaborate strategy in place.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: And it's my hope, and I think my conviction, that there is not a danger at this point because of the steps that we've taken.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: The Health Department and we have entered into an agreement three months ago, I think, in which -- and we've been working with the EPA on this too -- in which every morning, all 289 facilities that are in use, schools plus administrative facilities, all of those facilities used by the School District, every single one of them that has -- that was built before 1991, the pipes are flushed every morning through a process that -- where you begin

on the top floor and you turn the water on and you go all the way to the bottom floor, and by the time you get there, it will have been at least 30 minutes in small schools and, frankly, in some of the larger schools, as much as three hours. And then you go back and you start turning them all off, and by that time, you've flushed out the lead that has been contained.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: Now, about two weeks ago or three weeks ago, we began a sampling process of every school built before 1991. The reason for the 1991 is that after 1991, the kinds of pipes and so on that are put in schools, it's not a problem.

And the sampling will result in either a determination, we hope, in most instances, that there's not a problem. Or it will result in the identification of the problem, and then we would take the remedial steps that are necessary to correct the problem. And we are doing this under the monitoring oversight of the Health Department, so that we're going forward --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So something is in

place.

DR. HORNBECK: -- together.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Excellent. A couple more questions on school violence and school safety. Another positive discovery that the Human Relations Commission currently has a model pilot initiative in place in South Philadelphia around this notion of conflict resolution and that type of thing, and I've already registered that I think we need to look at how and if we can do that in an incremental way, from grades K through 12, if we want to dramatically change how young people think they ought to solve problems. So the relationship with the Human Relations Commission, the extent of that and other City departments, that can help the School District do its job.

DR. HORNBECK: This is a very important arena. And, in fact, we have conflict resolution programs in 60 of our schools in what are referred to as "peer mediation programs," which are a form of conflict resolution in about 60 of the schools. And one of the things that I want to take a look at is whether there are embedded in

our health curricula standards a provision for issues that relate to issues of disruption and violence. And I say "health" because we consider violence a health issue.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: But we've been -- we've been quite aggressive about putting in place the conflict resolution and peer mediation programs because we know that they work.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that becomes an internal mechanism that has a benefit. Externally, we discovered that the Managing Director's Office has Town Watch programs, and I know personally that there schools trying to pull together safe corridor programs, so there's an opportunity to bring those two worlds together so that we can maximize safe corridors around our schools.

DR. HORNBECK: I think that's a great suggestion. We now have safe corridor programs in 69 of our schools.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: And I think the notion of at least asking the question around the Town

Watch might permit us to expand that significantly.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I would hope we can do that, be it in a different place, 69-plus a year from now.

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Finally --

COUNCIL MILLER: Excuse me, Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's my last question and then I'll be completely done -- I think.

Arts and music in the schools. There's a tremendous amount of research that shows to the extent that young people are involved in arts programs, they're less disruptive, they do better in math and SAT scores, and we know that financial resources limit the extra riches that you can provide the young people.

I'm curious to know to know -- and if not now, later, by way of a summary report -- to what extent do we have arts in our schools? To what extent are we linking up with arts and cultural institutions who have the experts who

live and breathe that, that can bring those kinds of skills in our schools so that we can respond to what research says already, that young people do better to the extent that we have those kinds of things in our school?

DR. HORNBECK: We will put together a little report for you on that. Philadelphia has a very long and rich tradition of art and music programs in the schools. I don't remember the exact number right now, but there are, for example, in the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra today, a sizeable number of the musicians were graduates of Philadelphia's public schools, just by way of illustration.

We have not been able to expand music and art programs in the last years due to the financial constraints, but it was in some ways, the art-music programs that led the Mayor and the Board and me, three or four years ago, to this so-called line-in-the-sand position, that we weren't going to cut anymore programs because every spring, for some number of years before that, among the first things on the cutting board were instrumental music teachers and art teachers,

and we realized that we just couldn't continue that practice if we were going to have any pretense of being a good school district.

What we need to do at some point is to be able not to just hang on to what we've got but to expand those opportunities for all the reasons that you suggest.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The only thing I would add to that in terms of thinking outside the box is, recognizing the limitations the School District has and the priorities you have on how you spend your money, thinking outside the box might mean going to the University of the Arts and having young people who are about to graduate tie in, link up with schools in the Philadelphia school system, and we still achieved a goal -- just differently.

DR. HORNBECK: No, that's very good. And in this little report we'll give, we'll give you at least examples of that going on across the City in a whole variety of ways. The one that leaps to my mind at the moment, for example, is a very extensive program that's a partnership between the School District and the Settlement

Music School and the Philadelphia Orchestra, in which members of the Orchestra, in a structured, supervised kind of way, are going, I think, into 50 or 60 schools just this year, to give opportunities of learning to the kids in our schools.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so if that's working, the ultimate goal is all of schools throughout the system.

DR. HORNBECK: Absolutely, that's right. And the arts community is rich in -- I don't mean in money.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

DR. HORNBECK: They would say that they're not rich at all, but there is a depth of talent there that we have a lot of partnerships with, and we will share some of that with you as well.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

3/6/00 - OPERATING BUDGET CONT'D - SCHOOLS

Councilman Ortiz?

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

To set the record straight, Mr. Superintendent, Councilman Kenney said that we get 60 percent of the budget from the State, sort of the implication being that the State is already doing enough of its part or what it should do. The other part of that is that if we also comprise 44 percent of all the kids and children who live under poverty. Is that true?

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And what type of problem does that create for our educational system?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, the challenges educationally that arise from a child living in poverty are very significant. It means, way back at the beginning, that in the absence of books, for example, in the home, there's less reading done to the child, which we know is one of the things that starts a child out on the right path. There is significantly less opportunity for pre-kindergarten programs. And then the

challenges that arise out of health and social service challenges are really great, as they go through.

So poverty -- poverty is -- has been demonstrated over and over and over and over again to be the single greatest factor in -- that correlates with a child's academic achievement or his lack of achievement. So we have a great leap there.

And that's true, even with individual kids. Where you have concentrations of poverty, the impact is even greater. And that, of course, is something that we faced here, with 80 percent of our kids eligible for a reduced-price lunch.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: So when you have poverty, doesn't that mean that pre-kindergarten and preschool education is not as widely given to this population as students in other counties across the State?

DR. HORNBECK: The only people any longer that I know at all who don't give their kids an opportunity, by the time they're 3 or 4 years old, to some sort of organized early childhood experience are people who don't have the

money to do so.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And doesn't this fact lead to the effect, as a matter of fact, that in some of the youngsters in our city, this lack of monies to provide this type of education leads to some of the clusters having at the 1st grade level a 50 percent left-back rate among those students?

DR. HORNBECK: I don't know that there's any cluster that has that high, but there are certainly schools that have significantly high numbers of kids who have failed the 1st grade. And what that by and large means is that they came to school in the first place, which is the point you're making, without the kind of head start that kids in more affluent communities take for granted.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And if you have a higher number in population of students who are being left back in 1st grade, doesn't that then increase the problem later on and increase also the cost of making up for that -- for those things that have occurred?

DR. HORNBECK: There's actually

research even on that last point that tells us that for every dollar we spend on 3- and 4-year-old pre-kindergarten programs, we will save $7 in later years because the incidence of special education and criminal arrest rates and dropouts and subsequent failure, where you have to do it all over to them one more time, are avoided.

So it is a very cost-effective way. It is the single best spent dollar probably, the dollar on a 3 or 4-year-old child, particularly kids who are poor.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It would be very helpful to us here in terms of really putting a strategy together as we go along to know, one, by area and clusters whether kids in the barrio, for example, the Edison, Olney and Kensington cluster, are getting left back at the 1st grade level in greater proportion and also in Southwest Philadelphia, so that we get a clear picture of where it is that money is needed.

Because after all, it all comes down to being able to get money in order to get resources. I mean, we -- doesn't it come down to that? Because we're always talking about that we have to

do with less, that we have to do with not enough. And my child -- and she goes to a very good school -- has a traveling music teacher, and I believe that that should not be, that we should have art and music programs within the school, not that we have an itinerant troubadour come by every once in a while and teach our children.

But the cause and effect, I believe, in terms of the money that is needed I think is best exemplified is shown by those early-grade (unintelligible), and I'd like to see the numbers.

DR. HORNBECK: We'll be glad to, by cluster, aggregate numbers that show, for example, failures from the 1st grade.

One of things, though, that goes back to your original observation, that people need to understand about the Philadelphia School District is, however, that there are low-income schools, there are lower-income schools, and there are lowest-income schools. There are no wealthy schools.

I was struck last year to discover that, at least at that time, the Greenberg School, if you used the criterion of eligibility for free

and reduced-price lunch, was the, quote, richest school in Philadelphia, and it had 41 percent of its kids eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

So I would hate for us somewhere along the line in one sense to cannibalize each other when there is desperate need in every part of this city, and there ought not to be a single 3- or 4-year-old in this city who doesn't have the opportunity of that kind of a head start.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I asked a question of State Representative Perzel at that point, and Councilman Kenney actually gave the right answer. He said "no chance," but State Representative Perzel is also the person who voted against the bill to give us the ability to out the abandoned cars from our neighborhoods. So we have to see.

I just want to -- because as the City of Philadelphia goes and whether we're going to be a world-class city, as everyone keeps on talking about, it will depend very much so on what type of commitment that we give to the public schools and what type of money we're willing to spend. It really comes down to that at the end, doesn't it?

DR. HORNBECK: Resources and how you spend the resources you have are critical. The fact that we have virtually the highest achievement improvement rate of any big city in the country suggests to me that we've demonstrated that we know how you to spend the resources. What we don't have are sufficient resources in some of these critical areas that each of the Councilpersons have spoken to today.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Hornbeck, I'm going to ask like three or four questions 'cause you take up all my time with the answers, so. . .

(Laughter.)

DR. HORNBECK: This is one of those one question, four parts.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Actually, one questions around school safety. We had a call --

or actually, a reporter asked me Friday or Thursday if we knew that teachers were required to go through the monitors, that teachers at that particular school and other school personnel. She said she had gotten several calls from teachers, I think, at George Washington High that said that they are having to go through the monitors. That's number one.

The textbooks, the purchase of, when you divide the 23 million out amongst the schools, who makes the decision? I think we've talked before, I think it's the principal, the School Council and whatnot. But we have had teachers talk about the fact that they have not been able to buy workbooks -- not the textbooks -- particularly in the elementary grades.

And also the paper, the condition of the copier, and all of those things that are needed, you know, at that level -- well, at all levels.

The other thing I'd like to know is if you would examine, if your School Board would examine the opportunity for children that are in the desegregation programs that are going out of

their neighborhoods to schools, who then cannot participate in after-school programs at their local neighborhood schools. Children -- you know, every high school and every middle school and, I guess, every elementary school too does not have a sports team, so children, particularly those that don't go to the neighborhood school, and again, they're going outside and participating in a deseg. program or whatnot, and then they cannot participate in the sports and athletic programs.

And these are all things that we -- what we've heard all week, what we've heard all year is getting more money for after-school care because there's a whole group of children that don't even qualify to go to after-school programs that the School District has.

DR. HORNBECK: With respect to metal detectors, the Board's policy is that everybody who comes in -- kids, visitors, teachers, principal, everybody -- goes through the metal detector. So what is being reported to you is accurate. And the reasoning behind that is that, frankly, if kids see adults wandering through, they correctly perceive that as unfair. And so

the way to address that question of fairness is to include everybody.

Secondly, on the textbooks, there is an allocation that is made to the school, and then inside the school, the principal is in consultation with his faculty, the decision-maker. And different schools will approach that -- I mean, the character of the consultation will be different in different places, but the principal is really, in the end, the responsible person there.

I would worry, frankly, about -- I have to say it because you mentioned it -- too much emphasis on workbooks, 'cause workbooks are a pretty lousy way to -- they're not a very good part of an instructional program, let me put it this way. And, unfortunately, one of the problems we continue to face in too many instances is reliance on workbooks because it's too easy. You just tear the sheet out, and you don't -- kids don't have to work at it and the teacher doesn't have to work at it. But in any event, that's a kind of editorial on the side about good instruction. But the principal is the moving

party.

Now, the underlying things like copiers and so on is just the issue of money. And it is true that there are places with respect to some of the office equipment, machinery where there's not enough, and that's true.

The after-school thing is a real dilemma. What, in my judgment, would be ideal is if we had enough money, what ought to happen is that the children ought to be able to participate in an after-school program in the school that they go to. There aren't very many, you know, Northeast High School students who want to play on the Bartram High School basketball team. I mean, it just --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: There are -- you know, in some of the schools, the issue is travel. That's why they don't have after-school programs.

DR. HORNBECK: Oh, no, that's what I say, the transportation.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: That would be highly desirable. And then in many, many instances, I

mean, for all intents and purposes, in all instances, which is why there's a big number for after school in the budget, is that we don't have enough after-school programs to serve the kids even in the schools that they go to.

And every child in this city -- I mean, we've got some humongously large amount of building capital in this system, and every single one of the schools ought to be open until 10 o'clock at night and on weekends and during the summer. And there ought to be the programming capacity to do these things.

I don't have a very -- other than making more universal the opportunity, I don't have a very good answer for that.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Well, can you think about it a little bit? I talked to Bill Epstein, I talked to him several months ago about a particular case or two. And I'll just remind you, Bill, because I do think that we have a whole group children out there that we could serve differently.

DR. HORNBECK: Okay, thank you. We will.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Cohen, you're next, but if you're attending to other business, I'll recognize someone else.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam President.

Mr. Superintendent, I will be very quick in going through a couple of items, which I wou8ld actually ask you to forward information to us. If you have some by Wednesday, that would be fine, but otherwise, through the Chair.

What is the status of open or acting positions in the upper management of the District, specifically in the Finance Department area or in any of the financial services area? If you could get us information about that, I would appreciate it.

DR. HORNBECK: I'd be glad to.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you.

Second, are there individuals -- I'll

just use this term, it might not be an official School District term, but are there official action plans for the improvement of each particular school, kind of a listing of, This is what we need to do at this school, by way of either teachers, curriculum all of those issues?

DR. HORNBECK: There is a school improvement plan for each school.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Is it possible to -- I don't know if any of this is -- I can't imagine that it's necessarily confidential, but are there executive summaries of these or -- I mean, is it possible to see what the documents are related to these particular schools that would give a kind of general assessment?

DR. HORNBECK: The answer is yes, but so that it's most meaningful or helpful to you, why don't you give me the names of three schools that you would like to see, and then you would not only have a sample, but you would have a sample of three schools in which you have a particular interest and knowledge.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You can give me Barry, Mann, and Levering.

DR. HORNBECK: Barry, Mann, and Levering.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes. Those are the three quick off the top of my head.

DR. HORNBECK: Sure, we'd be glad to do that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, thank you.

If you could -- this is either more an assessment of the system, but what is your belief about the impact of the cluster system and how it has helped to make the improvements that are listed in the various charts 1-A through D in Tab 1?

DR. HORNBECK: The cluster system has had the benefit of serving this principle that small is better, and it has given greater access to the staff as well as to parents in the wider community to people in genuine decision-making roles. That's one piece.

Secondly, it has contributed, because of the continuum that has been created of K to 12. So there's a connection that didn't used to exist.

Third, we have been able, to a

significant degree, to place the clusters in the position to being an instructional leader and keeping the issue of instruction versus administration in front of the schools in important ways.

All of those things, I believe, have been a part of a constellation of things that have resulted in this dramatic achievement improvement, and the interesting thing that we've discovered, because of a recent proposal that the number of clusters be reduced from 22 to 11, is that the -- generally, this isn't an absolute rule. But significantly generally, the smaller a cluster is -- the 11 smallest clusters' achievement is significantly better than the 11 largest clusters.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mm-hmm.

DR. HORNBECK: And I wouldn't want to submit that to, you know, some highfalutin' research double-blind study kind of a process.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: But it is clearly a part of several things that have contributed to the improvement.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: With regard to

those same charts, are you able to project forward at a minimum what your goals are for -- well, I'll refer to the chart specifically. 1-A is showing steady growth, 40 percent since 1996 in students scoring at basic level and above across all grades and all subjects.

Chart 1-D is 4th grade scoring at basic and above in all subjects. Chart 1-C is 8th grade. And chart 1-D is 11th grade.

Is the District in a position, based on either where things are now, taking into consideration the financial circumstances, the realistic financial circumstance of the District, are you able to project out over the next five years at a minimum where you would like things to be? What's a reasonable goal? What could we expect to see even next year in these same numbers as compared to the charts that are in front of us today?

DR. HORNBECK: What we have done, Councilman Nutter, is to set a -- back in 1996, we set a goal of 95 percent of our kids achieving at the proficient level, which is a notch above the basic level.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: By 2008 -- we chose 2008 because that was one student generation. That is, the 1st graders in 1996 would be 12th-graders in 2008.

We then establish the individual performance targets for each school based on that goal for each two-year period of time. So there's a very specific target that every school is expected to meet --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: -- during that period of time.

Last spring, after three years of the twelve years, and the three years contributing to the 40 percent, etc., that you referred to there, 164 of our 259 schools were ahead of where they needed to be after three years. And if they kept on that pace, then they would be where they need to be at the end of twelve years.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Well, either for Wednesday or sometime shortly thereafter, I guess, if you could show us by way of the graphs where it is today, what you had projected it to be

three years ago, and where it has gone essentially ahead of projections, based on what you laid out three years ago.

DR. HORNBECK: (Nods head.)

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Chart 2-A in the same Tab 1 is, the School District has cut its number of administrative jobs, and your chart is showing 364 fewer administrative jobs since the '90-'91 school year. Are you able to lay out what those positions were and where those personnel were operating from?

DR. HORNBECK: To some extent, that's very, very difficult, though, because in some of those instances, positions in terms of what they did have gone through two and three sort of metamorphoses.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right, during transition from --

DR. HORNBECK: So that number comes from, what did the budget say we had in 1991 and 1991, and what does it provide today. And it's not a kind of tracing of individual positions.

So I guess the answer really is no. It would be very, very difficult, if not -- in fact,

I don't even know how we would do it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So you're just taking a gross number of administrators in 1990-'91 versus the number of administrators in '99-2000.

DR. HORNBECK: That's right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The difference is what it is, and end of story.

DR. HORNBECK: We have a lot less but I don't -- I can't do it position by position.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Lastly, I received a response to a recent inquiry from Dr. Stephanie Childs (ph.). It had been inquired of us and we wrote to the District regarding the District's bus policy for kindergarten student. And the response was, the District doesn't provide transportation for kindergarten students.

And I just wanted to better understand that. And what are the issues involved in that and why?

DR. HORNBECK: We do not provide transportation for kindergarten students. We have found that, generally speaking, at that age, parents get there kids to school. It arises, in

part, because we're only now, whatever it is, four years into everybody gets full-time full-day. And it's been one of the additional expenses that we have simply haven't undertaken either for our own children, or if we were to provide busing for kindergarten kids, then there would be a significant additional expense for all of the non-public school kids.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. So --

DR. HORNBECK: So it's really a resource issue more than any other single thing.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All right, but I mean, it's not that you don't think bus transportation is appropriate for kindergartners or an age level issue; it's a financial resource issue?

DR. HORNBECK: Actually, we think in the name of fitness, they should be walking at that point. But no, it is -- I'm sorry, it's a resource issue.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: 'Cause some of the neighborhoods that some of the kindergarten students might have to walk through, I'm not sure if I would want to walk through them.

DR. HORNBECK: No, I agree. It is a resource, not a policy issue about thinking kindergarten kids should walk.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, all right, thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Councilman Nutter.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Cohen?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to talk about -- what I have in mind is that I think there ought to be a vast public campaign led really by you and SEPTA for public support for private funding as well as for public funding. It's not your responsibility, I believe, to provide the funding, I don't believe it's SEPTA's responsibility to provide the funding, in either case, out of already inadequate funding that both public bodies have.

But I do think it is the responsibility both of the School Board and of SEPTA to lead the fight for this. Because a public transportation

system, I think, has no justification for existing if it doesn't take care of that part of the population that needs it most. I wouldn't expect a for-profit company to be concerned, but I would expect a public service agency to be considered that it is unable to furnish transportation where most needed, and I would feel that a school district ought to be most concerned.

I'm told there are 20,000 school children, 30,000 who need help financially to get to schools, and that 10,000 are already provided for by some program, which leaves 20,000 in this case of need. And you were eloquent when you spoke about a child not having to miss school, one of two children for $9 a week. Sometimes both have to miss if there's to be food or heat or some other necessity provided.

I think it's just unconscionable for Philadelphia to talk about this being "The Year of the Child" or by the remotest standards even thinking about being a world-class city with a world-class stadium, and I'm not sure that was a mispronunciation I just made 'cause I don't know, so few Philadelphians can afford to go to the

sports teams that it seems to me that Philadelphia may be becoming just a business enterprise in providing stadiums and using a lot of its wealth to try to bring in other people, like any other business, to attract more income.

But I do think there is a very heavy public duty, and I don't think it's satisfied, with due respect, Superintendent Hornbeck, because you know I respect your policies very strongly, even were I to disagree with any of them in particular at any given time, nothing can becloud the fact of your deep dedication to the school stem, and at times, you're almost the only person I know who's really fighting for quality education in a meaningful way and subjecting yourself to all sorts of abuse as a result of it.

But I think this is one area where you can perform such an enormous public service, you can bring 20,000 children into the orbit of being first-class citizens in Philadelphia and of having the right to really a public education.

So on that issue, I don't ask for any comment, but I would urge you to communicate with SEPTA. Frances Egan, who is now -- the former

Licenses and Inspections Commissioner is now with SEPTA, and in response to a question from Councilwoman Blackwell with respect to certain problems at 52nd and Market, and the issue isn't important, but she said that SEPTA would be willing to undertake corporate leadership and develop a sense of corporate responsibility for participation in the funding necessary to help achieve a very worthwhile goal, I'm sure it is, at 52nd and Market. It's that kind of leadership between SEPTA and the School District that I think can produce results.

I am so concerned about this that I am planning to introduce an amendment to withhold financing from SEPTA until they come forth with a program that will provide free tokens for everybody, whether they use tokens or passes. Other cities have it, and I think Philadelphia may be the only major city in which there is no assistance, but I can't vouch for that. Some people have so asserted and I don't know whether it's so or not.

But I don't see how we can feel we're really carrying out a struggle to educate all of

our kids unless we solve this very concrete simple problem -- and not at the cost of other very needed service.

I just wanted to do leave that message on that, but I think it's got to be an immediate campaign. I think by the fall, every kid in Philadelphia, regardless of income of the family, regardless of ability to pay, ought to be able to ride to school. Otherwise, I don't think we have public education in Philadelphia.

The other question I have -- and maybe, again, this may not require an answer -- I don't know how principals are selected for the school system. I don't know whether it's tied into the union contract or not. But I believe that the principal in the school is the driving force, that you can take two very difficult situations, and you put in a principal who just refuses to believe that kids can't be educated, and that undertakes -- I can't think of the name.

Marcus Foster, was that the name of the principal at Gratz High School, who used to go around and get his teachers, some of them at least, to go with him to visit families at home,

who was shot, unfortunately. It was in San Francisco where he went some years ago. I think the results at a school depend so heavily on a principal. He turned Gratz High School around, and he set a foundation that others that have followed after him have been able to build on.

And I would hope that if it's involved in union negotiations, so be it, but I think we've got to find a way to be able to have the kind of inspired leadership by principals. And as a strong -- maybe the strongest labor figure that's ever been in City Council, labor supporter, I believe public service unions have goals other than the wages and working conditions that maybe private unions have, where they're dealing only with taking a share of the profit from the employer and have it be divided. I think a public service union has public responsibilities and that they have to understand, you know, that they're serving the public.

And I think there ought to be no problem making sure that we can get the kind of leadership at every local school, because I do share the hope that we're going to get to the

point where parents of public school children think about their schools in the same way that parents come here and argue for charter schools. All public schools -- and the charter schools are public schools. All public schools ought to be able to develop that feeling.

Thanks, Madam President and Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Councilman Cohen.

Councilwoman Blackwell?

Is Councilwoman Brown here?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Superintendent, you use the phrase "social promotion" to be replaced by "standards-driven promotion." How is the District getting the message out that students will have to work harder, study more, and reach toward a concrete goal? When you introduced academic rigor, you implied that students will need to do some independent reading and study. Peer pressure often mitigates against this. Therefore, time management is crucial.

In other words, what counsel is being given to students to prepare them for independent study/reading for leisure as well as completing special projects?

DR. HORNBECK: The -- two answers. One is, it goes back to all these communications that we've already undertaken with parents. And additional ones like your good suggestion that we want to follow up on with the newspapers to do, to see if we can't do get them to do an insert.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: But even more important is the way in which this has been emphasized with the students themselves. In one sense, we tried to send this message really strongly last summer, when we began for the first time in ten years to tell kids they had to come to summer school, and that began to send messages to them. Then this year, we have, through the their classes, one on one directly, we have -- we have sought to make clear to them the kinds of standards they're going to have to meet.

I think, frankly, in the final analysis, however, the message will not ultimately

get through with children anymore than it does with us adults, that until the moment finally comes and sort of the crisis is there and I'm going to fail or I'm going to go to summer school or I'm going to go into one of these transaction programs, somehow we human beings are put together in ways that these messages don't penetrate.

So I think the value of summer school last year was at least partial value, but we hadn't eliminated social promotion then, and it will come at the end of this year.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It seems to me that if we start young enough, we have a chance. That's why I always believed in a 12-year program, so you can start the little ones on up. Because I still believe that if you tested an 11th-grader and that child or that teenager can't pass the test, that there's very little you're going to do and that it would serve him or us no purpose in keeping in that.

DR. HORNBECK: That's a very important point. And social promotion is eliminated this year, in effect, only for the 4th-graders. We're tightening up otherwise, but it's not -- it's not,

you know, sort of the final deal. And one of the reasons we're doing that is because we want to, in a sense, phase some of this stuff in.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's very important.

DR. HORNBECK: In a way that gives kids and teachers sort of forewarning that this is coming.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely. Because some students -- if older kids, even middle school age, no matter how much they panic, they can't do it. And a gentleman just stopped me in the hallway and asked me about vocational ed. his opinion was that we're doing so much with computers, we don't realize that we can train plumbers and other students in vocational fields, and more programs in our schools are equipped for them in this modern world.

Where are we on vocational training?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we have, of course, the several good vocational technical high schools that are still providing very strong and even better and better support simultaneously with that. And we're -- we decide what to teach in

those schools based on where jobs are.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: We attempt not to have programs for areas for which there are no jobs.

Secondly, however, as we move into the first part of this new century, it's increasingly clear that most students are going to have at least six jobs and be in at least three careers during their lifetime. And so it's very important -- it is essential that we successfully have youngsters who know how to read and do math and do science so that they are able, in effect, to learn to learn, so that they can accommodate these changes that are going to -- without any question, they're going to face during the course of the years.

And so the School-to-Career Program that both gives them the opportunity to be engaged in worksite learning opportunities in a hands-on sort of way, together with upgrading their skills that give them a shot at jobs where they can actually earn a living and support a family, is very much a greater part of the program.

The final thing I would say about this

is that one way to measure the health of vocational education is to determine how many kids we have in programs for which we are reimbursed by federal money. And in the last five years, we have gone from something in the neighborhood of 7 to 8,000 youngsters who were in programs for which we were reimbursed to something over 17,000 in vocational programs for which we were reimbursed.

So we have escalated significantly the participation of kids in vocationally-recognized programs.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: How do we determine how we use that space in schools? A lot of folks who are my age and older remember in all of your high schools, you have vocational programs, so they see that space there or unused space or not -- or reconfigured space and feel that we're lacking in not using it that way because we don't talk about it.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we all need, whether we're in a school system or Council or someplace else, to constantly try to bring people up to speed. I mean, for example, the Cisco

Programs, to which I spoke to a little while ago, these certification programs place kids in places that they can make as much as $35,000 to start, right out of high school. Those places that those kids are doing their certification program are not traditional vocational technical school -- Dobbins, you know, Bok, Mastbaum. There may be a Cisco place in those, I'm not saying they're not, but they are also in places that are not vocational place.

And so we have to help people understand not just to look at a space that used to have a wood lathe in it and see that the wood lathe isn't in there anymore and assume that we are no longer doing vocational education. We need to have them understand that, in fact, we've doubled the number of kids that are in these kinds of programs. They're just in different kinds of programs, because what it takes to get a job is just very different in the year 2000 than it was in the year 1966.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: My final question is, the SAT-9 tests, there has been talk, or always is, has been, over the years about

minorities not testing well. And I understand there is something that the School District is trying to do so that these children are tested better and in a way that is fairer to what they can or cannot do.

And what's the status of that? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

DR. HORNBECK: Let me say three things.

.

One is that the improvement that our children have achieved has cut across racial and language lines and income lines so that kids in racially-isolated schools, as well as kids in desegregated schools, as well as concentrations of Spanish-speaking kids, as well as -- I mean, they have all participated in the growth of achievement.

Secondly, the kinds of things that you see in the Fair Opportunities to Learn, the pre-K, the extra help, the tutoring, and all of those kinds of things are in there because we believe those things are necessary to help those kids with whom we've historically failed, which were disproportionately minority kids, to in fact

achieve.

The third thing that we've done is to work with the testing company to create what we refer to as "culturally sensitive test items," so when kids take the test, they will also more frequently also see themselves in the test. So that the test questions are constructed around both racial and language minority kids to a greater extent than was previously the case.

And we started that piece not -- I think it was last -- I guess it was last spring was the first time -- maybe it was two years ago.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Have we assessed that and that it is --

DR. HORNBECK: It was two rounds ago.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Have we assessed how it is that it is more racially sensitive to minorities? Have we made that assessment?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, as I say, the kids in the racially-isolated schools, kids in the language concentration schools, like Potter-Thomas is what I mean, where the vast majority of kids are Latino kids. In fact, Potter-Thomas, now that

I'm thinking about it, is a tremendous example. And I want to say Ferguson because her name's Linda Ferguson -- I mean, Linda Hall at Ferguson is a great example of a racially-isolated school where the kids have done really exceptionally well.

So the answer is yes. I mean, we are seeing the product of this work.

And one of the reasons we want these Fair Opportunities to Learn is that we think that if we don't have that opportunity, we may end up with kids being sort of at status quo, stagnating, not moving forward, and continuing the progress that we've made.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So they're making an assessment of --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Councilman Blackwell, you've had like eight minutes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All righty. I was finishing up that last question on racially-sensitive material.

Thank you. Whether or not we've made that assessment and compared it, the material.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, you're welcome.

Councilwoman Brown?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

There are three areas I overlooked, so I misspoke when said that I was done.

Another discovery we had when the City departments came before us is that there's a lot of great partnerships between some City departments and some schools. Example, Fleet Management has a wonderful co-op career path program and so does the Water Department.

Are you aware of any other partnerships with City agencies that are working? And are you interested in pursuing greater opportunities with City agencies that currently don't exist but you would like to see happen?

DR. HORNBECK: We are always enthusiastic about those partnerships that increase the productivity of our work. Among the ones that come immediately to my mine are the family centers with DHS.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: The 117 partnerships we have with the Rec. Department and the partnership that we've developed over the last two years with CBH and Mental Health Services, particularly in the Audenried and the Olney cluster and now being expanded to seven other clusters.

So we're always looking for those opportunities to strengthen both agencies by increasing, and we've got lots of them.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And you're saying there's student participation in those departments you just mentioned, DHS and CBH?

DR. HORNBECK: There are cooperative programs in each of those.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: And family centers serve students.

The other thing that we do with the departments is, we have -- we've had thousands of our youngsters in work site learning opportunities.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: In departments.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, that's what

I'm referring to.

DR. HORNBECK: Oh, okay, I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I may not have explained the question.

DR. HORNBECK: And lots of them are in City agencies, so that there are -- I don't know what the number is, but there are lots of 'em spread across probably every City agency that there is.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, then that's a good thing. If we can achieve 100 percent, that's good. I was just curious to know if there's an opportunity or a potential out there that we have not yet put in place.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, the other thing that has happened recently that Council will be interested in following, just not from that perspective, but it's really important, is that the federal law changed a year ago, that used to be JTPA and the PIC and all of that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Right.

DR. HORNBECK: And now it's PWDC and the Workforce Investment Board. And one of the

spin-off things of the Workforce Investment Board is something called the "Youth Council," and the Youth Council has focused on the expenditure of about 8 or $9 million worth of youth funds that are designed to help kids move productively into jobs when they get through high school.

And what we've done in an effort to do the kind of collaboration you're talking about is that three or four members of my school-to-career staff, who are these people that give great leadership --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

DR. HORNBECK: -- are the head of the staff now and are paid 30 percent by this Philadelphia Youth Network, so that the School District and all of these agencies of City government who are in the Workforce Investment Act end of the business all do our business all together, so that it's -- it's not -- it's not the School District's kids over there and somebody else's kids over there. It's our kids in Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's encouraging.

Transportation. On Page 15 of Section 4 of your document, you speak about the reimbursement or the funding end of transportation. I'm curious to know a couple things. One, how are contracts handled with school buses companies, and what policy is in place for school bus companies or a school bus driver that doesn't show up at a bus stop or at a series of bus stops? What kicks in to let parents know that that's the circumstance for that morning or that week?

And this is related a couple of constituent matters that have come up in my office.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, each one will end up being different. I mean, if the bus has a flat tire, then there will be instances in which because every bus has a communications system, that they can say to the dispatcher, I had a flat tire, or, you know, whatever it is, that word can be gotten to the school.

And to some extent, there is an ability to communicate with the homes, but it's pretty limited because you've got as many as 60 kids out

there standing on street corners someplace and parents who have gone off to work.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Work.

DR. HORNBECK: And so we try to avoid those things.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So it's incumbent upon the bus driver to access the communications system and make his or her circumstance known.

DR. HORNBECK: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

DR. HORNBECK: And then we have a dispatch process that either comes out and fixes the bus or, in some instances, will put a replacement bus out on the road. But that's invariably a process that results in a lot of down time. I mean, it's not an instantaneous thing.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay, all right.

DR. HORNBECK: But that's the process.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We gave a lot of discussion to school violence and school safety, and how SEPTA or lack of SEPTA tokens contributes to absences from school. This question is around truancy and the new pilot program that's in place.

What would be your response to the

suspicion, if you will, that for this to work, it's going to take the School District and the District Attorney's Office to work together to make this program real?

One, I'm won't to say "allegation." One concern that's been raised is, the School District has to be concerned about reimbursement. The School District does better when it does not report the number of truancies because that impacts the dollar reimbursement, yet the truancy project is only going to work to the extent that it is able to address those young people who are truant from school.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, we've taken lots of actions to reduce truancy, the Truancy Courts, for example --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

DR. HORNBECK: -- that we've done in partnership with the Family Court has been very successful. The Police Commissioner and we have launched the initiative that has resulted in picking up tens of thousands of kids off the streets and taking them to their respective schools to reduce that.

So truancy, in a sort of symptomatic way, is a really important thing. And it's -- there are a number -- I mean, one of the reasons we do the Truancy Courts is that it permits relevant agencies to come together to work together with the teacher, the kid, and the parent on designing a process to get the kid --

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Back in school.

DR. HORNBECK: -- into school. The -- so that there's no small amount of effort and extra effort that goes -- that goes into that. And, in fact, we have increased attendance at school over these -- over these years. 'Cause if you can't get the kid into school, you're going to be hard-pressed to teach him to read.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So it's not too early to measure the effectiveness of this new initiative.

DR. HORNBECK: No. I mean, it's not a single new initiative. There are several major efforts that we -- I mean, another big piece of this is that we put student attendance into the performance index on the basis of which we are

evaluated and rewards are given to schools and penalties are meted out to schools. So we've taken a multi-pronged approach to this and look forward to the cooperation of other agencies in that process.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Towards that end. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Councilman Brown, your time's up. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I know. I'm done. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Councilmember Goode?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Hornbeck, let me briefly follow up on the discussion we had this morning and focus a bit more directly on the governance at the individual school level. I'm not talking about the future so much in terms of contract negotiations in the new board, but under existing, what are principals empowered to do? Are they empowered to hire and fire, are they empowered to promote as they choose, are they empowered to make

budgetary decisions, are they empowered to make curriculum decisions? What exactly are they empowered to do under the current system?

DR. HORNBECK: They are empowered to make curriculum decisions, they make decisions about professional development, about the instructional programs that are going to go on in the schools. They have a great deal of authority around the use of the school building and the assignment of kids and the assignment of teachers once they're in the building.

The primary limitation on the power of the principal is in the hiring of teachers. The way in which a teacher comes to a particular school is, for the most part, is a consequence of seniority, and to a very large extent, it is automatic.

And in terms of firing, the principal has not only the right but has the responsibility to rate teachers, and it is through the rating process, if there should be any discipline to be meted out, that that would occur.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So ultimately, they don't decide who comes to their school or who

leaves; is that correct?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, they don't decide very much about who comes. In the framework of the rating process, they play a decisive role or a very important role in who leaves.

A more important part of who leaves, though, has to do with the transfer process. And transfer, at the moment, under the terms of the contract, is governed again by seniority. If there is a vacancy in School X and you are in School Y and you have enough seniority, you can go to School X.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: To what extent do they determine who they promote?

DR. HORNBECK: Who they promote?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes, if they want to choose a department head.

DR. HORNBECK: With respect to the -- we don't have many department heads anymore. But with respect, for example, to the assistant, principal, the principal by and large makes that determination.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And there are no decisions beyond that, there's just a general

teaching staff?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, there are -- I mean, there are librarians and counselors and so on. But I think all of those positions are, again, governed by the contract, and they are considered to be teachers. I mean, the librarian is a teacher, you know. So all of that is governed in much the same way that I described the teacher.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And lastly, what powers of principals would you seek to expand?

DR. HORNBECK: Well, those are the things that, at the moment, I think need to evolve out of the contract negotiations. And it's really something that would be inappropriate for me to -- but that was a --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That was my last question.

(Laughter.)

DR. HORNBECK: But that was a good way to ask that original question. What are the facts now?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you very much.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you Councilmember Goode.

Councilmember Rizzo?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Superintendent, this weekend, I had an opportunity to speak to a man named Peter Cursio of Junior Achievement. And in Chester Pennsylvania, they're going to be building a facility that will exchange students into this program where they actually operate a little mini city hall, a bank, and other businesses.

I'm wondering if the School District is aware of this Junior Achievement initiative.

DR. HORNBECK: We are. We cooperate with them, I serve on the board of Junior Achievement. Junior Achievement is a good program. It exists in a lot of our schools. And we also engage in similar kinds of instructional ventures that are Junior Achievement and are not Junior Achievement.

The sort of simulation process that Junior Achievement does is really, in my judgment, an excellent -- for example, in contrast to workbooks, to really, in a sense, construct the knowledge by being a shopkeeper or being the Mayor or a Councilman or, you know, whatever, and operate an entire city, in fact, is a really good instructional device.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: In response to a question earlier about what Chicago does, I'm wondering, you have a lot on your plate, and I would seem that there would be an organization within the School District -- research, planning -- that would be out there looking for what works and what doesn't work.

It kind of surprised me -- well, I don't want to use that word. It -- what do you do to look at other cities on what they're accomplishing and try to bring back the good things and not make the mistakes that they made? Is there a responsible individual in your organization that's out there doing those things that you heard mentioned this morning, and not have to hear it here in City Council?

DR. HORNBECK: The answer is yes. It's in our Leadership and Learning Unit. And it is -- it's not so much looking at whole cities. There are a variety of instructional practices, which, research tells us, if used faithfully, have a greater impact.

I referred earlier in response to a different question to a program called "Success For All," for example. That's the single-most widely used successful program in the United States, and it has a lot of research backing. Reading Recovery was the other one I mentioned. New Zealand became the highest reading country in the world about ten years ago because they developed Reading Recovery. We have a homegrown version that is referred to as the "100 Book Challenge," which you may have encountered in your travels around the City.

I began to emphasize three years ago the adoption of what I referred to as "research-based instructional strategies." For the first couple of years, they were voluntary. Last year, they became mandatory, that every school, faculty, and principal were to examine these various

opportunities and choose one.

And one of the ways that we helped people know how is that, you know how in Consumer Reports, there are those little round balls, and if it's really good, it's all red, and if it's half-good, it's half-red. And it's a consumer guide to lawn mowers or televisions or whatever.

Well, we produced a similar consumer's guide to research-based instructional strategies across the United States, and we set out some criteria that made 'em good or bad. And then we put in little red circles and half circles and clear circles so that people could see, in relationship to their own needs in a school, which is better and which is worse. And we will continue to update that kind of thing on at least a biannual basis.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you for that.

And, finally, in reference to being a good neighbor, our schools being a good neighbor, for years and years and years, we have restricted parking around the perimeter of many of our schools. I assume that's done for safety reasons.

I recently have gotten letters and

people have asked that since families are growing, two cars, three cars, could you reevaluate the need for restricting the need for restricting the parking around many of our schools? The teachers in many cases have the ability, and I hear some principals work with them and some don't, where they're able to park where conditions permit inside the school yard for security reasons.

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But to restrict parking -- and I might be wrong even bringing this up, but at least it should be looked at to see the need to prohibit parking on all four sides of a school, especially when parking is so valuable today in many of our neighborhoods.

Could you ask for some research?

DR. HORNBECK: Sure.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Or at least some rationale? I assume it has to do with fire and safety.

DR. HORNBECK: Well, I think safety more than anything else so that as kids come pouring out, there are not cars to walk between, but we'll have a look at the policy.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, if they're doing hopefully what we want them to do, cross at corners with school crossing guards, that may not be -- this has been a practice that's been around I think forever.

DR. HORNBECK: Right.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And I'm thinking that maybe that should be reevaluated, and I think that if we can't come up with a good, solid reason, I speculated it the same way you did, that that's the reason, I think the community would love to have some additional parking back in their neighborhoods.

DR. HORNBECK: I certainly don't doubt that, especially around Jenks, there's a problem that --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And in many cases, the signs have been removed, gone, and people are parking at these locations.

So I think we need to reevaluate all of the building, reevaluate the need for that, and then make a decision whether we should allow the public to park back in those locations.

DR. HORNBECK: We can have a look at

that policy.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And would you get that back to the Chair?

DR. HORNBECK: Sure.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I'm sure that will take a long time to accomplish that decision, but I would like to be able to know and have that eventually addressed.

DR. HORNBECK: Certainly the examination of the policy won't take very long. Any individual examination of each of the 259 schools may take a little while, depending on how we come at the policy.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Great.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Superintendent.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I'd like to thank the School District of Philadelphia for your presentation and testimony today.

And this hearing is recessed until tomorrow, at 10 a.m., March 17th -- I mean, March 7th.

DR. HORNBECK: Thank you very much,

Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

(Adjourned at 2:34 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia of Monday, March 6, 2000, were reported fully and accurately by me, and that this is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BILL NO.'S 7, 8, 9

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,
Registered Professional Reporter