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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 11, 2010
10:30 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

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COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN

12

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

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COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

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BILL 100119 - An ordinance amending Chapter
19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
"School Tax Authorization"...

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BILL 100120 - An ordinance amending Chapter
19-1801 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
"Authorization of Tax"...

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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morning. Can we have your attention,

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please. We would like to resume our

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public hearing on education that we

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started yesterday with regard to Bill

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Nos. 100119 and 100120.

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The plan is to respond to

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questions. We have a few Councilpeople

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who have questions. Councilwoman

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Blondell Reynolds Brown will be the first

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to raise the questions, and we'll ask

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Dr. Ackerman and Mr. Archie if they would

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again come to the witness table.

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After the questions are asked

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today, we will recess until 1:30 when we

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have the public hearing. Now, the staff

18

is trying now to contact those who were

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scheduled to come at 5:30. There's only

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a half dozen of them, and they're trying

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to get them to come at 1:30 so that we

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might just have one public session time

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for 1:30. That is the plan at this

24

moment, to have again a public hearing at

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1:30 and not the one at 5:30, if we're

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2 able to reach that handful of people who
3 want to testify.

4 After that, the plan will be to
5 recess until 5/13, which is Thursday, at
6 noon, because that is when all bills will
7 be heard and all budget bills will be
8 heard. And we expect then on 5/13 at 12
9 o'clock, they will be reported out of
10 Committee.

11 So that's the whole process for
12 education.

13 Anybody have questions on that?
14 I guess that's simple enough.

15 And, again, like yesterday, I
16 know that you all were sorry to leave,
17 but today we expect that we won't be very
18 long.

19 All right. The Chair
20 recognizes Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
21 Brown.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
23 Madam Chairwoman.

24 Good morning. Good morning
25 again.

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2 Madam Superintendent, first I'd
3 like to ask if you would forward to the
4 Chair the listing of the professionals
5 that were here this morning and yesterday
6 to accompany you and their positions in
7 the school administration.

8 DR. ACKERMAN: We will do that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you
10 would.

11 And just a review of two issues
12 raised at length yesterday. On the issue
13 of charter schools, it was reported in
14 the April 10th edition of the
15 Philadelphia Tribune that 51 of the 63
16 schools have filed incomplete information
17 and -- let me not misrepresent.

18 What will be the new policy
19 going forward with regards to financial
20 audits of charter schools, if you could
21 address that issue again for the record?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. Moving
23 forward, we as a district will take ten
24 percent of the charter schools each year
25 and do unannounced audits. In addition,

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2 we'll ask that they turn in their
3 financial records, their ethics
4 documentation every year for all of the
5 charter schools, because we don't have
6 those on file for all of them, and every
7 year all of us have to turn in our
8 information, our ethics and -- what's the
9 other document? I'm sorry.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Financial
11 disclosure?

12 DR. ACKERMAN: The financial
13 disclosure. We don't have those on a
14 consistent basis turned in by all the
15 schools. So every year we will ask for
16 those documents, and ten percent of the
17 schools will be audited unannounced.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: On an
19 annual basis?

20 DR. ACKERMAN: On an annual
21 basis.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So that
23 will be the new standard operating
24 procedure going forward?

25 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. And that's

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2 ten percent of those schools that are not
3 on a five-year cycle for renewal.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

5 Then my second question, which was
6 touched upon briefly yesterday, has to do
7 with MBE, WBE activity. I don't see --
8 who is the direct report for John Byars?

9 DR. ACKERMAN: Who does he
10 report to?

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Who does
12 John Byars report to? Michael Masch?

13 DR. ACKERMAN: He reports to
14 Michael Masch.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, then
16 this line of questioning will be then for
17 you, Mr. Masch.

18 Where are my questions? I'm
19 going to have to work from memory, which
20 is never a good thing.

21 What is the School District's
22 policy with regards to contractors who do
23 not honor the contract in terms of
24 payment to subs? What happens?

25 MR. MASCH: Councilwoman, first

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2 of all, it's important for us to enter
3 onto the record the fact that our Small
4 Business Unit within the Procurement
5 Division requires every construction
6 contractor to report to us, and then we
7 also do audits and site inspections to
8 make sure that all payments to subs,
9 including MBE, WBE subcontractors, are
10 being made in full and in a timely
11 manner.

12 If we were to find a consistent
13 problem -- and we do not believe that we
14 have a problem with payments to subs,
15 because we are monitoring it and insist
16 on its being one of the contract terms
17 that prime contractors must abide by, but
18 if we were to find a persistent problem
19 and the contractor were not to rectify
20 it, then we would take them off of our
21 qualified list.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So the
23 remedy is that they would be removed from
24 the qualifying list?

25 MR. MASCH: That's right. But

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2 as I say, we do not believe that that's a
3 problem in the School District,
4 because -- we know that this was a
5 problem with some MBE, WBE programs in
6 some small business contracting programs
7 in the past with other governmental
8 units, and that's why we have an active
9 program to monitor payments, to make sure
10 they're being made.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And then
12 what assurance do subcontractors have
13 that suggest that they will ultimately be
14 paid? And let me give the back story on
15 this.

16 Too often small business people
17 come to Councilpersons because they view
18 us as the last remedy of hope with regard
19 to getting paid because a contractor, a
20 prime, has not honored up, and we do what
21 we can to advocate on behalf of those
22 small business people, and one prime
23 example was around stadiums. It was two
24 years after those stadiums were built
25 that subs came to us to complain,

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2 rightfully, that they were not being

3 paid.

4 Similar circumstances have come

5 to my attention with regards to the

6 School District, which is why I raise the

7 question what remedy exists to ensure

8 that the contractor -- whatever the

9 remedy is, to know that, but then more

10 importantly, what is in place to ensure

11 that the sub, typically female or

12 minority, gets paid?

13 MR. MASCH: Councilwoman, if

14 you encounter constituents who are having

15 those kinds of problems, please contact

16 us immediately. We want to know about

17 it. As I say, we are monitoring -- we

18 both monitor the actual payments through

19 our automated systems and we do site

20 visits to contractors on site to make

21 sure that payments are being made.

22 I assure you, if you alert us

23 to a problem, we will act swiftly to

24 remedy it.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm

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2 encouraged to hear that. Here's the
3 reservation in citing specific
4 individuals: If there are not standard
5 operating procedures in place to remedy
6 it, there are small business people who
7 are reluctant to complain openly to the
8 School District for fear that they will
9 be ex-communicated, if you will, or not
10 considered in future opportunities. So
11 that's why I'm asking about standard
12 operating procedures within the system to
13 handle those types of circumstances.

14 MR. MASCH: That's why we
15 welcome your presenting this line of
16 questioning, because we do have standard
17 operating procedures in place. We are
18 aware of the kinds of problems that have
19 occurred with other subcontracting
20 problems in the past. The reports that I
21 receive regularly indicate to me that our
22 system is working the way that it's
23 supposed to. But if there are instances
24 in which there are problems with
25 particular contractors and subs, we want

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2 to know about it. But I'm happy to get
3 on the record so we can make it clear to
4 subcontractors that they should come to
5 us. We would encourage them to do that.
6 We do have the systems in place. We will
7 enforce payments to subcontractors. We
8 will make sure that that is complied with
9 or that, if it is not, that we will take
10 that into consideration in terms of
11 whether we're going to continue to do
12 business with the prime or not.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For the
14 record, could you please state what the
15 School District's anti-discrimination
16 policy is?

17 MR. MASCH: Yes. The goal of
18 the policy, first of all, is to ensure
19 non-discrimination in the award and
20 administration of contracts and insist in
21 the development of more minority and
22 women business enterprises that can
23 compete for contracts and the -- we
24 require that every contract that is over
25 \$100,000 should be competitively bid,

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2 unless there is some reason like it's a
3 sole source and there is no other vendor
4 who can provide the service, and we are
5 reducing the number of sole-source
6 contracts. For all others, the Program
7 Office is required to go to the
8 Procurement Office and get a
9 participation range that we believe that
10 they ought to be able to meet. We work
11 with the City's Office of Economic
12 Opportunity to establish those
13 participation ranges, and then we -- and
14 then the key is to competitively bid the
15 work.

16 We have been moving many more
17 categories of professional services into
18 competitive RFP since Dr. Ackerman has
19 arrived, at her direction. So bond
20 counsel, underwriters, appraisers,
21 brokers, insurance, lots of professional
22 services that weren't in the past always
23 subject to a competitive RFP process are.
24 We take MBE participation into
25 consideration as one of the -- as a

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2 significant qualifying factor in who gets
3 the work.

4 Our goals are, in professional
5 service contracts, to achieve no less
6 than a 15 percent participation rate, 20
7 percent for procurement services; that
8 is, materials, supplies and equipment,
9 and 30 percent for our construction
10 projects. And we have actually, as we
11 noted -- and the overall goal for the
12 program is 20 percent, and as we've
13 noted, for the first half of this fiscal
14 year, our actual participation level is
15 27.3 percent. So that is significantly
16 in excess of the target that we've set.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Indeed,
18 and I congratulate you for that and
19 applaud the leadership for making it
20 clear what the new paradigm is. It takes
21 a leadership that's committed to that to
22 make it happen, and I thank you for the
23 response to the question.

24 So let me be specific. What is
25 the status of the S-O-D-E-X-O contract

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2 with regards to them honoring up?

3 MR. MASCH: I'm happy to report
4 that Sodexo and their subcontractor, Team
5 Clean, informed us last week that they
6 are going into binding arbitration to
7 resolve their outstanding dispute.

8 This was a contract entered
9 into four years ago with Sodexo and the
10 School District before our current
11 management team arrived. Since we
12 arrived, we have audited this contract
13 and found two things: good news and bad
14 news. The good news is, Team Clean,
15 which is an MBE and a WBE firm, has a 77
16 percent participation rate on this
17 contract, which is one of the highest
18 that we have and one of the highest for
19 local public-sector agencies. However,
20 Sodexo committed to an aggregate 83
21 percent participation rate when they made
22 the initial proposal for the contract.

23 Now, there have been a series
24 of contract amendments. Again, those all
25 occurred before Dr. Ackerman and our

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2 management team arrived. What we
3 confronted was a situation where this
4 contract is up for renewal and our
5 administration informed Sodexo that we
6 would not proceed with the next contract
7 renewal unless they had resolved their
8 dispute with their subcontractor, and the
9 parties have informed us that they have
10 now come to a mutually acceptable way of
11 resolving that dispute, and we're
12 delighted to see that result.

13 Consistent with what I said on
14 the record before, we had notified Sodexo
15 that if they could not resolve that
16 issue, we would not extend the contract
17 further.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.
19 Well, thank you for the update on that
20 important matter.

21 Let's move now to science
22 programming. In an April 11th article
23 posted on philly.com, and I quote,
24 "Science is gaining momentum in American
25 schools," end quote. It cited the School

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2 District has transformed a number of high
3 schools to focus on science.

4 We live in a region for sure
5 that has a high concentration of
6 healthcare and pharmaceutical companies.
7 That's the good news. What are some of
8 the other efforts being made to increase
9 student achievement, particularly in the
10 area of science, but if you broaden that
11 to include involvement in STEM-related
12 programs?

13 DR. ACKERMAN: We are in the
14 process of reviewing our science
15 curriculum and looking at some new career
16 tech academies that are STEM related. We
17 have somebody now working on a curriculum
18 that would focus on STEM-related
19 instructional materials for science
20 classes. And as we are anticipating the
21 redesign through the Promise Academy of
22 at least two of our high schools, we're
23 looking at science or science-related
24 academies in at least two of those high
25 schools.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And those
3 would be?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: University City
5 and we're in partnership -- are
6 developing partnerships now with
7 interested community organizations and
8 health-related fields, and Vaux.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And?
10 Forgive me.

11 DR. ACKERMAN: Vaux, V-A-U-X.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Vaux?

13 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm sorry.

14 That's my midwestern.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
16 okay. Okay, then. That takes care of
17 that.

18 You and I both had the good
19 fortune to be in the company of First
20 Lady Michelle Obama when she unveiled her
21 Let's Move program across the nation.
22 What are any additional steps the School
23 District is taking to further assist
24 young people around better food choices,
25 and if you could answer that as you speak

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2 about what the School District is now
3 doing around healthy school initiatives
4 around the lunch program, if you would.

5 DR. ACKERMAN: You want to talk
6 a little bit and then --

7 MR. MASCH: Yeah. I want to
8 ask Wayne Grasela, who is our Director of
9 Food Services, to come up, because we
10 have some good news in terms of some new
11 grant awards that we've just recently
12 received that are going to be focused
13 exactly on this initiative.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: And while Wayne
16 is coming up, Councilwoman Brown, I want
17 to thank you for sponsoring the bill that
18 labels foods in restaurants. I think I
19 want to thank you, because now I don't
20 want to go to restaurants, because my
21 favorite restaurants are places now that
22 some of my favorite foods are there for
23 me to see the caloric intake, and it's a
24 little frightening. So I think I thank
25 you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, I
3 thank you for the acknowledgment. Let me
4 just seize the moment again to thank my
5 colleagues who thought that a good
6 measure, and I appreciated the position
7 that other colleagues had to take around
8 that. At the end of the day, we got it
9 done, after 24 months of work. And a
10 little back story on that that you may
11 not be aware of is, my second year here I
12 looked at the fact that there were sodas
13 in schools, and Councilwoman Jannie
14 Blackwell and I introduced a resolution
15 suggesting that they need to come out of
16 schools, and after much conversation with
17 that industry and your predecessor, we
18 were able to make it happen. So that was
19 a precursor to the menu labeling bill.
20 We have more work to do.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
23 very welcome.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: I even notice
25 now when they don't have it. You want me

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2 to tell you the restaurant I was in over
3 the weekend? Not on camera, but I'll
4 tell you. They don't have the caloric
5 intake on --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Are they a
7 chain?

8 DR. ACKERMAN: No. No.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
10 then.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
14 morning, sir.

15 MR. GASELA: Good morning.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How are
17 you?

18 MR. GASELA: Wayne Gasela,
19 Senior Vice-President, Division of Food
20 Services.

21 First of all, I'd like to say
22 that the School District has probably the
23 most comprehensive wellness policies in
24 the nation currently. We only offer 100
25 percent fruit juice, milk and water as

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2 far as beverages, and if there's any
3 sodas in the schools, we're not offering
4 it. The children are bringing it in, but
5 we're working towards that.

6 Our snack guidelines are the
7 most restrictive in the nation currently
8 right now.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You said
10 the snack?

11 MR. GRASELA: Our snack
12 guidelines are the most restrictive in
13 the nation right now.

14 In terms of what -- we're doing
15 a lot of good things, but more recently,
16 we just entered, in concert with the
17 Philadelphia Department of Health, we
18 received a -- the Department of Health
19 received a \$10 million grant for --
20 approximately \$10 to \$15 million grant
21 for childhood obesity prevention. Part
22 of that, the District received
23 approximately 1.8 million, and some of it
24 is related to physical fitness and those
25 type of things and health-related issues,

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2 but the Food Service Division received
3 \$695,000, and a good portion of that is
4 going to go to menu labeling. And how
5 we're going to do that is, we're going to
6 install LED monitors over the serving
7 counters in all our full-service schools
8 initially and then eventually in all our
9 schools. And the purpose of that is to
10 not only to help the children understand
11 what it is we're offering and why we're
12 offering it, but, more importantly, to
13 encourage them to make healthier choices
14 when it comes to what they consume,
15 life-long eating habits in general.

16 But we did a couple other
17 things this year. Obviously we're
18 offering -- we're integrating more fruits
19 and vegetables in our -- we offer them
20 daily, fruits and vegetables. This year
21 we discontinued the use of our deep-fat
22 fryers, totally discontinued the use of
23 our deep-fat fryers. So we substituted
24 those products that we fried with
25 oven-baked type prepared products. So

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2 that's -- we're also sourcing a lot of
3 whole grain products, reduced fat
4 products, breakfast breads, pastas. Even
5 our pizza is a whole grain pizza, flour.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Bravo.

7 How long is the grant for?

8 MR. GASELA: The grant is for
9 two years, but the majority of it will be
10 front-loaded. We'd like to see those
11 monitors in place by Christmas.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that
13 would be systemwide or for specific
14 segments of the school system?

15 MR. GASELA: Well, we'd like
16 to put them in every school. There's
17 currently enough money do all our
18 full-service schools where we have a
19 broader menu.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.
21 Well, thank you very, very much for your
22 testimony.

23 MR. MASCH: We also have the
24 grant for the four schools for the fruit
25 and vegetable augment, which we also hope

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2 to expand.

3 MR. GRASELA: Thank you. Every
4 year we apply to Pennsylvania Department
5 of Education for fresh fruit and
6 vegetable grants, and what that basically
7 is is they give us \$40,000 to \$60,000 to
8 offer, in addition to the meals we serve,
9 cut-up fruits and vegetables. We do it
10 like a snack and we distribute it
11 throughout the school. Last year we had
12 two schools, Bluford and Turner and J.
13 Rhoads. Next year we have four schools,
14 Reynolds, Willard, Blankenburg and Welsh.
15 So that's another \$160,000 that we got to
16 provide fresh fruits and vegetables.

17 In addition, the ARRA stimulus
18 grant, we received \$345,000 to replace
19 serving lines, refrigerations and ovens
20 in four schools. So that's all -- and
21 that's to provide a better -- hopefully
22 provide a better meal.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of
24 information.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,

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2 Councilman Green. Point of information.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

4 I recently had occasion to meet
5 with some people from the School
6 District, including Mr. Masch, and one of
7 the issues that came up, we were talking
8 about the TV show with that British guy,
9 Jamie, and I asked about whole foods in
10 the schools, and I guess what I was told
11 was that it's all pre-prepared, and so
12 you just put it in the oven. In other
13 words, nothing fresh is being made at the
14 schools anymore. Is that correct?

15 MR. GRASELA: Well, we do a lot
16 of fresh fruits and vegetables, but most
17 of your proteins are pre-prepared, yes,
18 your beef products, your poultry
19 products, et cetera, yes.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. And
21 with respect to fruits and vegetables,
22 how much would it cost you to expand that
23 program to basically every low-income
24 school in the District?

25 MR. GRASELA: We currently

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2 offer fresh fruits and vegetables daily.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: At every
4 school?

5 MR. GASELA: At every school,
6 yeah.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And that's
8 from the State grant?

9 MR. GASELA: No. That's just
10 part of the menu.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: For
12 breakfast and lunch?

13 MR. GASELA: Well, juices for
14 breakfast. Mostly for lunch.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So it's --

16 MR. GASELA: In your
17 full-service schools, we offer it for
18 breakfast and lunch, yes.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So in the
20 non-full-service schools, the fruit that
21 people are getting in the morning is
22 juice?

23 MR. GASELA: It could be
24 juice, it could be yogurt. Our menus
25 follow the USDA patterns for grades 4

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2 through 12.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And do you
4 do any kind of nutritional educational
5 programming within the School District --

6 MR. GASELA: The District
7 has --

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- as part
9 of the curriculum?

10 MR. GASELA: The District has
11 the most nationally recognized nutrition
12 education program. We receive \$10
13 million from the federal and State for
14 doing nutrition education in the schools.
15 We have nutrition education programs in
16 176 buildings. It's all funded through
17 grants that we applied for. We have at
18 least a dozen partners, all the local
19 universities, Drexel, Temple, University
20 of Penn, The Food Trust, PCCY, and it
21 goes on and on, that help us with our
22 nutrition education, where they actually
23 go into the classroom and do that. It's
24 a nationally -- the USDA has recognized
25 it as a nationally renowned program.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we are
3 training our young people to stay away
4 from sugar-sweetened beverages?

5 MR. GASELA: We try to
6 encourage it as much as possible. What's
7 being taught in the classroom is
8 reinforced at the menu that we serve at
9 breakfast and lunch.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

11 MR. GASELA: By the way, under
12 Dr. Ackerman's guidance, we offer
13 breakfast to all students District-wide
14 at no cost every day.

15 MR. MASCH: If I could,
16 Councilman, I don't want to let one thing
17 go by in the discussion. I understand
18 that there's a concern about pre-plating
19 and moving away from food prepared on
20 site, and I want to commend, to those who
21 are interested in this issue, a recently
22 published book about school nutrition
23 programs called Free for All. It's
24 written by a woman named Janet
25 Poppendieck. She said the following, I

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2 assume that central kitchens and
3 satellite systems were inherently
4 inferior to food cooked on site, but it
5 turns out that central kitchens are far
6 more likely to be able to make at scale
7 fresh foods, control the use of
8 preservatives, sodium, coloring agents,
9 and they also have the purchasing power
10 to be able to buy nutritious meals within
11 the limits of what the federal government
12 provides to us, which is challenging,
13 because we do have basically a
14 self-funding system with federal grants
15 under the Child Nutrition Act.

16 So we do not accept the premise
17 that we have to have a contradiction
18 between central kitchens and healthy
19 food, but we do recognize that there is a
20 challenge to us to push our vendors, and
21 we are pushing them harder every year, to
22 do more to move in that direction. And
23 we do expect to see further improvement
24 in that area. We think that we're not
25 done yet.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you, Councilman.

4 Councilwoman Brown.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This is my
6 final question on this issue, and then
7 I'll punt the ball to others who might
8 have questions.

9 Chicago is light years ahead of
10 us, recently unveiling a model to
11 transform concrete schoolyards into green
12 spaces. My office has actually already
13 begun to do some research on this area to
14 see how we can have garden clubs -- well,
15 actually there's some schools that
16 already have garden clubs, including my
17 alma mater, Girls High.

18 So what is the School District
19 doing around urban gardening and
20 transforming spaces in school grounds to
21 gardens or green spaces for children to
22 play?

23 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm going to ask
24 Pat Henwood to come up. I can tell you
25 again that with our new Promise

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2 Academies, we're going to start there on
3 the green spaces initiative. We're going
4 to start with those schools, but there's
5 some other things that are planned in the
6 long term. And then, remember, we have
7 the master facilities planning process
8 that's coming up also.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For my own
10 understanding, the Promise Academies are
11 for elementary, middle and high?

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

14 DR. ACKERMAN: There are right
15 now five of them that have been
16 identified.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.

18 (Witness approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
21 morning.

22 MR. HENWOOD: Good morning.

23 Pat Henwood, Capital Programs.

24 We have instituted a campus
25 park program modeled after Chicago from a

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2 previous administration. We completed
3 about 25 campus parks throughout the
4 City, and we are working currently with
5 the Eagles Youth Blitz to provide some
6 green space at a selected location
7 annually in conjunction with Mural Arts.
8 Also, every major renovation project that
9 we do and every new construction project
10 that we do has designated campus space.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Green
12 space.

13 MR. HENWOOD: Green space, yes.
14 Also, with the Philadelphia Water
15 Department we are working collaboratively
16 to provide green space at all of our
17 locations. They have some funding
18 available. We don't have the full plan
19 yet, but we are working towards that full
20 plan.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you're
22 working with the Water Department?
23 Because I know Councilman Jones is keenly
24 aware of the dollars that have come to
25 the Water Department. You're part of a

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2 think tank team on how the Water
3 Department is going to use those dollars?

4 MR. HENWOOD: Correct. We've
5 been working with them for about a year.
6 Our first location I believe is Northeast
7 High School, which happens to be one of
8 our largest sites that will be affected.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You should
10 know one of the prevailing concerns about
11 the expenditure or use of those dollars
12 is making sure that neighborhood people
13 get opportunity to dig trees and plant
14 trees, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.
15 So as you have those conversations and
16 discussions, that needs to be present
17 always. It's unacceptable for
18 non-residential, non-Philadelphia folk,
19 to start with, and folks who don't live
20 in the community to miss out on that
21 opportunity.

22 Of the 25 campus park schools,
23 how do they become the lucky 25? What
24 reasoning goes into the identification of
25 those schools?

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2 MR. HENWOOD: Well, the 25 --
3 the plan for the 25 was handed to me to
4 implement --

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.

6 MR. HENWOOD: -- four years
7 ago, but the plan now is, we have to get
8 community input. We need the principal's
9 buy-in. We need the neighborhood, the
10 community to take ownership, and when we
11 get that commitment from the community
12 and the principal, we move forward, and,
13 of course, the funding.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely.

15 MR. MASCH: Councilwoman, I
16 think you may know that the City Water
17 Department is under an EPA requirement to
18 develop a citywide storm water runoff
19 plan. I mean, our problem right now is
20 we've got too much storm water that hits
21 concrete, can't be absorbed into the
22 ground, winds up creating sewer overflows
23 and pollution in terms of the water
24 supply. So our Capital Program Office is
25 a partner with the City, with the Water

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2 Department taking a lead, but this is a
3 School District component of that overall
4 citywide storm water runoff plan. But
5 the City and the EPA and the State
6 Department of Environmental Protection
7 believe -- and we think that they're
8 right -- that one of the quickest hits we
9 can do in the City to improve our
10 absorption capability and reduce the
11 amount of concrete for runoff is to
12 target schools, because we're in the
13 neighborhoods.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

15 MR. MASCH: And so we're going
16 to partner with them in an aggressive way
17 to try to help implement that plan as
18 quickly as possible.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We'll look
20 forward to the updates, if you will, as
21 that plan shapes itself.

22 Thank you for your testimony.

23 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Madam

25 Chair, I'll punt the ball and I'll circle

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2 back on the next round.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much.

5 May I note that at Sulzberger
6 School, for years there's been a storm
7 water project with students, and we have
8 wanted to expand that in a big way. It's
9 one of our RDA, Redevelopment Authority,
10 issues, because we would like to give
11 them land right next to the school to
12 expand that and allow them to take the
13 Mill Creek Farms on Haverford Avenue,
14 move them next to Sulzberger and expand
15 that program. So that's one of our RDA
16 issues, because that program has gone on
17 for many, many years and it does work
18 well, and we can only expand it if it's
19 right across the street, right next door
20 to the school.

21 So that's an idea whose time
22 has come. It's important, and youngsters
23 really like learning about it and it's
24 such a hands-on kind of thing, because
25 it's right outside their school.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Especially
3 if given the opportunity.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

5 Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you.

6 Councilman Jones.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair.

9 I was intrigued about some of
10 the possibilities of Success Centers and
11 wanted to find out if that was a career
12 guidance test that people take and how
13 you ferret out which careers are better
14 for which students and the mentorship
15 component, if that was a part of it. And
16 I had a follow-up to that, saying that we
17 have proposed Bill No. 100223, which is
18 an intern tax credit that might accompany
19 that, where interns might be even
20 compensated for experiences within
21 companies in the City of Philadelphia.

22 So we're going to make sure you
23 get copies of that. We can look forward
24 to any input that you might have on that,
25 but I wanted for you to spend a little

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2 time talking about those Success Centers
3 and which schools have them and what
4 happens if you're not in one of those
5 schools.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 MS. SCOTT: Good morning. My
9 name is Majeedah Scott, and this is my
10 second day as Interim Director for the
11 Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation
12 at the School District.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Your what?
14 Second day?

15 MS. SCOTT: Second day as
16 Interim Director for Multiple Pathways to
17 Graduation at the School District. We
18 manage the Student Success Centers.
19 Currently, there are 11 Student Success
20 Centers in the City. They are at
21 Bartram, University City, West
22 Philadelphia, Overbrook, Ben Franklin,
23 Simon Gratz, Lincoln, Germantown,
24 Fitzsimons, Edison and -- I'm forgetting
25 one. I'm sorry. It escapes me.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: I couldn't have
3 done that well, so...

4 MS. SCOTT: I'm sorry.

5 And these centers are funded
6 through the School District of
7 Philadelphia and also the Department of
8 Labor grants. The Student Success
9 Centers are a part of the Imagine 2014
10 plan. It is our goal that we would have
11 a Success Center or some resemblance of a
12 Success Center in every high school.

13 The centers do provide career
14 counseling, college preparation, academic
15 support, mentoring and social supports by
16 licensed social workers.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: So as you
18 take -- give me a little better example
19 of the process. A young person comes in,
20 takes an assessment test, and what
21 happens?

22 MS. SCOTT: Absolutely. And so
23 the Success Centers work with all the
24 students in a high school. What they
25 would do is, they would do activities in

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2 the classroom as well as in the actual
3 center. So around sort of career
4 exploration, there are a number of
5 different tools that we'll use to help a
6 young person determine what their
7 strengths are and what their passions
8 are, and then we match those inventories
9 such as the Holland or even for younger
10 students, we'll use something like the
11 Career Game, just inventories that help
12 them make that assessment on where their
13 strengths and their passions lie.
14 We match that with the database
15 of jobs that are available through the
16 Department of Labor, and we give students
17 the opportunity to sort of look at all
18 those options. They look at how long it
19 takes to prepare for those careers, if
20 it's a college degree that is in order,
21 and we look at the salary for those
22 careers, and we sort of look at the whole
23 occupational background on a career. So
24 what it takes to become that career, how
25 long it takes to prepare, what the

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2 working conditions are for the career and
3 what kind of salaries they can expect.
4 So it's a full exploration. We allow
5 young people to really do the exploration
6 on their own, with some support from a
7 career specialist.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I
9 think when you first came on board, it
10 might have been right around that time,
11 we talked about this concept and also how
12 the Germans have a mentorship program
13 where kids from actual high schools
14 actually sit with people in auto
15 engineering and actually work under them
16 as apprentices, half a day school, half a
17 day practical knowledge, learning, and
18 they matriculate right into the workplace
19 at the bottom rung of the totem pole, but
20 they do get the practical work experience
21 that is attractive to the employer.

22 I think with this and some
23 monetary incentive if we can compensate
24 young people, that this may go a long way
25 of doing two things. One, pairing

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2 workforce with a feeder from your public
3 schools that allow talent, skilled
4 talent, to stay in Philadelphia, which
5 might be a novel, novel, novel approach.

6 So I'm encouraged by this and
7 want to kind of pursue that going forward
8 to see how and track this to see how that
9 translates quantitatively into young
10 people that may not all go to college,
11 that may be blue collar, green collar
12 folk that wind up staying and having
13 wage-earning, family-supporting jobs
14 based on the educational experience.

15 So we look forward to that.
16 And with that, how are we doing with the
17 blue collar component of our education
18 process? How are we matching folk to
19 jobs that are, as I understand, becoming
20 hard to fill by skilled, with-your-hands,
21 get-dirty-every-day kind of workforce?
22 How are we kind of maturing that?

23 DR. ACKERMAN: The District in
24 our Imagine 2014, we have put in that
25 plan upgrading our career technical

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2 programs, and we're already in the
3 modernization program at -- see, I
4 couldn't even remember the one.

5 MR. MASCH: Are you talking
6 about Dobbins?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Dobbins. Sorry.
8 She did 12. She named 12 schools. I
9 couldn't get one.

10 MS. SCOTT: Frankford was the
11 other one.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Frankford was
13 the other one. She just remembered.

14 And we are -- in the plan we
15 also have plans for at least three more
16 technical high schools between now and
17 the end of 2014. We're also in the
18 process of revisiting our compact with
19 the labor unions so that we can get more
20 opportunities for our young people,
21 project-labor agreement, the
22 project-labor agreement. That's up now
23 for renewal, and we want to make sure
24 that there are more ample opportunities
25 for young people to work side by side

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2 with some of our labor unions and to be
3 clear that we're looking at young people
4 who are in our schools, not just
5 graduates of our schools. Because we've
6 had some difficulty in making some of
7 those internships and apprenticeships
8 available for our students who are in
9 school now.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: My concern
11 on that is that I understand the State
12 budget drastically cuts vocational
13 education by about \$5 million, and every
14 kid isn't on their way to Duke. Some
15 kids are on their way to a construction
16 site, and we need to prepare both tracks,
17 and I don't want that to be lost as an
18 opportunity for some young people.
19 There's some young thundercats that are
20 standing on corners that know they will
21 never wind up at Morehouse or Duke, but
22 they do know if I could work with my
23 hands, I could choose a life that is
24 respectable.

25 DR. ACKERMAN: Right.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: And we need
3 to provide them that opportunity.

4 DR. ACKERMAN: I absolutely
5 agree with you.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just don't
7 want us to throw that out -- that baby
8 out with the bath water.

9 I will yield on this round and
10 come around with another line of
11 questioning, Madam Chair.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
13 sir.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
15 very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you. Thank you very much.

18 Councilwoman Sanchez.

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
20 you.

21 Good morning.

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I wanted
24 to ask a few questions around the
25 Renaissance schools. And first I must

1 5/11/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 start with commending the School District
3 team. Having lived the restructuring
4 process at Olney, I could tell you that
5 this is a whole different ball of wax,
6 and so the road show is pretty intense
7 and I've had the opportunity to sit
8 through the road shows in my district,
9 and really feel very encouraged by the
10 level of commitment by the outside
11 providers and their sensitivity to the
12 parents. So I just really want to put
13 that on the record.

14 I was not -- I was a little
15 scared about what we were going to engage
16 in in that process, but I feel very
17 encouraged. My parents feel very
18 supported in this. And even though I may
19 not always agree with their premises, I
20 think the process is very important. So
21 I want to commend the staff, Ben and all
22 the team who put that together.

23 I wanted to ask you, this is
24 the first phase of Renaissance schools,
25 and I know we talked about there's a lot

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2 of schools. I'm very concerned about the
3 high schools, because the Promise Academy
4 or the Renaissance schools doesn't
5 address the high schools. We had
6 hearings about high schools when you
7 first came on board.

8 What's our plan for high
9 schools and will that be the second
10 phase?

11 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, we have
12 actually three high schools in the
13 Renaissance school.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: You do?

15 DR. ACKERMAN: Yeah, we do.
16 Vaux, University -- is it Vaux? I'm
17 going to try to pronounce this the
18 Philadelphia way. Vaux and West Philly.
19 So we have three. And we imagine --
20 well, we intend every year to have high
21 schools in our -- so we'll have another
22 round next year of Renaissance schools
23 and we'll see some more high schools.

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: What was
25 the determining factor? All of my

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2 schools are in Corrective Action III or
3 empowerment schools, all my high schools.
4 I was wondering why none of those were
5 selected. Is there a thought?

6 DR. ACKERMAN: We took the
7 lowest performing schools. They were
8 10's on the performance index. So we
9 admit that being a 9 is low performing,
10 but we started with the 10's, and you'll
11 probably see us move to the 9's and
12 you'll probably see some of your schools,
13 your high schools, at that point as we
14 move to the next level. But we started
15 with the 10's and we're going to go up to
16 probably 10's, 9's and 8's. We're hoping
17 all the other schools are moving up.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Right.
19 Can you tell me what the difference
20 financially is between the Renaissance
21 and the Promise Academy for the schools?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: The financial
23 amount for both will be the same.
24 Whatever we do for all of those schools
25 will be given -- if the schools become

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2 charter, they'll get the same monies that
3 these other schools are getting.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: What --

5 DR. ACKERMAN: They'll be
6 translated into money.

7 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: What's
8 the additional resources you're looking
9 at at the schools?

10 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, facelift
11 facilities-wise. Certainly we'll be
12 working on those schools so that they're
13 conducive to a strong instructional
14 program. As we talked about before,
15 Saturday school, longer school days,
16 longer school year, more opportunities
17 for enrichment, not only -- Parent
18 Universities will be in all of those
19 schools, so the parents will be engaged.

20 We're actually asking parents
21 to sign contracts for service and
22 volunteerism in those schools. That
23 doesn't cost anything, you know, in terms
24 of a dollar sign, but it is a different
25 take on how we want parents to be

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2 involved.

3 They will have programs in --

4 instructional programs that have been

5 proven in terms of research based. They

6 will have next year, along with the

7 empowerment schools -- they'll get all of

8 the resources that they got as

9 empowerment schools, the parent

10 ombudsmen, all of those things stay.

11 What we'll look at is intensifying the

12 instructional program and adding programs

13 in that work. But it's looking at the

14 entire school, the schedule.

15 The high schools will have a

16 zero hour as well as an extra hour at the

17 end of the day, which has a price tag on

18 it also, but we're trying to give young

19 people an opportunity to catch up and to

20 accelerate forward, which means that

21 they'll get an opportunity to take extra

22 classes also.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: In terms

24 of the teaching piece, there's some

25 concerns that I wanted to clarify for the

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2 record. You have a teacher freeze now.
3 I mean, congratulations on those two
4 teacher fairs. I thought that was great,
5 and I know Tomas Hanna, you worked on
6 recruitment for so many years, it was a
7 major achievement.

8 As it relates to the
9 Renaissance schools, does that mean that
10 we're going to -- the providers are going
11 to be able to do -- because I heard in
12 the different presentations, every
13 provider has a different goal. Some said
14 we're going to keep 50 percent of the
15 teachers. Some people said everybody has
16 to apply.

17 How are we going to ensure that
18 with the hiring freeze we just don't
19 recycle some of the low-performing
20 teachers?

21 DR. ACKERMAN: The hiring
22 freeze is for all of the schools outside
23 of the Renaissance school or Promise
24 Academies initiative, and so we're
25 talking about five or six schools. We

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2 believe that one school may come back.

3 That's Potter Thomas.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Yeah.

5 Can we talk a little bit about that?

6 Again -- and I attended Potter Thomas. I

7 don't know if Tomas' mom was the

8 principal then. That just tells you how

9 far back we go.

10 I have a little concern about

11 the option. And from this perspective, I

12 mean, again, those parents, incredible

13 group of folks. I think there's a

14 difference between giving people choices

15 and giving them a responsibility around

16 making that type of choice. Potter

17 Thomas, post the dismantling of the

18 bilingual program, just went downhill,

19 but prior to that, particularly during

20 Tomas' mom's leadership there, was a good

21 school.

22 So I'm a little concerned that

23 because of the lobbying that happens

24 between principal -- and I met the

25 principal. She seems very

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2 well-intentioned. A lot of great
3 teachers there that I personally know.
4 I'm a little concerned that the lobbying
5 one way or the other from the teachers
6 and parents feeling like if they vote for
7 Renaissance, then they're voting against
8 their teacher that they like. And so I
9 really want to caution us that we give
10 them choices, but not a responsibility
11 and then a year later, we're having the
12 same conversation about the other way. I
13 know that we want to be as democratic as
14 possible, but sometimes some of these
15 decisions --

16 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, it's
17 tough, and all of the schools have had to
18 go through that, believe me. I just met
19 last night with one of them. And most
20 schools aren't used to parents having
21 real authentic autonomy and
22 decision-making. They're used to -- and
23 so the reason that I insisted that Potter
24 Thomas go through this process is, I
25 really did want them to look at all their

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2 choices, because I felt that tension that
3 was there that to become a Promise
4 Academy without looking at others.

5 So I hope that they will, the
6 parents in particular -- that's why
7 they're 51 percent of the School Advisory
8 Council are parents. I hope that they
9 will look at all of them. That's what
10 I've said to them, because they've tried
11 to pressure me to go back, and I said, I
12 want you to look at all of the options,
13 because there's some good options for you
14 there. So we'll see what they -- it goes
15 back and forth.

16 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: They've
17 been through four principals in five
18 years, so there's this issue around every
19 time they start liking their principal --
20 because the first six months, they're
21 doing a song and dance, the courtship.
22 So, again, they're very well-intentioned.
23 I think the principal there is very good,
24 and I thought last year's principal, as I
25 expressed to you, had a lot of potential.

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2 It's always about the supports and the
3 pieces that you put around it.

4 So we'll be looking at that
5 particular one, because I think what we
6 do or not do in there could put us back a
7 year or two.

8 DR. ACKERMAN: I agree.

9 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And
10 that's important.

11 DR. ACKERMAN: We're watching
12 that school.

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And the
14 strongest component again of the success
15 at Potter Thomas will be the bilingual
16 education piece. That's the largest
17 concentration of first-generation Spanish
18 speakers. So that's a challenge. Again,
19 this is -- it's a whole new ball game,
20 but I did want to put on the record how
21 different this whole process has been
22 than when we went through the
23 restructuring of schools and how
24 important that is. I think -- I don't
25 want to minimize that importance of that

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2 initiative.

3 I wanted to add one thing as it
4 related to that, the healthy initiatives.
5 Clearly, I'm very pleased at what Welsh
6 has been doing and Fairhill School, which
7 is where the First Lady visited. I was
8 wondering about how we are spreading that
9 throughout the curriculum. Was there
10 anything different? I know we've always
11 had a health initiative at the School
12 District. I'm very curious to see how
13 that's being infused in the curriculum to
14 support it.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: Linda, who is
16 Linda Chen, who is Deputy for Teaching
17 and Learning.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ:
19 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown, most of
20 these initiatives are being piloted in
21 the 7th Councilmanic District, I want you
22 to know, these healthy initiatives.
23 We're very proud of them.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The rest
25 of the City will follow your lead.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

3 (Witness approached witness
4 table.)

5 MS. CHEN: Good morning. I'm
6 Linda Chen. I'm Deputy Chief of Teaching
7 and Learning. And can you just restate
8 your question again?

9 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I wanted
10 to know how the healthy initiatives is
11 being infused throughout the curriculum.

12 MS. CHEN: We have -- it is
13 infused through the regular health
14 curriculum that's taught by our health
15 and phys ed teachers. In addition, we
16 have health educators, as Wayne Grasela
17 mentioned earlier, in about 176 of our
18 schools, and that has been a nationally
19 recognized program.

20 Most recently, we've partnered
21 with The Food Trust and the National
22 Dairy Council around an initiative where
23 students were leading the charge in terms
24 of nutrition education in their
25 buildings. So they worked with cafeteria

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2 staff and their teachers and their peers
3 to really promote healthy eating and
4 physical fitness.

5 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I want
6 to encourage us to continue that. I
7 think as we talk about your capital plan,
8 just having water fountains and the
9 importance of water, it's really basic,
10 simple stuff and it doesn't cost a whole
11 lot of money, but it really goes a long
12 way. So thank you.

13 One last thing. Any updates --
14 I know that we did some school closures
15 around our feeder patterns. Again, I'm
16 busting at the seams all over the
17 district, so I have a great concern about
18 our future feeder pattern. Have we made
19 progress on that?

20 DR. ACKERMAN: That's an
21 important part of our master facilities
22 planning process, and as I said, our goal
23 is to have this completed by December.
24 We'll come back to you. And we'll
25 also -- I'd like to invite you to have

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2 members of your staff be a part of this
3 committee also.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: On
5 feeder patterns, okay.

6 One last thing as it related to
7 the Success Academies. As a successful
8 participant of a career exploration
9 program and having the opportunity to do
10 that as early as Year '14 --I know that
11 Councilman Jones has a bill around the
12 internships -- I'm really interested in
13 any other ways we can help support that.
14 I know I have students in my office all
15 year long and in the summer too, figuring
16 out what other things we could be doing
17 here in Council to help promote that.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: We'd be
20 happy to do that.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: We will do that.

22 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
23 you, Madam Chair.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're
25 quite welcome.

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2 Councilman Kenney.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,

4 Madam Chair.

5 Good morning.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Two things

8 I'd like you to check out for me. First,
9 as it relates to capital projects and the
10 worthwhile goals of minority inclusion
11 and female inclusion, majority firms
12 often run into the problem of not having
13 enough minority firms that are
14 pre-qualified by the District. I don't
15 know why that is the case, whether it's a
16 very difficult process, whether people
17 aren't aware of it, but when firms are
18 calling around trying to find their
19 minority partners to make their goals, a
20 lot of them tell folks that they're not
21 pre-qualified. So I don't know what the
22 reason for that is, and I'm sure you
23 don't know the answer right now, but if
24 there's some way to expedite that process
25 to do some type of outreach, fairs,

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2 whatever, to get these firms,
3 architecture, engineering firms, involved
4 in the process, it makes it much easier
5 to meet the goals. And I think it's been
6 very difficult to meet the goals because
7 there's just not enough of them around.
8 That speaks to a whole other problem of
9 STEM and what we're doing getting kids
10 science, technology and all that stuff,
11 and engineering, and that's a longer-term
12 goal.

13 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But the
15 firms that are available for use now to
16 partner with and to mentor are not
17 pre-qualified, many of them, and it's
18 really difficult to find them. So if you
19 could ask your folks to take a look at
20 that, that would be helpful.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: I will.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And half of
23 Councilwoman Blackwell -- I didn't say
24 anything to her about this yet, but while
25 I recognize that West Philly is a

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2 Renaissance school and you're going to do
3 what you need to do to get that school
4 straightened out, within the school is an
5 extremely, as you know, extremely popular
6 and well-known, nationally recognized
7 club, hybrid automotive club, and I
8 really want to make sure you protect
9 them, because -- I mean, I've -- when I
10 first met those kids, I was knocked over.
11 I went there on a Saturday in the summer
12 and the place was filled with kids
13 wanting to learn, telling me about things
14 that they've been doing. I had no clue
15 what they were talking about, but I was
16 just nodding my head and thanking them
17 for exposing me to this. And they've
18 been in here before and been honored
19 nationally, and I know within the process
20 of Renaissance school, whatever happens
21 there is going to happen, but I really
22 need you to make sure that you shelter
23 them as best as you can.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: They're on my
25 radar screen.

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2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Great.

3 Thank you.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much, Councilman.

7 Councilwoman Brown, you're
8 next.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
10 I was not following closely
11 enough regarding the hiring freeze. What
12 was your response to the question where
13 does the hiring freeze apply?

14 DR. ACKERMAN: It applies to
15 all of the schools but the Renaissance
16 schools or the Promise Academies, because
17 the Renaissance schools -- the other
18 schools will go under a charter provider.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so
20 what is the recourse for principals who
21 may have already made a commitment to
22 teachers?

23 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, what we've
24 asked them is to put that on hold right
25 now. The problem that we have is with

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2 the -- until we stabilize and know where
3 the teachers are going to go, they all
4 have to be interviewed to go to different
5 positions. Some of the principals --
6 sorry. Some of the teachers in our
7 Renaissance schools are great teachers.
8 So I don't want people to assume that
9 because they're in a Renaissance school,
10 that they're not a great teacher.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Some of them are
13 going to want to come back. Some can't
14 because the new schedule for the longer
15 day and the longer year doesn't work with
16 them. These are great teachers. They're
17 going to make other choices.

18 What we want to do is that
19 those young people get a fair -- I mean,
20 those teachers get a fair opportunity to
21 interview for jobs that are open first.
22 And they have to interview, so nobody has
23 to take them, but we want them at least
24 to get the opportunity to interview
25 first, and then we'll open it up again.

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2 But that would be a problem if we just --
3 we didn't -- because people just have a
4 tendency to say all those teachers are
5 bad. They won't even look at them. So
6 we wanted to protect their right to be
7 given an interview, to be given an
8 interview first, and then we can open it
9 up. So we've asked principals to --
10 we've put this hiring freeze in.

11 And the other thing we don't
12 want, especially in these economic times,
13 is to have a lot of teachers, an overage
14 of teachers because people didn't pick
15 them because they thought they were
16 tainted by the Renaissance label. So
17 that's what that was about, trying to be
18 proactive on behalf of those teachers who
19 work in those schools and deserve an
20 opportunity to get an interview for open
21 spots, but to be fiscally responsible
22 also.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely.

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you
3 want to comment further?

4 MS. MATTHEWS: Yes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
6 state your name for the record.

7 MS. MATTHEWS: My name is
8 Estelle Matthews. I am the Chief Talent
9 and Development Officer.

10 We're also going to hold a job
11 fair for the current teachers in the
12 system, just for them, and that job fair
13 will probably take place on the 21st, if
14 that's a Saturday, Saturday after next.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: When you
16 say currently in the system, you mean
17 currently teaching, not have applied?

18 MS. MATTHEWS: Current teachers
19 in our system that have been force
20 transferred.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: In the
22 Renaissance.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Oh, in the
24 Renaissance schools, okay. Thank you for
25 your testimony.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: Can I --

3 MS. MATTHEWS: We actually
4 looked at the data for those who have
5 been site selected already, and the
6 majority of the teachers that have been
7 site selected are already teachers in our
8 system. They're not new teachers. It
9 was a very small percentage, maybe 15 of
10 those site selected were new teachers,
11 but the majority were internal teachers
12 already.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

14 DR. ACKERMAN: Can I say
15 something? Because I know there was much
16 to be made about the fact that we've had
17 these job fairs, and I think they have
18 been fantastic. We had fewer teachers
19 retire this year also, much fewer, about
20 400 teachers so far. Usually we'd have
21 1,000 in the course of -- now, maybe the
22 economic times and people aren't willing
23 at this point to retire. But, again,
24 looking at all the data, we had those two
25 goals in mind. We wanted to be fair to

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2 those teachers who have a right to work
3 here and interview and to be fiscally
4 responsible, on the other hand, while at
5 the same time making sure we had enough
6 teachers in our pool so that we could
7 open school like we did last year with
8 very few openings.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That needs
10 to be commended and should not go
11 unrecognized.

12 Could we please have your
13 professional speak about this new --
14 first of all, is this a new department,
15 Institutional Advancement and Strategic
16 Partnerships?

17 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes, it is a new
18 department. Actually, we've had it as an
19 isolated department under Strategic
20 Partnerships, but we wanted to bring all
21 of our abilities to garner inside the
22 District -- I mean, outside the District
23 resources. So this is an opportunity for
24 us to put all of our grant writing
25 together. It's now all over the District

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2 and there's no coherent strategy for how
3 we go for or write grants.

4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 DR. ACKERMAN: This is Lee
7 Nunery, and I could have him tell you
8 about his job.

9 MR. NUNERY: Good morning.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
11 morning.

12 MR. NUNERY: It's been about
13 five weeks, I guess, since I joined the
14 District, so I've got a little bit more
15 tenure than my other colleague, but it's
16 been terrific to be with the District and
17 to run this newly formed unit,
18 Institutional Advancement and Strategic
19 Partnerships.

20 We're concentrating, as
21 Dr. Ackerman said, on a number of
22 different things, including how to gather
23 resources efficiently, how to build our
24 alliances and our relationships and
25 maybe, more importantly, to create some

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2 new programming that will attract new
3 resources. To date, we have accomplished
4 about \$67 million in total funding
5 against the \$60 million goal.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So those
7 are new dollars?

8 MR. NUNERY: Those are new
9 dollars and/or repeats of grants that we
10 compete for. And increasingly, as Mike
11 Masch said yesterday, the world of grants
12 is becoming competitive either from the
13 federal government and/or from private
14 sources. So we have to be much more
15 organized and well-placed in terms of how
16 we go after those sources.

17 What is great about the folks
18 that I've come to work with is that they
19 already have a satisfaction rate of 85
20 percent from principals and from central
21 office based on survey in terms of being
22 good or excellent resources. Our hit
23 rate is about 75 percent, so --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What kind
25 of rate?

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2 MR. NUNERY: Our hit rate, our
3 success rate, is about 75 percent. So
4 three-quarters of the time that we go
5 after a grant, we are successful in
6 obtaining those funds.

7 But that means that there's a
8 lot more that's expected in order to make
9 sure that Phases One and Two of Imagine
10 2014 get accomplished, and we're well on
11 our way.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The parent
13 ombudsman initiative, how -- are those
14 Title I dollars, or no?

15 DR. ACKERMAN: They're Title I
16 dollars.

17 MR. NUNERY: Yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So that
19 suggests then that there is no end window
20 in the continuation of that program?

21 DR. ACKERMAN: No. That's
22 right.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Was that
24 not a new initiative under your
25 leadership, Dr. Ackerman?

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: It was. It was.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Can you
4 give us an update on that?

5 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, the parent
6 ombudsman position, because I really
7 believe that parent involvement is to
8 critical to sustain change in a school
9 system, was -- what we found in our
10 lowest performing schools, and we call
11 them our empowerment schools, we found
12 that those schools had very low parent
13 involvement and the parents weren't
14 engaged. We wanted the parents to be
15 engaged, and we believe that having
16 somebody on the staff of a school or in a
17 regional office or even in my office -- I
18 have a parent ombudsman in my office --
19 somebody who can reach out to those
20 parents, visit them in their homes, take
21 them to the place that they need to go to
22 get glasses for their children, these --
23 the people who work in schools as parent
24 ombudsmen are extraordinary people.
25 Their jobs are hard. They don't work in

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2 a traditional 8:30 to 3:00 job. They're
3 in those homes in the evening, on the
4 weekends. And I can't say enough about
5 this program, but neither can the
6 principals in schools. And, in fact, we
7 see that some of our other schools are
8 now hiring parent ombudsmen out of their
9 funds, because they've made such a
10 tremendous difference in engaging
11 parents.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, I
13 need to underscore that and report that
14 I'm very much aware of that, having
15 spoken with principals who have them in
16 their school, and they -- you could
17 easily equate them to social workers that
18 become extended eyes and ears for the
19 school in trying to wrap your arms around
20 young people who are lacking some of
21 those supports.

22 DR. ACKERMAN: And the parents
23 will share with the parent ombudsmen, who
24 are often parents, things that they won't
25 share with the staff, the principal and

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2 the teachers because they're embarrassed
3 or they don't want -- they don't want
4 anybody to know their personal
5 situations, but they will share it with
6 the parent ombudsmen and they see that
7 person as really somebody there for them.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So is
9 Title I a stand-alone entity or will it
10 also fall under your leadership?

11 DR. ACKERMAN: The Title I, the
12 compliance piece, will fall under -- the
13 compliance piece, making sure that we are
14 following the rules and regulations, will
15 fall under --

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
17 Mr. Nunery.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Mr. Nunery. I
19 thought you said Nutter. But the actual
20 program piece is in another part of the
21 organization. The ombudsmen actually
22 fall under our Parent and Community
23 Engagement.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

25 Councilman Green, you raised

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2 questions yesterday about the early
3 childhood centers; is that not so? I
4 don't want to repeat if you already
5 covered that topic.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I covered it
7 a little bit, Councilwoman.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Are there
9 plans to extend the offerings of the
10 child care?

11 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Could you
13 just let us know what they are?

14 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, there are
15 two. The parent -- I mean, the child
16 care centers, I believe there are five
17 scheduled over the next five years.
18 We've opened one last year -- or this
19 year. We'll open another one this year.
20 One every year we'll open. Those are our
21 plans.

22 They're regional early
23 childhood centers. And then we'll have
24 the Parent Resource Centers where parents
25 can come in, get their children assessed

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2 if they're immigrant children, families
3 who don't speak English, and then the
4 whole enrollment process will take place
5 at the Parent Centers. Then we have
6 Parent Resource Centers where parents can
7 come in and pick up books and other
8 materials to work with their children at
9 home.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, to
11 follow up on Councilwoman Sanchez's
12 interest raised around the fact that the
13 seams of her district are exploding, is
14 one, when you look at strategically, in
15 her Councilmanic District as well?

16 DR. ACKERMAN: There will be
17 one in that district. We are looking at
18 where there are demographics that show
19 that there is a growth of population or
20 there is a high need.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Previous
22 testimony, your young professional said
23 that there are 176 schools of a total of
24 what? The young lady that was there
25 prior to Mr. Tomas. She said there were

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2 176 schools. What are the total number
3 of schools?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: Two hundred and
5 sixty-seven schools.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So --

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Next year there
8 will be 265, because we're closing two.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So in
10 instances where you have extraordinary
11 programs and that they're not systemwide,
12 what are some of the factors that you
13 consider that help those schools gain
14 that opportunity, and what role do
15 principals have in that process?

16 DR. ACKERMAN: You mean in
17 gaining schools that are successful?

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Successful
19 as it relates to the additional
20 programming.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm sorry. I
22 don't quite understand.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm trying
24 not to answer the question while I ask
25 it.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: You can answer
3 it. It's okay.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is it fair
5 to say that where you have exceedingly
6 strong leadership in the school; i.e.,
7 principals, that you have less incidence
8 of young people in the principal's
9 office, you have stronger parent
10 associations there? There are other
11 indicators that might reflect that but
12 for this strong principal, these things
13 might not be happening.

14 DR. ACKERMAN: Absolutely. I
15 think that -- my third core belief is
16 that victory is in the classroom, but
17 it's facilitated by a strong principal.
18 I really believe that. And I show you a
19 good school, I'll show you not only good
20 teachers, but I'll show you an
21 extraordinary principal who knows how to
22 work with those teachers and the school.
23 So you're absolutely right.

24 One of the things we've done
25 is, in the School Performance Index,

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2 we've not only identified our lowest
3 performing schools, we've identified our
4 highest performing schools. We call them
5 vanguard schools, and we're using those
6 schools as examples of what good schools
7 look like. And they're not all the
8 special admit schools, believe it or not.
9 They're actually schools -- a lot of them
10 are schools that look like the
11 Renaissance schools, or they used to, and
12 I think that's important. And when we
13 took our parents on their bus trips in
14 the District, we took them to some of
15 those schools to say, These schools have
16 the same student population as your
17 school, but they're achieving at higher
18 levels, what's going on in those schools.
19 And we actually gave parents a little
20 script to check to see what they saw.
21 What did you see, was it strong in that
22 school. So we gave them a cheat sheet so
23 they would know what they were looking
24 at.
25 I think we have to continue to

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2 do that to show schools and -- to show
3 the parents what schools look like that
4 are really high-achieving schools, what
5 the principals are doing, what the
6 teachers are doing, what the children are
7 doing in those classrooms. And it was
8 interesting, because parents have said to
9 me that that was a fascinating process,
10 to get a chance to go into a school
11 that's really working, with young people
12 who look like the young people in their
13 child's school, but they saw a very
14 different school. Even when they took
15 the tours of the charter schools, I think
16 they went to Aspira, they went to
17 Mastery, they loved those tours, and I
18 have found that they just don't know
19 because they've not seen what great
20 schools look like.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, I
22 believe that covers all of my questions.
23 Let me ask that you continue to keep
24 Council informed about opportunities to
25 be engaged and what's happening

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2 throughout the District, and I personally
3 commend you for the enormous mountain you
4 have climbed with the 2014.

5 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
7 very much.

8 Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you. You're very welcome.

11 Councilman Jones.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

13 And you show great endurance.

14 Two days of this is more than I think I
15 could bear.

16 A couple of quick questions.

17 Last year we talked about joint
18 developments, and in context it was about
19 better planning between your
20 organization, the City of Philadelphia
21 and other organizations on how to develop
22 capital buildings, infrastructure and put
23 programs where people are.

24 To that end, I wanted to find
25 out -- you had mentioned in your

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2 testimony that there would be a committee
3 looking at that, and I do know that
4 you're going into your capital formation
5 planning phase. What I would love to
6 look at is areas where we could get more
7 out of capital investment, both in the
8 City's point of view, whether it is a
9 school that shares space with a college
10 where adults are educated at in evening
11 hours and young people are in the day, or
12 a health center, recreation centers, and
13 to kind of, in these tough economic times
14 when the public is looking to us to be
15 creative and be resourceful by way of
16 spending their dollars, how that has
17 progressed.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I'm going
19 to ask Tomas to talk about some of the
20 City collaborations, but we are still
21 very much supportive and want to be
22 engaged in how to use joint uses of
23 space. We have 43,000 extra seats. I
24 think there are things that we could do
25 without closing schools. There are

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2 combined spaces that we can use for the
3 City services. My thoughts are, as
4 yours, if you have those services in the
5 schools, then you have a captive
6 audience, and we're serving the same
7 clients.

8 I also want to talk about the
9 fact that we are working with PHA on the
10 development of the recreational center,
11 the Lucien Blackwell Recreational Center.
12 The District is -- but it's come a long
13 way. We now finally have -- we're moving
14 forward, but it's a great project for
15 what we can do if we work with other
16 agencies. And that's not -- that's the
17 first big project that we're getting off
18 the ground with PHA, but we have -- the
19 City Recreation will help us with it, but
20 actually the building of it is going to
21 be between the District and PHA. And
22 that's not the -- that's the first, not
23 the only project that we're going to
24 undertake with PHA. They're actually
25 going to help us with one of the -- with

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2 University City as one of the models -- I
3 mean, the partners in their turnaround.

4 So it can happen. It is
5 happening. I know we have some other
6 things that we've done that Tomas will
7 talk about, because we have been working
8 with the City on some of these joint
9 collaborative opportunities, these
10 opportunities to collaborate together.

11 MR. HANNA: Sure. Thank you.
12 Tomas Hanna, Chief of Staff.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Before you
14 start, this is in conjunction with my
15 earlier question about the vo-tech
16 schools and as we look at areas like
17 Randolph Skill Center that has an aging
18 infrastructure, outdated probably a bit,
19 not as techie as it should be, as we
20 design new vo-tech schools, that we can
21 incorporate, inculcate these services in
22 our design.

23 So as you speak to these
24 collaborations with the Health
25 Department, rec centers and others, PHA,

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2 we should keep in mind a couple of
3 things. One, where populations are
4 growing, where they are shrinking, and
5 keep demand where it is growing and where
6 it is shrinking in our planning phase.

7 DR. ACKERMAN: One of the other
8 things I wanted to say in relationship to
9 our focus on CTE schools as we are -- for
10 next year we have in our budget a new
11 position and it's a Deputy's position, a
12 Deputy Chief position that will look --
13 will be there specifically to guide us
14 into the next decade in developing and
15 modernizing and updating our career
16 technical high schools. So that's a new
17 position that's going to be in the
18 District for next year.

19 MR. HANNA: Again, Tomas Hanna,
20 Chief of Staff.

21 Thank you for the question.
22 There are a number of areas where we've
23 been working with our partners with the
24 City. I'll give you a couple of examples
25 that were at a high level, sort of made

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2 it to the middle part of the
3 organization, and now we're sort of
4 diving into schools.

5 Recently, the District hosted
6 with DHS a town hall meeting where we
7 were able to bring our ten Regional
8 Superintendents and their key staffs,
9 their regional parent ombudsmen and other
10 positions in their offices that support
11 parents regarding human services and
12 other types of supports. And we started
13 a very good conversation around how stuff
14 should work, right? What we learned
15 shortly thereafter during a principal's
16 roundtable with the Superintendent was
17 that while that discussion was very rich
18 and important, we need to figure out if
19 we're figuring out how to get those folks
20 to talk to principals and lead teachers
21 and other folks in buildings to ensure
22 that the connection happens. Because we
23 know that change happens in schools.
24 That's where the young people are. So
25 we've, over the last three years, talked

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2 at the Commissioner's level, at the
3 Superintendant's level in terms of what
4 needs to be happening around the
5 Department of Human Services, what needs
6 to be happening with the courts, working
7 much more closely with Judge Dougherty in
8 terms of attendance and truancy. But the
9 bottom line is, how does change happen at
10 the school level, and we need to have the
11 conversation going north-south. We've
12 gotten to a much better place with the
13 data sharing and things of that nature,
14 so we're very encouraged there, but,
15 again, when we met with our principals
16 and realized that some of the information
17 wasn't filtering down, we realized that
18 there was a step we're missing. We're
19 working to correct that.

20 Within the next few weeks,
21 we're going to a sampling of our school
22 principals and their key staff to come to
23 the table and talk to the leaders of our
24 City partners so that we have a sense of
25 what needs to be happening.

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2 Another area, the
3 Superintendent mentioned Summer Learning
4 and More, our expanded summer
5 opportunities. We're working closely
6 again with the City to align the work of
7 the out-of-school-time work that's
8 happened, so that the after-school
9 opportunities being offered during the
10 summer are aligned to what we're doing in
11 the District, so that summer doesn't have
12 to end at 3 o'clock. Summer in fact
13 could end at 6 o'clock as we ensure that
14 the specific sites, families are aware of
15 everything that's available. So that's
16 been strong in terms of collaboration.

17 Yesterday, there was a
18 discussion around the PSAs in the 24th
19 and the 25th -- 24th and 26th District
20 where in the East Region of the City,
21 we've been partnering with the Police
22 Department, we've been partnering with
23 the probation officers, and we've been
24 partnering with schools, so that a young
25 person who may be on probation and is

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2 truant is returned to his or her school,
3 and we make use of the in-school
4 suspension option to work with the young
5 person to ensure that we're supporting
6 them and meeting their needs, so that
7 that collaboration is happening, and
8 we're looking forward to expanding that
9 as well.

10 So we see a lot of work that,
11 again, may not be newsworthy, but
12 certainly we believe as we learn more
13 about it is helping families and young
14 people in our city.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: I understand
16 that line of thinking by way of programs
17 and application of service. I'd like
18 that to extend as well to physical
19 planning. As we -- as I traveled in the
20 district and we went through an exercise
21 a couple years back about our libraries
22 and our infrastructure there, and in that
23 exercise, they talked about the proximity
24 between a library and a rec center and a
25 school, library, rec center and a school,

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2 and that many of those constituents were
3 the same, young people. And in our
4 future design, not that we're going to
5 get rid of libraries, but we could
6 imagine a day with a library, which is a
7 capital project, is connected to the new
8 school, which is a capital project, which
9 is connected to the recreation center,
10 which is a capital project, and in so
11 doing, design savings that could come
12 from that. And as we start to think a
13 little more collectively, maybe we can do
14 that. And I think that as you start to
15 plan your capital projects, let's see how
16 creative we can be, because, again, a
17 community college that is educating some
18 of the at-risk young people that managed
19 to find their way out of your system,
20 find their way into their system in the
21 same building. That could be a novel
22 approach.

23 DR. ACKERMAN: I agree with
24 you.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

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2 I think the City Planning Commission
3 should also be in that group of thinkers
4 to do that, and obviously we need to
5 involve our District Councilpeople and
6 maybe even one or two at-large. All
7 right?

8 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Maybe.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you very much.

13 You mention in-school
14 suspension. How is that working out?

15 DR. ACKERMAN: We have it now
16 in 90 schools, I believe -- 54 schools,
17 and the goal this next year is to expand
18 that program.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
20 very important.

21 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. It is
22 working well. It got off to a slow
23 start, but now they're up and running in
24 the schools, and our goal is to expand it
25 next year.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
3 great. That's great.
4 Councilman Green.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair.

7 I pretty much covered the field
8 of my questions yesterday. There were
9 several items that -- questions that you
10 were going to answer and provide to the
11 Chair. I'm not asking you to do that
12 now, but I would just like to know how
13 long you think it will take to put that
14 information together. Is it realistic to
15 expect it by the middle of next week,
16 Wednesday or so?

17 MR. MASCH: We'll try to get
18 everything in a week. Our goal is to try
19 to get everything that you've asked for
20 within a week from this hearing today.
21 If we can't, we'll give you everything
22 that we've done and give you a date
23 certain for the remaining work. But the
24 overwhelming majority of it we should be
25 able to do.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Well,
3 thank you very much.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you very much.

6 Are there any further
7 questions?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: If
10 not, we will recess until 1:30 for --

11 DR. ACKERMAN: Excuse me.
12 Before you recess, I wanted to just make
13 a comment.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
15 Absolutely.

16 DR. ACKERMAN: Councilman
17 Kenney is gone, but yesterday he brought
18 up South Philly, and then last night -- a
19 comment that I made about South Philly
20 and the cameras, the fact that we spent
21 almost a million dollars on cameras, I
22 want to put that in context just for the
23 record and not let the news media spin
24 this story into something that it isn't.

25 We did install 114 new cameras,

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2 but there were only 23 cameras at that
3 school, South Philadelphia High School.
4 And if you --

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: State
6 that again. How many, you said?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: We installed 114
8 inside of the school. So now they have
9 137 new cameras. And yesterday this
10 issue of equity came up, so I want to
11 tell you that if you compare 23 cameras
12 that they had before we put in the new
13 cameras to the other schools, Lincoln
14 High School, which has the same -- about
15 approximately the same square footage,
16 had 160 cameras. Fels High School had
17 160, and Sayre High School, which has a
18 smaller square footage, 200,000, had 118
19 cameras.

20 So putting in 114 new cameras
21 shouldn't have outraged or made anybody
22 upset. We should be, to me, happy that
23 we are addressing this issue of equity
24 for South Philly, which at that time
25 certainly needed to have those cameras,

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2 surveillance cameras, put in place. And
3 the building is 54 years old. It's more
4 than 300,000 square feet with five
5 floors, and 23 cameras was simply not
6 enough.

7 So I wanted to make sure that
8 that was addressed and it was on the
9 record, because I heard something was on
10 the news last night that we spent a
11 million dollars. We had already spent a
12 million dollars on at least three other
13 schools or more that were comparable
14 sizes.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you. Very important information.

17 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you for
18 letting me put that on the record.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much.

21 If there are no further
22 questions, then this hearing will be
23 recessed until 1:30. We still have two
24 people we're trying to reach to see if we
25 can't get the 5:30 group to come to 1:30.

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2 The other handful are there. So if we
3 can get in touch with them, that would be
4 our last public testimony, and then the
5 entire bill will be voted out when the
6 other tax bills are, which is 5/13 at
7 noon. So after the public hearing, we'll
8 recess that until 5/13 at noon when all
9 tax bills will be considered.

10 So then we'll see folks at
11 1:30. We thank you all.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you, Madam
13 Chairperson.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you to my colleagues, too.

16 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

17 (Luncheon recess.)

18 * * *

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2 (Second-shift stenographer

3 Josephine Cardillo relieves first-shift

4 stenographer Michele Murphy.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

6 you. Good afternoon.

7 The hearing will be reconvened,

8 the hearing with regard to the School

9 District budget concerning. Bill No.'s

10 100119 and 100120 dealing with the School

11 District budget will be heard. This is

12 our public hearing part of this issue,

13 and we are happy and welcome everyone who

14 is here to testify.

15 The first person is Sheila

16 Simmons, Education Director, Public

17 Citizens for Children and Youth. We

18 welcome you, please come forward. Thank

19 you for being here.

20 When you testify, please give

21 your name for the record and begin your

22 testimony. Again, thank you all for

23 coming.

24 (Witness comes forward.)

25 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you. Good

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2 afternoon, Councilmembers and Chairwoman
3 Blackwell.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
5 afternoon.

6 MS. SIMMONS: My name is Sheila
7 Simmons. I'm the Education Director for
8 PCCY, Public Citizens for Children and
9 Youth.

10 I'd like to start by saying
11 that there is much for the School
12 District to celebrate among increased
13 resources and systemic improvements, from
14 smaller class sizes to more counselors
15 and liaisons, to a new teacher-evaluation
16 system, to expanded arts and music, to
17 centers taking targeted approaches to
18 early-childhood education, to immigrant
19 students and English-language learners.
20 Finally, a summer of enrichment at
21 neighborhood schools in collaboration
22 with the City hopefully awaits thousands
23 of students this summer.

24 A quality education requires
25 resources and positions, and we certainly

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2 support Bill No. 100120 authorizing
3 real-estate taxes for School District
4 purposes.

5 However, in terms of budget
6 items, we would like to bring your
7 attention to a decrease of 27 positions
8 in the area of climate and behavioral
9 support. I am admittedly unsure of the
10 reasoning behind this decrease, but I am
11 sure that climate and behavioral support
12 remains areas in which we, as a school
13 system, have not turned a corner.

14 In the month of March alone,
15 the School Reform Commission voted on 37
16 expulsion recommendations; and even with
17 these recommendations, PCCY continues to
18 field weekly phone calls from parents
19 whose children have been bullied and
20 their cries for help ignored. We need a
21 better learning environment

22 Both advocates like myself and
23 school administrators, as well as faculty
24 and students, agree that schools should
25 be safe and respectful places, that they

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2 should operate based on agreed-upon
3 expectations and appropriate and
4 graduated consequences for misbehavior.
5 We agree that kids respond to modeling
6 reinforcement and positive acknowledgment
7 of good behavior.

8 But how to implement such a
9 framework remains an unmet challenge in
10 most of our schools. I hope the District
11 and the future directs more resources
12 towards how to implement steps to achieve
13 environments productive for learning and
14 teaching.

15 We are thankful that school
16 officials are increasingly aware of the
17 negative results of missed learning
18 opportunities in the third grade, in the
19 sixth grade, but we call on everyone to
20 recognize that we have many 9th-, 10th-,
21 11th-, and 12th-graders for whom the
22 system has already failed. They're
23 approaching graduation while performing
24 at a 3rd-grade reading level. We must
25 find a better way to respond to students

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2 in our older grades

3 PCCY would like to call

4 attention to the work of multiple

5 pathways to graduation. This work,

6 certainly helped along by a broad

7 citywide collaborated termed "Project

8 U-Turn," acknowledges that too many of

9 our kids are overaged and under-credited

10 for the classes they occupy, and it does

11 provide them with the accelerating

12 learning academies

13 Multiple pathways to graduation

14 and the District's alternative schools

15 acknowledge that some students need

16 smaller, more personalized environments

17 but do not need to be completely removed

18 from a familiar setting, and this worked

19 resulted in the Oasis programs inside our

20 neighborhood schools.

21 This work acknowledges that

22 juveniles returning from detention need

23 an education but have a 70 to 90 percent

24 chance of dropping out. So these

25 students receive reserved slots and

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2 hands-on, skill-based training programs
3 run by personnel familiar with the
4 challenges of these young people.

5 And when young people who have
6 dropped out, or who are on the verge of
7 dropping out, don't know where to go, the
8 Reengagement Center welcomes them with
9 up-to-date academic records, counseling,
10 literacy and numeracy assessments, and a
11 school placement as closely tailored for
12 their skill sets as much as possible.
13 Among young people, the Reengagement
14 Center is a hit; among other school
15 districts across the country, it's a hit.

16 We commend the District for
17 expanding the Reengagement Center work to
18 another satellite office, and we would
19 love to hear the new center being
20 promoted.

21 In accelerated programs, nearly
22 97 percent of students have zero out-of-
23 school suspensions and zero serious
24 incidents. In fact, some students
25 characterize alternative schools as the

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2 first place in which they have found
3 someone who cares about them and who
4 cares about whether they learn.

5 I encourage you to visit these
6 programs. Philadelphia shouldn't be the
7 last ones to know when we have a good
8 thing going.

9 Thank you for your past support
10 of our school children, and I hope that
11 you'll continue to invest in them.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you, Miss Simmons.

15 We note that Councilman
16 Greenlee and Councilwoman Sanchez,
17 Councilwoman Miller, Councilman Bill
18 Green is here and Councilman Rizzo is
19 here. And they have been here for all of
20 our hearings and we say thank you to them
21 as well.

22 Are there any questions for
23 Miss Simmons?

24 Councilwoman Sanchez.

25 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank

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2 you, Madam Chair.

3 Thank you. I want to thank the
4 whole team at PCCY.

5 I wanted to ask you something
6 that you mentioned here because I was
7 recently approached, and I know since you
8 do such great work in Harrisburg around
9 bullying legislation; New Jersey has it,
10 Oregon.

11 MS. SIMMONS: Mm-hmm.

12 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Have you
13 done any work on that? Is there any
14 appetite at the State for it?

15 MS. SIMMONS: We certainly
16 advocate for a number of prevention
17 programs, and so long as schools have a
18 prevention program, we generally are
19 supportive of that.

20 There is the Olweus bullying
21 prevention program that I know is in a
22 number of our local schools.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: What's
24 that called again, please?

25 MS. SIMMONS: It's called the

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2 "Olweus." O-L-V-Y-U-S? I don't know.

3 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

4 MS. SIMMONS: And it is a
5 nationally-recognized bullying-prevention
6 program; research-proven, it has a lot of
7 stats behind it. And we certainly have
8 that in place in some Philadelphia
9 schools, but we certainly need that
10 program and other types of programs in
11 our schools.

12 We have not advocated for it at
13 the State level. We have advocated for
14 positive behavior support, which is also
15 a national framework; it's in more than
16 10,000 schools nationwide.

17 PCCY works with the School
18 District to co-convene a PBS citywide
19 leadership team, and we are working with
20 a cohort of 90 schools on implementing
21 that. But we support PBS, Olweus
22 bullying prevention.

23 There are other models:
24 Responsive classrooms, restorative
25 practices. Sometimes schools need to

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2 choose which one is right for their
3 school and their population. But there
4 are certainly a number of them that have
5 shown that research shows them to be
6 effective.

7 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

8 Thank you. Thank you for all your work.

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you too.

12 Thank you very much. Great
13 presentation.

14 Any other questions?

15 (No further questions.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Next
17 is Miss Cecilia Thompson, the
18 Philadelphia Right to Education Local
19 Task Force.

20 (Witness comes forward.)

21 MS. THOMPSON: Good afternoon,
22 everyone. Thank you for the opportunity
23 to speak. I didn't get a chance to make
24 copies of my testimony, but I can leave
25 this for individuals to view when I'm

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2 finished. I'm sorry. I was coming from
3 an IEP meeting for another family, so...

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please
5 identify yourself for the record.

6 MS. THOMPSON: My name is
7 Cecilia Thompson, and I'm the Chairperson
8 of the Philadelphia Right to Education
9 Local Task Force, a State-mandated
10 organization which provides systemic
11 advocacy for students with disabilities
12 attending public and charter schools in
13 Philadelphia.

14 I am here today in support of
15 those aspects of the budget which have
16 promoted parent involvement, training,
17 and extra resources, particularly those
18 relating to special education.

19 As of this year, the District
20 has a dedicated special education liaison
21 part-time and elementary schools at
22 full-time and the high schools. These
23 individuals are the point person in the
24 schools regarding special education.
25 They have also been made available

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2 reading and math interventions. The
3 staff in the Office of Specialized
4 Instructional Services has been available
5 promote trainings so parents are
6 empowered at their IET meetings.

7 Extended school year has been
8 restructured, where reading and math are
9 mandatory, and enrichment is included for
10 our students. There have been more
11 efforts to train staff to identify those
12 students deemed as high-incident
13 students, which are learning support,
14 emotional support, speech, et cetera, for
15 extended school year services.

16 Additionally, at every school
17 open for the summer, there will be one
18 person trained in special-education
19 instruction and State and federal law to
20 ensure special-education students
21 attending summer programs have the
22 supports and services needed to be
23 successful.

24 I do need for you to be
25 concerned about the potential school

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2 closings based on the now 44,000 extra
3 spaces. Last year, it was 33,000. How
4 are these numbers derived, and who is
5 leaving the District? While it is true
6 students are attending charter schools,
7 there are a number of children in your
8 districts attending schools which are
9 full to capacity.

10 Also, the District still has
11 annexes. I know of two schools -- Samuel
12 Gompers and Thomas Morton -- who have
13 annexes and have witnessed parents upset
14 and children teased by other children
15 because they are not in the "real"
16 school. Before schools are closed, let's
17 close these annexes, which are often
18 smaller classrooms, than those in the
19 schools.

20 Lastly, there will be a need
21 for self-contained classes for students
22 with disability whose IEP dictates this
23 need. We need to have enough schools to
24 have room for these classes and all of
25 the other wonderful classes for students

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2 in the District.

3 As to the families moving out
4 the City, this does not pertain middle-
5 and low-income families, which is the
6 majority of the City. Most of us cannot
7 afford to move, so we have to stay here
8 to have our children educated.

9 I would suggest either waiting
10 the upcoming census report or a
11 consultation -- or the District having a
12 consultation with those members of City
13 Council where the school is potentially
14 being closed, to ensure children will not
15 be placed in a overcrowded school, and
16 there is a discussion about impact on the
17 community.

18 Again, thank you for the
19 opportunity to speak and for your
20 continued support of the School District
21 budget.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you. Thank you very much.

24 Are there any questions for
25 Miss Thompson?

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2 (No questions or comments.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you again.

5 Miss Jamira Burley, Chairwoman,
6 Philadelphia Youth Commission. We
7 welcome you and again offer our
8 congratulations.

9 (Witness comes forward.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Feel
11 free to identify yourself for the record
12 and begin your testimony.

13 MS. BURLEY: Good afternoon,
14 members of City Council. My name is
15 Jamira Burley, the Chairwoman of the
16 Philadelphia Youth Commission.

17 As I mentioned, I am the
18 Chairwoman of the Philadelphia Youth
19 Commission as well as a senior at Temple
20 University. And for those who may not
21 know, the Philadelphia Youth Commission
22 was voted into the Home Rule Charter in
23 2007 by three-fourths of the voters in
24 Philadelphia.

25 It was conceived from an idea

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2 by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown,
3 Public Citizens for Children and Youth,
4 and a group of young people, who saw that
5 there was a need in Philadelphia to have
6 a voice in city government. The Youth
7 Commission, which represents ages 13 to
8 23, with 21 members, 17 whom are
9 appointed by City Council members and 4
10 appointed by the Mayor.

11 I would first like to thank you
12 for your continuous support on the
13 development of young people and allowing
14 them to be at the table of discussion
15 when decisions about their future are
16 being made. "No Decision About Me
17 Without Me" is the model that the Youth
18 Commission continues to stand by. As I'm
19 testifying before you today, it is
20 evident that that model has been brought
21 to full fruition.

22 As a resident of Philadelphia,
23 a product of the Philadelphia public
24 education system, and a proud graduate of
25 Overbrook High School, I know all too

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2 well the need for a quality education
3 system to take place here, in
4 Philadelphia.

5 Being the first of one of 16
6 children to graduate high school and to
7 attend college, I have witnessed the
8 damaging effects when resources for
9 educational opportunities are not readily
10 available for Philadelphia youth. Where
11 positive options are scarce, many
12 Philadelphia natives are forced to look
13 for alternative ways to feed and
14 financially support their families.

15 The work of the current
16 superintendent, Dr. Arlene Ackerman, has
17 shown me that there is hope for the
18 betterment of our school system and the
19 development of our young people.

20 Dr. Ackerman is doing the job that few
21 would volunteer for and that few would be
22 successful at, which is to educate the
23 very people who will one day fill the
24 seats that I now see before me. Youth
25 will one day lead our city into a

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2 brighter future.

3 Dr. Ackerman, with the
4 collaboration of Donna Frisby-Greenwood,
5 Director of Office of College and Career
6 Awareness, has worked to give our youth a
7 voice in the decision process, which has
8 taken place through the work of Citywide
9 Student Government and their Attack
10 Truancy Campaign, their census
11 initiatives, and their many different
12 initiatives that focus on youth problems.
13 This leadership opportunity has allowed
14 for students to be at the forefront of
15 issues that affect them directly, issues
16 such as violence in education.

17 Over the past year, the
18 implementation of the School District's
19 Imagine 2014, a five-year plan, has taken
20 hold of our district and has started to
21 reshape the very idea of education in our
22 city. This is to not only put students
23 first but also to provide them with a
24 quality education, a quality education
25 that is befitting the next leaders of our

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2 generation

3 I personally have a stake in
4 this because I have five younger brothers
5 and sisters who are either in elementary,
6 middle, or high school, who, like many
7 other Philadelphia students, they not
8 only want an education but they deserve a
9 better education. Why should the
10 fundamentals of their young life hang in
11 the balance of a price tag.

12 The strides the School District
13 has made over the last year is largely
14 due to the amount of funding that they
15 have received through federal stimulus,
16 funds that are only good for a two-year
17 time period dealing with the Fiscal Year
18 2009 to 2010 and Fiscal Year 2010 to
19 2011, funds that will need to be
20 supplemented if the District continues to
21 provide quality education to our youth.

22 We, as the Philadelphia Youth
23 Commission, ask that you think about the
24 young people whose silent cries sometimes
25 will go unheard, whose hopes and dreams

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2 sometimes go unfulfilled. And, lastly,
3 think about the legacy of the City and
4 where it will be in twenty years if we
5 don't first educate our youth

6 We respectfully request that
7 you vote yes for Council Bill 100120,
8 which authorizes the imposition of an
9 annual tax for School District purposes
10 on real estate within the City of
11 Philadelphia and Council Bill 100119.

12 We thank you for your
13 continuous support of young people across
14 the City of Philadelphia, and we thank
15 you for your continuous support of the
16 Philadelphia Youth Commission.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much. Congratulations again.

20 Are there any questions?

21 (No questions or comments.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you.

24 MS. BURLEY: Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

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2 Miss Danita Bates.

3 Is Judith Robinson here? Oh, I
4 see you now, yes.

5 (Witness comes forward.)

6 MS. BATES: Good afternoon.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
8 afternoon.

9 MS. BATES: Good afternoon.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please
11 identify yourself for the record again
12 and begin your testimony.

13 MS. BATES: Yes. My name's
14 Danita Bates, and I'm a parent and youth
15 advocate and a community activist for the
16 (indiscernible) Duckery and the
17 surrounding schools in North
18 Philadelphia.

19 May I also give you copies of
20 what I last gave at the SRC meeting?

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.
22 We would be happy to receive it.

23 Feel free to identify yourself
24 for the record and begin your testimony.

25 MS. BATES: Yes. Danita Bates.

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2 I'm a parent and youth advocate for North
3 Philadelphia youth and schools and a
4 community activist.

5 I just had a few issues. There
6 are a lot of issues that's going on in
7 our district. Mostly what I hear is that
8 it's not enough funding or funds for our
9 schools. Particularly, we're only funded
10 by how many youth are in a school.

11 We now don't have a librarian
12 in our school, and there are librarians
13 in many schools. So I'm really just
14 asking for the resources to go back into
15 our schools and into our communities for
16 all schools.

17 The resources, what I mean is
18 music classes and math and reading and
19 literacy, phonics especially so our youth
20 can start learning again and reading at
21 3rd grade or 4th grade. Kids are
22 starting to read in pre-K class, believe
23 it or not, and now it's not happening
24 because the resources are not there or
25 they're not providing them with the

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2 resources for our youth.

3 Also for our special needs and
4 special-education students, they don't
5 have the resources that they need, so we
6 need all of the monies to go back into
7 the resources in our schools for our
8 students and to our community.

9 It's a lot of schools that are
10 being sold for dollars and being torn
11 down. At the end of the day, our
12 community is not getting anything, the
13 schools isn't getting anything, nor are
14 the youth.

15 So my basic complaint and my
16 presence of being here is for our youth
17 in our community.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much. We appreciate all your
20 work and your advocacy on the part of
21 parents and children.

22 Are there any questions?

23 (No questions or comments.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much.

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2 MS. BATES: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Judith
4 Robinson.

5 (Witness comes forward.)

6 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
8 afternoon.

9 MS. ROBINSON: My name is
10 Judith Robinson, and I'm here today to
11 hopefully find some money for the School
12 Board; I know it's much needed.

13 But before I get to that very
14 important point, even with all of the
15 money that has been spent so far, I'm
16 really shocked to find out that after
17 eight years of our governor, who I was
18 always under the impression had an
19 emphasis on early-childhood education, I
20 just got a Governor's Report, where out
21 of all the 52 counties in Pennsylvania,
22 Fayette County and Philadelphia County
23 are the worst as it relates to our
24 childhood getting -- our children getting
25 a good education, preschool education.

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2 There are seven risk factors,
3 they say, and Philadelphia has the
4 highest, along with Fayette County. I
5 just couldn't understand how we could
6 compare to this small county as it
7 relates to these risk factors, when we
8 have a governor who was focusing on this
9 early childhood.

10 So I really think we need to
11 focus, because if a child starts off
12 negatively wrong, out of order, and are
13 not learning by the time, you all keep
14 saying, till they get to 4th grade, if
15 they don't read by 4th grade, then they
16 are not going to be able to -- they'll be
17 eligible are for prisons.

18 Well, it looks like we are
19 creating this environment. You know,
20 it's like we are allowing this to happen.
21 According to documents and information in
22 the Philadelphia newspaper, 60 percent of
23 our youth are not reading on grade level.

24 I want to put this in the
25 record because this is a document that

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2 our State Representative Jewell Williams
3 came to our community with. He had it
4 for two years. It's about the children
5 at Duckery School. We came to a meeting,
6 trying to find out about the land deal
7 that we'll discuss a little later, and he
8 brought this information to us, showing
9 that school children at Duckrey School
10 are not reading on a proficient level.
11 And it's disgraceful, with all this money
12 being spent, that we are not doing a job
13 now. It's truly unfortunate.

14 But so, I'm going to leave that
15 there and let you all deal with that
16 because I think you all really need to
17 focus on why our children are suffering
18 from these seven risk factors that make
19 Philadelphia and Fayette County the
20 highest in childhood negativity, let's
21 call it, okay, where our children are not
22 taking advantage of early-childhood
23 education.

24 As it relates to funding --
25 funding, funding, funding -- after the

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2 stimulus dollars are not here, what are
3 we to do? Well, I could tell you what we
4 could do: We could stop selling land for
5 one dollar, stop selling buildings for
6 less than fair market value, because
7 according to the documents, the
8 resolution at the SRC that they passed
9 back in October of 2009, when they sold,
10 or were attempting to sell, land at
11 Tanner Duckrey, behind Tanner Duckrey
12 School, for New Courtland, they were
13 trying to push that deal through. I'm
14 glad it did not go through.

15 But nevertheless, they were
16 trying to push that deal through for \$1.
17 Here's an organization with over
18 \$110 million in assets, and the School
19 District and the City Council Public
20 Property and Public Works Committee were
21 trying to move that deal to sell the land
22 for \$1.

23 Sell it at fair market value,
24 put that money into educating our
25 children.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MS. ROBINSON: There are a lot
4 of deals going on as it relates to
5 real-estate land and buildings. I think
6 somebody needs to focus in on land and
7 building sales to make sure that money is
8 going back into the School Board budget.

9 I love the way the resolution
10 was written for that. I would encourage
11 you all to go get a copy of it, because
12 every one -- every deal should be written
13 like that, because the money would go
14 back into the school system for our
15 children. So I just want to make sure
16 you all are focusing on that.

17 No more dollar deals. Sell the
18 land, sell the building, get the most you
19 can. If you need help, I'll be glad to
20 put my 25 years of real estate experience
21 on the table to show you how to can get
22 the most you can.

23 Land and real estate in
24 Philadelphia is a value, even in the
25 poorest neighborhoods. Get the money,

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2 give it to our children; and then with
3 the money, teach our children.

4 Thank you very much.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you, Miss Robinson. Nice to see you.

7 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is
9 there anyone else to testify at this
10 time?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Seeing
13 none, this committee will be recessed
14 until 5:30. We have two people on the
15 list who staff could not reach;
16 therefore, we will have testimony again
17 at 5:30 p.m.

18 After that, again we will have
19 hearings on the 13th, at noon, with
20 regard to all budget bills.

21 Thank you again.

22 (Committee stands in recess.)

23 (Proceedings resume at
24 5:40 p.m.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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2 evening. This is Jannie Blackwell we're
3 in Council chambers for any
4 Councilpersons who are in the building.
5 We are ready to begin our evening
6 testimony on the School District budget.

7 Thank you very much.

8 Again, if you're interested,
9 please report to the chambers. Thank
10 you.

11 Good evening. We will resume
12 our school budget public testimony
13 portion of our hearings.

14 We will now invite Ms. Carol
15 Heinsdorf. We welcome you and invite you
16 to introduce yourself and begin your
17 testimony.

18 (Witness comes forward.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much. And because you don't see
21 people in the chambers doesn't mean
22 they're not in their offices. They're
23 watching Channel 64.

24 MS. HEINSDORF: Thank you,
25 Councilwoman Blackwell.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you. Good evening.

4 MS. HEINSDORF: Yes.
5 Councilmembers, I am Carol Heinsdorf, do
6 President-Elect of the Association of
7 Philadelphia School Librarians.

8 Page 1 of your handout states
9 that strong library programs increase
10 student test scores and academic
11 achievement. Certified librarians teach
12 critical thinking and research skills.
13 They co-teach and with classroom teachers
14 and manage the library.

15 Strong school libraries require
16 a full-time certified librarian, current
17 and adequate resources, open hours, an
18 inviting facility, and a budget adequate
19 to purchase all of the above. Now, 76
20 percent -- 3 out of 4 Philadelphia public
21 schools -- do not have a certified
22 librarian, usually are in poor condition,
23 have outdated resources, and may be
24 closed and locked.

25 On page 2 of the handout, there

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2 are 70 Philadelphia public schools with
3 librarians out of 284 schools; meaning
4 there are 214 schools with anywhere from
5 94 to 118,000 students each year without
6 a library or librarian.

7 Page 3 quotes Imagine 2014,
8 which says, "District resources will be
9 allocated equitably during the annual
10 budget process." That did not happen for
11 school libraries this year, and at least
12 three high school librarians have been
13 force-transferred for the upcoming school
14 year of, which I am one.

15 Page 4 quotes research
16 supporting the role of school libraries
17 in student academic achievement, one
18 study, having been completed by the
19 Research Department of the District
20 itself.

21 You also have a booklet of
22 supporting research, "School Libraries
23 Work."

24 Page 5 lists the necessary
25 components of a maximized school library

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2 program required for the full benefit of
3 student academic achievement.

4 Page 6 shows Roberto Clemente
5 Middle School Library when it was fully
6 funded: 23,000 items were used 78,000
7 times.

8 Page 7 continues with Clemente,
9 where an annual investment of \$10,000
10 resulted in \$468,000 worth of use, an
11 excellent return on the investment.

12 Page 8 suggests that when
13 110,000 students each year do not have
14 access to a school library and do not
15 borrow books, there have been 26,400,000
16 missed opportunities for books to be read
17 in the 12 years. This is happening now,
18 and we wonder why our graduates can't
19 read.

20 Page 9 quotes Forbes Investment
21 Magazine, which states: "Before parents
22 accept the wisdom of a school board to
23 cut school librarians, they should ask,
24 Will my child graduate with a 21st-
25 century résumé or a 19th century

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2 transcript? When a search engine returns
3 105 million results, can the student find
4 the 5 that will set her paper apart? Why
5 does a school district want to abandon
6 its certified librarians, its
7 professional guides to the complex
8 information landscape."

9 Page 11 indicates that Council
10 President Verna's district has the least
11 proportion of high school librarians of
12 any district in the City -- one
13 librarian, five high schools.

14 Page 12 indicates that
15 Councilwoman Miller has the worst ratio
16 of elementary school librarians: 1
17 librarian, 24 elementary schools.

18 With research fully in support
19 of increased academic achievement through
20 maximized school library programs, how
21 could you not want them for the school
22 children of Philadelphia? To increase
23 academic achievement, a certified
24 librarian and adequate resources must be
25 line items in every school's budget.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much. Your testimony is so
5 invaluable. And, obviously, we agree.
6 What can we say.

7 The Chair also recognizes
8 Councilwoman Sanchez. We thank her for
9 being present at each and every hearing,
10 and we really thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 Any questions?

13 Councilwoman Sanchez.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: You're
15 saying that the cuts -- you were at
16 Roberto Clemente?

17 MS. HEINSDORF: I was. I'm not
18 there now.

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
20 And then this was a recent decision that
21 was made at Roberto Clemente?

22 MS. HEINSDORF: No. I left
23 three years ago. I was there.

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

25 MS. HEINSDORF: The charts that

1 5.11.10 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SCHOOL BUDGET

2 you have are from the last year that I
3 had a library-supportive principal and a
4 fully-funded library. So those figures
5 are from that time.

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Do you
7 know --

8 MS. HEINSDORF: I understand
9 now that it's closed, the library's
10 closed.

11 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: The
12 library's closed at Roberto Clemente?

13 MS. HEINSDORF: That's my
14 understanding.

15 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
16 Well, we'll verify that. That's very
17 unfortunate. I remember when we were
18 building that school, and some of the --
19 the new school. I'm a graduate of
20 Roberto Clemente, so this is personal.

21 We were building this school,
22 and we had a whole discussion about the
23 accessibility of the library to the
24 public because we had a lot of dreams
25 about using that library and making it

1 5.11.10 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SCHOOL BUDGET

2 multi-functional, so I'm --

3 MS. HEINSDORF: Well,

4 Mrs. Mazzucca did have many events in
5 that library, including a wedding, but it
6 went from 8,000 old books, when I was
7 there, to 23,000 with a copyright date of
8 10 years.

9 And we had fabulous use. We
10 had open access and flexible scheduling,
11 which meant that I was there. And I
12 wasn't covering preps, which meant that
13 any student that needed to do come in was
14 able to come in on a hall pass; and also,
15 the teachers could sign up. So my last
16 year, I did 50 collaborations with
17 teachers.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I have
19 yet to go to a school recently where
20 that's still the option. I remember,
21 when I was in school, libraries being
22 open for that exact reason, so the kids
23 could just go.

24 MS. HEINSDORF: Right.

25 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And now,

1 5.11.10 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SCHOOL BUDGET

2 you know, between using it for other
3 types of classroom -- for other types of
4 classes, the library's open time is more
5 and more limited. So I'm sorry to hear
6 that.

7 MS. HEINSDORF: Well, it's
8 still that way at Masterman.

9 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: My son
10 goes there, and there lies -- yes, I am
11 very much aware of -- he stays there --
12 he's upstairs actually doing his
13 homework. He usually stays after school,
14 till 4:30, to do homework and provide
15 tutoring support to his classmates.

16 So it's very unfortunate.
17 There was a robust discussion earlier,
18 when Dr. Ackerman was here, and my
19 Council colleague Curtis Jones, and we
20 were talking about libraries. So I want
21 to assure you that it was a topic of our
22 discussion here earlier.

23 And, you know, one of the
24 innovative ideas was the need to ensure
25 that as we're building new schools and

1 5.11.10 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SCHOOL BUDGET

2 the importance of the libraries, and how
3 do we co-share facilities better so that
4 library time is available not only to the
5 kids at the school but the whole
6 community. Those of us who grew up
7 visiting them understand them and
8 appreciate them.

9 I think in the last year, the
10 City has come to understand how important
11 libraries are to folks. We need to send
12 the same message around the School
13 District.

14 And it's so tough 'cause, you
15 know, we talk -- we also had a robust
16 discussion about healthy eating, and you
17 watch principals cut physical ed teachers
18 or music teachers, and it's a very
19 difficult situation.

20 MS. HEINSDORF: Mm-hmm.

21 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: But I
22 want you to know that that was an issue
23 that we brought up earlier.

24 MS. HEINSDORF: The return on
25 investment is excellent in your school

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2 library when it is staffed appropriately
3 and used appropriately.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: We agree
5 and we appreciate your testimony and
6 definitely appreciate the information
7 that you just shared with us.

8 MS. HEINS DORF: Thank you very
9 much.

10 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
11 you.

12 MS. HEINS DORF: Councilwoman
13 Blackwell, may I please say thank you
14 very much for meeting with us. It was in
15 January or February, and we really
16 appreciate the time that you gave us
17 then.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Oh,
19 thank you. Kind of you to say. Thank
20 you very, very much.

21 Thank you, Councilwoman Miller,
22 for being here as well.

23 Any other questions?

24 (No further questions.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is

1 5.11.10 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SCHOOL BUDGET

2 Mr. Bennett here?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That
5 is Mr. Henry Bennett.

6 Is there anyone else who would
7 like to testify before this committee
8 today?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Seeing
11 none, this committee will stand in recess
12 until noon, on 5/13/10, 12 o'clock noon,
13 when all tax bills will be considered.

14 Thank you all for coming.

15 Thank you to those who are visiting. And
16 thank you, colleagues, thank you.

17 (Proceedings end at 5:51 p.m.)

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

3

4 WE HEREBY CERTIFY that the
5 proceedings of the City of Philadelphia
6 Council Committee of the Whole are contained
7 fully and accurately in the stenographic notes
8 taken by us on Tuesday, May 11, 2010, and that
9 this is a true and correct statement of same.

10

11

12

13 _____
MICHELE MURPHY
14 Registered Professional Reporter

15

16

17 _____
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
18 Registered Professional Reporter

19

20

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