COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 8, 2012
10:35 a.m.

PRESENT:
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 120164, 120165, 120166, 120173, 120174, 120175 and 120230
RESOLUTION 120167

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning, everyone. Council is going to come to order.

This is a continuation of the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bills No. 120164, 120165, 120166, 120173, 120174, 120175, 120230 and Resolution No. 120167.

Ms. Lewis, please read the title of the bills and resolution.

MS. LEWIS: Bill No. 120164, an ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for the six Fiscal Years 2013 to 2018 inclusive.

Bill No. 120165, an ordinance to adopt a Fiscal 2013 Capital Budget.

Bill No. 120166, an ordinance adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2013.

Resolution No. 120167, a resolution providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal

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Years 2013 through 2017, and incorporating proposed changes with respect to Fiscal Year 2012, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (the "Authority") pursuant to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an ordinance of this Council approved by the Mayor on January 3rd, 1992 (Bill No. 1563-A), by and between the City and the Authority.

Bill No. 120173, amending Section 19-1806, entitled "Authorization of Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the use or occupancy of real estate within the School District of Philadelphia, under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 120174, amending Chapter 19-1500 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and Net Profits Tax," by

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repealing Section 19-1508, entitled "Refunds and Forgiveness for Poverty Income."

Bill No. 120175, authorizing real estate taxes for the City of Philadelphia and the School District of Philadelphia for Fiscal Year 2013 and thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real Estate Taxes," to provide for a tax and tax rate on real property, for exclusions, and for an established pre-determined ratio; and by amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate within the City of Philadelphia, and providing for a tax rate and for exclusions; all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 120230, authorizing real estate taxes for the City of Philadelphia and the School District of

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Philadelphia for Fiscal Year 2013 and thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real Estate Taxes," to provide for a tax and tax rate on real property; and by amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate within the City of Philadelphia, and providing for a tax rate; all under certain terms and conditions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

Before we proceed with testimony, the Chair would like to recognize Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good morning. Today I address you with a passionate mind and a hopeful heart. Our body, our city, our people find themselves in dire times. We have a

School District that is all but broken. There are issues with nurses in our schools, with security in our schools, with librarians who demonstrate the power of reading to our children, and certainly with the role of charter schools and how they fit into the whole educational system.

Per School District statements, we have been misled for years regarding the true state of the District's woes. Each year the District plunges deeper into debt, and each year the District returns to this Chamber with open hands pleading for just a little bit more. However, there has not been the level of accountability that the public and that the Council has a right to expect.

This Council has tried to do its part to deal with these important issues and how they affect the City at large. We have had five hearings or briefings to discuss issues. We've even had a nine-hour hearing to talk about all

aspects of educational issues, and we've come to this conclusion. Yes, it is a conclusion that many have reached, and, that is, that we need change.

We look forward to working with all of you on behalf of those we so righteously are charged to serve, the people, the students of this city certainly and all the residents of the City of Philadelphia.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman and Chair of Committee of Education.

I would like to ask the School District to proceed with their testimony. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good morning, President Clarke, members of City Council and all who have joined this hearing this morning. My name is Pedro Ramos. I am Chairman of the School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia. I want to thank you for the opportunity

to testify before you here today. I'm joined at the table by Chief Recovery Officer Tom Knudsen and Chief Academic Officer Penny Nixon. Also behind me are members of the School Reform Commission, Wendell Pritchett, Lorene Carey and Feather Houstoun.

As you know, Mr. Knudsen and Ms. Nixon have been in their current roles about four months, and most of the SRC has been in place for less than six months. And we know many of you have been in office just over five months. So many of us are relatively new to our roles. Yet, I think the basic details of the state of the public school system in Philadelphia are well known enough that we all -- that we are all ready to share a few basic convictions.

We would all, I hope, agree that the City's future and continued recovery depends on having a strong, fiscally sustainable School District that offers current and future children a

safe, high-quality public education, an education that prepares all children for the intellectually and technically demanding, globally competitive world of work and lifelong learning. Moreover, I think you and this community recognize that the District and the City are at a unique point in time in which we must either decide to amass the will to do what is necessary to stabilize and turn around our public schools or surrender to managing the decline of our schools and, in turn, our city.

At the SRC, we have declared emphatically that we must have the will to make enormous changes, fundamental reforms to the way we budget and spend, but also the way we manage and educate. We are here today to discuss the state of our thinking, which is far from final, on how these changes might be planned and implemented and on the budgetary support we believe the District needs to support our schools.

In part because many of us are new to our roles, I believe that it would be useful to start with some context on this new SRC, why we are here and the approach we have taken to our work.

Many of you with whom I've worked over the years in education, business or government leadership have expressed surprise that knowing the state of affairs at the District, I would choose to come to the SRC at its most difficult time. And I know that the same goes with respect to all my SRC colleagues. I speak for all the Commissioners when I tell you that we are here now precisely because the public schools are at the most difficult moment and we believe that everyone has a duty to do everything within their power to make a positive difference now within the window of time that we have.

Following the departure of the former Superintendent, the Mayor and the Governor reconstituted the School Reform

Commission. Wendell Pritchett and Lorene Carey started in October. I joined in mid November, and Feather Houstoun joined in December. We knew there was trouble. We knew there was a crisis of confidence. We knew that the District had normalized spending on recurring expenses far in excess of recurring revenues that it had a reasonable chance of receiving. We knew there were issues of lack of public trust. What I don't think we knew was how far the crisis had gone or the gaps between the reality of the financial crisis and the public perception.

We began to see the full picture clearly within weeks of our arrival on the Commission, and we knew we had to start making real, concrete changes immediately if we were going to develop the credibility to do the things on the horizon.

With that in mind, in just a few months, the SRC has recognized that the District has not been managed in a

fiscally realistic way and quickly laid out facts to the world, with a commitment to not sugarcoat the truth, a commitment we have backed up by narrowing the Fiscal '12 shortfall to 26 million today from approximately 70 million in January, and by publishing the first real five-year financial plan the District has done in years. I should note that the additional support Council provided last year was crucial in keeping the financial situation from being even worse than it was, and we appreciate your support.

We put a stake in the ground for more open and transparent governance, even though transparency is sometimes even more difficult in a crisis, by moving our meetings to 5:30, creating space and time for real conversations about policy, and engaging in dozens of community meetings on a variety of topics.

We reduced salaries and benefits of non-represented staff,

including furlough days and shared costs for benefits.

We brought in a public-sector executive experienced in managing through these types of crises, Tom Knudsen, who is as known for his low ego, straightforward approach to management as he is for his expertise in fixing large organizations in financial crisis.

We established two simple goals for the organization that reflect our core values - safe, high-quality educational opportunities for all students and fiscal sustainability, starting with getting the budget into balance by Fiscal '14.

We made these goals concrete by setting out to reduce the number of seats in chronically poor-performing schools by intervening or closing them and increasing the opportunities at high-performing schools while engaging in a strategic master planning process to reduce unnecessary overhead and capture

more resources for teaching and learning.

We moved forward with the search for a new Superintendent with the goal of having a public phase of finalists in late June and a new leader in place before the school year, with a commitment to not let the schedule force the SRC to settle for less than the right leader for the District.

We replaced confrontation with collaboration with charter schools through the District charter Great Schools Compact, focusing on opportunities to work together to better serve parents, students, teachers and taxpayers.

We continued former Superintendent Arlene Ackerman's Renaissance School Initiative, a reform that is delivering impressive results in quickly turning around low-performing schools. Just a few weeks ago, we decided to do three additional renaissance schools for the '12-'13

school year and are considering what to do about a fourth, including a teacher-led proposal.

In making high-stakes decisions such as building closings, turning around poorly performing District-run schools or closing poorly performing charter schools, we've put front and center school quality and school performance.

Across all of these initiatives, community engagement has been a top priority. We have conducted scores of community meetings regarding the Facilities Master Plan and the criteria for the Superintendent search. In addition, as soon as we began our planning and budgeting process this year, Chief Recovery Officer Knudsen and Chief Academic Officer Penny Nixon conducted listening sessions with parents and student groups, as well as a number of civic and faith-based groups, delivering clear information about the crisis we are facing and soliciting their input on

potential solutions. And now, as we have a proposal before us for the structural and financial transformation of the District, we have gone back to the community, conducting many more listening sessions all across the City throughout the month.

So that is the SRC that is before you today, a body committed to transparent, engaged stewardship, and that has, I believe, established an impressive and concrete track record of managing according to those ideals in just its few short months in office.

Now let me turn to the context in which we are operating.

It is no hyperbole to say that we are in a moment of national educational and economic crisis. Federal and state funding for education has declined, while salary benefits, debt and other costs have continued to rise, leaving districts, large and small, in impossible situations and local

governments to pick up the slack.

The School District of Philadelphia is no exception. In fact, our plight is worse than most because we've been slow to respond to changes in revenue, the need to reduce labor costs or reduce the infrastructure commensurate with the loss of students in District-run schools, and we have a broken system of assessment that disproportionately hurts our schools.

The District has also put things off longer than it really could and, unlike national governments, does not have the ability to print money. The District can't continue to spend beyond the means provided by taxpayers.

Like you, I love this city, have lived here all my life and would love to spend the rest of my life here and have my kids find fulfilling careers here after they graduate college. I believe in public service and in the public sector, and I am telling you that

we need to stabilize this District now or we will all be sorry later.

Mr. Knudsen will testify about a projected $200 million shortfall for next fiscal year, not because the District is deciding to spend more, but because the spending has been at levels unsupported by predictable and recurring tax revenues. And while a lot of spending reductions have happened, there is no practical way to close the remaining gap in a single year. He will show a five-year plan with a $1.1 billion shortfall over the next five years.

Let us also make clear what should have been clear in recent years and which you should have been told clearly long before now. These budget numbers lose meaning because at some point before you get to these big budget numbers, you run out of cash. Like most financial problems, this situation does not improve with time.

Similarly, we are at a critical

juncture in terms of the public's confidence in the improvement of our schools. New residents are choosing to live in the City and have started to stay in the City even as they have families. The census data bears this out. Parents are finding charter schools or engaging in District-run schools. Longtime residents also know that good schools that have served the needs of their children are actually possible. But we are all worried by the drama of the last few years. As a city, we can't afford to lose hope or population, and we can't afford to sacrifice our young to hand-wringing and indecisiveness.

A critical point to note in these figures is that because basic principles of budgeting require that we base our revenue projections on those of the Mayor and the Governor, those shortfalls I have listed assume an additional $94 million from the passage of the Actual Value Initiative as

currently proposed. Without those funds, our gap next year would grow to over $300 million, which, as Tom has said, is unthinkable.

What we are here to do today is discuss a difficult but we believe realistic path back to structural financial balance.

It is the SRC's view that providing every student a safe, high-quality opportunity is our mission, and doing so in a way that is fiscally sustainable is our duty. Quality and sustainability must be our starting point and our end point, our alpha and omega.

With that in mind, the budget and long-term financial blueprint has built what Tom Knudsen calls a firewall around school budgets, seeking to protect schools from further cuts to fill the gap.

Last year, school budgets were cut by over $260 million. Nurses and music teachers, counselors and athletic

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programs were all pared back, in an exceptionally disruptive manner, in which the central bureaucracy went to school budgets repeatedly to get savings to offset revenue and savings that they should have known much earlier were not going to materialize.

This year, even with the $94 million, this year's school budgets preserve the bare minimum of services that make schools run. That funding is not for extras or bells and whistles. It is simply to maintain what schools have now. Again, we cannot cut any more from the schools.

And so we are not. The budget we are proposing tries to hold service levels constant - nursing, bilingual counseling assistants, kindergarten and early childhood education, special education services. All of these are maintained, along with some limited music, art and athletic programs.

And even in these difficult

times, we have found creative ways to provide new opportunities for our students. In a few minutes, you'll hear Commissioner Wendell Pritchett talk about our plans for improving our Career and Technical Education program and Commissioner Lorene Carey discuss our plans for developing sustainable models for school climate and safety to address the number one concern of our parents and students.

Perhaps most impressively, our Chief Academic Officer, Penny Nixon, has been able to create more than 2,000 seats in our highest-performing public schools by implementing a more rigorous process of matching students and schools.

Of course, we would like to do more and better. I would not for a moment say that the resources in our budget are sufficient to serve all needs as we would like, and I do not believe any of my colleagues would either. But as I noted, these are lean times for

public education, and even as we advocate for better structures for funding schools at the federal, state and local level and for more money, as I am doing here today, it is also the District's duty as a governmental body, like you, to figure out how to do the best we can with the resources we have. So even as we are fiercely protective of our academic program, we must also be fiercely responsible with our resources.

What this means is that in order to preserve services for children, an enormous number of adults are going to have to make sacrifices to get the District to a firmer foundation for a stronger future.

The proposal for getting back into balance that our Chief Recovery Officer has set out requires enormous concessions from our workers, enormous additional efficiencies in our operations on top of the hundreds of millions already cut last year, enormous

cooperation from our charter school partners, enormous effort and confidence at all levels of the District and enormous support from all parts of our community.

Make no mistake, these cuts will have real human consequences. There is no way that they won't. I hope and expect that even as we manage through the urgency of the crisis, the District's leadership will acknowledge, respect and minimize the pain. However, we have to do things fundamentally differently and fundamentally better if we are going to achieve our mission in a manner that is fiscally sustainable.

One change that is long overdue, as it will be painful, is the need to close buildings in large numbers. This is another matter where the District has put off the inevitable for a long time, but must now act. We know that schools are anchors in our communities and that these building closings must be

undertaken with as much sensitivity as speed, paying attention to issues of equity, safety and potential blight.

However, we also know that we have the same number of school buildings now as there were 20 or 30 years ago when we have 50,000 students less and 80 new charters in the City. Tom says that we are spending $33 million every year heating, cooling, cleaning and repairing empty seats. Penny says we need that money for education. And so we have no choice but to act.

The choice we do have is to be thoughtful in how we go about this work, to take into consideration not just a building's age or cost, but the safety and quality of its program and the safety and quality of alternatives for students in that neighborhood.

Our commitment is to pursue this kind of thoughtful approach. Where there is a building that is old and costly, but with a program that is safe

and high performing, the District should find a way to preserve the program even if we have to close the building. Where we see students in an unsafe or low-performing program, the District has to find a way to move them into safer, higher-performing programs. The District must be careful to keep equity in mind as we consider closings across neighborhoods, and the District needs to deal with closed facilities thoughtfully, as we know that blight is a real risk when an old building shuts down.

This approach will require deep, meaningful conversations with the community, and that is exactly what we plan to do. We are engaging in a number of listening sessions across the City right now where we are asking residents what criteria we should take into account when considering closings. Over the summer, we will make a final matrix of criteria public and will go back out to discuss how these criteria indicate which

school buildings should be closed.

The proposal for school building closures and other elements of our proposed reorganization have been in the public for two weeks now and have stirred some controversy. With that in mind, I want to close my testimony by speaking directly to three of those concerns.

First, I have heard concern that this proposal is a done deal, foisted on the public with no opportunity for input. I understand that concern, but can say unequivocally for the SRC, that is simply not the case. When we were considering the staff's recommendations for school closures, we heard the community from all the affected schools. As a result, Stanton and Sheppard kept their schools open. When we were considering renaissance schools, we heard the community from all the affected schools, proceeded with staff recommendations to renaissance three

schools, but also decided to give the teachers at Creighton time to make the case for a very different teacher-led approach to turnaround.

And we will hear now. Our Chief Recovery Officer and Chief Academic Officer have put forward a thoughtful proposal that is worthy of our careful consideration. But it remains a proposal only, open to be changed, and through many listening sessions over the past two weeks and many to come throughout the rest of the month and beyond, the SRC will continue to make the voice of the community an important influence over decisions.

Second, I have heard a concern that the framework of Achievement Networks that has been proposed is nothing but a mask for privatization of our system. Again, this is just not true. I am a product of public education. My children are products of public education.

By the way, unlike the press always reports where they went to middle and high school, they don't report that they went to Ludlow and Moffet for elementary school, which I invite folks to visit.

Our Chief Recovery Officer and Chief Academic Officer have trusted their children to public schools. We are here because we believe in the promise, potential and shared need for effective public education opportunity for all.

What the proposal does reflect is a sentiment we have heard again and again, from parents and students, principals and teachers. The system we have is not responsive or effective in meeting the realtime, real-world need for quality education for all kids. It is an inflexible bureaucracy, out of touch with the needs of individual schools in individual neighborhoods. It is too often closed to the best ideas and innovation from the community and the

outside world. We need something different, something more open to innovation and more accountable for results.

On this issue too, I want to stress how committed the SRC is to truly hearing and being responsive to public comment. We have put a stake in the ground. We know that the system needs to move from one centered at and on the bureaucracy at the headquarters at 440 North Broad Street to one centered on supporting schools, from a system based on status in a hierarchical command-and-control, industrial model to a performance-based service model that is accountable to not just the Superintendent, but to the schools it is supposed to serve. This new vision is not an easy task, and Tom Knudsen and his team are to be commended for putting forth a first attempt at articulating such a system, through the Achievement Networks idea. While there are a lot of

questions to be answered about how we get there, I think in fact it is time to leave behind our current industrial/factory approach to leading a diverse and complex learning organization. We know that we have much more work to do to define how this should function, work that can only be done in partnership with the community.

Another point that I believe has gotten missed in the public dialogue over the very complex issues surrounding the District right now is that while we do not reorganize that part of the District that happens outside school buildings, this part of the work requires some time. It can't take forever -- while it's going to take some time, it can't take forever, because how we manage schools in the 2013-'14 year has significant implications for the work that must be done in the '12-'13 year. However, unlike the fiscal crisis which has hard deadlines pushing us to move

immediately, the organizational challenges outside of schools can be tackled over the course of the months to come, even into the new academic year, with community and stakeholder input along the way.

Third, I've heard concern that the proposal seeks to charterize the District, moving from 25 percent of students currently in charters now to 40 percent in five years. There are, I believe, two misunderstandings here. The first misunderstanding is that the proposal would somehow change the system to increase charter growth. The budget and financial plan are not prescribing an outcome, merely forecasting realistically.

The second misunderstanding is that the proposal is explicitly pro-charter. It is not. The District is not pro-charter or anti-charter. The District is for safe, high-quality public education for all children. The plan

simply calls for what parents and taxpayers have a right to expect - the expansion of high-quality public schools, District or charter, and the discontinuance of low-quality schools and charters, a proposal in line with the direction the SRC has set. Safe, high-quality schools for all children is not an ideology; it is a mission. Similarly, fiscal sustainability is not an ideology; it is a duty.

In conclusion, in my testimony I have tried to present a broad and unvarnished view of the state of public schools in Philadelphia. Today we are here to ask you to authorize school taxes in the amount and manner requested by the Mayor to provide essential support and financial predictability for public school families. I think it is fair to say that in less than six months with new members, this SRC has stepped up and brought some clarity, energy and will to make timely and tough decisions to repair

a system that has been weighed down by enormous challenges. We recognize the difficulty of your jobs and your roles as elected officials, trying to balance many public needs and to act fairly and decisively in times of uncertainty. I know that we will have a detailed and productive exchange today, during which my colleagues and I intend to answer your questions thoroughly and candidly with the best information and thinking that we now have. We ask for your support, and pledge that we will work together with you for the good of our city's future, our school children.

Thank you, President Clarke.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I know you have a number of individuals scheduled to testify, and if I can ask Mr. Knudsen and Ms. Nixon since you're here if you can summarize your testimony. It's important for us to be able to ask as many

questions, as you just evidenced during your conversation about giving us the opportunity, and we have a full board, and what I would like to do is to maximize the opportunity for interaction. We have all of your testimony. We'll make sure that it's written into the record, but at the end of the day, I'm sure people have a significant number of questions that they would like to ask you in direct relationship to your testimony. So if you can just kind of summarize your testimony, and then we'll go to questions from members so we can kind of get some of these very, very, very important questions answered.

MR. KNUDSEN: Very well.

Good morning, President Clarke and members of Council. I think Chairman Ramos has summarized the philosophical framework under which we are working. Let me --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I know I'm kind of catching you off guard.

MR. KNUDSEN: -- turn pages quickly here and jump to some of --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The problem is, we only have one bite at the apple today based on the proposed timeframe, and we may have to bring you back. And we got some good information, actually got very detailed information here, but we just got it today, so we're going to have to kind of digest this as we go through this process.

MR. KNUDSEN: Well, I think with regard to the causes for the shortfall and our responses to date, I think it's fair to say that or, in summary, I would say that substantial activity was undertaken over this fiscal period to close what eventually got to be a $700 million gap. We're down to about $26 million in that. We are looking to close that remainder with what I'm hoping will be a successful attempt to collect taxes that are owed us that are in excess of $200 million right now.

I think the other important thing about this year is, we did incur obligations. We did a refinancing that had certain consequences and we essentially had to borrow from SEPTA. All of those are long-term obligations for a short-term benefit.

On the '13 budget, I think I can summarize by saying we started off about a month ago with an anticipation for a $186 million deficit. That grew by 30 million -- $33 million as we confronted the consequences of the STEB, the State Tax Equalization Board, decision. So we're now looking at $218 million of obligations -- or of a shortfall.

If I can direct your attention, and I'll be very quick about this, but it does summarize as succinctly as I could capture what balance looks like, not in 2013 but looking forward to 2014, but the two years are intertwined and we can't separate them.

This $218 million assumes, going forward, several features. One is, could we in '13 look to our further operations for savings. The answer is no. What's shown here are things that we have underway right now, but those benefits will not be realized until 2013-2014. They include modernizing some of our operations, the school closures, which will not take place in bulk or in numbers until next year. We will get some marginal benefit from freezing expenses this year, as well as we've undertaken some changes in the way we purchase, looking for about $12 million of savings.

But basically the operations are not the place to look. Penny will talk about the fact that what we're spending now is all for education and that it is as tight a budget as we can possibly manage. We're characterizing it as a bare-bones approach.

The public charters, they are

going to be facing a consequence this year. They will be -- we will be reimbursing them less based on our lower costs going forward in '12 and '13. So they are participating in this problem as well.

We do have an option this year in '12 and '13 with regard to our personnel cost reductions. However, all of our collective bargaining agreements do not expire until August of '13, so opening these negotiations now offers a particular challenge.

The additional revenues in this '12-'13 budget do assume the $94 million in the proposal from the Mayor, as Mr. Ramos has discussed.

So where are we with regard to this year? We are looking at the 218 as a shortfall. If we do not get the 94, we're then looking at 312. I'm sure you have questions in that regard and I won't go into it now, but it is almost an insuperable barrier for us. That amount

of long-term financing for short-term purposes is really an unsustainable position for us to take.

Let me jump further here. We have filed with you the Five Year Plan. Understand that is a forward look. With what I've just discussed briefly on the screen, with all of that in place, and with everybody on -- all of the stakeholders as shown there participating in ways I've anticipated or I've indicated here, we can get to structural balance in 2013-'14 much more -- that's a fairly quick timeframe for that kind of a shift, but it is a heavy lift on all fronts. There's just no question about it, but it is possible.

I think, Mr. President, those are the major highlights of my testimony, and I'll stand by questions for when you're ready.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. We'll leave the screen up.

MS. NIXON: Good morning.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MS. NIXON: I will summarize in about two minutes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I mean, don't feel like you have to leave substance out, but we -- and I understand you have two additional witnesses. So what we try not to do is like spend half the day on testifying, because we got a lot of questions, trust me.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And we have a lot to say.

MS. NIXON: So good morning. Thanks for having us today.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MS. NIXON: I just want to highlight three areas of my testimony. If I could share with you a statement written by Jason Snipes and the Foundation for Success.

The movement to reform education in the United States is

fundamentally about improving urban public schools. Every debate about standards, testing, governance, bussing, vouchers, charter schools at their core are about public education in the cities.

These discussions are worth having, for nowhere does the national resolve to strengthen its educational system face a tougher test than in our inner cities. There, every problem is more pronounced; every solution harder to implement. The burden of not solving these problems or implementing successful improvement strategies has fallen disproportionately on the African American and Latino children, children with disabilities, children learning English and children who live in the poverty-stricken cores of America's major cities.

So I also would like to say to you that we come before you today emphatically stating that we are committed to providing students with a

world-class education that prepares them for college and career and to ensure that schools, teachers and principals have the resources and supports that they need to effectively and efficiently operate their schools.

We all know the District has fiscal challenges, but we're also -- we also want you to know that we are committed to early childhood education, full-day kindergarten, reduced class size for kindergarten to third grade and specific programs that support the learning needs of the diverse students that we serve in the areas of special education, English language learners, career and technical education, and alternative education.

Chairman Ramos said it earlier, but I also want to solidify that, yes, we have our challenges, but we have some great schools in this city. We are proud of our flagship schools - Masterman, Science Leadership Academy, Girls' High,

Creative and Performing Arts, and Central. But I also invite you to visit Bache Martin, E.M. Stanton, Amy Northwest, Academy at Palumbo, Crossan Elementary, Dunbar Promise Academy, Meredith Elementary, Baldi Middle School, Hill-Freedman, A.B. Day, Sheppard, GAMP and Northeast High Schools, and I can go on. But there are so many great schools in this city that go unnoticed.

I want to at this point -- Chairman Ramos stated in his testimony that we've built a firewall around school budgets. So funding from AVI will enable us to maintain that firewall. But understand that the firewall still only provides a bare-bones school budget that is not adequate for the children that we serve. We still do not have enough nurses, counselors, librarians, arts and music programs, sports or support staff, and I can continue. Indeed, we lack the appropriate funding to provide our students with the education that they

deserve. Not only do we need additional funds that are considered locally, we also need additional funding from the state and federal government.

And I'll make one more comment.

Simply put, we need public education to be adequately funded. The cost of a first-class education is not cheap, and we will pay later if we do not improve the life chances for our students now.

And if you just will allow me really quickly, what I have on the screen is a real school with a real school budget with real children. So on the screen, you will see that the redlined items represent the items that are mandated and the line items in green represent the non-mandated items. However, the non-mandated items have already been cut to the bare bones, and if we don't receive additional funding, the cuts can only come from what we've already cut.

I will close out with a quote from John F. Kennedy, and he once said, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our children's greatest abilities, because in each of them there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

I just want a couple of quick statements and then a couple of questions. And first I'd like to say that personally I've only been a Councilperson for 12 years, but in the short period of time that you've been here, I would like to commend you on the level of detail, although we did get some of it this morning, and I'm impressed with the level of detail and the specificity associated with some of the strategies and the proposed plan relating

to not only recovery but the level of detail as it relates to each individual school, because there's always this question and, you know, we've had a lot of conversations, as I'm sure you've had with a number of members, about where is this extra $94 million going. I'd like to think it's a coincidence that you have the Blaine School up there and the fact that I went to Blaine school as a little child. I'm sure that was a coincidence. It's okay. Good move. Good move. I'd have done the same thing.

But I understand the struggles that you've had in this short period of time. So I do want to commend you. You guys put together a pretty good presentation and I'm quite impressed.

And, Pedro, I want to thank you for taking me out to a couple of schools, to YouthBuild to see the relationship and the ability to have a diverse educational process dealing with construction in that particular case and the Stetson model,

although I didn't see it. Four years ago I talked to Councilwoman Sanchez and she told me that it was quite a difficult situation up there, and when I went in the class -- I'm sorry; in the lunchroom and I saw the children with their hands folded, I thought it was staged, but it wasn't, because we didn't let them know we were coming. And I never seen anything like that. It was quite impressive. And I told you at the time that's the model that we'd like to see across the board, where you have that level of interaction, having the executives that were actually students being a part of the process. So I said at that time if you created that environment across the board in the School District, I think that there would be a significant level of support for your proposal and ultimately some additional financing. And in conversation with colleagues, I don't think that there's anyone that thinks

that you don't need additional dollars. This whole issue about, one, how we got there, a process that was established that had nothing to do with the School District. It's established locally by the Administration and the Council. That is a challenge for us without having information relating to numbers and also having some level of a game plan, which you've presented today. So hopefully we'll get through that.

I'd like to start out with a couple of quick questions and then the Chair of Education, Blackwell, will follow and then we'll go to the board to move through this process.

One was, actually this morning I was looking at television as I'm getting ready and MSNBC this particular time, and the individual -- and I know Councilman Jones has been talking about this, and I'm sure we'll have several questions relating to this, this whole issue about manufacturing. They were

talking about the aggressive nature of manufacturing, jobs coming back to the United States and being created, and, frankly speaking, the thought is that we are unprepared for that educationally. And the individual who was there talking this morning talked about the fact that the companies that are startups and the companies that are expanding simply don't have educated individuals for those type of manufacturing jobs. And last week we introduced -- the Mayor introduced in Council, brought into line the Jobs Commission, and a part of that Jobs Commission role is to have a diverse approach to creating jobs, and one of the things that we wanted to do is make sure there was an educational component in that Jobs Commission. I believe there's some individuals on there from the educational field.

So we'd like to be in a position to have a real response to -- I'll let Councilman Jones get into the

detail of it. You know he's going to talk to you about Lehigh Valley -- being in a position to have some relationship to the Jobs Commission and providing information to them as they lay out this blueprint for how we create job opportunities. So I would like for you to be able to have some interaction with them, because that is our entity in the City of Philadelphia in terms of laying out a blueprint for us as we move ahead.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I couldn't ask -- amazingly, we didn't coordinate this. I couldn't ask for a better setup than to ask Commissioner Wendell Pritchett and Mr. Hornberger from Lehigh to come up and give you a quick overview of what's going on in career technical education, because I do think that with our Chief Academic Officer, I think this is in the area where we also saw a lot of opportunity for improving quickly. So I'd like --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Well, Mr. Pritchett is going to testify. Do you want to wait until he testifies?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I was giving -- then he can abbreviate it. I know he also has to get back to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Well, the issue is, I have this full board and my colleagues are looking at me, All right, Clarke, let's get moving.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Your call. I know he has to be --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So if he can just make a note when he comes up, if he can just respond to that, a couple of quick questions.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Sure. And, Mr. President, as you noted, Commissioner Pritchett has to leave around 11:30 for his university campus meeting. So that's why I thought it might be -- 12:30.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right.

I just had a question for -- actually in the testimony, it talks about

in order to become fiscally sustainable, the Chief Recovery Officer set out a proposal that requires significant concessions based on your presentation. And understanding that you probably can't answer that question now, but there is going to require significant buy-in to this as relates to the PFT, City Council. We'll probably be the easiest task as relates to us buying in since we do this on an annual basis. I don't know to what degree. And then this whole notion you reference the state revenue in '16 and '17, Fiscal Year '16 and '17, and I guess my question is relating to that, do you have some sense that any of this is going to happen or as you rank the possibilities of those things happening, is it likely, probable, unlikely or --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll say that with respect to the revenue projections in the out years, we have shared those with both the Mayor's Office and the Governor's Office and I do think that

everyone who looks at those numbers think, one, they're not unreasonable and -- either way, they're not unreasonable in terms of growth, and we hope to do better than that and hope to have more success, but, more importantly, for purposes of budgeting, what we actually spend, we're not -- we're out of the business of projecting that we're going to have money until we have a reasonable basis of thinking we have money as we plan our spending. But I'll ask Mr. Knudsen to address the other parts.

MR. KNUDSEN: With regard to the operations, which is the about $122 million in the upper left-hand corner, I think that is doable. It does require that we have continuing negotiations with 32 BJ, who represent the drivers and the maintenance and custodial services. The schools, I think there is the will to do that, and the other things will take care of themselves. The public charter

portion of the program, that is a matter of formula. The charters will not be getting the same amount of money from us that they have in the past. Why? Because we are spending less, and their reimbursement rate is based on our level of spending per student. So that will happen automatically by formula.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: By state formula.

MR. KNUDSEN: By state formula. I'm sorry.

The additional revenues, that is the subject of this morning's conversation. And then with regard to personnel, this is the most difficult, because 60 percent of our costs are personnel based, and we can't change the cost structure of the District school system without help from our employees. So you asked me if that's doable. I hope it is. I think that's within range of reasonableness given the direness of the situation right now.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. Let me go quickly to the additional revenue portion in FY16 and '17 and additional revenue from the state, and you also reference a long-term borrowing. Is the '16 and '17, is that for purposes of paying debt service on the borrowing or is it that we just have given up on the state being in a position to give us any more revenue in earlier years? Because to be honest with you, I continue to be amazed how throughout this process, particularly over the last month, how somehow the requirement for the state to meet its mandated responsibility continues to not be in the discussion. I just don't know how we can talk about this, and I don't see the state referenced in the newspapers and the conversations. Like how does that happen? And I'm a little concerned when you say you're not going to ask for any revenue until '16 and '17, it is sending a signal that, you know what, you don't

have to be on the hook.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's a great question, Mr. President, because I think it really points out something that over the years got combined in a way that made it hard to understand and we're trying to separate, which is one thing is, where's our advocacy. The other is, what's our planning. And when you budget responsibly, you budget to conservative assumptions. So you have to budget according to -- you don't want to -- you don't want to set up a plan based on something that you have currently no reason to believe you're getting, not any -- so while this doesn't say that we're not asking for more, this says that this is what we think is an appropriate way today to plan for those out years so that we don't find ourselves again where we are today having budgets on hopes. What we're trying to do is base budgets on actual conservative projections of reasonable growth in revenue just -- and

we will continue to seek better and more predictable ways of funding.

One of the challenges, both at the state and local level, is that as student enrollment now increases through -- we talk about the stranded infrastructure, because the School District has 50,000 to 60,000 fewer students, 50,000 fewer this year, 60,000 next year. But overall, public school enrollment is now trending up when you consider the charter schools. And the fact that the formula -- that the funding that comes out of the General Assembly and that has been coming through our current system locally is not responsive to student growth creates a problem.

One of the problems back in the 1990's was --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Mr. Chair, all due respect, before we get too deep into that aspect of it, I'm simply asking about a plan that does not call for state revenues in this fiscal

year and the following fiscal year and --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We have --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let me finish, please.

And you reference the predictability of this particular state funding in the out years, because the assumption is that they're not going to do anything now, yet 94 million from the City; i.e., City Council, was put in the plan before we even saw the proposed plan or even knew about the $94 million. So the assumption was the City Council is going to put $94 million additional in the plan. And we may ultimately do that, right, but the pressure built as a result and you got signs in the back, pass this bill, do AVI, to make sure that City Council feels the need based on the reasonable approach --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let me finish, please.

So for you to do that on the

City side, when I don't think anybody in here has taken a vote yet on the additional 94 million, but not do the same on the state, so the level of advocacy as you reference can be then put on the state to ensure that they put revenues in the budget --

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: That's my issue with that approach. Okay?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: What the District has presented is exactly the way the City presents its Five Year Plan. It bases the revenue assumptions on the projections of the Mayor and the state projections based on the proposed revenue of the State Legislature.

When I was here as Managing Director, the revenue numbers we offered up in our testimony on the Five Year Plan were the testimony -- was revenue projections based on the projections of the Mayor and the state. That's the

standard under which you submit the Five Year Plan submitted to PICA initially, and then it's adjusted based on what the reality is after the fact.

But in terms of what our staff did in presenting a Five Year Plan, I would just submit that it is the same approach that is taken that depends on the executive branch's projections. And I agree with your statement of fact, and I'm just saying that the practice here in the budgeting is similar to the City's.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Well, I'm going to follow up one last statement and then I'm going to turn it over to Councilwoman Blackwell.

So you're reflecting the plan by the state and the City. So if City Council comes up with a five-year funding plan -- because I think it's time for us to start doing this with the School District, because this seems to be a continuing theme about additional money, and I'm okay with that. So if we submit

a funding plan that includes a different model; in particular, different funding sources, will you look at that --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Just like --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: -- in a reasonable way? Because we are in the equation.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Just like the City, as we have reasonable basis to project different revenues or different expenditures, we'll update the plan. But with respect to revenue projections, we are moving to a standard for doing that that is comparable to the City's standard under the post PICA regime, which is you base it on, first, on the projections of those that under their -- in the City, only the Mayor can project revenue. In the state, there's a similar type of apparatus. So in the beginning of the budget process, that's what we do, because that's the most reasonable basis, and at the end, we adjust to whatever the action is that's taken by the legislative

bodies.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You know -- all right. All due respect, you keep referencing the City and what the Mayor can propose and --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'm just talking about the City Charter.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I understand that. But the City Plan -- a Five Year Plan means in this particular Chamber, in all due respect, not a whole lot, because I can't remember the last time the City Council of Philadelphia passed a Five Year Plan, because it's a plan, and every year we adopt a budget, which we're required to do under the PICA statute.

So my question to you, that if Council has a Five Year Plan on the funding scenario -- because it means as much as anybody else, because it's just a plan. We may have ideas about additional revenues from additional places to ensure some level of stability, because at the

end of the day, the Five Year Plan by the Administration is no less guaranteed than any other plan, because it's just a plan, because we're not going to vote on a five-year revenue stream for the City of Philadelphia. We're just not going to do that, because we don't do that, because you don't know what may happen the next year.

So my question is, if we submit to you, will you look at that -- and I don't say you have to agree with it or whatever -- and look at it in a meaningful way and possibly consider that as a part of a strategy to continue to fund the School District? Because every year, you all end up here asking for additional revenue, and pretty much every year we do that. So that's all I'm asking.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, we would certainly welcome any information that enables us to better project and more accurately project revenue, we would

welcome. And I'm sorry about being sensitive to it, but the only point I'm trying to make is that the -- I think in the past few years, part of the challenge that the SRC and the District have had coming before this body is that it has mixed its aspirations and hopes with reasonable budgeting for anticipated revenues. So I want to just say that we're doing that, and the more information we have to base revenue projections, including information from Council, we would certainly welcome that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. I'll ask a few questions now and come back again.

The District spent more than two years on the Facilities Management Plan, during which time it identified dozens of underutilized schools and,

based on that process, voted to close the eight schools this June and reconfigure many others.

Why can't or won't the District tell parents which 64 schools will be closed? How can you ensure communities that they won't be -- that these closed schools won't add to the neighborhood blight, which you referenced? And why is the District waiting until the summer, when we're not in session and many families are away and their attention is focused elsewhere, to announce the list of schools to be closed? This is the kind of transparency and accountability that we need. Can you respond?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes. Thank you, Councilwoman. As our testimony suggests, our plan is to engage -- not just to announce -- our plan is for hopefully to be able to start implementing not this coming year but the following year, and before that, going through a community process for

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articulating the criteria.

We already have some of the building information, but we want to work with community to articulate criteria and also work even at the neighborhood level on how we go about implementing this.

A concern that we have is not just that we do the right assessment of the condition of the building, but that we also proceed in a way that's equitable, in a way that people are heard, but also in a way that works with other bodies, including this body and other governmental bodies, so that if there are ways of avoiding contributing to blight when a building's lights are turned off, that we do that in some way that's collaborative.

So we want to do that not just in one big citywide process. We hope to be able to develop a process that is much more local and neighborhood based where we can really work in cooperation with other public agencies to make sure we do

this as well as we can as a community.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: There are --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And I know that you appreciate, Councilwoman, that when we have high schools that are one-third empty that the -- and in bad condition, the money that is being spent on that is money that could be spent in teaching and learning in a classroom.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely. But, you know, this issue of decisions being made over the summer when we can't know, there are -- and the issues of when the Board makes decisions. I'll use my own district for example.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I mean, I think what our intention has been, to start a process over the summer, because we don't want to lose time. In terms of when decisions get made, my guess is that it runs past the summer before any decision -- we're ready to make any decisions. There's a lot of work left to

be done to do this right. So we do want to do it with City Council, and I know that while Council is not in session, I know everybody here is pretty much here all the time anyway, and so are we. And at our neighborhoods, there are a lot of folks that we hope to be able to engage over the summer, but my guess is that it will go into the fall.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We as elected representatives need to know. For example, we all know the West Philadelphia High School is on the -- is to be sold, but we'd like to know when that happens. There are meetings last night on Drew School in my area with Drexel University and others. We want to be in the loop. We affect those neighborhoods. We affect those schools. The students and their parents come to us about what's happening, but if the School District operates independent from that, it gives us more problems and it makes it not possible for us to act cooperatively

if we're not kept in that loop.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you. I think the point is well taken.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're also concerned about this whole -- I heard Mr. Knudsen mentioned 32 BJ, and, of course, we've read all of this about unions and givebacks, and we have not heard certainly from Jerry Jordan and PFT that that is where they are. We will look forward to his testimony to have that discussion. That's very important to us and it's very important in a union city that we consider those -- that we really, really consider those issues, because we don't feel that -- most of us in this Chambers are not going to feel that we're going to fight the unions about it, and we're concerned that we see it as if it's agreed to when we hear to the contrary from union representatives.

We also want to know, you know, these proposed cuts to libraries and school nurses, school security and arts

and music, all of these cuts that are proposed, when do you expect these issues to be resolved? How do we know what happens in June, what happens in September and, again, what's planned over the summer?

MS. NIXON: I just want to clarify that the budgets -- that schools have received budgets already that have -- and I will be honest with you -- limited resources around librarians, music and those areas, but the budgets that they've received, it is our intention that we will not cut further into those budgets.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And we -- how will you include us in all of this?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilwoman, an important additional --

MS. NIXON: And they are the current service levels that they have now. So we haven't reduced those services in this budget. What we have

provided to you is actually the actual budgets for each school, and we can answer additional questions around those specific budgets for you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I have only two more questions and the President can defer to others.

With Network Providers with this five year -- the District has a five-year contract with Network Provider, and if it's evident in a year or two that these new providers aren't succeeding, who will know? How will this be monitored and how long will this experiment go on and how will we know if these providers are successful with our kids?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilwoman, a couple things, and I referred to that in our testimony. The SRC asked the team to come up with a way to make our schools more -- our organization more responsive to schools. The basic shift, in my opinion, is that we want to see the

school as the unit of change. The place where things will happen or not happen are at the schools, the schools for which you have individual budgets in your books today. And we know that the current structure that's built really around a model of running things that was based on factory management -- and factories don't even manage themselves that way anymore -- we would need to -- we need a way that is more responsive and more flexible in supporting schools.

Mr. Knudsen's team came up with a proposal that for now they've dubbed Achievement Networks. That is at this point something that we're looking to hear not just community feedback on, but we want to hear from principals what they really need from the administrative structure and how they can be better served.

So this is the design. The design and implementation is something that will probably take most of the next

year, Councilwoman. It's not something that will go right into effect, and it's not something that's already constructed that we're throwing out there. It's an idea that we're looking to develop with the community and with schools.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

I saw PFT President Jerry Jordan come in the room, and I want to acknowledge to all of you, good morning, and to him, and say that it is not with irony that today is National Teachers Day and it is a part of Teachers Appreciation Week. So we're going to spend a lot of time paying attention to you today and for the rest of the week throughout this budget.

But it's also ironic that in our research, we looked up the last,

what, six Superintendents, and under Connie Clayton, it was in '83 Children Achieving. Under David Hornbeck, his theme was Fair Funding, and under Paul Vallas, it was Teaching Strategies, and under Arlene Ackerman, it was Imagine 2014. Mr. Nunery didn't have long enough to get a slogan, but I'm looking at you guys, Pedro, Ms. Nixon and Mr. Knudsen, and I'm hoping that your theme will be Let's Get It Right This Time and so --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And, Councilman, Let's Get It Done.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Let's Get It Done.

So I want to break up my questions in four areas. I want to deal with your funding gaps, number one. I think the President talked about it a little bit in the strategy in acquiring some dollars from the Commonwealth. It's my understanding that the Independent Finance Office just released May 1 that its revenue estimates from the General

Assembly will have as much as $800 million in unanticipated new revenue, and I need to know specifically what your strategy is to include in that Five Year Plan some of those dollars. Because we're being asked to take a look at a $94 million heavy lift and, again, with the President's sentiments, we don't hear where the state has any responsibility to help with that heavy lifting. So that's number one.

School safety will be the second part of this.

School closures by way of both closures and are they population driven and areas of -- we went through redistricting where we found areas that have increased amount of population and others where they're decreased.

And then I want you to start with this last one, which is after all is said and done and we pay for this thing, if we pay for it, if it gets paid for, what is the end product going to be?

What are you going to produce by way of a graduate that is employable in a global marketplace and one that can, with that diploma, pay for themselves and produce a wage-earning living to their family? So from the technical to the college bound to the just regular graduate, what are we getting for the money that you're asking us to invest? And you can start with that.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll start with the first two and then maybe call up Commissioner Pritchett to provide some backup on the third.

First, with respect to the funding gap, first of all, the system for funding schools at the state and local level I think are -- the City provides about 35 percent, the state about 50, and 15 percent comes from the federal government, and at the state and local level, that funding isn't really affected by enrollment or actual cost. It's sort of the end of a political process pretty

much that decides what funding levels happen.

What I can tell you is that just as we're here today, we are continuing to work both on getting more revenue and trying to address some of the expenses that are generated from the state that are very expensive. For example --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Who are the Governor's appointees on the SRC?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Commissioner Houstoun, Commissioner Dworetzky and me. Commissioner Dworetzky was appointed by the former Governor, and which I will point out under the former Governor and even under former leadership structures, it's been very -- getting support out of the General Assembly appropriated to Philadelphia from state tax revenues has been difficult. Even when new money came to Philadelphia under Governor Rendell, former Mayor Rendell, it was largely directing federal funds at Philadelphia,

and the reality was still that in the General Assembly, it was very difficult to get state tax revenues appropriated to Philadelphia.

We're going to continue to work, because we think the funding should be -- that it should be more enrollment sensitive. If people return to our schools, we shouldn't be penalized for it. We should try to figure out how to strengthen it.

We need pension costs, which are state pension system. Unlike the City, our professional employees are in a state pension system, pension state run. The costs there are not just very -- just overly burdensome for us, but are also strangling other smaller school districts. That's a big area that I think districts can get together around to address.

So there are -- the advocacy effort will, I think, continue, and we'll continue to figure out every place where

they can help us on either side of the ledger.

But for purposes of the Five Year Plan, there's the Five Year Plan of what we want and mean to do in advocacy, but in terms of making projections about what our fiscal situation is going to be -- and I know that this dialogue is a different dialogue than what's happened in this Chamber between the SRC and City Council before. What I'm telling you is, I'm not going to come here and show you some hope and a prayer on the revenue side and then plan to spend against it. I'm going to tell you, we're going to say what we want in terms of program. We're going to say what we want in terms of revenue. But the way we got here today is because folks felt that they had to come here and show revenue numbers that they knew or should have known they weren't going to get all of and then didn't make enough planning to cut back.

So we're not doing that, and

one thing -- one commitment I can make is that I will give you and this SRC will give you -- will tell you as it is as it's happening and give you the unvarnished truth, and we will do -- we have to do all the things you're saying. What we can't do is to put numbers up there that we can't rely on.

We're hiring -- this is about what happens in the classroom. This is about whether people can expect a check when they work. We shouldn't be propping up what we think our revenues are going to be or what we hope they're going to be without any basis.

This past year we had to go back to schools several times and ask them to cut, because there were revenues that everybody was saying we weren't going to get, but we left them in the budget, the District left them in the budget, and there were expenses that people were saying we're going to cut and they had no plan for doing it. We're not

doing that anymore.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, we appreciate your candor and honesty today, but understand that -- and I'm glad that there's six new freshmen that didn't have to hear what we heard last year. So they got an open mind, but we were given the illusion that if we pass this 37 million or something better than that, that there was the calvary coming from the state that would equally match us and that all they were waiting for was our shoe to fall, for that shoe to fall. Well, that works once. It didn't -- it won't work this time.

So we appreciate your candor in this, but what we also want is some commitment that you will go to the state where they have equal, if not more, responsibility constitutionally to fund this education process and to get some assurances that there will be some relief, because for sure and for certain, we're not going to keep biting this apple

every year.

So I'll go back to where I started. Let's make the thing, let's get it done, but let's get it right.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Nixon --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good morning, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: -- and SRC Commissioners.

I'm going to jump straight to the point. The first thing we need clarity on is what is the ask. Council President began that process by outlining the $94 million that's mentioned in your

presentation. You've responded that your budget and Five Year Plan is based upon the Mayor's budget and Five Year Plan and the Governor's budget.

So specifically for the record, where did the $94 million figure come from and what does it represent?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The number was projected by the Mayor's Office, and I believe that the way the number was derived was by an effort to capture the -- in essence, to capture the value that has -- that the District has not received from the delays in assessment. So the way that we understood it was that it is tied to capturing the unassessed value that currently exists.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And it also represents a split of property tax revenue where the School District will get 60 percent and the City will get 40 percent, which is not the case right now; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's my

understanding that this would get us in line with at least where things were at some point of that type of split.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: In 2001, the City had a $1.7 billion -- the School District had a $1.7 billion budget, a $216 million deficit. The City put up 45 million, the state put up 75 million. The way we accomplished the 45 million was to move from giving 55 percent of property tax revenue to the School District to 58 percent. Five years ago, I sponsored legislation that moved it from 58 percent to 60 percent, which we were just discussing.

So is the ask from us, is the proposal simply that we, one, properly reassess property and, two, give the District a 60 percent share of that?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think that that approach brings a lot more reason and predictability to our multi-year planning, because --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So the ask

is that, one, we properly assess real estate and that, two, we give the School District 60 percent?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's my understanding of how this is -- yes. I mean, that's my understanding.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Under the proposed Five Year Plan that you proposed and according to what you presented here today also, there is no plan for additional local revenue beyond our moving to AVI and providing the District with a 60 percent share. Beyond moving back to a 60 percent share after reassessment, the District, as outlined here today and outlined in other documents you've given us, is not asking for any local revenue beyond that any time soon?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: With the additional local revenue and the predictability, this Five Year Plan assumes that -- this Five Year Plan is constructed so that we're not coming

back. It assumes that we're proceeding with the implementation of the Five Year Plan, to which we're committed.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So we reassess properties, we move to a 60 percent share for the School District. That produces maybe $94 million, maybe more, maybe less. Beyond that, there is deficit borrowing required, a significant amount of deficit borrowing possibly.

Is the 60 percent share or the additional revenue coming from the move to 60 percent share related to deficit borrowing or is it to plug the deficit, or both?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll have Mr. Knudsen supplement this, but the -- I mentioned that the District's situation was -- that what we found a couple months in was that the District's situation wasn't a budget problem. It had actually become a cash problem. So the -- our plan to try to spread this out and get to balance by Fiscal '14 and do borrowing

assumes that we have the cash that's generated by the 94 million.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That answers my question.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'll come back on the next round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for your testimony and for summarizing some of your testimony. We appreciate that.

My first question is for the Chief Academic Officer, Ms. Nixon. And I think you're probably today the most important person up there, from my perspective. You're responsible, your

shop is responsible for providing a top-flight education to Philadelphia's children and equipping them with critical-thinking skills, knowledge base, confidence and the support to pursue their dreams.

Given that, in your experience as a teacher, principal, administrator, School District alumna, it is your opinion that I want to hear about the transformation plan and the Five Year Plan. The question is, do you think the plan with its closure of 64 schools, increase in charter enrollment, I guess based on Mr. Ramos's testimony the as-yet undefined Achievement Network structure will lead to better educational outcomes for children enrolled in District-run and charter schools, and, if so, why?

MS. NIXON: Thank you. Good morning.

I want to reiterate before I move forward is that what has been put -- what the District has put forward is a

proposal. What we know for sure is that we must improve outcomes for students. So that the plan that we've put forward has placed a laser-like focus on the importance of the improvement of academic achievement happening at the school level. So that the plan rests on the fact that we must recognize that teachers and principals are the key to turning academic achievement around in the school. I think we're clear on that. We agree with that.

As we spoke with our committees to the community, I think that's the one piece of the plan that we all agree on, that we must improve teaching and learning in our schools, that teachers and principals are the core of that work and what any reorganization does and what we've put forward right now is a proposal on how do we reorganize to support teaching, learning and leadership in our schools.

So to answer your question, we

don't have a full-blown plan right now. We know that we have to go back out to the community and get some more information, particularly around Achievement Networks, which is the reorganization piece of the plan. And we're going to do that, and once we gather the additional information from the community, then we'll come back out with a plan that's inclusive of the views of all of the stakeholders.

In terms of school closures, I think we are clear that we have too many buildings, that we have to close some schools. So the plan is to get to our 85 percent --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Ms. Nixon, I'm sorry. The question is a specific question. I'm not asking you to break down each of the issues in it. The question is -- and I guess I'd ask you to start with a yes or a no and then the explanation. Will the transformation plan improve educational outcomes for

kids? If so, why?

MS. NIXON: I guess I didn't answer yes or no because we don't have a full-blown transformation plan yet, because as the District and the SRC, we are committed to going back out to the community for further engagement to get a final plan. So we don't have a final plan yet. All we have is a proposal. But what you've heard throughout that proposal is that we have to focus on the school building, we have to focus on teachers and principals, and we also have to focus on reorganize central office in a way that supports the school buildings and supports teaching, learning and leadership.

Do I believe those components are key to turning around the District? Yes, I do, but we haven't gotten to a full-blown plan that encompasses all of that yet.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So in summary, you're asking us to invest in

something that you can't clearly say will improve outcomes for children?

MS. NIXON: No. What I'm -- you said to me say yes or no on a proposal.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: On what you've proposed to the City Council.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: What City Council is acting on today is a request for funding for this next fiscal year that pretty much maintains the levels to which the School District has been forced to cut by now, and it's the level at which is reflected in the individual school budgets that you have in your binder.

If you go to each page in your binder here, you'll see that there's a box that's been added to the actual school budget that says -- that shows what happens without the 94 million. So what we're asking you to do today is, one, understand that we are working towards a Five Year Plan. To achieve the

Five Year Plan, the District needs to do many things, including reorganize itself to be more effective. But in terms of the $94 million ask today, what we're showing you is pretty much reflected in any one of these pages between -- it's really a choice of whether the items in green can sustain the cuts that are shown in the box, which is, I think, at the end of the day, the yes or no comes down to whether that -- what happens at the school level, and that's why we have each school's impact before you today.

This is, with respect to the plan itself, this is a five year plan. The transformation plan is, as all these things, you're not changing 120 years in a few months. It's going to take working through the details of that, and we're asking you to support us today in funding for this year, but we're also asking you if you're willing to be part of the discussion about what this system should look like in the end.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You're asking us to support $500 million of additional taxes over five years, and I was asking about the plan in that context. And so, I mean --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We're not -- we're pretty much presenting a choice. This is a community's choice, and we're showing you what in practical terms where things are today. And we're here every year, and we will be willing to come back more than annually and report on how we're doing compared to plan.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: If that will be helpful.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: My time is up. I just find it very troubling that after five years and what's proposed, that we can't get a clear answer that, yes, it will improve educational outcomes for children if we pursue what you propose today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, let me answer, because the 94 million that you started with per year does not -- what it does under the current structure is maintain the status quo. What we're doing is presenting a Five Year Plan and reorganization that's meant to generate more resources to the school level. What Ms. Nixon is saying is how well that then gets spent at the school level is what we have to make sure that happens through a structure that is better than the one we have today. We know that the structure we have today is not one that is producing the results we want, especially with the structure that we have in place and that's reflected in the individual school budgets.

MS. NIXON: But what I would also like to add, Commissioner, is that once we have -- I'm sorry; Councilman. It's running together. That once we have the community engagement, we will come

back to you with an emphatic yes, that what our final proposal will do is improve outcomes for students.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: What's clear is not doing so makes it worse.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

Is that the Five Year Plan? Is there a document other than that that says Five Year Plan? You keep referencing it.

MR. KNUDSEN: Mr. President, we have provided it online and it was called the Transformation Document. I have a copy of it here somewhere. I can --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So online, but it's not included in --

MR. KNUDSEN: It's not included in this packet.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Is there a reason why it's not in here since it's being referenced like every five minutes?

MR. KNUDSEN: It was an

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oversight.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It's an oversight? Okay. If it's oversight, it's okay.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Transmitted to Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Because that was actually one of my questions that I was supposed to ask.

MR. KNUDSEN: It was transmitted and it wasn't reproduced, but you do have it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. That's what I was wondering. That was like one of my questions to ask, where is the Five Year Plan. All right.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Oh.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you, Mr. President.

In light of what has happened up till now, I think the issue that we all face is this is not just about this year's funding. This is about this

year's funding in light of the previous year's funding and next year and then so forth and so on.

So one of the things that we're concerned about is rather than a future plan of reforming the system of education; in particular, the governance of education, what is the opportunity now for us to begin that conversation around really, I think, what people in this city want? Because either way, people will be unhappy. We will either not give enough money to the school, we will either raise taxes, we will take taxes away from what other people want. Either way, but at the end of the day, I think what we're responsible for that we all have to do is ensure a better system of accountability, responsiveness, stability and progress in education. And I personally cannot see that the SRC -- not you folks, because you were, as many people have said, probably the best folks we've had to bat so far, but we need a better system,

including perhaps some type of outside auditing of whatever governance body there is. Is that something that we can put on the table to discuss?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think it's not a reach to say that given everything that has to happen in the next several months, in the next few years, that we should have a mechanism by which we are able to come together more frequently than annually. And I think I've been to caucus or to meetings probably more in the last few months than -- I think we tried to be here a lot. But as this all gets harder, I think that we should have structured ways of communicating and sharing, in addition to the scores and scores and scores of community meetings that we've had and even more that have to happen, because each one of these is a heavy lift.

I mean, I do want to say that what you see up there doesn't go away depending upon who is in my seat or your

seat. This is the reality of the state of the District today, and you can project out from there what awaits the District and the City.

So I do think that whatever level -- I mean, this is a challenge for the community. The community is even sort of less prepared for the magnitude of change that we see and that we're trying to sort of convey to you, and we've tried to convey that in the last several months that we've been here.

So regardless of the structure, we're all -- I mean, the fundamentals don't change, and we need to change the fundamentals to get a district that's sustainable, as you say, fiscally sustainable, but that's our duty. Our mission is to provide safe, high-quality educational opportunities for all children, and at the end -- and in a way that Councilman Jones reminds, that's relevant, in a way that prepares them for a life and making a living as adults

where things are constantly changing.

So at least in terms of the financial, which is where you're focused right now, I think we should be communicating regularly given the circumstances here, and if that were a structured quarterly meeting or something like that, City, District, Council get together, review where we are, we'd be happy to do that and hopefully -- because for us, it's also a way of engaging you more and thus being able to engage the public further through some really tough stuff ahead.

COUNCILMAN OH: I'm going to move to my second question, but I do want to make the point for your consideration that in my voting and study of this, I do find it problematic that -- and I believe the reason there's so much frustration is that people have felt a lack of an ability to communicate with the school leadership, that having a consistent voice -- because ultimately the community

are the parents and the students, and their voice is important.

I understand my time is up. I'd just like to leave one question for you to think about, because I wonder is our current system of funding the School District, being that we have so much property in this city that does not pay the property tax, is this a sustainable model for us going down to the future? And I think one of the issues ultimately is that while that is our perspective today, it really could change. We could have less and less funding from the state and the federal government in the future.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you. And if we aren't able to show that we can turn this District around, stabilize this District now and provide the prospect in the short term of a stronger, more stable District, then I think the benefits that we've seen of growth in the census in the last couple forecasts we will lose.

We are in a time-sensitive

battle here for the future of the City and the future of the schools, and while everything you say is absolutely true, I feel right from everything -- from everything I sort of really was passionate about as an undergraduate to everything that I've learned in business or government public service, this really is a moment that if it gets away from us, we're going to be sorry for a long time. We need to keep all our -- we need to provide better prospects for all our families in the City. And I think that as we come out of this recession, we have some opportunity potential with revenue, but we're not going to be in a position to realize that opportunity if the message we have sent is that the prospects of the schools are going to be weak for the years to come.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Johnson.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good morning, Pedro. Thanks for being here today. I just had a couple of questions I wanted to just get some clarity on with the new model of -- the proposed model of restructuring as we move forward.

I know Ms. Nixon talked about the components of effective teachers and principals and the decentralization of the central office as well as rightsizing the District from the building standpoint. So, one, I want to see what role the parents and the community will play in this new model, proposed model, as we move forward.

Two, when you talk about Achievement Networks, I really want to see when we talk about EMOs running schools, how does that play in this new model, how will they participate, rather

be a course I always put out there like the KIPP School or Aspira or Universal, charter schools. Like how would those EMOs play in this context? Most of the charter school models have an opportunity to pick and choose, right? And so I want to see what's the plan for those who suffer from special ed and behavior problems, the ones who are like I was when I attended Edward Bok, get a 3 in behavior, but A's and B's in terms of my grades. What's going to happen or what's the plan for those particular young people moving forward?

And, last, what's the status of our Superintendent?

I want to echo what's always been my main -- my grave concern in being a citizen of Philadelphia. Before I even became an elected official, every mayoral administration we have a new superintendent with a new plan, and ultimately it's the children that suffer. It has nothing to do with this SRC Board.

This goes back to when some people advocate let the City take back over the schools, which I don't necessarily think we're in a position financially to do at this particular moment, but even when we had a School District-ran school board, some of the same issues we faced at that particular time.

And so I think we have to get to a point -- and some of this is rhetorical -- that everyone who has a stake in education in general, I would like -- I wish every elected official and every teacher and principal had to send their children to a public school, because I don't think we'll be in this same predicament that we're in right now.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: But we have to move forward. We have to move forward. And it's really so -- everybody's experience is different, but I know for a fact if I didn't have a good education, growing up in the streets of

South Philadelphia, where half of my friends are dead or in jail, I know the role that education played in making me change my life around. I'm talking about education in general, for the record, just across the board. And every parent should have a right to choose, and the reason why I say that and it may sound controversial, but the reality is, while we fix public education and debate these issues, under every new Administration, the lifespan of a kid between K through 12 is passing and they don't get a second chance to get it right.

But if you can just touch on those four key points that I mentioned earlier.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You made five points, starting with your last one first, which is -- I mean, I think we have other than the geography of North Philly east of Broad and South Philly, we probably have a lot in common about the role that education has played, all the

difference that education has made in our lives and thus the lives of our family.

So I do share with you, and I think one of the distinguishing features of this SRC and this leadership team is that more than everything, there's a sense of urgency, a sense that this isn't about waiting 12 or 18 years or waiting to end poverty. This is work that has to happen now and which I think through some of the examples you gave, it's possible. It used to be that this was a theoretical thing. There are enough anecdotes now of places that work that turned around quickly to tell us that this is possible.

I do think that there are -- the District has been in cycles of financial crises, and I do think that it goes to the fundamental economic health of the City and also to the structures that we have in place at the state and local level for funding schools.

With respect to the Superintendent search, it's continuing.

The Notebook today I think has an interview with the search team leader, Wendell Pritchett, that lays out in pretty granular detail where things are in terms of the number of candidates seen and all that. We're hoping to have a public process going hopefully sometime in June. Our goal is still to have somebody in place by September. And as Commissioner Pritchett always says and all of us always say, but we're not going to settle. So if we're not done, we're not done, but we're not going to pick somebody because the clock has run.

With respect to charter management organizations, they are part -- and charter schools, independent charter schools, they are a part of the educational landscape. Right now one in four students are in charter schools, and that's going -- if trends continue, that will increase. And what the movement is within the District and I think within a lot of the charter leadership community

as embodied in the Compact is, this is -- there's a sufficiency scale that this is no longer about anti-charter, pro-charter. This is about quality, quality at the District, quality at charters having some common language, some common measures and even common enrollment so that the complexity isn't passed on to parents and children.

With respect to community engagement, as I said in my testimony, I think it's enormous, both on the facilities side, on the discussion about networks. A lot of this, this is an effort to transform and not just mess around at the edges.

Mr. President, I do know that -- and I think I hit all your points, Councilman.

Mr. President -- engagement, EMOs, Superintendent, sort of the cycles and then --

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Behavior, special ed population of children moving

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forward.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: First of all, in every discussion of every proposal, the responsibility, the ultimate responsibility, for equity resides at the top, because every part of the organization is responsible for that. It also increasingly means that as we get to scale within the charter community, charters have to carry their part of the responsibility, and some of them do better than others, and that's also a discussion within the Compact.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you just clarify that one component in terms of charters having the opportunity to play a part in the responsibility of servicing that specific population. Because we get --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think the main thing now as we go into the next -- as all this continues to evolve is that being a public school means you have to serve all kids.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's my point.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Mr. President, can I have Commissioner Pritchett come up before he leaves. He has to be on his campus.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.

Councilman, are you done?

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: My second round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

Mr. Pritchett has to leave.

And real quick, for the members that are trying to tee up, there's an issue with respect to the communications device that will not allow more than nine people to be teed up at a time. So just kind of like give me a signal and we'll just try to keep it manually. We have to go back to old school, just kind of write it down.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon, sir.

MR. PRITCHETT: Good afternoon, Council President Clarke and distinguished colleagues. It's a pleasure to be here with you, and I apologize that I can't be here with you for the whole session. As you know, it's college graduation season and I have a lot of young people who are expecting me to give them the awards that they have earned, and so that's where I'll be this afternoon. But I hope you'll indulge me. Again, I look forward to working with you.

You have my testimony, so I won't read it, but I will say, Council President and Councilmen, that we are focused on career and technical education. I actually saw the same report that you saw this morning, and this is priority for the School Reform Commission. We have to improve our efforts to prepare our students for

productive work in the workforce. And so we have as an SRC appointed an advisor, Dr. Clyde Hornberger, who is with me. Many of you have met Dr. Hornberger already. He is a nationally recognized leader in career and technical education, and the SRC has appointed him our advisor to improve our efforts in this area. Dr. Hornberger is here to answer more detailed questions, but I'll just point out that he has been deeply engaging with the business community and other stakeholders in Philadelphia to find out exactly what the needs are, projected needs are, for employment in the City and in the region, and he's been working with stakeholders, both within the District and in the community, to figure out how to match those interests, those needs with the desires of our students. And I will point out that our students are deeply engaged in this process too. They have a role in figuring out what they want to do in their careers, and so we've

been engaging with them also.

Our goal -- we currently have 5,200 students in career and technical education. Our goal is to increase that number to 10,000 in the next few years, and I think we can achieve that goal. And I hope we can go much past that, because obviously our final goal is to provide career and technical education to every student.

And before I conclude my remarks, I'd like to say as a college president, we've made a distinction in the past between career and technical education and college, but, in fact, they are deeply related and we should be preparing our students for both, and we should be understanding in preparing our students for careers, that maybe in the future even those who choose not to go to college at first will choose to go to college later. So we should be thinking about that, and we are.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you. Thank you so much. Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much.

MR. PRITCHETT: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And good luck today.

MR. PRITCHETT: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman O'Brien.

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm going to follow up on some of the issues that you raised.

Maybe I'll just go through an historical perspective here, and maybe I got it right and maybe I got it wrong. But I think the primary problems come from the fact that the stimulus dollars went away in 2010 and we're feeling that impact now in the 2012-2013 school year. When you looked in 2010, our local newspapers predicted the tsunami was going to hit the beach this very year.

The Corbett cuts have gone much further than expected. Our fixed costs continue to rise in your testimony and by

every expectation that I've seen in wages, health benefits, pensions. We had $500 million in permanent cuts, $170 million in one-time-only cuts. The 170 million is why we're here today, because that's going away and we're trying to find additional revenues.

I have somewhat of a different take on what the $94 million is about. Last year it's my understanding that there was a $37 million deficit in TransPasses. So SEPTA was asked to pick up that cost. Casey at SEPTA said this is going to be a one-time fix we're never going to go back and do again, and then the unions were asked to make concessions of $42 million from their dental and optical plan, where they waived a $42 million contribution. So that quickly gets me to the 94 million. And we've never had discussions about real cuts. That also represents another deficit in this conversation that I'm very concerned about. We're sitting here talking about

where these cuts are going to be and creating advocacy around a new design of education. We're not talking about cuts in promise academies, after-school programs, summer schools, English language learning programs, special ed.

The SRC admits that they have a $218 million deficit. We talk about kicking the can down the road like we've had in years past and we're going to fix it. No offense. No offense. But the credit card is out and we say we're going to borrow our way out of that $218 million. To me, that's kicking the can down the road.

From an historical perspective, we're sitting here over -- we have one year where we had a sales tax for the City. Second year we have a property tax for the City. Third year we have a property tax for the schools, and this year we're asking for another property tax for the schools.

We have a dysfunctional

conversation here, and maybe I'm the only one that's hearing this. We have an SRC who is presenting a list of assumptions that only the Governor and the Mayor can respond to. We're here as window dressing, because the SRC is designed and controlled by the appointments by the Governor and the Mayor.

I am astonished. I'm going to go further than what our President said and say, we have a Five Year Plan that says no anticipated revenues from the state until 2016 and '17? What the hell is up with that? How can we possibly sit here and talk to you when you're the product of the Governor and the Mayor and say we're going to tweak all of our educational visions to fit those revenue projections and our assumptions go right out the door? Well, let me tell you, I am not confident, not in you, but I'm not confident in this conversation going forward.

We have created autism

classrooms of the future. In 2008, we got millions and millions and millions of dollars from the NIH and the Department of Education. We've trained 200 teachers of the future in 100 schools across the School District, and that goes away. It disappears. We're not funding the consulting contracts, and those teachers disappear. They get scattered everywhere. Well, you know what? That doesn't improve special ed. And, frankly, I want to know when you create advocacy, I want to know where is the vision for the kids that learn differently, the kids with ADHD, dyslexia and language processing issues?

I applaud the opportunity to have career education, but you know what? I don't want to limit these kids to saying they're going to work in an automotive industry or a gas station or they're going to work in a machine shop. You know what? I recognize that these kids have an IQ and an EQ -- an EQ is

something that we have never appreciated in our society. We have a visual learning system. We have auditory learners. We have to recreate this conversation. We have infrastructure in this city with 85 institutions of higher learning. If you want to change the academic conversation, I can buy into that, but I'm not hearing anything about a vision for our kids for the future. I'm not -- and I'm hearing a deficit conversation where all I hear is what we can't do.

We started this autism conversation in 2008. Now it's going to disappear. That's the most regressive thing and it's out of hand, and I can't accept it.

The other thing is, we have an opportunity to change fundamentally an educational opportunity for every kid in the City of Philadelphia, and shame on us if we as Council don't demand that we have a better vision. And I'm telling

you, it's not your fault, but there are two people that can change this conversation and change the expectations of the hope and the future of every kid in the City of Philadelphia, and that is the Governor and the Mayor. They appoint you, and, frankly, this has to be a better conversation.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

You have a comment?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I want to respond to at least the last part of the statement.

The vision that I think is expressed -- and maybe not sufficiently well through the proposal -- is a vision where schools like -- where schools that are able to be constituted by people with a common vision, with a common strategy are able to do that and are able to be supported and sustained without having the constant disruption that's caused by some of the staffing rules that we have,

the constant disruption of the unpredictability of funding that we have. It's one where teachers don't have to scramble for crayons, where principals don't have to worry about whether a substitute shows up and where the SRC doesn't have to worry or you don't have to worry whether something that's working this year has to be dismantled next year at the policy and funding level.

On the special needs -- as you know, I'm not going to dispute anything you said on special needs, because in fact increasingly for all children, we have to move towards a way of providing students ways that are flexible to students' learning styles, that are more responsive to their learning needs. And I can tell you that the current structure, which is an industrialized late 19th century, 20th century factory industrial structure, is not the way that you get there.

So while, you know, there's

probably a lot of emphasis on that sort of structural stuff, part of it is that the current structure is getting in the way of being able to get to that more individualized level that you're talking about instructionally.

In terms of funding, I think that, you know, the more we can get and the smarter we can be, obviously the better. And as I've said earlier today, in putting out a five-year financial plan, what we're just trying to do is be able to project out so that the District stops finding itself here where people are upset because how did we get here. We're trying to just project out from year to year how things look. It's not because we think that that's where we should be. It's not to say that we've accepted it as it has to be, but it is a way of us not getting ourselves into a situation as we are today where we are, as you mentioned, the tsunami comment from a couple years ago.

You're right, there was public statements made with respect to that budget that there was a tsunami coming. The budget still got approved at the District, and this was the -- at the SRC at that time, but it was clear that this was coming based where things were. And we are here today projecting a deficit and asking for funding. Last year, the District was here showing a 600-plus million dollar deficit that was actually a 700-plus million dollar deficit and probably giving much easier responses, but what we're committed to as an SRC is to, one, staying at the table and engaged with you, but also trying to be thoughtful and respectful, but also be candid with what we see from our seats today.

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm just going to follow up, because this isn't the first time I've talked about this research-based protocols that exist in the School District of Philadelphia on

autism. It's not the first time that I've asked why and how this is going away and I've not gotten a response.

I'm not worried about putting crayons and other things in the classroom and making sure that those kids have that. I'm looking at research-based protocols that recognize that kids learn differently and that we have to have an academic conversation that responds to those challenges in the future by bringing our institutions of higher learning into a conversation so that we're not doing it one school at a time in a demonstration project, but clearly changing the course of education so that that standard is available to every kid in every school in the School District of Philadelphia.

MS. NIXON: Thank you. I've also asked Linda Williams to join me from the Office of Specialized Services, because the programs that you're speaking about aren't going away, and I'll have

Linda speak specifically about our continuation of those programs, and I think you know them well.

The other -- what I also want to add is that we have engaged Terry White, who is working with us to work with our higher educational partners around these issues to further inform the District and help us with our processes as we move forward.

So there are two things that are going on in terms of special education and particularly autism. One, the programs aren't going away, and I know we had a conversation around teacher placement in those issues, but I will ask Ms. Williams to speak specifically to some of the programs that you're talking about. And we are engaged with how do we increase partnerships to help us with the academic works -- I'm sorry; with the academic work.

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And I'm very happy with Dr. Williams, because she

helped create these programs, but I also have a letter here that there's a job search for the person that's going to replace Linda Williams and the Executive Director. So my questions are futuristic. I know what she did. I want to preserve what she did. My question is, I have no guarantee that it's going to go away, and with the budget cuts, the 200 teachers, that's 200 years of training, 200 years of training. With the budget cuts and other teachers going to bump into that and those teachers are going to be moved and all that professional training and development and opportunity for those kids disappears. I don't know that there's anything you can say that can make me feel confident that those kids are going to be better served.

But the other issue is, we always talk about how are we going to change the lives and the opportunities of the kids going forward. Asking universities to come in and help with

this charter school or this public school is not going to change anything. We've done that for time out of mind. I'm talking about a comprehensive conversation with the face of one of our major institutions in the City that brings that conversation, with all the research opportunities, the evidence-based protocols, with outcomes focused and tracking in an epidemiology fashion what works and what doesn't work. But you have to have a plan, a four-year plan, where you diagnose these kids in pre-school and kindergarten and then you take these kids and you program for them, you generalize the third year and you have the cooperation by changing the basic curriculums of these teachers in our institutions of higher learning so that four, five years from now, we do have the classrooms of the future. I don't see that vision possible when you're in a deficit model where all you're talking about is what we can't do.

That's not satisfactory for me.

MS. NIXON: And I just -- I don't want to underscore that the District's commitment to the special education population in that we recognize that we have to continue to be intentional about serving that population and the work that we've started to do already down that road.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me say that I do appreciate the enormous task, job, some might say duty with regards to how the District changes the paradigm and moves forward, and I am one who believes that the educators there do care about -- and you stated it well in your testimony -- needs of special education, young people, English language learners, which

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Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez might argue sometimes are not as embraced in a way that they could be or should be academically, career and technical education, which Councilman Jones cares a lot about, and the early childhood education, small class size, which I care a lot about. I get what you have in front of you, and that needs to be stated for the record.

I also appreciate, for the first time that I've been here, that we see a visual which captures the big picture for all of us to read from at the same time. It's just helpful as we walk through this enormous document of testimony.

Councilman Goode has addressed some of the numbers, budget issues. I want to go right to programming. The Tribune did a study December 5th, 2010 called "Study: Poor, Minorities Get Novice Teachers." According to the report, the number of teachers with less

than three years of experience jumped from 17 percent in '08-'09 to 31 percent in '09-'10. Numbers laid out in that report found that 45 schools serving largely minority students had the fewest experienced teachers. Similarly, the District's poorest schools were served by more experienced teachers.

So the question is, do you find the general findings of the study to be true, and, if so, what is being done to remedy that situation?

MS. NIXON: If I can respond to that. So I didn't -- I got most of the facts, but generally the research is clear that in our schools that are most neediest, we generally have principals and teachers with less tenure, but what we do know is that principals, more times than not, principals normally opt out of schools after about three years.

So we've taken a careful look at the principal data in the District and we've looked at every school and we

looked at the number of years that principals have served -- and I'll tell you why I'm focusing on principals in a minute; I'll get to the teacher piece -- have served in that school, and as we go through the process that we're currently in of placing principals in schools and hiring new principals, we're looking very carefully at that data, because we are clear that in our schools, particularly the schools that are hardest to staff, are schools that are high poverty, have high numbers of special education, that we are committed to having stability in those schools.

So we have -- so what we're doing is really looking at -- and I think this is the first time we've done it -- is look at a district and really look at the tenure, knowing that the tenure of a principal --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Leadership.

MS. NIXON: -- the leadership

has an impact on student achievement.

I'm focusing on the principal because if you look at schools where there are great schools and high-performing schools, you're going to see stable leadership.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Absolutely.

MS. NIXON: Stable leaders attract and retain high-quality teachers. So that if we tackle and focus on the leadership in the schools, the research is clear that they will begin to attract and retain high-quality teachers. So we're looking at it from the principal angle in order to address some of what you just spoke about and is the high turnover rate of principals and teachers in many of our schools. And I will say that we've looked at that and I can share the research with you around each school and the principals and our plan for addressing that need.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

Because that's what I'm most interested in, what is the action plan going forward to address the outcomes of that research. And you expect to see changes or adjustments for fall '12?

MS. NIXON: Yes. Yes. I expect what we're going to do is, right now we have about 17 principal vacancies, and then there's a domino effect of one principal moves from one school to the other. But what I'm looking at is to make sure that we make those adjustments in a way that's intentional and it also takes into account having stable leadership in our schools, particularly the schools that we just mentioned.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilwoman, I would also invite you to the SRC now once a month has basically an open policy discussion meeting that's not the routine business of the District, but usually picks one or two policy topics and invites around a roundtable discussion

with the public, and meetings have been pretty well attended. I believe it's the third Monday in June. The third Monday in June we're having a meeting of what we call Strategy, Policy and Priorities Meeting, and the impetus for this policy discussion was a recent report by, I believe it was, Action United and Education Voters PA on the equitable distribution of principals, on the issue you're raising and was raised by the Philadelphia Tribune a couple years ago. So the third Monday in June we're going to actually devote an evening to dive down into this issue, and you and your colleagues are certainly invited to that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.

Thank you, Mr. President. I'll come back on the next round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Good

afternoon. I also want to add my appreciation for the type of information that was prepared for this hearing. It is definitely more information than we've ever received, and I hope that my colleagues will take an opportunity to look at it, because what's missing in some of this discussion is -- and we're focused on the problem -- is some of the achievements that have been gained. And for me particularly as a parent, I'm encouraged by the quality of some of the educational programming.

I'm going to assume for the purposes of this discussion that the framework laid out by our Chairman is correct, that the District is about safe, high-quality public education for all children. So I just want to -- for the record, I'm going to assume that that's what we're talking about and in that context, so that when I ask the questions, it's based on that. Because that means it's not about buildings, that

it's not about anything other than children and how this system and the adults adjust so that we can get to that goal. So I appreciate the clarity of that statement.

The devil is always in the details, and I was mentioning to Councilman Green earlier today that I could really kick myself, because as Chairman Ramos pointed out, we saw the tsunami coming. We've seen it at PHA. We've seen it here. And I definitely don't want to be an elected official that will allow those things to happen again and not call it what it is. And so it is through that framework that I want to make sure that whatever we end up doing this year allows for long-term accountability. And as an elected official, I want the School District to feel that it's accountable to me as my parents feel that I am accountable to them, which is something that I take very, very serious.

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The process -- and the devil is always in the details of the process. What can the SRC tell us today that is going to be different about our ability to buy in to a blueprint that I hope exceeds everybody that's at this table, that we are not here faced with a different Superintendent that comes in and changes everything, but that we can agree to a blueprint that supersedes the individuals? What can you tell me today is going to be different, so as Councilman Jones asked earlier, when we do the heavy lifting -- and many of us expect the state to do more -- that we are assured that there will be a process of accountability for this Council?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Councilwoman. First, thank you for acknowledging that it's a collective effort, and in that spirit, I think given the magnitude of what we're trying to work from to what we're trying to work to, that in addition to the work of

coming up with the best metrics for things like closing buildings or the right service levels for which the Administration should be accountable to schools and how that is better delivered, as we work through what is not an easy path to get to, as you said -- I said safe, high-quality schools for all kids, but in a way that's fiscally sustainable, because we need -- you don't get that done if the District is in perpetual crisis.

So one thing that I suggested earlier and I think you also suggested in previous conversations is that it is an opportunity for us in this collective effort to be coming together more frequently, whether it's quarterly or not, to not just -- to talk about exactly -- as long as we stay focused on those two points, safe, high-quality schools for all kids, as long as we understand that doing that has to be in a way that's sustainable and as long as

we're all committed to urgency, I think we can work out everything. And I think we can keep coming around how are we progressing towards those goals, how are we advancing towards the goals in the multi-year plan, how do we need to adjust the plan as we go along to make sure that we're most on course towards those goals. I think that's how we do it, and in concrete terms, to go to an idea you've had before, you know, we've, I think, in the last six months have had a lot of informal meeting and we've done caucus and all that, but it makes a lot of sense for us to just put on the calendar check-ins as we've done informally over the last several months.

This is a big endeavor that is going to require a lot of collaboration all the way down the road, whether it's on the fiscal side knowing that what's happening or whether it's more directly to the District Council and other Councilmembers, what building closures

could mean to their communities, what are the options, all that. These are all real tough discussions, real work that's required in the months ahead, and in many of those, you're going to have much better end sight than we are, particularly at the District level, to assess the impact of some of these building closings and what some of the possibilities are for reuse.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I'd like to see before we end these sessions kind of what your process and roll-out plan is going to be, a timeline. I know in the Five Year Plan you talk about different goals. Between now and the next three months where some really heavy decisions are going to be made around future leadership, whether there's some union concessions or not, how are we going to be engaged in that discussion and the public?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We'd be happy to provide, you know, that type of time

lapse plan, and also in terms of how we're involved, you'll get an idea. We won't prescribe or dictate that. We'll provide something for your feedback.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay. I'll come back around.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

Thank you very much for your time and effort. I want to go back to the -- in your comments you talked about -- in your goals you want to reduce the number of seats in chronically poor-performing schools by intervening or closing them and increasing the opportunities at high-performing schools while engaging in a strategic master planning process to reduce unnecessary overhead and capture more resources for teaching and learning.

One, I want to -- my question is -- it's kind of hard to figure out what my question is. My question is, on the lower-performing schools, what is the plan to increase their performance rather than just close them? There are charter schools -- and everybody can't go to a charter school. The District is responsible for educating all children, and there will be children who will not -- everybody is not going to perform at the same level or the highest level. My question is, what do you do? How do you educate those young people who may have disabilities or just have learning -- are slow learners?

In closing the 40 schools and putting them someplace else, to me -- and you may have to close the 40 schools, but I think the focus should be on what is the plan for us, for you to educate those young people who are not performing.

The other question -- because I only get one. I'm tied into this. The

question Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown asked about the -- what power do you have? You talked about the principals. And what power do you have to assign principals to lower-performing schools so you take all the good principals and you take them to the better schools, and where you really need them, you need the good teachers -- and everybody should be good, actually. If they're not performing, they shouldn't be there. That's a whole other issue. But it seems to me they ought to be assigned to those schools where you need the special attention and the strong will of the leadership to help these young people along.

My concern is, what is your plan for educating the rest of the student body that won't be in charter schools and you can't get in all the charter schools? That is the plan I want to see. And how do you -- I don't know what obstacles you have in assigning. I

don't know the process of assigning teachers, assigning principals and all of that, but it seems to me that that may be a problem. How do you overcome all of that?

MS. NIXON: Thank you. I want to add and also sort of add a little bit to the Chairman's last testimony around what's different and how do we ensure that we can continue progress even if there are different -- a different set of administrators.

One of the things that we know that's constant is the school building. So when we're no longer here, the school is still there with the teachers, leaders and students. That's always going to remain constant. For FY12-FY13, while we're reorganizing, we have set what we call our academic priorities to get at what you just said, how are you going to address the needs of all of the schools at the same time you're trying to reorganize the District, and that's what

the set of academic priorities do. And I sort of don't want to read you a long list of the academic priorities, but what I will pull from them is what we are looking to do and what we've began the process of doing is really improving the curriculum at the District level. We already know that we have to have a more rigorous curriculum, and we started that as one of the academic priorities.

The improvement of principal and teacher performance we know is clear. What's always constant and what the research says and that we don't believe is debatable, that the greatest impact on student achievement is the teacher. So then how do we support teachers around their work so then they become better teachers with professional development. That's clear. We have to support teachers, and they're always going to be constant.

Second to teachers are leaders, that leadership has -- after teachers,

leaders have the greatest indirect impact on schools, because great leaders do certain things. They attract and retain high-performing teachers. They engage the community. They know how to set vision. They know how to operate -- they know how to basically engage the community, bring in stakeholders. They know what to do with their resources.

We know that if we get better around those two areas, that we're going to improve academic outcomes for students. I'm not saying it's an easy task, but what we're also working on is a clear professional development plan to support them with that work.

We're also going to engage in a recruitment campaign. We know we have to have ongoing recruitment of talent. How do we become a talent magnet for strong teachers, strong leaders. But part of it is support. A lot of our new teachers leave the system because they don't feel supported, and we know all of these

things, but what we've done in the academic priorities is develop clean plans around those areas that leave gaps for students.

I stated in my testimony that we have to be committed to early childhood. We have to be committed to full-day kindergarten. We have to be committed to reducing class sizes for K to three, because we know that those early skills are necessary if they're going to achieve.

We have to pay more attention to our diverse student population. We have much work to do around special education. So part of the training is that -- is to really share with principals and teachers how do you implement an IEP with fidelity. So really looking at the data, looking at the gaps, providing that training.

We also know that we have limited resources and we have to be intentional around where we put those

supports. There are some schools -- and we've called them full autonomy schools -- that they have all of those pieces together, so that we know that for those schools when they call on us for supports, we need to be there, but then we can spend a lot of our time in other schools that need support. So it's about us really having a plan to sort of leverage our resources in the right way to support schools. So I don't know if we said it clear enough that while we are trying to reorganize, we have set priorities. We have listened to the community. There's more work to be done.

We talk about -- when we talk about reorganizing, we continue to talk about how do we organize in a way that as -- and we looked through the eyes of a parent to say, do we have choice and viable choice for every student in this city. So the reorganization plan is not only about how do we organize central office in a better way to support

teaching, learning and leadership, but we're also focusing on the priorities that we know that's going to move us to student achievement.

I think that was a long answer.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I would -- I think of it from an SRC perspective almost in three levels. One is first making sure that all the supports are in place before you get to a point of chronic failure. It's about making sure that in a school, expectations are high and standards are clear, that principals are strong, that principals are supported, and then that principals are able to build a coherent and focused faculty and team that can go from year to year implementing their strategies for helping each child in that school succeed. If that doesn't work, then there are escalating strategies, which Ms. Nixon has talked about, whether it's people or time or other resources. And then it gets to a point where we are the

point of where -- after decades have had chronic failure. Then you have to do something more. And one of the things that I think is different today than maybe other points in the past is children that people were giving up on because they were poor, because crime was high in the community, because lots of excuses, one of the things that's come out of Dr. Ackerman's renaissance and promise initiatives is that schools have been turned around and students that people were making excuses about are performing and school climate is better, and part of what happens in those environments is, there's the ability among other things for the principal to have some cohesion and some coherence in the school.

So, yes, in some cases, we see some of these charters perform better; in some cases, the same or worse. But the ability to organize all your resources, all your people, all your time around

what's best for the children in that school is what's at the heart of all this discussion around reorganization, how do we make that more the rule rather than the exception.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Can I just follow up on that?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: But my question is, the renaissance schools and the promise academies are run by outside --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Promise are run by School District.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay. So then maybe -- I'm going to look at what people who are not in the charter system or the promise system, what are they doing to achieve all the goals really to achieve for these children who are not going to be in those schools.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And you see some similar strategies that revolve

around sort of the flexibility to build and maintain a team, the use of time, all that. We also -- but part of the strategy is also to say at a certain point in time, we compel -- each child is assigned to a catchment area, and the child is compelled to go to school, and there are schools -- and nobody said this more eloquently than Dr. Ackerman and other leaders at the time. And there's schools where we know that we're sending children by compulsion of the law to schools that have been chronically failing for years and where the chance of success of that child isn't determined but is luck, just correlating to that school. And you have now -- we have enough anecdotes and some data where those same schools with those -- with same communities, same children, same parents, same building, same environment, where you're able to build the school community around those children, it's made a difference, and that's what you

see in the promise academies. That's what you see in renaissance. That's what you see in the School District-run demonstration schools. That's what you see at some of the schools that are thriving and some of the schools that exist under the existing rules, but where you have principals and faculty that have figured out how to get it done in a much more complex set of rules.

So I think what I hope happens as a result of these anecdotes that we observe is that we get a greater sense of urgency about it. People used to say that this type of work took 12 or 18 years. It doesn't have to take that long.

So I think that while we have to avoid getting into those situations, provide support and intervene where we see them developing. Where we have chronic failure, we also need to act urgently and not lose -- and stop losing children to schools that we know over

time statistically too many children are not prepared.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you. I'll come back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Chairman, in your search for a Superintendent, are you looking for an academic or a business manager?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We have criteria -- we're looking across the board for what the School District calls traditional and untraditional candidates. If you look at the criteria that are posted for Superintendent, we're looking for a leader for the District. And I can tell you that among the applicants and people being considered at this early stage of the search, you have a mix of traditional educators, untraditional

educators and some number of folks who have some grounding -- that have had grounding in education, but have other leadership attributes that we think are important.

One of the challenges, as you know, in the District is its enormous organization. And even when we've had the best of educators, sometimes they're overwhelmed or weighed down by the non-educational part of running the organization in a way that enables teaching and learning to happen. Districts keep falling to that. But it's a mix right now.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: In this five-minute concept, you have to learn to speak as fast as me.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm just kidding.

Where do you shop? Where do you shop for groceries? What store do you --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: All over.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So if you're in a supermarket and someone recognized you and said, You're Pedro Ramos, you're on the SRC, and said, Can I speak to you for a second, and they would tell you a story that the house that they bought for $150,000 ten years ago in a heavily tax-abated neighborhood is now worth $600,000 and him or her, whoever is shopping, and their spouse pull in maybe $80,000 to $100,000 a year with three kids, and the woman says to you, I don't have any part with the School District, my kids don't go to public school and this extra $200 a month, I just can't afford it.

What would -- now, I know we're going to go through this whole issue of trying to protect through Harrisburg and here and through Council President's efforts to protect those folks who are exposed in that way, but what would be your answer to that shopper, parent,

homeowner, taxpayer? And add to the fact that your real estate taxes -- and I voted twice in two years to raise real estate taxes, in addition to what's going to happen to that particular individual. And as we look at the numbers, some of it is going down, I grant it, but there are certain areas of the City because of tax abatement that we supported are going to really experience a major increase in their assessment.

So what would be your conversation with that person?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, I think it's sort of a conversation with myself in some ways as well, and I have this conversation. The conversations that I end up having, I moved into Southwest Kensington before it became Northern Liberties, and when I first -- I moved originally on to Randolph Street, and it was very cool. When I moved in, people who had babysat me still do live on the block and people that I've known, and it

was sort of a homecoming, and that was great, and around that block -- and that block had been sort of the same sort of little block sort of stuck in time, and over time the neighborhood was -- a lot of the empty buildings were being developed. And in my experience, when I think back that far, now about 18 years, 19 years, what would happen was young couples, you would see them first -- first you would see they would buy a Volvo at that time, because those were the safe cars back then. Then folks would get pregnant. Then you'd see a For Sale sign. And you had some dog parks. People walked their dogs. Now you walk around and you see the park where the adults sort of hung out, they're now all filled with kids. Their parents are involved at -- taking their kids to charter schools that are in the neighborhood. They're also sending their children to the most local public school.

I mean, you see -- we just

broke down on an expansion of the Kearny Elementary School, which is booming. It's a pretty high-performing school.

So what I can tell you is that I think while people understand -- all of us feel the weight of taxes overall, and it's the aggregation of all the taxes that we pay, either as small business people or as individuals, we feel that.

With respect to schools, where schools work and where development has been happening, it may not feel such in terms of your overall tax burden, but in terms of your school tax, the school part of your real estate tax, I think it's a pretty good deal. I mean -- and when you look at some of these areas that we have population growth, these are --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But many of the people you're talking about took advantage of tax abatements, which haven't paid taxes in ten years other than on the land. I'm talking about the person who was in the neighborhood before

the Volvos came and what --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I know you've done some trips in the past where you bring folks in from the region to Philadelphia amenities and all of that. Maybe we need to organize some trolley rides out to the suburbs for people to see what tax bills, school tax bills, are in the suburbs, because it is -- but the value proposition out there is that schools will work. In some areas here, whether they're District-run schools or charter-run schools, I do think that we are playing a role for now in holding those neighbors and new residents and new taxpayers here.

My big fear that sort of is between the lines of my remarks this morning is that if we don't all come together and project a common purpose to make sure that our schools are strong, then we will lose those folks, and we can't afford -- none of the kids in our School District can afford to lose

that -- can afford to fall back to the City losing population.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: All right. I understand that, and the balance that's necessary is going to be a difficult one to balance, but I do also know the story of the folks who have been in that neighborhood before it became Northern Liberties and Queen Village and Bella Vista who are going to also be hit with this burden, and they need -- you also need to figure out a way to highlight your successes, because you don't do that. I mean, just give me one minute. I mean, New Jersey schools work. Why? Because they tell you on commercials every single day. I don't know if they work in Trenton, Camden or Newark, but New Jersey schools work.

You do not as a District tout the good things and the many good things that not just Masterman and Greenfield but everywhere in the City. No one tells that story.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And Camden, I don't know what Camden spends per pupil, but I assume it's about 20,000, 25,000 per child.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How are you?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just had a few questions, and as someone who is a big supporter of public education who, like most of my colleagues here, attended public school all the way through, and as the mother of a two-year-old and looking

at public school options and options in general, really want to be supportive and want to give serious consideration to supporting public education, making sure that my daughter has an opportunity to have the quality of education that I believe I got. And I guess I feel in some ways a little bit sad and disheartened, because I think that right now if you were to think of the School District as a company or someone selling a product, I think primarily you would see that people, with a few exceptions, would either decline your product or take it reluctantly. And I think that that's just a very sad statement, but I think it is the state of affairs when we talk about public education right now.

And when you give us a scenario in which you suggest that your product may actually continue to drive away customers; i.e., parents, because you expect to double charter school enrollment in coming years, it doesn't

leave us with a sense of confidence, I guess. And so I wanted to start there with the charter schools in particular, and I just had a few questions.

I know that part of the work that we're going to be seeing you do in terms of getting the schools together and getting things in order is to phase out low-quality charter schools. And you said that some of them do a better job, and we all know that, than others. So I wanted to ask you to talk a little bit about that in particular and also about who the providers are, and in particular, if you could talk about who the minority charter school providers are here in the City of Philadelphia when we talk about a constituency that's primarily African American and Latino here in Philadelphia.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you. First, I think I need to preface what I say by reminding that I think part of what's happening is the discussion -- I think we're all -- at least there's some

shift in the discussion about whether you're pro-charter, anti-charter, pro -- I mean, I think we're all, I think, growing consensus that what matters is safe, high-quality schools that serve all kids.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And let me just state for the record that I am for what works, and so this is not a question aimed at taking a shot at charter schools. This is who works and who doesn't.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You talked about charters or -- make sure that charters in the context of the budget, charters not chasing away customers and that, in essence, the budget -- that by acknowledging sort of the public school choice, that we're hurting the budget, thus chasing customers away. I don't think -- I don't know if that's what you meant, but if that's what you meant, I would probably suggest that in the example that I gave and many others, that

charters -- in terms of the residents of our city, I think charters have probably on balance done more to keep residents than to chase residents away. That's not to say that everybody that's exercised that choice has made a choice for a high-quality charter school, but I do think that the reality is that folks think that that opportunity is a plus factor rather than a negative.

I will also --

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Let me just --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think I need to acknowledge also --

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Let me just clarify, because I just want to make sure you understood what I said, which was that not that charter schools are chasing people away, but that currently public schools. If you're saying that you think that charter school enrollment will double, then these are children primarily who are going to be coming from probably

neighborhood public schools.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Charter schools or public schools.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I understand that, but they're going to be going to charter school providers.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And so a couple things. One is, I think the other thing that is a big factor for the product, as you say, I'm sorry, but the product is safety. I can't explain why in the educational -- why in the world of governance and management of schools, of District-run schools, safety doesn't come up at the top of the list when it's at the top of the list of parents and children.

Part of our saying safe, high-quality schools for all kids is both an internal and external message of recognizing that safety is the threshold issue. If you don't feel safe, you don't learn. But it's also literally the threshold issue, which is if you don't

feel safe, you never even walk in the school. And even some of the less high-performing charters, some of the bad-performing charters and mediocre ones, often what they appear to offer to parents is the perception of safety over the perception of lack of safety in our schools. So that is something that I think just has to be tackled at a different level. And I know that Commissioner Carey is going to be talking about that later, but I did want to place that as part of this whole discussion about schools that our residents want.

In terms of providers, we can in followup to your question provide you the demographic data we have for each charter school. If it's not already in your package, we'll send that promptly, because I do think it should be easy to get.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Do I have time for one quick question?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And people

keep reminding me to remind the public and remind you that when we talk about the charter growth in the plan, that's a projection. It's not a pre-determined goal. It's a projection based on the current rate of growth.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right. I think it's a projection that it's likely to be accurate. My colleague Councilman Oh, I know he has young children like I do and -- do you mind if I -- his daughter was number 300 on a waiting list. And so people are interested and people want to see high-quality performing schools and safety is important as well.

But one other thing I just wanted to mention in terms of -- in a statement, Penny, that you made in terms of you gave a list in your opening statement of schools that work, and many of them work very well, and I do want to ask, though, that you may want to take another look at that list. I went to one

of those schools. It's actually in my neighborhood, and it had a number of issues. And so I know that Pedro and I -- excuse me; Commissioner and I worked very closely together to address those issues and we were able to resolve everything, but I just want to make sure for the point of accuracy that what we say is true to form. And also on the list that I received in terms of schools in the 8th District, some of them didn't belong in the 8th District. Some of them were in Councilwoman Tasco's district and so forth. And then there were a few minor errors, but just so that if we could make sure the information is correct.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And sometimes schools are located -- and I don't know whether that's the case here, but also sometimes schools will show up on these maps because their catchment areas may extend --

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's likely to be true. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla and then we'll have Councilman Henon and then we'll take a break. That will complete the first round.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good afternoon, Councilman. Welcome.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Welcome to you too.

I want to go back to the questions. I guess first of all, I guess the budget for the School District. And we talked about the 94 million and we'll take that as it is as a city revenue, but we talk about not putting money in the budget that we don't have, even though you know I'm a big advocate of getting more money from the state and want to do things to try to get that.

The money that's in the budget as far as the union givebacks is concerned, if that doesn't happen, what is our next step?

MR. KNUDSEN: The program on the screen is the workout. We don't have a lot of options if we don't accomplish all of that. The key question that I'm struggling with is, if we don't get participation, then that means we either come back to the City Council for something more in terms of revenues or we would have to borrow in this coming year, and I think there's a real issue with regard to what our credit capacity is at this point. We are walking the line right now. And so all of that I would like to work and not have to deal with looking at the credit markets differently from the way we are right now. I think we can get through this if we can get this done. Otherwise, it becomes more of a problem.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: But I would

just say that the problem doesn't go away. There's revenues and there's expenses. They're already out of balance. They've been -- we got here. So there are certain drivers of revenue and expenses, and we're not in a position to certainly budget revenue that we can't yet see. So we're in this situation of having to find the expense reductions elsewhere, and the tough part about launching into this Five Year Plan now is that we're starting at a really tough place with very little wiggle room, and our intention is to really try to do this in a way that's as -- that, to the extent possible, minimizes disruption and hopefully collectively see an end point, be able to look past balance to fiscal sustainability and be on a stronger foundation for growth. But we won't get there if we don't address these big structural pieces now.

I mean, I think everybody is being asked for a lot, and it has to be,

because we are determined to get to the other side of this problem in a way that leaves us stronger rather than just continuing to repeat these financial crises every few years.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I agree, and that's the point I'm getting to, because we don't want to continue this crisis next year where we need more money the following year.

So we don't know basically if we're going to get to that 169 million or --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We have a plan and we're going to manage to our plan, and our ask is and our commitment is to manage that plan. Now, we all have to work together and hold together to manage through it if we believe that fiscal sustainability in this type of time period is the imperative for a stronger foundation for public schools to come. And I would say that we keep saying District, but this is about all public

schools. The District-run and charter-run schools depend on the fiscal health of the District.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. Do we know if we're able to borrow the $218 million? Is that a definite?

MR. KNUDSEN: We have to borrow substantially this year. We have to do our normal TRAN, which because we don't get our revenues until February or March or most of our revenues until February or March. So we're going to be in the markets for TRAN. In doing that, we've also signaled that we have a definite financing, and in response to that, then people were looking for -- the signals coming back are that we want to see the plan for the eventual workout, and that's what we have now in hand and that's what we will be presenting to the markets over the next month or so.

We have to get through the TRAN first, then we'll be looking to some kind of deficit financing, some amount of

deficit financing this fall.

You asked specifically about 200 million. I think the capacity is there for that. I'm not sure how much beyond that, and that's what we're struggling with right now. We're trying to read this, and that's why I'm trying to make sure that this picture is well understood and that there's some sacrifices on everybody's part.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Because what I'm trying to get at, we're just at a point where we're not sure exactly if we're able to do all these things at this point right now and --

MR. KNUDSEN: I think we can do the financing. The issue isn't specific right now. The issue is the long term. They want -- the financial interests want to know that we are on a firm footing going forward, and that's what this picture is really about, is not '13, it's really '14 through '17. That's what they're concerned about.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. I'll come back to that afterwards, but the one last question is, what is -- I know you talk about the networks and the new plan in doing that. What is the cost of that?

MR. KNUDSEN: The networks -- the forecasts assume a cost structure that is very similar to what we have right now. The networks basically assume a reallocation of resources within this umbrella of revenues and expenses. So we haven't costed it out specifically, but we're basically -- we're looking at a cost structure that's very similar to what we have right now.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So it will be -- the same cost as our administrative costs are now will be used within the new frame?

MR. KNUDSEN: They will not be the same costs, but, yes, the amounts of money that are there now will be reframed under this new program. But we're

looking at keeping essentially that amount of money the same going forward.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Just to be clear, I wanted to have you explain TRAN versus long-term deficit funding. And essentially what you're talking about, a TRAN is, my understanding, a one-year borrowing.

MR. KNUDSEN: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: That in order to borrow that money, is what I just heard you say, you have to convince the people who would lend you the TRAN, who are different than the people who do the long-term financing, that you will be

able to repay the TRAN in this fiscal year with long-term deficit financing, and right now you're putting together a package for the long-term deficit financing people to try to convince them that it's correct. So it's really a simple question. Who is going to lend us the TRAN and who is going to lend us the long-term $218 million to add to the overall School District deficit borrowing that we're going to use as operating dollars this year and pay back over the next 10 or 20? Who are the people who are going to invest in that that are banks, investment banks, et cetera? Is someone signed up to do that?

MR. KNUDSEN: We started the conversations with the banks yesterday.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yesterday?

MR. KNUDSEN: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

That's all I needed to know, Mr. President.

MR. KNUDSEN: We've been having

these conversations. I don't want to say -- the specific conversations on the funding of the TRAN started yesterday. We've had ongoing conversations with the financial community over the last three or four months.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And with your financial advisors.

MR. KNUDSEN: And with my financial advisors, that's right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Speak a little louder.

Okay. Are you okay, Councilman?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, Council President, and good afternoon.

I'm glad you added a little -- were a little more specific in that point of information, because one of my questions was going to be what have you done or what steps are being taken to

reduce any sort of debt service that the District is currently under, and has the District -- have you guys entertained any kind of swap rates on the investments?

MR. KNUDSEN: The District refinanced the bulk of its debt in December and brought down its debt service requirements. So the markets have not changed in any material way since then. So we're not looking at refinancing as an option, and we're not looking at swaps right now.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. In addition to -- are there better rates available out there? How come you won't be looking at the swaps? Because of December's -- because of renegotiation in December?

MR. KNUDSEN: The December was a refinancing of the outstanding debt that we have right now, and we got some present value gain out of that. What I'm saying is that because the interest rates have not changed materially since then,

we don't have an opportunity to refinance again. And also the swap -- the atmospherics around swaps are not -- there's no real advantage for us right now.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. I have a question regarding the modernization of the Transportation Facilities Management Plan. Can you explain a little bit on that? I know that you had the professional service workers, I guess, 32 BJ and the transportation segment of services for the District. What's that like, 2,700?

MR. KNUDSEN: We have 2,700 in transportation and in custodial.

COUNCILMAN HENON: And they have all received layoff notices?

MR. KNUDSEN: They have all received layoff notices, that's correct.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Do you plan on laying off 2,700 people?

MR. KNUDSEN: I'm sorry?

COUNCILMAN HENON: Do you plan

on laying off 2,700 workers?

MR. KNUDSEN: Right now, no. Right now I am in negotiation with 32 BJ on the range of options that we have right now. We have told them what it is that we need, and this conversation started in February right after I came, and we laid it out and said we're heading into some really stiff winds here, we need some major concessions, but we're not here to not have a union. We're happy to have a union, but we have to get to these dollar saving levels. So that's where we stand right now. And they have a one-year notice in the contract, so that's why the actions were taken a year ago.

COUNCILMAN HENON: A one-year notice to --

MR. KNUDSEN: If we were to -- no. If we were going to lay off, then we had to notice a year ahead, and that's what's happened here. There's a series of -- we start with 500 in July and it

goes up to the remainder in December. And this was a way of setting up negotiations with the union.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, how is modernization -- what are your plans of modernization for?

MR. KNUDSEN: We need --

COUNCILMAN HENON: For the facility workers and transportation.

MR. KNUDSEN: Well, for example, on modernizing transportation, we have a pretty primitive system of both dispatch and control on vehicles. We want to highly automate that so that we have control on where the buses are, how many kids are in the buses, what's the most efficient routes, particularly if we're going to marry this with the Facilities Management Plan, if we're going to be closing school buildings, what is that going to mean. So all of this has got to move into the 21st century. Most of it is in the 19th century right now.

COUNCILMAN HENON: No doubt about it, but keeping up with today's times and the new technology, would that be in addition to reopening --

MR. KNUDSEN: Yes.

COUNCILMAN HENON: -- contracts and trying to ask for concessions or givebacks?

MR. KNUDSEN: That's correct. It is in addition to. It's only part of. The big piece of the modernization has to be in terms of concessions with the union, work rules particularly.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. So concessions, givebacks or no modernization of --

MR. KNUDSEN: And modernization.

COUNCILMAN HENON: And?

MR. KNUDSEN: Yes. And continuing automation of the processes that we're talking about, particularly in transportation. That's where the big dollars are or some of the big dollars

are, and that's separate from the concessions that we're asking. We need the whole package. There's $50 million tied up.

COUNCILMAN HENON: I just wanted to be clear to make sure that it is separate from negotiations --

MR. KNUDSEN: Yes. There are two components. That's correct.

COUNCILMAN HENON: -- for healthcare or benefits and salaries of the workers in the facilities and transportation.

MR. KNUDSEN: These are separate items.

COUNCILMAN HENON: I have more questions, which I'll defer to the second round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

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We will break until 2:30. Thank you.

(Short recess.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon. We're going to start now.

Welcome back, sir and lady.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon.

A couple of quick questions and then I'll turn it over to Councilwoman Blackwell. She has a couple of follow-up questions and then to the list of individual Councilmembers.

Mr. Ramos, I just wanted to ask a quick question. In the document on Section 2, Page 2, Tab 2 and you reference a cumulative deficit of 1.1 billion, and if you look in the out years, '15, '16, '17, it increases to 292. Can you tell me why that is? And that's also assuming the 94 million from the City of Philadelphia?

MR. KNUDSEN: Yeah. Basically what that exhibit -- and I think I've got it there on the screen.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.

MR. KNUDSEN: All that represents is, if we do nothing other than what we do at present in terms of programs, in terms of collective bargaining agreements, in terms of where we are as an organization, we change nothing, continue to operate as is, we don't effect the economies that we talked about on the other -- in the four-part slide, then these are the deficits that build each year, because we continue to have automatic wage provisions in our agreements and so forth, and it also includes inflation and so forth. So this is if nothing changed.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm asking you why is this. What specifically? You say it's all in wages, proposed wage increases, it's costs of utilities? I mean, you got some pretty

aggressive numbers here.

MR. KNUDSEN: Well, for example --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So what specifically changes?

MR. KNUDSEN: Well, for example, on the pension plans, we have substantial increases in the premiums over the next five years going from 8 percent to 25 percent increases. It's that kind -- I can give you a list of what drives this.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Yeah. You can just kind of give us that.

MR. KNUDSEN: That would be fine.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm interested in that spike.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's fundamentally a carryforward budget that has a structural deficit, plus natural growth in it. So our expenses going up every year, and this is -- I think the

additional point about this is, you never get to that accumulative deficit because it's just too much. There just isn't enough cash to maintain that type of deficit.

MR. KNUDSEN: We could never finance that picture.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. You can just forward it in the specific terms in terms of what you think will drive the ever-increasing debt.

Quick question. Earlier in my question -- in my earlier opening statement I referenced the Stetson School as what personally I would like to see as a school model in terms of climate, safety, encouraging opportunities to learn and creating an environment for a learning experience. And, as you know, Mr. Chairman, I've continually said that to you and the Mayor in terms of personally my support for increased revenue would be based on a model that showed how we can get to that environment

where people can actually learn in the public school, not a charter school, not any other model, but where the bulk of the young people happen to be in the traditional public school.

If you can just kind of talk me through that, what the plan is to get to that point. I know it will be a probably long and challenging program, but at the end of the day, you have to start somewhere. So if you can just kind of talk us through that process. I understand you have an individual here today.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We visited a few places, YouthBuild and Stetson. YouthBuild had a restorative justice model and Stetson had the success academies, and it was a renaissance school. With me, Commissioner Lorene Carey, who chairs the School Climate, Safety and Engagement Committee of the SRC, which is one of only four committees and has been leading a pretty broad

effort around school climate and safety.

MS. CAREY: Thank you. Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon.

MS. CAREY: You have my testimony too, I believe, and I won't read it, but I'll just talk a little bit about us and safety.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. CAREY: So good afternoon, Council President and members of the City Council who are here.

Chairman Ramos asked me to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Just state your name for the record.

MS. CAREY: Sorry. My name is Lorene Carey and I'm a member of the School Reform Commission.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. CAREY: Chairman Ramos asked me to chair the Safety and

Engagement Committee, and what we began was putting together a committee of adults who would treat each other in the same manner that we wanted the children to treat each other. So we've been pulling together this steering committee from all different segments, including external and internal.

What that committee -- our core value, we began looking at the Blue Ribbon Commission and decided that we needed to just restate for ourselves our core values, and those are that the children are -- the children are fine. Sometimes we need to say it a bunch of times. The children are exquisite little characters. And I'm saying that because we don't often say it. And we come in and we show the numbers and we show the deficit and we smear some of that deficit on the children, and I just want to separate them from it.

We know from the turnarounds that can happen that if we change the way

adults behave, the children are incredibly resilient and change too. So we believe that we can make significant behavior changes quickly by changing the way that we as adults -- and I'm starting with "we" saying SRC even, right, "we" leaders and then the leaders in the schools and all the adults around them behave.

The Committee suggests -- and Penny Nixon has been extraordinary with us in working on this -- that this summer for next year, the principals have a three-day safety summit. They work together over the summer. The idea is for them to have a summit together talking about best practices with each other. Often we have not done restorative behavior to our own adults. So sometimes the District brings people in and tells them stuff.

One of the things that this three-day -- and I'm looking at Penny and this is true. One of the things this

three-day is about is getting those who are doing best practices who have had turnarounds, have great safety culture in their schools, to talk to others peer to peer. We'll also bring in some people who are very good and can help those who are struggling.

There will also be time for those principals then to work with their teachers in the summer. And one of the things that the Academic Officer has agreed to and committed to is moving back the deadlines for everybody's specific enrollment so that principals know earlier what teachers are in their schools. It's very simple, but it's key to us getting structure rather than chaos, that the teachers know the children who are going to be in their classes. Often we leave that right up to the first day of school.

There will be churn, of course. People move, things happen, but if we are much clearer about who is going to be

where and when, then we can manage our education activities toward exactly those children instead of doing it two weeks later.

I've also talked to the Chief, who has agreed and has been very -- really very thoughtful on the issue of safety committees in the schools and doing de-escalation training with the school police, who are there with the young people. It's really good for both of them, but it needs to start in the beginning and it needs to start in a structured environment, not in a chaotic environment.

There will be positive behavioral intervention supports, and that's a specific -- there's sort of a specific way of behaving to get sort of circles and peer mediation and that kind of stuff happening before anything happens, so that you don't have a crisis and then respond to it, that it's preventative. And I believe, Penny, you

have worked to have that in every -- in 40 elementary schools where there has been trouble in the past, where they have had a violent history. So that we would bring that in at the beginning of school.

We also want to make sure that we find lots of pro bono partners. Sometimes we poo-poo that, but it's incredibly important.

There's a pilot program this year, for instance, with the Good Shepherd Mediation something, Good Shepherd Mediation Group.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Program.

MS. CAREY: Program, right. Thank you. Thank you so much.

They have about 60 or 70 already granted conferences between victims and offenders. Kelly Hodge, who is our victims advocate, made the connection there. And they bring together in cases of what we call Level 1 offenses the victim and the offender to work together to come to some

understanding and for the offender to make amends. It's very useful for everybody, including that community around them, who sees that you can walk through this and not be stopped by it.

And then, finally, we will in that summer program be making sure that all of the adults in the building understand school safety team responsibilities, and that six months in from making the safety plan, that all of the adults, the parents, community, that we check in with them -- do it at the beginning of the year, but then check in with them later to make sure that -- to get their sense of how that plan is doing, so that you get the parent and the community sort of saying to you, you thought this worked, but this didn't work or this worked better or I want it being this way.

And, finally, the one thing that I didn't check on before I came is, I know, Penny, you've put in some

anti-bullying technology somewhere, and I'm not quite sure what that is, but -- so we've been trying to work as fast as possible to make sure that we're doing some things for this year having to do with policies, but that we set up the next year. And we believe these can make significant changes quickly on the ground just with all the people whom we have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Okay. Followup to be a little more specific. I was talked out of doing this. I've gotten to the point where the level of frustration has grown within me and I was telling the Mayor and then telling the Chairman that I was going to have a press conference and start talking about this classroom environment and how the 85 percent of the young people in the classroom were being held hostage, because there are 15 percent or 10 percent who come to school -- and I don't know intentionally or unintentionally -- to basically cause this disruptive

situation. So nobody can learn, because the teacher is spending the entire day disciplining. And I guess I pretty much said it publicly now. But I heard that there were models. I know Councilwoman Blackwell is actually telling me about a model out in West Philly and I saw a model, it was at Stetson where as opposed to the traditional process that put individuals who needed help in CEP schools, that internally within the same school that they were able to address those concerns and those children that have those challenges in the school in a particular model. And I don't know if there were multiple models.

From your perspective, what do you believe is the best-case scenario or do you need a combination of both? Should you remove the individuals who have challenges out of the school and put them in another school or should you try to do it within the school population and have them deal with a specific program or

a specific classroom environment in a portion of the school?

MS. CAREY: The pushing out that you referred to is a deeply disrespectful way of talking to young people. It also shows them that we adults are incapable of helping them develop different behavior. And we shouldn't do it. We should not do it to them.

One of the -- because we're stressed and there's not enough and we don't know how to do better. It's the same reason why you smack around your kid and then later you say, Oh, Jesus, I shouldn't have done that. It's because we don't know how to do better. And it's much more a symbol of our own lack of resourcefulness than it is the children's incorrigibility. There are very few truly incorrigible kids. Now and then you get some kid who is really incorrigible, and there are people who are really specialists in working

wraparound with those children, but, in fact, there's a much larger group of children who are not being adequately challenged or are not being adequately -- so we talk about the different intelligences and different learnings, but emotionally and socially we have children who are little power children. They want a boss. They want to run things. They want to -- and there's no opportunity for them in their lives to do it any way other than negatively. And we're not adequately sort of using up that energy that they have or finding ways in our schools.

So the other thing about safety is, it includes everything else that we're talking about cutting. That kid who is so aggressive needs to be on the football team, right? I asked my husband why do you want to -- he said, I needed to hit. I needed to hit. He was 18. He needed to hit somebody. So he was on the football team. Great.

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You have arts. I mean --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That's what the coaches say.

MS. CAREY: I'm sorry if that was too violent. I'm supposed to be in charge of the Safety Committee and I'm talking about hitting. But they do.

We have arts.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: That's real talk.

MS. CAREY: We have arts. I mean, one of the things that arts do -- and we need to put them back. We need the arts, give them social, emotional ways to express what's not on the page. We have so much grief. Our children have so much loss. They have so much loss, and they have no way to express it. So a child comes in and the father is gone, the grandfather got hit by a truck, the mother has diabetes and now the grandma fell and broke her something, and then the child comes in you say, do this, do this and you shout at them. You know,

we've been in these schools. We know this. So we have not gotten every adult on the love train. We have failed to do that. We have failed to do that. We need to do that. That's part of safety.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So I take that --

MS. CAREY: That's a no.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: -- to mean that your preference is to do it within the existing school and not have the child go to a CEP school where they're like --

MS. CAREY: Absolutely.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And we have a code of conduct that provides for escalation of consequences. There's law in everything, but I think the types of programs that Ms. Carey is talking about where you have all those other things happen, things tend to not get to the point where you have to really -- where a

student has to be sent out of a school.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Pull your mic a little closer. I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I was just saying in the situations where Ms. Carey is describing where you have a school culture built around these values, you also find that the serious violence problems also just dramatically go down. The schools that you visited were examples of that. And you saw, I think, that how even the language of things like restorative justice, stuff that sounds very philosophical, you saw how it played out in very real terms. It didn't sound soft when it was -- when young people were sitting around talking about it, and I think it was your observation.

And so I think the net effect is, yeah, you still need those high-stake consequences, but you end up using them a lot less and you end up needing a lot of -- you end up being able to spend a lot more on the front end than having to

just keep scaling up on police.

MS. CAREY: And on the front end is better for children. And I don't think there's anything wrong with soft. These are children. Everything around many of our children is hard. These are children. We can do soft. I mean, this is our core mission. This is our core mission, is to give them care and nurture. So a little soft is okay. We can harden them up later if we want.

It's also cheaper. It's a lot cheaper to take a child and sit down four of them in a circle and talk some through.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I agree, and that can actually be applied to the front side of the Criminal Justice Center, because I continue to say, along with a number of my colleagues, if we invest in individuals early on in the process, we won't end up having to spend $35,000 a day housing those individuals in a prison. But that's --

MS. CAREY: What we could do with $35,000 a day, we could do a lot with $35,000 a day.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I agree a hundred percent. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Carey, and for your commitment. It always comes through. It always come through. Thank you.

My question is in regard to Title I funds. You say on Page 15 that you don't know what Title I funds will be for this fiscal year. You expect they'll be less than they were last year. And this whole issue of grants and funding and whether or not you use all your resources for grants, including locally, is an important one, and it also feeds into, since this Title I is your largest grant, it also feeds into your desire to have more money in this whole AVI

question.

So could you talk a little bit about Title I, what you expect and all the implications of less money, more money and what it will fund and where we go from here.

MS. NIXON: I can speak about what we're doing with Title I in terms of academics, and then I will move it to Tom to talk more in terms of the actual numbers.

With the Title I funding, we do have a decrease in Title I funding for this year, but we utilize our Title I funding to prioritize our academic priorities. So with Title I funding, we are focused on early childhood education so that we can service the exact number of students in early childhood this year as we did last year.

We are committed to kindergarten. So we're using 50 percent of the Title I funds to fund full-day kindergarten.

We're also committed to reduced class size. So we're using a portion of our Title I funds for reduced class size for K to third grade.

We did have to eliminate this year some of the programs in Title I. You saw the reduction in summer school, so that we weren't able to fund summer school so that we could focus on those other priorities. So that's why you see a reduction in summer school.

Also with Title I funding, in the past we've provided supplemental counselors, and we weren't able to fund the supplemental counselors out of Title I as well. Also, we wanted to keep the same level of funding at the school level due to all of the other cuts. So when we looked at the funding, we made sure that the exact funds that we provided to schools last year, they were able to receive this year. And it was a slight increase of funding just because of the increases that are associated with the

cost of personnel.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So the question is, you're talking about cutting counselors and summer school programs, but using it for pre-school, kindergarten, et cetera. So if you don't know what you're getting, how are we to deal with that as a specific issue and cut? And if you don't know what you're getting, why then did you cut counselors and summer school programs when you don't have the answers, and when do you expect to get the answers?

MS. NIXON: I'll defer to Tom or the Budget Office in terms of the final numbers for Title I, but each year Title -- I work with the Budget Office around how we're going to utilize the funding, and we come up with the academic priorities. I will punt to Tom on specific dollar issues around Title I, but I guess I wanted to share with you that with the funding, we did have to prioritize how we utilize the funding,

and we did just that.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And in your answer, I don't understand how only allowing students who will become seniors to be able to go to summer school isn't going to cost you more money if other kids are left back and have to repeat a whole year. It seems to me that summer school is a cost-saving issue and a cost-saving program for students.

MS. NIXON: Yeah. So when we looked at -- just because of the reduce in funding, there were five options that we had. It was early childhood, fund full-day kindergarten, reduced class size, summer school and the supplemental counselors. We actually have counselors in every school. These were supplemental counselors that were provided as a part of Imagine 2014 a few years ago, and then just collectively we made the decision that early childhood education, funding full-day kindergarten and reduced class size would give us greater impact over

the long run as opposed to the 18-day summer program that I think in the past has cost us like $40 million.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay. I will accept that as your response. I don't know that I agree, but I'll accept that.

MS. NIXON: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You were going to respond further?

MR. KNUDSEN: Councilwoman, Wayne Harris is our Budget Director, has joined me, and he has the specifics on how we develop those numbers.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MR. HARRIS: Councilwoman, the School District received a great deal of Title I stimulus funding. Title I stimulus funding could be spent on the same exact things that regular Title I can be spent on, and we did not spend as much of the Title I stimulus funding as we got. So basically we have a big

amount of carryforward that we have to spend through. And so what's happening is, our spending last year was greater than it can be this year because we're spending through the carryforward, and so we're having to lower our -- the amount that we receive actually from the federal government is in between $150 and $160 million each year, and we're spending closer to 200 million as we spend our way through the Title I stimulus, and we have to start working our way back down to the amount of the grant award.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Mr. President, just in terms of Penny Nixon's availability, Tom and I and the rest of the team are staying here through the time we have today. There is the ceremony for the Lindback Award winners, the teachers that are doing that, and Ms. Nixon has to head over there in the

next ten minutes or so for a 4 o'clock ceremony.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And we may need you back.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We're here.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm talking about beyond today, because there is a lot of information and most of which has just been provided to us this morning, and there's a strong possibility that we may need to have some additional questions beyond today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And Ms. Nixon will be available beyond today as well.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I understand. Tomorrow we have some challenges, because we have a hearing in the morning and then we have public testimony tomorrow. And you all are going to Harrisburg tomorrow?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'm going to Harrisburg.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. We'll work it out. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank my colleagues who have allowed me to jump the line, as I have a commitment that I cannot escape, and I appreciate your offer to bring the School District back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Just to clear it up, I see a couple of members saying, Wait a minute, I didn't give authorization to jump the line. Actually, the two people that were ahead of the Councilman authorized it.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: They both gave me permission, so I want to thank them.

And so, Ms. Nixon, when I'm finished asking a few questions of Mr. Ramos and I'll submit the rest of my questions in writing, I'd like you to answer the following question, which is can you describe how the transformation

plan integrates with your reorganization and transition proposal for 2012 and '13, or said another way, how your reorganization proposal is preparing us for the transition plan. I think that's important for us to hear in the context of the first question I asked you several hours ago, which I did let you know I would be asking you. I think it's important for people to know that.

Chairman Ramos, throughout your testimony and throughout the other testimony we've heard today, there's been a great emphasis on the fact that you and the other members of the SRC, who I have tremendous respect for, weren't here when these problems were created and now we all have to deal with that, and, of course, I completely agree with that statement, but your appointing authorities, the Governor of Pennsylvania, is very responsible for us being here today and in this situation and the Mayor of Philadelphia, the

appointing authority of the other Commissioners, are very responsible for us being in the situation, because for three years, despite the fact, as you acknowledge in your testimony, we knew the District had normalized spending on recurring expenses far in excess of recurring revenues that we had a reasonable chance of receiving, et cetera, some of us on Council have been saying that for three years and the Administration has defended the School District's budget and that spending level, et cetera, during that period.

So the appointing authorities are accountable to us for where we are today. And you mention specifically that you had given the Governor revenue estimates for the next five years, but that that is separate and apart from advocacy. So my question is, is the first set of numbers you gave the Governor's Office in terms of revenue expectations what you presented today or

did you go in and ask for more and they knocked us back to these numbers?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: What we did, as we did with the City, was to provide -- to share the Five Year Plan that we were presenting, the projections, to the City and to the state. We're not just as -- and we plan to continue to work with City Council on local revenue and with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly on state revenue.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: All we have done in the Five Year Plan and --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You've answered my question. My question was, did you ask the Governor for any more money before you presented this proposal, and the answer is no.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And we didn't ask you for any more before we -- took the Mayor's projected revenues and the Governor's projected revenue.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you say

that you --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And then on the out years, we showed some growth, and there we did take some liberty and shared that, but --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand, but you say you're separating advocacy from budgeting, and yet your testimony is that there was no advocacy for additional dollars this year or next year or the year after that with respect to state funding. That doesn't happen until 2016, and you are publicly here asking us to provide $94 million. My question for you and Feather as the Governor's and Zogby's appointees is, are you publicly going to Harrisburg to ask for a restoration of charter school funding, which is the statewide formula, or other revenue in addition to coming here and asking us for $94 million?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Okay. From the perspective of the School District, the Accountability Block Grant -- there

are some things that I think were more predictable than was reflected in the past budgets. Two things that I think were more of a surprise and that I think that were very important to the District and have been lost were the Accountability Block Grant for early childhood education and the transition charter funding. And I do think that on the transition charter funding, we sort of missed an opportunity at the District side to use those funds to help shrink the District in a more incremental way, but I think that given the continued significant growth at the charter school level, that there should be some real vehicle for transition funding of charter schools even if it's tied to downsizing -- even if it's tied to sort of reducing infrastructure.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: But the answer to the question is no, you have not asked the Governor to increase funding for the next three years; you

have sent him this budget?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, when we submitted this budget, the Governor had already offered his proposed budget and --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: No. I understand. You said you were doing separate advocacy.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: At the point in which we did our proposal, like in the City, the process had moved from the executive branch to the legislative branch. So I'm sure that everybody here, along with the SRC, every time that they come in contact with a member of the General Assembly is making the case for greater support for Philadelphia schools.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand. You and Feather Houstoun are the appointees of the Governor. My question is simple. What advocacy are you doing? How are you using that relationship and the fact that you are the appointees of the person accountable

for the reason we are here today to get us more funding in the next three years? And the answer is you have not yet. I hope to hear about that soon.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, that wasn't the answer, but I think -- the answer was that the District has been in continuous over the years advocating on this, that we are constantly talking about the consequences, that when we submitted our proposal, we submitted it based on the executive projections, and then when we submitted our proposal, it had already gone to the legislative body in the state as it has here locally.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm sorry. I mean, I appreciate that, but the question was specifically with respect to what advocacy you and Feather Houstoun have done and --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We've had just --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- with your

appointing authority, not the General Assembly.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We will continue to be in conversations with our appointing authority just as we've been probably to City Council in the Caucus Room a number of times and we'll continue to be here.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are you publicly calling on additional funding from the Governor in the next three years as you're calling on additional funding from us?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We're asking for support in terms of funding, in terms of relief. We've been particularly vocal with other school districts about pension relief.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: How much specific funding have you asked the Governor for in the next three years? What's the specific dollar amount of funding you've asked the Governor for in the next three years? You've asked us

for 300 million.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, what we've asked you to do is to -- from the perspective of local --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: The question is about what you've asked the Governor. What have you asked the Governor?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We've asked the Governor for support in any way that they can, including relief on the expense side, which can be as great or greater than 94 million on the revenue side. And we've asked for -- what we're asking you and the Governor and the General Assembly and the Mayor is to work with the SRC over a period of time to fiscal sustainability, and that's not going to be done in quick sound bites. It's going to be done by working through two systems that are broken. The state system for funding schools is broken, and I've been advocating for that a very long time and I've been not just for -- I've been advocating for public schools in general

for a very long time and for funding, because our state system for funding schools is broken and our local system for funding schools is broken, and that's why we're here today.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I still didn't hear an answer to my question, but that being said, thank you for your indulgence, Mr. President. I will submit the balance of some questions I have about the probability of various revenue items like the $218 million, $169 million, $122 million, when they will occur during the five-year period, et cetera, in writing, and then I'm confident I will have additional detailed and substantive questions after reviewing the great material that you sent us today.

I thank you for your effort. You guys, you know -- I know that it is not you that brought us here, but it is your appointing authority, and I ask you to point in that direction also.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: It's been a long day. Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: No problem.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I have two basic questions. One deals with the issue again of public safety, and as I listened to some of the solutions, I think I followed a great deal of them, but it harkens back to my youth. Admittedly, I was one of those at-risk contrary young people, and I remember the crew of or peer group that I engaged with, and we didn't call it the nice terms that they do now, but we were called a gang. And there were some of us -- all of us were not equal. Some of us could be reached, some of us could be talked to, some of us was headed for

penitentiary. I mean, just point blank.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Which one were you?

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you very much for your vote of confidence, Councilwoman Blackwell.

But I do recall some of those individuals and I do remember some of the challenges that they had, but I can tell you there was a sigh of relief when -- for purposes, I'm going to call this guy Ray-Ray, because he's still alive and I'm still scared of him, you know, be all honest with you. The happiest day in our classroom's collective sigh of relief life was when Ray-Ray got transferred to CATO, because he was the head of all things bad and we were going to follow him to the hell fires if he led us, and it was time for him to go.

So the question that the President raises is a valid one. And I will tell you that short of the man coming in the room right now, Kenyatta

Johnson, I know I have experienced being a counsel at the House of Umoja with wayward young people that could go either way. And I'm saying to you, some of them need to go that way and be outside of that classroom so that kids that really want to learn can feel free enough, because everybody is not a leader. Today I'll smack Ray-Ray if he tries to lead me astray, and you could categorize me any which way you want to psychologically, but what I am telling you is that back then, I did not have the leadership, strength and capability to do that on my own. I needed a teacher, a principal, vice principal in particular to say, Ray-Ray, you will no longer terrorize this class, you're on the bus to CATO. That was the best day of our lives, and education began that day for us, because we felt that it was no longer cool to be the most disruptive kids and that we could calm it down and actually open our minds up.

So I understand those sensitivities and stuff like that, but I've been to some of the schools in my district and there are Ray-Rays of today, and I can tell you there are schools like -- and I'll name this one, Mastery Charter, where it was a scary movie. I walked around the corner and it was like the children of the corn were there. They were polite. They didn't -- I'm seeing 20 kids stand there and I couldn't hear one of them. But that was the expectation of that school and of that class, and I was so happy.

There were other schools that I won't name I went in, it was like when I visited Dallas penitentiary. I was looking for where the shank was coming from, and I hate to say that about -- so we have to -- as the President says, I want to save every child from deep in my heart, because there but by the grace of God stands I. But I don't want to do that at the expense of a potential

victim.

We have to figure out how we can get children into a situation where they can get all the extra attention they need and then not be a distraction to those kids that are prepared and ready to go. And I don't want to sound like, you know -- I don't want to sound like the bad guy here, but God knows, I was one of the bad guys and I was glad to see the worst guy go. I'm just going to tell you.

So I don't know how you would respond to that. Do I need to lay down on the couch? Tell me what I need to do.

MS. CAREY: I'd respond a few ways. One way is that there are --

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: He's on the phone. Ray-Ray is on the phone.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Ray-Ray is on the phone.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman, that was the speech that I was going to make, right, but I got

talked out of it, but thank you for making it for me today.

COUNCILMAN JONES: That's what your Majority Leader is for.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

MS. CAREY: There are a few answers. One answer is that to put in positive behavior intervention supports in K to 8 means that you give young people who don't have the ability to do leadership in that way, you give them practice doing leadership. You don't let school be Lord of the Flies. You teach them how to behave with each other in the same way that you teach them how to read or count.

So the first one is to make fewer children who need -- who have bigger problems if you take care of them when they're smaller.

The second -- so you have fewer.

The second is that we do still

expel students from school, but the numbers are on the order of between two and six per month considered at an SRC per month instead of as of last year this time, the number was, I think, above 200. So that's what I'm talking about. When I talk about pushing out, I'm talking about those kinds of numbers that were generated by a policy of zero tolerance, and that's unacceptable. We should not find that we have to get 200 -- or that we do pushing out that sometimes isn't within our system, but is just making life difficult for children so that they drop out. Both of those are unacceptable. Right? And I will say when you go to a place like YouthBuild, you see the care that's taken with young people who could not stay within a classroom that didn't have that kind of support. And YouthBuild is really -- that's an example. There are some others.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So do I

understand your answer to be that there is a pathway for those who need that specialized attention and it should be provided?

MS. CAREY: Yes.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay.

MS. CAREY: Short answer, yes. But the numbers have to be small, not huge.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Then I'm close.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Real quick, there is a bill moving out of the Senate. You're on your way to Harrisburg tomorrow, Mr. Chair, and I'm assuming it's school related, and I just ask you to check. There's a bill that's been introduced in the Senate to provide assistance to distressed schools, but the concern is that they may put a threshold on the amount of students per school, similar to what was done in prior

years that figured out a way to not include the City of Philadelphia. So if you can check on that and make sure that there's not a cap that falls just under the City of Philadelphia.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Always have to be on the lookout for those.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Mr. President.

Since we're going back in time, I can state for the record that I graduated from the Philadelphia public schools about 30 years ago. I graduated from Central High at age 16, went on to University of Pennsylvania, graduated at age 20. And, Mr. Chairman, you know that because you were at Central High and at Penn with me. Therefore, you know that

the questions I'm about to ask you --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And we were talking politics back then.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Absolutely. And, therefore, the questions I'm about to ask you you know are not personal and it's actually my pleasure to question you in this way.

Similar to my line of questioning this morning, I believe I already know the answers to these questions. The first question is, who is in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Who is in charge of the School District?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The School Reform Commission.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Specifically who is in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: School Reform --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: If you name a person, who would that person be?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Under law, the law governing the School District of Philadelphia, the management --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm asking for a person.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: But --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I want to put this in context. We talked about kicking the can down the road several times. The issue is who kicked the can down the road. Having studied the School District, there were School Boards that had appointees from Mayors, and those appointments were staggered so that no Mayor controlled the School Board. It was controlled by different political fiefdoms who, in most cases, were only concerned with the contracts. Not until then-Councilman Nutter in 1999 and then the voters approved something different in the Home Rule Charter was there someone actually in charge. The first person who was in charge that I know of, an actual person, was John Street. John

Street appointed the School Board, controlled the School Board, was the first Mayor to be able to do so. He was in charge. That was the purpose of the Charter change. The voters approved it. The voters didn't choose the SRC. So if the voters wanted to know who is in charge, what person is in charge, who is in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The commitment and the oath that the SRC members take --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm asking what person. Is there any one person who is in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's five people, and if you let me, I'll explain why.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm asking, is there one?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No, there is not one, because under law --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's fine. That's fine. That's the only question.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Under law, you

can -- SRC members can be appointed, but can only be removed for cause.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's the only question I'm asking.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And the body, which is like other bodies in government, actually --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Chairman, I'm short on time. I was only asking is there one person in charge, because at one point in our history there was one person in charge and --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And they served at the pleasure of the Mayor.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Because there needs to be one person in charge, in my view.

You were appointed by the Governor? You were appointed by the Governor?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I believe it's a statement of fact, yeah.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You're not in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I chair the body that is in charge.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Does anyone in the School District have more authority than you?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: The SRC acts by majority of three Commissioners and that's what acts for the School District.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Does anyone in the School District have more authority than you?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Nobody at the School District has more authority than the SRC, which can only act by three votes, a majority vote, like this body.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Does anyone in the School District have more authority than you? I just ask it one more time, then I'll move on.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: On a day-to-day basis, the Superintendent and the Chief Academic Officer --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: In general, does anyone have more authority than you?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Sure, because I can't do anything without three votes. So, yeah, everybody.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: We'll move on. What did the Governor ask you to do?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: To help turn around the Philadelphia schools, which were in financial crisis again, to try to help get it to fiscal stability and to turn it around academically.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I mean, what specifically did he suggest?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: That was it. That was the discussion. And he said, Are you willing to do this, and I said, Well, part of that is that I believe that there's --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Did he offer you a strategy or game plan?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: No. I think what we've -- what this new SRC has done in less than six months is --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: My question --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: -- provide a game plan going forward.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: My question is about the Governor. Did the Governor offer you a strategy?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Part of, I think, why each of us are here is because we believe and believed then --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm asking about the Governor.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: If I can answer.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: If you're not going to talk about the Governor. I'm asking about the Governor.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, I am. Which is -- part of the answer is that there was a level of dialogue brought about by the circumstances between the Governor and the Mayor that I think gave the new SRC members some hope that among the -- eventually among the Governor, the Mayor, the Council and the General Assembly and the SRC we can turn around

the schools. And in terms of specifically one-on-one between the Governor, the Secretary and me, it has been about trying to -- it has been about concern for the instability at the District financially and in terms of management and governance and the need to act with urgency for safe, high-quality schools.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: There was one person in charge before the SRC.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's what the voters voted for.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes. That's a much clearer answer. Yeah.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: This is a yes or no question. Do you support a return to local control with one person in charge?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Do I personally -- under the existing law, under existing City Charter, which is where you're pointing at, when the -- at

a time where the SRC ceases to exist, what remains is a Board of Education completely appointed at the pleasure of the Mayor, and if the City were prepared to assume that responsibility, including given where everything is, including the fact that it shares about 35 percent and its school tax is about $1,500 average per student and all that, I think that that's a discussion that's at a level beyond the particular Commissioners who volunteered to come in to help with this situation right here.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: It appears to me that we are taking the responsibility and it's only us taking responsibility. And I'm not pointing to the SRC per se, but if the Governor is not in charge, the Governor gave no strategy, no game plan, no marching order, the Governor told you to go do it without any money, it doesn't make sense to me. At the end of the day, what the voters voted for was local control with

one person held accountable, and that's what should happen. That's what we need to move to if you're going to come just to the City for money.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Oh.

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman Oh is not here.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco. It's this device. The communications device is confusing us here.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I have a long question, Mr. Knudsen.

Mr. Knudsen, on Page 2 of your testimony, you stated that the School District is working collaboratively with charter school partners to find ways to continue the financial impact of charter operations by finding charters willing to

agree mutually to more predictable enrollments and accept your graphic catchment areas for enrollment. However, from my understanding, the District's form of collaboration does not appear cooperative and has weighted heavily in the District's favor.

For example, charter schools whose charters are up for renewal this year expected to receive a decision on their charter renewal during the April 19th SRC meeting. Yet, they learned at the meeting that a new process had been created for new charter renewals. Under this process, charter schools must submit a charter school term sheet, letter of intent to sign a charter agreement upon conditions, and ultimately a new charter school agreement with the SRC. From April 27th to June 30th, the SRC will vote on charter schools that have completed this process.

Based on your testimony and this process, it appears that charters

that are not willing to agree to enrollment limits as well as changes to the enrollment areas will have a delay in their charter being renewed.

According to the state-enabling legislation for charter schools, also known as Act 27, it states that enrollment of students in a charter school or cyber charter school shall not be subject to a cap or otherwise limit to any past or future action of a board of school directors or any other authority unless agreed to by the charter school or cyber charter school as part of a written charter.

Considering this new charter renewal process, it appears that charters must agree to limit their enrollment in order to receive a charter renewal.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilwoman, in the excerpt you read from the law, it says that there basically wouldn't be -- at least your paraphrasing of it I think captures the current state of the law,

which is that without explicit agreement by a charter to what its enrollment is going to be, they can do any enrollment of any size with or without notice. In the Walter Palmer decision, which was the Commonwealth Court decision, pretty much said that unless the District got in writing from a charter school what agreement on what its enrollment was going to be, that the District would no longer be able to hold charters to their enrollment plans. As charters become an increasing part of the overall public student population, it's just completely -- and under the existing laws you state correctly at this moment, which we're appealing, but it is the state of law at this moment, under that -- in that scenario, what we have -- it results in enormous unpredictability for where children are going to be. It makes it even harder to figure out where to deploy our resources. So we are asking those charter schools that are willing to do a

letter of intent where they agree to -- where they put in writing what their intentions are and what they're willing to agree to with respect to the types of things you said, total enrollment, will they take some percentage of children from chronically poor-performing schools in some cases if their practices haven't been good with respect to special ed or ELL, where they've had barriers to admissions. We've asked them to put all these things in writing, because after the Palmer decision, it's harder for us to have anything -- to hold them to anything without -- unless it's in writing.

That said, all we have said for this year is that we have until June 30th to make these decisions under the same law. We have until June 30th to decide, and we're scheduling those decisions in a way that brings through the folks with whom we've reached some agreement on those issues. So we do intend to make

decisions as provided by law by June 30th, and we are inviting the schools to work with the District to help serve all students and to provide some predictability that let's us make sure that as much money as possible is actually getting to each classroom, whether it's a charter school classroom or a School District classroom.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I don't think this question is about them taking in new students, but taking in new students from you, from the School District, in order for them to get their charter. They're not requesting. You're requesting. Are you requesting that these charters take additional students from the School District as a condition of having their charter renewed?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We have not made that for this year as a condition of having their charter renewed, but we are asking that as we schedule votes on the renewals within the legal timeframe

that's permitted, that those that are willing to work cooperatively with us -- and there's some issues too. I don't think we've been particularly friendly or our communication particularly friendly even for those that have agreed with us. I think there's some issues in the last couple of weeks about how we've gone about doing that that we're trying to address. So that's a legitimate issue. But we are trying to work as much out as possible before the June 30th deadline.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And then on June 30th, we'll make a decision. And if we make a decision with which a charter disagrees, they have a state appeal board where they have a second bite at the apple to appeal the SRC decision if they disagree.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Has there been any requirement in the past that the charter schools take additional children from the School District? Has that

action been held before?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think there's been a discussion. I don't think it's been framed as a requirement. It's not being framed now. What we've said is, here are factors that help everybody and let's talk -- we haven't said you have to do A, B and C or you have to do this much of A or B. What we've said is, let's have a discussion around all these issues and figure out how we can reach some effort where the new slots are predictable, because we're all here to serve all children, have the greatest impact, because everybody gets in this I think to provide for a better quality education for all kids.

So I think many schools are receiving that well. I do think there is some discontent in the last few weeks because I think a lot of -- I think, frankly, on the side of the District as it's gone about trying to implement this, it sets a tone and a manner of doing

things that doesn't convey the spirit of partnership that's been the intent of the SRC, where possible.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So you're going to try a different approach?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I hope so. Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I mean, there are some charter schools that have different enrollment standards. Some of them have lotteries and some don't. I mean, they all are different, and to try to make them conform to one formula, that seems to be a little unfair.

Can I come back?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Ramos, what would be, in your mind, the salary range for the incoming Superintendent? What do you

view the salary range to be, or what was the incoming last salary of Superintendent Ackerman and what do you expect the range to be in?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'd like it to be less.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Why?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think that it's important --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Could we argue in the range of 300?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I think the range of 300 in some way -- I mean, I don't want to negotiate --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I just --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I don't want to negotiate in public. I think that whatever it is, we have to be mindful that this is public service, that -- and we want somebody that is of quality and all that, but I think that sometimes -- I think it's important that at the District, everybody from the top down remembers that while there's a market for

the talent, that it's also public service in a financially distressed school district. So that's very much on our minds.

In terms of compensation, you know, that's, I think, a fair guess, but I can't say that we have set a definitive range.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If you're looking for someone to do this very, very important job with a lot of additional money now being asked to be put into the system, both locally and statewide, if we are successful in getting that, and to run such a complicated, complex organization, doesn't it seem that the salary would be going more to the top upper end?

Where did the last Superintendent rate in urban districts similar size to Philadelphia? I mean, New York, Chicago, Boston, Chicago is generally a good --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I don't know,

but I suspect that data is out there at least in some of the publications and we can look it up and get it back to you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If I didn't have a BlackBerry, I would have had the answer by now, but the web speed on BlackBerry is wanting.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I don't think we were at the bottom, and my guess is we were from the middle to the top. But that's a guess. But I guess one thing, Councilman, that I would just suggest is that I think you're right about sort of the top executive in the District. I think one of the things that gets lost is that you really need -- in order to be successful, you really need a strong team of executives, and in the District more than even in the City, the structure seems to always be in a very pyramid structure. The number one person makes the most, the next level all make the same and, you know -- you know what I mean? It's sort of -- but that hasn't

been the case in the City for decades. The Medical Examiner has probably always made more than the Mayor.

So one of the things that I think the prospective that this SRC and I think a new Superintendent would bring is that, you know, I can imagine having a Superintendent who thinks, Well, somebody, you know -- that wants to pay somebody more than they may make themselves if they think that that's the value to the public and the value to children. And that while you're right in thinking about that senior spot, you really have to think about the type of team of skills and executive ability that's going to be needed to run an organization as complex as this, where a lot of good educators have failed because of the complexity of the overall organization.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I can sit here and make an argument with you or for you that we should be looking -- I mean,

I know it's very sensitive in this public arena, but if this is the most important job facing the City, even more so than the Mayor, God love him, why would we want to cheapen it down and not get the best person that's available?

And the only other thing I would ask you, since the bell has run, is you're going to short list to probably three or five, I would suspect?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: What's that?

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You're going to short list at some point to about three or five, I would think?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Not currently, but at some point we would like to be and have a public process.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: As you get to that process, you'll short list?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Will you afford us an opportunity to interview the short list of candidates?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Sure. I would

be happy to work with the Council President on what --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I mean, the first time I met Arlene Ackerman was after she had already been hired, and I had no way of determining who she was, where she was from, what was going on. Same thing with the other Superintendents. I mean, if we're being asked to -- I'm not asking for signoff. I'm asking for a feel for the person before we -- no matter what happens with AVI, no matter where we go with this new money, I need to be able to sit in a room with that person -- and I think the rest of the Council would concur -- to get a feel for what they're like and what they're about. I hate to provide all these resources and then go down the road we just went down without any input from us. And I'm not looking to approve the contract or do anything; just to be able to sit in two's or three's and get a feel for the person before they hire them.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thanks. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm going to focus back on process and who is making decisions. One of the concerns that's been raised has been the consulting firm that I'm assuming came up with this plan. Is that -- or was this plan a combination of the consultants and the SRC?

MR. KNUDSEN: I think it's fair to say it was a combination.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So how much did we pay them for this plan?

MR. KNUDSEN: I'm sorry?

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: How much did we pay for this plan?

MR. KNUDSEN: Well, the

original contract was for $1.5 million, and that funding came from the William Penn Foundation.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And moving forward, what is expected that we will pay this firm if they're engaged in the implementation?

MR. KNUDSEN: We're determining that right now. It can be substantial in our terms. When I was at PGW, for example, over a period of time for the turnaround there, I paid $9 million over a four-year period. I would think something like that over a period of years would be not unexpected, let's put it that way, but we're certainly looking for ways now to transfer knowledge and information to staff and so that we can take a lot more of that responsibility on internally.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Is there an assumption that William Penn would also pay for the implementation?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: William Penn,

as you said, provided funding on its own. They've also been helpful, and we expect that as this work sort of gets scoped and sequenced, that we decide what has to be done externally versus internally, what gets done externally we would continue to work with them as a leader, but seeking broader philanthropic support. And as I said before the William Penn announcement, that I was cautiously -- I was optimistic that that would come through. There is a lot of interest in the philanthropic community in seizing the transformative opportunity here. Now, it's not for implementing this or that. It's for the transformation, and part of that transformation is this process that has to go on on some of these elements.

So we hope that this is largely, if not completely, funded from outside sources.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That's probably going to be the area where we

have the biggest challenges in buying public support and gaining some public confidence. We're seeing it with PGW when you have someone that comes in and does a report and has a vested interest in the end result or the product. And with education even more so, that folks come in and they operate on this national model that they've implemented in other places and they want to come in and make that shoe fit us. And so part of what needs to be answered for me quickly is who is ultimately going to make the decision? Because if we have a blueprint, I would hope that we have an internal team who could do this and don't want to see this dependency and again in this kind of sometimes very aggressive way that these consultants come in, because we're going to be here after this and we have to look at this opportunity as an opportunity to build that capacity internally. And I just don't know how we sell that to folks, because it's hard for

me because I don't buy the PGW report stuff. And so when I don't drink the Kool-Aid, I don't want to make my parents drink the Kool-Aid.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Let me just say that, one, in the end, the SRC now has taken this proposal, is going out and now trying to further inform the proposal and listening as we have in these other processes, and at the end, we'll make final calls about how resources get allocated. But we also share the commitment and the urgency around building capacity within the District and not becoming dependent on -- there's a danger when you get dependent on outside consultants and there is urgency to build that internal capacity, as you say.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That's the public confidence piece as well we've heard with parents. And I still don't know how we sell that to them.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, it's tough, but there are moments like this

where you need -- where, one, you need to bring -- we needed to bring together a lot of capacity quickly at a time when we were worried about running out of cash within months. So now I think Tom has helped stabilize this from projecting a $70 million gap year end to now within the 20's and bringing it down, and the more that we can attract and deploy talent, the less dependent we would be. Certainly we should be less dependent every day. And we have to make some choices too about how we prioritize the implementation. Some things, as Tom was showing these other slides, just have to get done in a short period of time, and the magnitude of it is really big. So we are going to need some help in some ways that's external, but I can't disagree with anything you've said.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay. Well, I think we're going to be interested in what that number is as part of this plan and how much of it, if any,

gets picked up from external sources and how much of that is going to be part of general operating. It's going to be an issue that we're constantly going to hear, and I just want us to have good arguments for it. If it's valid, it's valid. If it's not --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And at some point this is -- I'm now going off script a little bit, but I think you're raising a legitimate policy issue, which I think at some point there should be -- we should look at something like a productivity bank, as was set up under PICA, that is there for the purpose of those one-time transformative costs to get from here to there. You have to show what your return on investment is going to be when you put it out and you make a commitment to putting it back in from your savings, and I think that that type of structure and that kind of discipline ultimately is -- how you need something like that in order to be able to manage

transformations like this.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And I think part of it is whatever agreements you sign, how they are phrased so that people know they're weaning themselves out, not in. And what we don't want to do is create a system that is more dependent on external sources, but less. And I think it's all in how we write it. And we've seen agreements come through this Council that to us sometimes just don't make sense, because you create that dependency as opposed to the self-sufficiency.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. My time is up.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

Real quick. Quick question. With respect to proposed sale of assets; i.e., buildings, is there a strategy associated with those revenues? Are you going to pay down debt or is it for operating costs?

MR. KNUDSEN: We don't have a position on that yet. It all depends where we are. I mean, we're in the process of selling about eight buildings right now. It's very unclear what the proceeds for that would be. My feeling would be, we'd probably use those right now to pay down the deficit.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. I mean, that's kind of where we -- the discussion in the City of Philadelphia --

MR. KNUDSEN: I mean, right now paying down the deficit or paying down debt is the same, because we're about to go into debt to pay --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And I don't know the details, but I know that as you sell buildings, you have to look at whether there's debt associated with the specific buildings, whether you have to defease that debt.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Correct.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: So I think there are some properties -- another answer is that there are some properties that will generate some either revenue or savings from the disposition itself. Most of the properties are -- the savings come from having -- from not having to maintain sort of old buildings that are being underutilized.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Right. It's a similar process that we're discussing. Most of our buildings, a lot of the asset sales have more to do with the benefits with the actual real estate, because a lot of them are not in operation, but in your case, you can get a double hit.

MR. KNUDSEN: Right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Johnson.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You're welcome, sir.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just a couple questions. One, just going back to public safety in schools. There's more than 112 behavioral health programs that are monitored within the School District. And so when we talk about funding, I wanted to see how would the monitoring of those programs be sustained and moving forward with the new plan under the Achievement Networks. That will be the first question.

And the second question is, I definitely commend the SRC and the Board members for the decision to expand 2,272 seats in our most high-quality performing schools in the City. Can you elaborate on will there be a possibility to expand seats in those schools that are high performing as we move forward? Because I think within this whole discussion -- and, of course, we definitely need funding. That's going to always be a

situation with supporting urban schools. It's not just in Philly, rather you go to Detroit, rather you go to Chicago. You always deal with funding public education, and even in DC, particularly in urban environments. So I understand that component. But at the end of the day, most parents want their children to go to a quality school.

And I think the other part about this conversation is, there's a reason why there's a waiting list for charter schools. I think that's the other part of the discussion that we don't often talk about. We don't talk about that there's more than 30,000 parents who are making a decision to apply to the charter schools. So when you're talking about a market, you're talking about the demand for quality schools, people are opting in -- parents are participating by signing up to getting these charter schools. That's why there is a waiting list. But the

main reason why there's a waiting list is because of what y'all actually started. Well, what y'all attempted to address by expanding seats in the high-quality schools, high-performing schools. So can you just elaborate on that component as well. That's it.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll take the second part, which is -- I mean, it was really remarkable work by Penny Nixon and her team to work with schools and school principals to expand the number of slots and time for next academic year in the high-performing schools. We did that maybe three weeks ago, and then the next following week, we voted to close the start -- to start at the process of closing three low-performing charter schools. We voted to renaissance three chronically poor-performing School District schools. There was a fourth that was recommended. We held off and wanted to hear about a counterproposal from teachers that we're still working

with them on.

So the idea here is about quality. It's about -- whether it's District schools or charter schools, expanding the access, the opportunity for high-quality schools for all kids. You got to do that fairly, and where each public school, including charter schools, takes their share of responsibility. But it's about expanding high-quality schools regardless of whether they're District or charter and closing low-performing, chronically poor-performing schools, turning them around or closing the chronically poor-performing schools, whether they're District or charter school. I think as long as we stay on that track, as long as we stay fair in doing that, as long as we stay transparent in doing that, I think we can move relatively quickly to build parent confidence and taxpayer confidence and to, more importantly, serve children better.

So we will continue to look for opportunities in the District to expand high-performing seats in District-run schools. We've also, as you know, in recent years created new high-performing schools, whether it's the Academy at Palumbo or the Science Leadership Academy, a number of programs that have been expanded over the years, and we want success to be infectious. We want success to spread and that to be the culture, that to be the expectation.

The first question was about monitoring of healthcare?

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Behavioral health programs that deal specifically with students.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Penny may have left us, but she didn't leave us alone.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. JAMES-VANCE: Good afternoon, Councilmembers. I am Deborah James-Vance, Director of Behavioral

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Health for the School District of Philadelphia.

In answer to your response, yes, there are approximately 112 school-based behavioral health programs operating for our students within the District in partnership with the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health. Those programs are monitored by presently nine Response to Intervention Student Assistant Process Specialists. They work with each school and each program to provide quality care in the area of behavioral health to our students who are in need.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So with the Achievement Network, as we move forward, I guess, Pedro, how would the continuation of this particular program, specifically dealing with children with behavioral health -- and, again, this kind of alludes to what the Council President is talking about when you have those few folks in the classroom who are

acting out for behavioral reasons, it kind of takes away from the kids who get lost that really want to learn. How will that play a role in the Achievement Networks as we move forward?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Well, I think my understanding of how the Achievement Networks are conceived of -- and the plan for them are still being developed. So these are types of issues that would have -- would have to be addressed in developing them. But I can tell you that at the conceptual level where things are now, the focus is on making sure that there's accountability for the delivery and the quality of the service that's being provided, whether it's within -- services that are on our own or contracted out.

So I would say that in terms of the classroom, the classroom effect should be that the service level and the quality are as reliable or better, because you only want to do it if it's

better, and that everybody knows who is responsible. Unlike the governance of schools under the questioning from Councilman Goode earlier, where governance is shared and no one person has responsibility, in management everybody does have responsibility, and this is about that responsibility and accountability. So it -- one, it's something to be developed, and, two, from a school level, what schools should be focused on is am I getting the service level and the quality that I expect, and if not, is somebody going to do it better.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

You answered part of or asked part of my question when we were talking

about the consolidation, selling of schools, and my only comment on that would be that it incorporate some of the District Councilpeople, as many members have asked, because there are certain subtleties. Catchment areas that are redesigned from this don't take into historical differences between neighborhoods. Down the bottom or University City is different than Hilltop. Hilltop is different than Woodcrest. And those subtleties may not make a hill of difference to map drawers downtown, but you try to go to 50th and Woodland from North Cecil B, there could be a potential problem, and those subtleties where neighborhoods have historical relationships or historical differences need to be incorporated in that. Because, I mean, when Overbrook expanded its catchment area down the bottom, Overbrook then had a problem because there were some traditional historical differences that were not

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taken into account.

So as we start talking about mergers and closures, many of the Councilpeople who have boots on the ground will understand that. That's a statement. Part of my question is, I would like to hear a little more from Mr. Hornberger about the career and technical education aspect that we can look forward to. Every child is not going to go to Harvard or Cheyney or Lincoln, but every child deserves to have the skill sets to earn a living.

I had the, I guess, misfortune of going up to the technical institute in Lehigh Valley, and I talked about it several times in this -- and I came home riding back with municipal envy, because there were kids 14 years old working on nanotechnology. There was a young man cutting a piece of metal that was measuring twice to cut once, that that piece of metal was going to wind up in a space station. And I said that

Philadelphia children deserve that kind of thing too. And much to my surprise, I heard we went up to Lehigh Valley and stole the gentleman.

So I wanted to hear from him and get a vision of what is similar, what is different here in Philadelphia, what our expectations should be of you. The model you had, as I recall, up there was that one school, 3,200 students, serviced ten schools. So instead of having ten individual auto shops, electric shops, plumbing shops, you had one master plumbing curriculum that all kids fed into.

So with that, I'd like to get a little bit of vision as to where the differences are and what the expectations are from you.

MR. HORNBERGER: Thank you, Councilman Jones. For the record, my name is Clyde Hornberger. I serve as a consultant to the School District of Philadelphia in career and technical

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education.

I started with the District approximately two years ago, a little less than two years ago, and at that time, I interviewed many employers throughout the City. I interviewed workforce investment staff, economic development folks, and took a look at about 115 career and technical programs in the City so I could get a good feel. I did an honest assessment. And I obviously interviewed a lot of teachers and talked to students, et cetera. And what I found was that business industry didn't really count on the School District as a pipeline for employees. At some point, they made their way into it, but it wasn't a pipeline. To me, it was incredulous, because in my school where I left, they would come in and interview the students and hire them right there. So that was a disconnect.

But what I found, that the School District approximately four years

ago really took a critical look at the career and technical programs that were offered and closed many programs that were probably needed to be closed. They weren't worth the investment to bring them to the standard that they needed to be, so they made a decision to close them. What's left is many less programs, but there's a good quality base in Philadelphia right now.

What I also saw was lacking a process. The decision to open new programs and the decision how resources have been controlled pretty well have been decentralized. Many inefficiencies, in my opinion.

So I'm going to tell you a little bit -- I'm going to vary away from my testimony and give you what I see to answer Councilman Jones, and I appreciate the question because it fit right into my notes. I made a lot of notes listening to some of your comments here today.

First of all, again, students

have been experiencing significant success in the last three years. Third-party testing for career and technical students on the end of their program, which is a national assessment, has gone from 27 to 59 percent. So they're really making progress in getting the programs to a higher level standard. We're not where we need to be yet. We're a couple percentage below the national or the state expectation, but it can be much higher than that.

What I see is, we need a process. First of all, there has not been a citywide plan for career and technical education in many, many years, and that plan is under development now. It will focus primarily on quality. It will increase access and make sure that there is equity throughout the City. And Dr. Pritchett talks about this and my testimony talks about it. So I won't talk specifically about that unless you have questions.

What we are doing is following a very detailed process, and the process becomes a template on how you build a quality career and technical program. It's focused, again, on quality and continuous improvement.

The plan is based on data from local labor markets and workforce investment information. The plan requires strong input and involvement and advice, I should say, from business and industry. Previously there was periodic advice accepted at the local level, at the building level, at the program level, but at the District-wide, there was no formal structure to provide that advice. So we're putting that in place to make sure the quality is there, because you can't leave career and technical education to the educators. It has to really be controlled by the people who consume the product or the people who hire these students.

We want, first of all, we want

our students all to leave with business industry credentials and we also want that credential to be used as a template for articulation in a post-secondary.

There is literally no reason why the students in Philadelphia career and technical programs can't get up to one year of college credit for their technical work. The school I left, that was common.

They can now in the state system, in the PASSHE system, state-owned universities, they can now get a four-year degree in three years, and the cost is less than $20,000 in a state university. It was approved about three months ago, using the template that I spoke about.

The plan, again, will allow students to maintain credentials. It will allow them to have the highest possible quality achievement in academics and technical, and the assessment will be there. The plan will also have a

financial annex or appendices that will really focus on external funding. First of all, I believe there's a lot of resources within the system that can be redirected. I said earlier I think they're inefficiencies. And as a third party coming in, I saw a lot of inefficiencies. A lot of good things happening, but ways to do it better, because there's really no process in place, and the decision how to install and develop these plans need to be controlled at the District level, not at the individual building level. It's just too inefficient.

Accountability: Clearly there would be accountability with achievement. There's at least eight national performance standards that we must be accountable for. There are state performance standards and there are District performance standards that need to be accountable, and the career and technical students have had remarkable

achievement. Some of the highest-performing schools for graduation rate happens to be the career and technical schools. So the goal is to expand career and technical where we have an access for every student in high school for career and technical education within the City.

So the Five Year Plan really in Philadelphia will be, in my opinion, within five years we will be a national model, because it's not for the lack of resources. We've got really good people. We need business and industry to help us with advice and help us hire the most technically qualified teachers, and then we can make them through the process, we can make them into a teacher. But most career and technical teachers are not professionally prepared academically when they go into the classroom. We hire them because of their subject matter expertise. And what I said is, you can't teach what you don't know. So we want

the highest possible technically qualified person in our classrooms. Then we can make them an excellent teacher. And we want them to stay in the system to be an excellent teacher for many, many years.

But, again, I believe that Philadelphia School District will be a national model because of the process and the involvement on business industry. And I know that career and technical education will be a major contributor to the viability of our workforce and to the economic competitiveness of the City of Philadelphia.

That's subject to your questions.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I just want to -- Council President, I went up there, and I would encourage every Councilmember to go up there, 3,200 students, not a metal detector in sight, not an argument or a fight, everyone rushing to class, because there was a real expectation that

if I finish this curriculum, I'm going to get a 40,000, 50,000 60,000 dollar job. Nanotechnology being taught with high degree of math. And guess where those kids are getting hired? From Lehigh in Philly, because we're the head of nanotechnology. We're on cutting edge, but they're getting the workforce from Lehigh. It makes no sense to me.

What I'm encouraged about is that you're not going to create a curriculum to develop eight-track tape players if we're dealing with music in the clouds. And that's important to me. What I saw in your school were actual people that weren't just teachers, they had done the things that they are teaching. They had Daimler Chrysler -- and I don't tend to brag on other things. I'm a Philly guy. I don't like other municipalities doing anything better than us, including sports, but when I saw this, I rode home semi-depressed, because they're going to clean our clock, eat our

lunch if we don't turn that around. And when I say to you that we went from shop to shop, cutting-edge, things that they know they're going to walk out the door and get a job, there was no need for an NTA, because the NTA is, in their mind, the payday that they expect to come. And I picked that up, and what I would encourage you to do -- and, listen, you know, I'm a critical guy.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: You just answered your previous question too.

COUNCILMAN JONES: What's that?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: On how they achieve school climate.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Absolutely did.

So I say this to say -- a quick question. Are you going to build the model where you have a feeder school or are you going to take what exists and try to make a patch work?

MR. HORNBERGER: Frankly, the model you have in Philadelphia is even

better, because it's decentralized. The problem that we have in Lehigh County and through most of the state, area career and technical schools cost more because of the transportation issues and because of the lost time on task while you're transporting back and forth. I had students sometimes nearly an hour on the bus.

So in one way, we can do a better job in Philadelphia. We can do it less expensive.

I need to make a comment to you, sir, about your comment about manufacturing. When I looked at the programs that were offered in Philadelphia -- at the time there was 117; now there's 120. The 117 programs that were offered, I compared that to the needs of the workforce and economic development of the community and found out manufacturing was grossly underserved. So the plan includes Center for Advanced Manufacturing Excellence,

and I know from my experiences that when you build it, they will come. The employers will come and the students will get high-paying wages. And we're talking about programs that fast track to a four-year college degree. It's not low level. Career and technical education has opportunities for all types of students and all abilities. That's the advantage to it.

So, again, I am a Philly guy now, and I guarantee we will have the best quality anywhere in this system.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'll take that, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

One real quick reference to the story that I said I saw this morning on MSNBC. They were actually talking about the manufacturing base in New Jersey, which is actually expanding faster than Pennsylvania, and they're actually now going out to Michigan and Ohio to recruit

employees, because the manufacturing base in the old Rust Belt is where all the qualified employees are.

MR. HORNBERGER: In the month of April I was in Wisconsin and I was hired by manufacturers to help them put in a program similar to what they saw in Lehigh County. But I'm saying we have the basis for it here, but we need a center, because the programs in manufacturing are very expensive. So that's one case we need to bring the students to the center.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: That sounds exciting. I have a building. You know, maybe I can find a building -- or you have a school. You have 40 schools, right?

I think this is the one last

question I'm going to ask, because we have to go. We have a hearing at 6 o'clock at St. Williams Roman Catholic Church -- School. I'm sorry.

How will the District's proposed decentralization deliver better performance at low cost? Specifically, what will make Achievement Networks more efficient than the cluster model in the '90s or the partnership schools a decade ago?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I'll let Tom talk about the cost. I'll talk about sort of some of the comparisons. And, again, the networks, we want to hear from principals what -- we want to have discussions with principals and with community about how to deliver the best service to schools. So whatever answers we give are really subject to a lot more work that has to happen in listening to the ultimate customers here, the schools and school principals.

The basic idea is that

principals should be more like the customer than like the object of the rest of the administration, that we should -- that we move from a structure that tries to do everything through sort of top down and hope that it gets to every school, to ways that is more decentralized in how it provides support to schools. And you mentioned the -- you asked a really good question, Well, then how is this compared to other sorts of decentralization things that we've looked at in the past, and I think there are a lot of similarities. The one fundamental difference, as I understand it, in Tom's proposal is that the relationship is one where you have agreements in writing about what that network, whatever you want to call it, what its obligations are and what the consequences are for not providing to that level to a school, and that's how their performance is judged.

Under the proposal that Tom and his team laid out, that means that the

headquarters shrinks a lot, but it doesn't mean that all the administration goes away. It means that now you have a smaller headquarters and you've got organizations that may have different shapes and sizes over times, depending upon the needs of the schools that they're serving. So it is more an idea about how to provide service to schools around the City than it is how to rename districts or clusters or other names, academic divisions and all that. So I think what they're going for -- and I think I get -- is really the relationship between the network and the schools being different. Instead of my boss being the network, my service provider is the network.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: In having the community discussion, the engagement with the parents and the community about the new program, are you explaining to them -- are you explaining to them what you want to do and then you elicit

feedback from them in terms of whether good idea, bad idea or I guess what? And when is this process going to kind of like fold together?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: It's already starting, and I have to say that it didn't -- I don't think the way we started brought -- I think brought more confusion than clarity, and I think it wasn't -- I don't think we did a good job of communicating that this was -- of all the things that were put out there, this was the one that by definition required a lot of time to develop.

So we're going to be working through this through the summer, as you said, talking to community, but the SRC has been very explicit that it also wants to hear directly from principals about what their expectations are.

And then to just jump back to the first part of your question, it's conceivable that this is more -- that this generates savings, but we're not

banking on generating any savings, because we know once you start moving these parts around, there are going to be things that we don't anticipate. So the only condition we've put on Tom and his team at this point is that it not cost us any more. So hopefully it will generate some productivity. Hopefully it will generate lower costs in other areas, but we have not given him a target, make it cost 20 percent less. We first need to know what the whole scope of it is.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Are you good, Councilwoman?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Yes. I'm sorry.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Just a couple technical

questions on the capital budget. Tab 6, the chart that's given to us, there's no indication of the period of time that they're referring to, and there's a couple entries that confuse me. Tab 6 in that big beautiful binder you brought us this year for the first time. And I can't ever remember having that much information, so I do appreciate it. But it's Tab 6, Page 1. It has capital projects by Council district, I think. Like, for example, in the 1st District, it's $4.3 million in construction and $3 million in design, which seems to be out of whack. You go down to the 5th District where it's $13.2 million in construction and 56.4 million in design. For what period of time is that and why -- it would seem the construction would always be much more than the cost of design. Design is usually 8 to 10 percentage of the construction bank.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Councilman, I'll see whether --

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COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If you want to get back to us --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We'll get back to you on that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just to kind of explain it.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I don't know why it doesn't have a time period. We'll get back to you on that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The other thing, if you look at the totals --

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: I assume the numbers that are different for design and construction, that it can indicate that they're for projects at different stages. It's not for the same project.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If you look at the totals, it's 62.3 million in construction and 100 million in design, which makes no sense. That would be helpful.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Also, just a couple terms. What's Annex 504, which

is zeroed out in every individual school budget? Not capital; the individual School District budget. For each individual school, you have a budget, and this Annex 504, I don't know what it is. It's zeroed out at every school.

MR. HARRIS: This is Wayne Harris.

Councilman, a 504 refers to the code in the federal law for employees who need help to do their job. So that is funding that's providing like something for someone who is hearing impaired, things like that.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And what's de-seg support?

MR. HARRIS: De-seg support --

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: De-segregation support.

MR. HARRIS: That was funding that was established under the lawsuit from 1973. There's a lawsuit from 1973 that was settled, I believe, two years ago and that was actually supposed to

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make schools more attractive so that physical de-segregation would occur, people would be drawn to those schools.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And that's been pretty much -- there's a varying degree of expenditure school by school?

MR. HARRIS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The other thing is, for example, Overbrook High School, school safety line for 2010-'11 is zero, for 2011-'12 is 41,000 and then for 2012-'13 it goes back to zero.

MR. HARRIS: That's for -- the $41,000 is given to schools that were called Project 46 schools, and they were schools that were on the state's persistently dangerous list. And I assume from that, that that school flipped on and off of the persistently dangerous list.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Fine. That's it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Are we going to be closing out soon?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yeah. We have to be at 6 o'clock at Rising Sun, and I understand from my colleagues that it is very difficult to go to the Northeast at this time of day. So we're going to --

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: If we're going to wrap up and they're going to come back, then I'm going to be fine. I just wanted to -- I wasn't sure what the schedule was.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. You want to defer?

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So the

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School District is coming back?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: If you all request it, they will be back, I believe.

Sir?

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: Yes. We'll be here through June 30th, July 4th, whatever.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: See, now come on. That's not an answer to the question.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: We'll be back at your call, of course.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: There you go.

CHAIRMAN RAMOS: And I could share with you some of the moving parts on Council, but of course we'll be back at your call.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Okay. Thank you all very much.

Recess until 6 o'clock this evening. We will reconvene at St.

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Williams School, 6234 Rising Sun Avenue.

(Committee of the Whole recessed at 4:55 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings, evidence and objections are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the foregoing matter on May 8, 2012, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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