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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, May 10, 2010
10:20 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

11

COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE

COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN

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COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY

13

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ

14

COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCIO

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

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

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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morning. We thank you all for coming and

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for your patience. We are now convening

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the Committee of the Whole on the School

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District of Philadelphia budget. I'm

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Jannie Blackwell, Chair of the Education

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Committee. Again, we have a quorum, and

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we are happy to begin.

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The Chair notes the presence of

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Councilwoman Augusta A. Clark. We

12

welcome her.

13

(Applause.)

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Very,

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very nice to have you.

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And we will have the Clerk read

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the title of the bill, and thereafter we

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will ask our Superintendent and Chairman

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of the SRC to come forward. And we thank

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the SRC members and all our friends from

21

the School District for being present.

22

Clerk?

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THE CLERK: Bill No. 100119, an

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ordinance amending Chapter 19-1800 of The

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Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax

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2 Authorization," by amending Section
3 19-1806, entitled "Authorization of
4 Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to further
5 authorize the Board of Education of the
6 School District of Philadelphia to impose
7 a tax on the use or occupancy of real
8 estate within the School District of
9 Philadelphia; and

10 Bill No. 100120, an ordinance
11 amending Section 19-1801 of The
12 Philadelphia Code, entitled
13 "Authorization of Tax," to further
14 authorize the Board of Education of the
15 School District of Philadelphia to impose
16 a tax on real estate within the City of
17 Philadelphia, all under certain terms and
18 conditions.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much.

21 Again, we thank you all for
22 being here. We will begin immediately
23 with our testimony, and certainly we
24 invite Dr. Ackerman and Mr. Robert L.
25 Archie, Jr. to come to the witness table

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 to present their testimony.

3 (Witnesses approached witnesses
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Again,
6 thank you, members of the SRC, School
7 District and members of the public who
8 are here.

9 Please identify yourself for
10 the record and begin your testimony.

11 MR. ARCHIE: Good morning. My
12 name is Robert Archie. I'm the Chairman
13 of the School Reform Commission. I'm
14 here to testify in favor of Bill No.
15 100119 and Bill No. 100120. On behalf of
16 the entire School Reform Commission,
17 including Commissioners Johnny Irizarry,
18 Commissioner Denise McGregor Armbrister
19 and our newest Commissioners, Joe
20 Dworetzky and Commissioner David
21 Girard-diCarlo, and I thank you for
22 providing this opportunity to share what
23 we feel are the considerable achievements
24 and noteworthy innovations that the
25 School District of Philadelphia has

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 accomplished under the School District's
3 current exciting and dynamic leadership
4 team.

5 In our Superintendent's
6 testimony, Dr. Ackerman will describe how
7 the School District is forging ahead with
8 a sense of urgency to serve our students
9 and their parents.

10 Before I introduce Dr. Ackerman
11 and the Chief Business Officer, Michael
12 Masch, I would like to take a moment to
13 thank Governor Rendell, Mayor Nutter and
14 every member of City Council for your
15 leadership and ongoing support that is
16 provided the School District. Trust me,
17 it's been very -- it's very much
18 appreciated, especially in light of the
19 challenging economic climate that the
20 City, State and the School District have
21 all endured.

22 Now I invite Dr. Arlene
23 Ackerman, Superintendent of the School
24 District of Philadelphia, to review how
25 collectively we plan to continue the

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 intense pace that we have set for
3 achieving the ambitious goals laid out in
4 our strategic plan called Imagine 2014.

5 Following Dr. Ackerman's
6 testimony, the School District's Chief
7 Business Officer, Michael Masch, will
8 outline the School District's proposed
9 Fiscal Year 2010 to 2011 budget and how
10 the School Reform Commission and the
11 District intends to be careful stewards
12 of the financial resources that the City,
13 the Commonwealth and the Obama
14 Administration have provided us.

15 I thank you for your time.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning,
19 Councilwoman Blackwell and members of the
20 City Council. I'm Arlene Ackerman,
21 Superintendent of the School District of
22 Philadelphia. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to provide you with a status
24 report on the state of education in
25 Philadelphia and the context for the

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 2010-2011 School District budget.

3 To begin, I'd like to express
4 my sincere respect and gratitude for your
5 support of our District-operated and
6 charter schools and for your clear
7 commitment to give our youth the
8 education that they so deserve. From
9 City Hall and throughout the entire
10 community, we are working together to
11 build a system of great schools where all
12 children have equal access to the
13 opportunities they need in order to
14 succeed in life and to achieve their
15 dreams.

16 Last year at this time, we were
17 in the early stages of implementing our
18 five-year strategic plan, Imagine 2014.
19 This plan engaged the wider Philadelphia
20 community and reflects our shared vision
21 of a world-class educational system for
22 our children.

23 My testimony today will focus
24 on three areas: what we have
25 accomplished in Phase One, the challenges

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2 we face, and our plans for moving forward
3 into the next form of our reform agenda.

4 Let me start with the
5 accomplishments. I came to Philadelphia
6 in June 2008 with five core beliefs.
7 Then and now, these core beliefs guide us
8 in everything that we do. What we
9 believe helps us to envision where we're
10 going and then helps us plan for how to
11 get there. The five core beliefs are
12 simple and straightforward, that children
13 come first, parents are our partners,
14 victory is in the classroom and
15 facilitated by a strong instructional
16 leader in the principal's office,
17 leadership and accountability are the
18 keys to our success, and that it takes
19 the entire community to ensure the
20 success of its public schools.

21 Built on the foundation of our
22 shared beliefs, the City's five-year
23 strategic plan, Imagine 2014, identified
24 five goals: student success, quality
25 choices, great staff, accountable adults,

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 and world-class operations. All of our
3 programs, projects and initiatives are
4 designed to support these goals.

5 Our primary goal is clear, that
6 student success is what we want. The
7 sooner we close the District's
8 opportunity and achievement gap, the
9 sooner we will reach our goal by 2014.
10 While the District is proud to report
11 seven years of steady incremental growth
12 in test scores, if we continue to make
13 progress at this rate, it will take us
14 until the year 2123 -- yes, 2123 -- to
15 get all of our students to a level of
16 proficiency in key skill areas. We know
17 that this is unacceptable.

18 We already know everything we
19 need to know about how to educate
20 children well, and we know that we must
21 do this with a sense of urgency. We know
22 that growth -- the prison growth in this
23 state is projected by officials looking
24 at third grade scores, reading and math
25 scores in Philadelphia. So we share a

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2 deep sense of urgency, and we recognize
3 that incremental growth is just not good
4 enough. Our children have, I believe, a
5 civil right to an equal opportunity for
6 an education now, not next year or ten
7 years down the road. For them, we must
8 do whatever it takes to accelerate the
9 progress.

10 So let me give you a mid-year
11 report on Imagine 2014 to show that we've
12 made some significant progress in a
13 relatively short amount of time.

14 Under Student Success, we've
15 put in our empowerment schools -- and
16 that's 95 of our lowest performing
17 schools -- new supports and systems. We
18 monitor the progress and to strengthen
19 what happens for students. This includes
20 parent ombudsmen, student advisors, more
21 nursing services, social service
22 liaisons, as well as corrective reading
23 and math, which are now standard
24 interventions in all of our empowerment
25 schools.

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2 We reduced class size in grades
3 kindergarten through third grade. They
4 are now down to 24 to one (sic). They
5 were at 20 to one. We've added resources
6 for ninth grade students to keep them
7 actively engaged and on track to
8 graduate. And we've lengthened the
9 school day to give teachers common
10 planning time. We've added more time to
11 the school year by offering a month-long
12 summer school that we're calling Summer
13 Learning and More, otherwise known as
14 S.L.A.M. This office offers a full day
15 of instructional and enrichment
16 opportunities for our students. This
17 summer we expect to welcome 50,000
18 students at 115 school sites. That's
19 12,000 more students than last summer.

20 We've hired 200 new counselors
21 and we've decreased the student ratio in
22 our secondary schools, and we've
23 implemented an in-school suspension
24 program, along with a student-led
25 campaign to tackle truancy.

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2 Efforts to engage our parents
3 and community partners more effectively
4 have yielded great results, thanks to our
5 Office of Parent, Family, Community and
6 Faith-Based Partnerships. For example,
7 the District's Parent University opened
8 in the spring of 2009. Through April
9 2010, we have enrolled more than 7,000
10 parents. Almost 8,000 parents have taken
11 classes in our Parent Universities.
12 There's some 38 sites across the
13 District. Through partnerships with our
14 local colleges, we're now offering
15 skill-based and professional
16 certification classes, as well as
17 Associate Degrees in our Parent
18 Universities.

19 More than 5,000 parents have
20 attended a total of nine Superintendent's
21 Roundtables, and a record number of more
22 than 3,000 people have utilized the
23 Parent Resource Center, which opened
24 about a year ago. And as new immigrant
25 families are arriving almost every week,

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2 our Center for Translation and
3 Interpretation is also busy, and we are
4 expanding the services for next year.

5 Outstanding among our
6 accomplishments this year is the
7 District's contract agreement with PFT.
8 It's referred to as groundbreaking by
9 national policymakers and the news
10 reports across the country. The new
11 contract provides us with flexibility to
12 address the most pressing needs in our
13 struggling schools, provisions for a
14 longer day, a longer school year and
15 Saturday classes. The new contract
16 provides pay for performance to all
17 members of a school staff when there is
18 dramatic achievement for students. The
19 new contract provides -- or ties teacher
20 evaluations to student outcomes and
21 strategically rewards individuals and
22 schools for high performance. It also
23 provides incentives for teachers and
24 principals to take on the most
25 challenging and critical assignments in

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2 schools with the highest needs. This
3 agreement also showed the nation and this
4 community that a school district and a
5 powerful teachers union can come together
6 and make the pieces fit without pulling
7 each other apart. I believe our
8 collaboration was a major step forward
9 for school reform.

10 The second goal was quality
11 choices. Building a system of great
12 schools means providing quality choices
13 and options for families. So far, we
14 have a system that includes traditional
15 neighborhood schools, empowerment
16 schools, charter schools, EMO schools,
17 vanguard schools, which are our highest
18 performing schools, Renaissance schools
19 and Promise Academies.

20 In a focused effort to turn
21 around our lowest performing schools, in
22 January 2010 we launched an extensive
23 parent-driven process called the
24 Renaissance Schools Initiative.

25 Using a School Performance

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2 Index, we identified 14 schools as
3 Renaissance schools. Approximately nine
4 will run as charter schools and five or
5 six will become charter schools -- I
6 mean, Promise Academies. Advisory
7 Councils, made up of a majority of
8 parents, will make a recommendation to
9 the Superintendent and SRC this week of
10 the provider organization who can best
11 meet their school's educational needs.

12 Our School Advisory Councils
13 from the Promise Academies are now
14 engaged in community forums. They're
15 visiting high-performing school sites and
16 they're looking at different components
17 of the Promise Academy Model.

18 Come September, Renaissance
19 schools and Promise Academies will be
20 still in the neighborhood, but they will
21 look very different. People are excited
22 about this initiative and they see it as
23 a rebirth of opportunity for their
24 schools and communities.

25 With our great staff, the

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2 Office of Talent and Development deserves
3 credit for several accomplishments this
4 year. We opened in September 2009 with
5 only 24 teacher vacancies. That's the
6 lowest number of teacher vacancies in
7 more than ten years.

8 We've implemented an
9 accelerated hiring timeline and we're
10 enforcing a policy to submit their intent
11 to retire or resign by a designated date
12 early in the school year.

13 On Friday, we will open our new
14 Office of Teacher Affairs, and this
15 office will address the needs of teachers
16 from the time that they're hired until
17 the time that they resign -- I'm sorry;
18 or retire.

19 As far as accountable adults,
20 Philadelphia's Office of Accountability
21 has built a performance management system
22 and a data infrastructure unlike any
23 other across the country.

24 We are now producing and
25 publishing annual school report cards

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2 that show the measure of progress made on
3 a number of indicators, including student
4 achievement, school operations, parent
5 and community satisfaction. The District
6 data is more transparent and accessible
7 to the public than ever before.

8 We've implemented a new
9 performance index, which allows parents
10 and the community to look at schools as
11 they rank across the District, but also
12 as they rank compared to similar schools
13 with similar student populations.

14 Under the World-Class
15 Operations, we're paying much more close
16 attention to procurement, especially the
17 District's plan participation in minority
18 and women business enterprise, M/WBE,
19 which increased from two percent in 2003
20 to 27 percent as of December 31st, 2009,
21 thanks to our careful monitoring of the
22 District's anti-discrimination policy.

23 We are very pleased that the
24 District has implemented the Weighted
25 Student Formula, and a pilot is currently

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2 underway with 57 vanguard schools and
3 non-empowerment schools. Finally, the
4 District is embarking on plans to
5 implement a five-year -- develop and
6 implement a five-year facility plan which
7 will determine capital improvements,
8 programs, modernization and school
9 closure initiatives for the next decade.

10 There are challenges, and in my
11 many years of service as a school
12 Superintendent, I've never seen so many
13 programs implemented and so much change
14 happen in such a short time in a
15 district. Many of these initiatives are
16 not glittery and they're certainly not
17 newsworthy, but they are changes that lay
18 a foundation for accelerated and
19 sustained growth and student achievement,
20 and we all know in the end that's really
21 what matters.

22 This fact alone presents
23 numerous unexpected and expected
24 challenges. We know that we need to
25 communicate more effectively with greater

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2 efficiency so as to build trust and
3 understanding both within the District
4 and outside of the District.

5 We know that we have a
6 challenge to implement these major
7 reforms, that we must do them with a
8 sense of urgency in a system where the
9 infrastructure is often broken and
10 neglected, and in many cases a district
11 where mediocrity and just good enough are
12 the mainstay rather than the exception.

13 We know we must be good
14 stewards of the public dollars in a
15 difficult economy, and we know that our
16 buildings, which are on average more than
17 100 years old, must be modernized with
18 the proper instructional resources and
19 technology so that our children can
20 receive a 21st century academic education
21 and be ready to compete with their
22 student counterparts in neighboring
23 suburban school districts.

24 Philadelphia we know, like
25 other high-poverty districts, face the

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2 challenges that are reflected in the
3 larger community. Issues like violence,
4 hunger, homelessness, as well as access
5 to quality health and social resources
6 are needed.

7 The lessons of research and
8 experience tell us that within the
9 blessing of diversity comes the
10 challenges of multiplicity. So no state
11 or school district today is immune to the
12 devastating impact of youth violence, and
13 while the number of incidents are down by
14 17 percent this year and the number of
15 prevention programs are up, we know that
16 there is still much we must do to promote
17 pro-social behaviors, and that we must
18 put in place more protective factors to
19 strengthen families and create learning
20 communities that are safe from violence.

21 As an optimist, I believe that
22 within every challenge there is an
23 opportunity. Think about it. The harder
24 we are pressed by challenges, the more
25 we're pushed to think in new ways and to

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2 build better schools for our children.

3 In moving forward, the journey
4 to 2014 continues. In the face of
5 critical economic challenges, initiatives
6 for the next phase of Imagine 2014 may
7 look leaner, but we are still
8 anticipating great results. The year
9 2123 is not an option for our children.

10 Our children all over this city
11 who have tremendous capacity, natural
12 talent, innate intelligence and a hunger
13 to learn must be given the opportunity to
14 do so.

15 We've come a long way in a very
16 short amount of time, but we still have a
17 very long way to go to ensure that every
18 child has an early start in life, that
19 every child has a great teacher with high
20 expectations, that they have counselors
21 to guide them, and that every child has a
22 fair chance to succeed in life by getting
23 a quality education from the Philadelphia
24 public schools.

25 Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you.

4 MR. MASCH: Madam Chair, good
5 morning. My name is Michael Masch. I'm
6 the Chief Business Officer for the School
7 District of Philadelphia.

8 We have submitted written
9 testimony. We've also provided you with
10 our detailed consolidated budget document
11 and our budget in brief, and I'm not
12 going to cover all of that, but I thought
13 I would just start with a highlight
14 before we turn to questions.

15 I want to note that our funding
16 is complex. We receive funding from the
17 federal government, we receive funding
18 from the Commonwealth, and we also
19 receive local resources that are
20 authorized by the Mayor and this Council.
21 And we are grateful to all of our
22 funders, and most particularly we are
23 grateful to you, the members of the
24 Council, for the funds that you have
25 entrusted to us. Our commitment to you

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2 is that we will use them prudently. We
3 will maintain a balanced budget. We will
4 drive efficiency, and we will invest in
5 the achievement of our children.

6 I'm pleased to note that of
7 every dollar that we spend, over 94 cents
8 are spent directly in schools in
9 Philadelphia. Even broadly defined, our
10 administrative costs are only six percent
11 of the total budget.

12 The budget that you have before
13 you for Fiscal Year 2010-11 will support
14 265 District-operated schools, 67 charter
15 schools and 46 alternative schools and
16 programs serving over 202,000 students.
17 The budget provides two and a half
18 billion dollars -- that's 87 percent of
19 the total -- to support District-operated
20 schools and District-managed alternative
21 programs; 527 million, 16 percent of the
22 total, to support charter schools and
23 other non-District-operated educational
24 programs that will serve over 38,000
25 students; and, finally, about \$182

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2 million to fund the administrative
3 support services for the entire school
4 system.

5 Of the two and a half billion
6 for District-operated schools, the
7 overwhelming majority is for instruction,
8 1.6 billion, for classroom instruction in
9 our pre-K programs, K to 8 and elementary
10 schools, middle schools, high schools,
11 plus extended-day and summer programs,
12 alternative programs for students who are
13 struggling to stay in school, additional
14 supports for English language learners,
15 gifted students and special education
16 students.

17 We want to note that we faced
18 some challenges in constructing this
19 budget. We have now negotiated new labor
20 contracts with four of our five
21 collective bargaining units. Those
22 contracts had many important non-economic
23 terms. They did provide for the
24 continuation of health benefits and for a
25 modest wage increase for our employees,

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2 and that will increase our costs by about
3 \$35 million this year.

4 What we have budgeted for
5 charter schools supports both the
6 State-mandated increase in per-student
7 payments for existing charter schools.
8 That's about a six percent increase that
9 we anticipate. It also provides for
10 anticipated enrollment increases, both
11 enrollment increases that are permitted
12 under the initial charters that were
13 granted by the School Reform Commission
14 and additional growth and enrollment
15 under the School District's new
16 enrollment policy, which provides for
17 additional enrollment increases for
18 academically successful charters. The
19 total cost of all of those changes for
20 charter schools is about \$40 million.
21 More next year, about a 12 percent
22 increase.

23 We also face some other
24 significant changes. Our State-mandated
25 pension contributions will increase 72

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2 percent. We will receive some additional
3 support from the Commonwealth, but we
4 will still have a net increase even after
5 State aid in our charter payments of over
6 \$13 million.

7 With the advent of the lifting
8 of rate caps on electric utilities, like
9 all large enterprises, we will face a
10 likely increase in our electric rates,
11 which we think will be no less than a \$5
12 to \$6 million increase.

13 Our debt service costs will be
14 increasing by about \$18.7 million, as the
15 Superintendent noted. We are dealing
16 with decades of underinvestment and
17 deferred maintenance in our facilities
18 and have to strike a balance in terms of
19 how much we borrow and the burden that
20 that puts on the operating budget, but we
21 have to continue to invest in the
22 reconstruction and the rebuilding and
23 sometimes the replacement of our very
24 extensive physical plant, which comprises
25 over 300 separate properties.

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2 In order to do all of those
3 things, this budget contains in it a \$76
4 million reduction in basic expenditures,
5 largely derived by central administrative
6 offices taking a six percent
7 across-the-board reduction in those
8 budgets under their direct control.

9 The budget provides for
10 extensive investment in the
11 implementation of the strategic plan, 119
12 million for the continuation of Phase One
13 initiatives that were launched last year
14 and an additional 61 million for new and
15 expanding initiatives.

16 This is, I don't have to tell
17 the people in this Chamber, a very
18 difficult, very challenging time for all
19 state and local governments. We
20 recognize that because of the state of
21 the economy, our local revenues are
22 projected to be basically in a zero
23 growth condition for the coming year,
24 just as they have been in this year, and
25 we are able to accomplish what we are in

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2 this budget largely because of two
3 things. The Governor has proposed a \$95
4 million increase in the basic education
5 subsidy in this budget, as is a standard
6 for the School District. In anticipating
7 State revenues, this budget is based on
8 what the Governor has proposed.

9 Even more significant for the
10 School District in this year and the
11 coming year is the provision by the
12 federal government of significant funds
13 through the economic stimulus program.
14 We have received this year and will
15 continue to receive next year substantial
16 aid from the stimulus program in Title I,
17 about \$82 million; in IDEA, which is
18 special ed funding, IDEA stimulus funding
19 will be \$22 million. The State provided
20 us this year 120 million of State Fiscal
21 Stabilization funds, which was given to
22 the State in order to support school
23 districts.

24 In addition to that, this year
25 ahead will be the first in which we

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2 anticipate receiving competitive stimulus
3 funds in addition to formula stimulus
4 funds. The largest source of those funds
5 will be stimulus funding for the federal
6 School Improvement Grant program. We are
7 preparing applications to the State now,
8 but based on our discussions with them,
9 we have budgeted about \$52 million in
10 support for our highest needs, lowest
11 performing schools.

12 I just want to say again that
13 we deeply appreciate the support we
14 receive here. We recognize that the
15 leadership of this Council has helped us
16 to achieve what we have in recent years,
17 and we anticipate the continuation of
18 that partnership going forward, and
19 respectively request that you vote in the
20 affirmative for Council Bill 100120,
21 which authorizes the imposition of the
22 annual tax for School District purposes
23 on real estate within the City, and Bill
24 100119, which authorizes the imposition
25 of a tax for general school purposes on

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2 the use and occupancy of real estate
3 within the City.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much. Thank God for President
7 Obama and stimulus dollars across the
8 board, housing, education, homelessness,
9 foreclosures. We are very, very happy to
10 hear about that.

11 I'll hold my questions and go
12 immediately to my colleagues.

13 Councilman Jones, you're first.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
15 Madam Chair.

16 Once again, good morning.

17 (Good morning.)

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: It's good to
19 see you all again.

20 I'm going to start out by
21 citing a couple of truths. When I first
22 heard Imagine 2014, my immediate
23 knee-jerk reaction was, Here's another
24 plan from another Superintendent and here
25 we go again. But I'm actually cautiously

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2 optimistic about its progress in a couple
3 of respects.

4 Number one, a vision without an
5 action plan usually results in a
6 nightmare. And you took bold action in
7 my district particularly and looked at
8 the worst three performing schools, and
9 with a stroke of a pen and with
10 decisiveness, you went after them and
11 said they're going to qualify for
12 Renaissance.

13 The respondents to the RFP are
14 good, better and best. I mean, we have
15 nationally acclaimed charter school
16 providers going after these schools. And
17 I won't name who they are, because it's
18 still a fluid situation with the contract
19 not being in hand, but the only thing I
20 can see is good, better and best. If the
21 worst of them, perceptionally worst of
22 them by myself, gets it, it's a step
23 above what we had.

24 The other indication is that a
25 lot of parents have become engaged in the

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2 process. They're coming out to Home and
3 School Associations. They're asking
4 tough questions and are engaged in and
5 invested in this process. So if that's
6 any indicator of what the ultimate
7 product will be, I'm cautiously
8 optimistic about what's going on. So I
9 want to thank you for that.

10 Two people on your staff pretty
11 much kept me in the loop and well
12 informed are Joe Meade and Rodney
13 Oglesby, and I want to publicly thank
14 them. Whenever I have a question and
15 you're too busy -- and if you call every
16 Councilperson back, I'm wondering who
17 you're educating. But these people have
18 been right Johnny and Jannie, in some
19 cases, on the spot. When I have
20 questions, I get answers from them. It's
21 not always the answers I like, but at
22 least they are answers. So I thank you
23 for that.

24 On this, I wanted to talk about
25 these Renaissance schools a bit and ask

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2 that in each of the contract provisions,
3 there is a capital infusion to the
4 physical plant that they have to make and
5 that is negotiated with the advisory
6 groups, and can you explain how that will
7 work?

8 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you for
9 being not only complimentary of the
10 Renaissance program, but being really
11 knowledgeable about what's going on,
12 because it is really exciting to see the
13 parents so engaged in determining what's
14 going to be best for their school
15 community.

16 With the Renaissance schools,
17 they will all be subject to initial
18 changes in the facilities. They'll also
19 be included in the long-term -- get
20 priority in the long-term master
21 facilities planning process. But over
22 the summer, all of those schools will go
23 through renovations, paint, some simple
24 renovations outside. They're going to be
25 beautification projects. And then they

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2 will get priority in the five-year plan.
3 Because we know that to change the inside
4 is one thing, but you want an environment
5 that's conducive to learning. So they'll
6 get extra technology resources are coming
7 to those schools, and you'll see some of
8 those changes immediately, over the
9 summer.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, I
11 mean, if you look at the -- when I first
12 ran for office, one of the research
13 components I did was to look at how the
14 schools in my district were performing,
15 and I was stunned that the 7th may be the
16 poorest district in the City of
17 Philadelphia, but it wasn't the most
18 underperforming district in the City of
19 Philadelphia, and so, therefore, I
20 immediately was concerned about it.

21 But if you take those three
22 underperforming schools out and then
23 replace them hopefully with really
24 performing, it changes the dynamic almost
25 immediately.

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2 My question becomes, next year
3 can we anticipate that happening again,
4 taking the underperformers if they fall
5 below a certain guideline and considering
6 them for a similar process? Is that our
7 expectation?

8 DR. ACKERMAN: Absolutely.
9 We're going to systematically eliminate
10 the lowest performing schools while
11 pushing all the other schools to become
12 vanguard status. So being a top
13 performer isn't limited where you have
14 sort of a bell curve. We're pushing the
15 schools that are in the middle to move to
16 the vanguard school status, and every
17 year until we eliminate all the schools
18 that are low performing, there'll be a
19 Renaissance school program.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: My
21 question -- and it's a part of the black
22 box theory that people have known, which
23 is -- I see you, Councilwoman.

24 There is a theory that by the
25 time young endangered, at-risk youth get

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 in the ninth grade, there is something
3 happening that creates the high dropout
4 rates. Are you addressing that, A? And,
5 B, are we looking at these Renaissance
6 schools being in the middle school areas
7 to try to combat that, but what high
8 school -- does all of that kind of work
9 for naught if you're not addressing the
10 high school experience as well?

11 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, this
12 year --

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: -- we actually
16 took the lowest performing schools,
17 middle and high schools and elementary
18 schools. What we're trying to get to
19 next year are feeder patterns, so that we
20 get an elementary, middle and high
21 school. So we're going to be looking
22 next year at this geographical pathway,
23 so that young people who are in a Promise
24 Academy elementary, we look at the
25 middle, we look at the high school of

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2 their choice in terms of geography.

3 As you -- what was the first
4 part of your question? I'm sorry.
5 Because I had a good answer.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: The first
7 part of my question is, you mention in
8 your testimony about the high dropout
9 rate and you focused in particular on the
10 ninth grade. Is this a part of a
11 strategy to combat that black box theory?

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, this is
13 one of the strategies to address
14 underperforming schools, but the larger
15 strategy, as I talked about in my
16 testimony, is to get to these young
17 people and make sure they don't leave
18 third grade without strong reading and
19 math skills, because I can tell you as a
20 former middle school teacher, if a child
21 leaves the third grade without strong
22 reading skills, strong math skills,
23 they're going to struggle unless
24 intervention happens. And what we see
25 with young people who don't -- who come

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 to the ninth grade without those skills
3 is, that really is where they make the
4 decision to drop out.

5 We also put more of our new
6 counselors at the ninth grade. The
7 counseling level at -- student-counselor
8 ratio at the ninth grade now is down to
9 about 250 to one, and they're going to
10 follow those students, so they'll have
11 them for four years.

12 Each of the ninth graders this
13 year we put in place with their
14 counselors an academic learning plan. By
15 the first quarter, the second quarter,
16 third quarter, the counselors were having
17 conversations. We know exactly who the
18 young people are who are in danger of not
19 going into the tenth grade. We've made
20 adjustments. They're going into summer
21 school.

22 That's the kind of one-on-one
23 intervention you have to have for these
24 young people. And then you have to have
25 intervention courses. So we've

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 extended -- added another period to the
3 day. We're going to add a zero period,
4 because if you're behind, you have to
5 have more time to catch up. And all of
6 this is part of a larger plan to address
7 the serious dropout rate that we have,
8 especially for African American and
9 Latino young men, 49 percent for African
10 American men, and they make that decision
11 at ninth grade, 59 percent for Latino
12 males.

13 So this is -- the Renaissance
14 Schools Initiative is a large -- is a
15 part of a larger initiative that we
16 focused on critical key grades to make
17 sure there's personnel there. We also
18 hired 77 new reading teachers to address
19 and to intervene at the third grade,
20 between first and third grade. All of
21 these, we believe, will then produce --
22 begin to stem that tide.

23 Remember, I said they look at
24 the third grade reading scores of young
25 people in Philadelphia to determine the

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 number of new prisons. There are three
3 being built now, so that tells you why we
4 have to seriously tackle this.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam Chair,
6 thank you.

7 Councilman Bill Green last year
8 talked about the national priority, and
9 he's right --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
11 Councilman Jones, you know your time has
12 been up.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you.

17 Councilman Greenlee, you're
18 next.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
20 you, Madam Chair.

21 Good morning, everyone.

22 (Good morning.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I want to
24 touch a little bit, Dr. Ackerman, on the
25 violence issue that you talk about in

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2 your testimony. And I know South Philly
3 High has gotten a lot of the publicity,
4 but I know there's a lot of issues out
5 there, and I know you say -- and I saw
6 the numbers that the violence incidents
7 have gone down, but talk about the need
8 for more prevention programs. Can you go
9 into a little bit in what, under your
10 leadership, you've been able to do in
11 that area?

12 DR. ACKERMAN: We've put in
13 prevention programs, in-school
14 suspensions, which are to me important,
15 not new. Again, not sexy, but they're
16 needed for young people to keep them in
17 school and not out of school for even
18 short amounts of periods.

19 We put in place new programs
20 that address the issues of violence,
21 single-school culture programs that focus
22 on not only having a structure for rules
23 and consequences, but incentives for
24 young people to promote pro-social
25 behavior.

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2 But in the long run, I think
3 what we've tried to focus on is putting
4 in place the kinds of things that we know
5 keep children, young people interested in
6 school. In the schools where our
7 children are achieving at high levels,
8 you see lots of enrichment programs
9 before school, after school. You see
10 music, art. You see lots of athletic
11 programs. We're trying to systematically
12 make sure that those programs are in
13 place at all of our schools. The schools
14 where we have high incidents of violence
15 and disciplinary incidents, we see
16 schools that don't have libraries, we see
17 schools that don't have athletic
18 programs, music, art, journalism classes.

19 I believe the way you treat the
20 treatment for strong -- I mean, for
21 disciplinary issues is a direct -- is
22 directly related to the kinds of
23 enrichment programs that we have in
24 place. And they shouldn't even be
25 enrichment, they should be a part of the

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2 core curriculum. You have to make school
3 more interesting than the streets, and
4 you have to do that by having the
5 programs in place, which we haven't.

6 So in some ways, you know, you
7 have schools where they don't have these
8 programs and the kids go out and they get
9 in trouble, and we've had our share of
10 those. But you have to have not only a
11 structure inside of the school day, but
12 you have to make sure that there are a
13 variety of programs for young people
14 where they're engaged throughout the day
15 and after school.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you.

18 You talk about the challenge of
19 reaching a goal of racial and cultural
20 harmony. In this violence issue, have
21 you ever checked out how much percentage
22 of the violence is related to cultural or
23 ethnic issues?

24 DR. ACKERMAN: We have, and I
25 don't have the numbers here, but I can

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2 tell you that most of the violent
3 incidents are not across cultural and
4 racial lines. It's within black on
5 black, Latino on Latino, very -- it's a
6 small number when it cuts across the --
7 which is why I said it's a larger issue
8 and we got to focus on what are the
9 issues that cause children to see
10 violence as the only way to resolve a
11 conflict.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

13 DR. ACKERMAN: We can give you
14 those numbers.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If you
16 could get them to the Chair, I'd
17 appreciate it.

18 Lastly, if I could, you talk
19 about the Translation and Interpretation
20 Center. Can you give us a little detail
21 on what that does?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, when I
23 came less than two years ago, we didn't
24 have translation services. They got done
25 by people who could read or write in a

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 certain language, and it was not done
3 very well. We have now hired translators
4 for every language that we have, and
5 we're expanding it because we have so
6 many new immigrants coming into the City
7 and into the school system on a weekly
8 basis. We're now going to put the
9 translators into what we're proposing for
10 next year, our Parent Centers, which are
11 in the community, so that parents -- sort
12 of a one-stop shopping for parents. They
13 can go, they can get the services that
14 they need to enroll their children, to
15 have them assessed, and then get a school
16 assignment, all in the community, and
17 that's different.

18 So we're expanding those
19 services now. I think we now have
20 30-something translators, and they are
21 going to be able to do even more as we
22 add -- I don't know how many more, but
23 we're adding them so that they can go
24 into the Parent Resource Centers, which
25 will be in the community.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Great.

3 Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Doctor.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you, Councilman.

7 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
8 Brown.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair.

11 Good morning. Let me first
12 commend you on this comprehensive
13 testimony that you provided,
14 Superintendent, and say to you that the
15 one paragraph I am most inspired by is on
16 Page 5 where, Still I am an optimist and
17 I believe every child is an opportunity
18 in disguise.

19 I'm going to run the risk of
20 losing my five minutes quickly. I'm very
21 much interested in knowing what
22 departments are represented here with you
23 today. So if you could just share with
24 us on the record the many departments
25 that are in the audience, as a starter.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: Okay. Let me
3 look back and have them stand up.

4 Just tell me. Okay? Because I
5 don't want to mess up.

6 So let's stand up, everybody.
7 Let's start with the back row first and
8 identify who you are and what department.

9 (Witnesses speaking without
10 microphone.)

11 MR. CREEDON: Dennis Creedon,
12 Director of Arts Education.

13 MS. GROVEMAN: Arlene Groveman,
14 Office of Early Childhood.

15 MS. NEWBERG: Fran Newberg,
16 Educational Technology.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm
18 sorry. We're going to ask you if you
19 would take a mike. The stenographer
20 can't get it. I'm sorry we have to ask
21 you to do this, but the stenographer
22 can't get it. Hold on, he'll bring one
23 to you.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: They're looking
25 nervous. They shouldn't look nervous.

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2 They could be up here.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
4 right.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, we
6 know it's a huge organization with many
7 important departments, and we in Council
8 have to do a reach often, so it's helpful
9 to know faces with names that we see on
10 the paper.

11 (Microphone handed to audience
12 members.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you. Could we begin again.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: Joe, why don't
16 we start with you. You got a compliment,
17 so people should know who you are.

18 MR. MEADE: Joe Meade, Office
19 of Government Relations.

20 MS. CREEDON: Dennis Creedon,
21 Comprehensive Arts Education.

22 MS. GROVEMAN: Arlene Groveman,
23 Early Childhood.

24 MS. NEWBERG: Fran Newberg,
25 Educational Technology.

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2 MS. COLDEN: Kelly Colden,
3 Office of Government Relations.

4 MR. MCKINNEY: Theos McKinney,
5 Office of Talent Development.

6 MR. WRIGHT: Benjamin Wright,
7 Office of Alternative Education.

8 MR. POMBAR: Frank Pombar,
9 Attendance and Truancy.

10 MS. SCOTT: Majeedah Scott,
11 Multiple Pathways to Graduation.

12 MS. REVERON: Delia Reveron,
13 Attendance and Truancy.

14 MR. SCOTT: Jim Scott, Office
15 of Parent, Family, Community Engagement
16 and Faith-Based Partnerships.

17 MR. LOMBARDI: John Lombardi,
18 Transportation Services.

19 MR. DOUGHERTY: Francis
20 Dougherty from the Chief Business Office.

21 MR. HENWOOD: Pat Henwood,
22 Capital Programs.

23 MR. CARDWELL: Jeff Cardwell,
24 Facilities and Operations.

25 MR. NUNERY: Leroy Nunery,

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2 Institutional Advancement and Strategic
3 Partnerships.

4 MS. WOO: Jenny Woo, Office of
5 the Superintendent, Strategic Planning.

6 MR. GOLDEN: James Golden,
7 Office of Climate and Safety.

8 MR. ANTONIO: Joe Antonio from
9 the Superintendent's Office.

10 MS. CHEN: Linda Chen, Teaching
11 and Learning.

12 MR. BRADY: Stephen Brady,
13 Office of Empowerment Schools.

14 MS. KIMBERLY WILLIAMS: Good
15 morning. I'm Kimberly D. Williams from
16 the Office of Talent and Development.

17 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Linda
18 Williams, Office of Specialized
19 Instructional Services.

20 MS. LOMDEN: Dawn Lomden,
21 Office of Talent and Development.

22 MS. PHILLIPS: Latifah
23 Phillips, Superintendant's Office.

24 MR. WILLIS: Rodney Willis,
25 Government Relations Department.

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2 MS. MATTHEWS: Estelle

3 Matthews, Chief Talent and Development
4 Officer.

5 MS. SAMPLE-OATES: Evelyn

6 Sample-Oates, Chief Communication
7 Officer.

8 MS. BROWN: Pamela Brown,
9 Interim Chief Academic Officer.

10 MR. WEINER: David Weiner,
11 Chief Accountability Officer.

12 MR. HANNA: Tomas Hanna,
13 Superintendant's Office, Chief of Staff.

14 MR. FRANGIPANI: John
15 Frangipani, Chief of School Operations.

16 MR. SHORE: Good morning.
17 Miles Shore, Interim General Counsel.

18 MR. RAYER: Good morning. Ben
19 Rayer, Charter and Renaissance Schools.

20 MS. FLOYD: Good morning.
21 Danielle Floyd, Superintendent's Office.

22 (Witness speaking without
23 microphone.)

24 MR. ORTIZ: On this side,
25 Wilfredo Ortiz, Office of Counseling and

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2 Promotional Standards.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We'll
4 bring the mike over, because the
5 stenographer can't get it clearly enough
6 to record. Thank you.

7 (Microphone handed to audience
8 members.)

9 MR. HARRIS: Wayne Harris,
10 Budget Office.

11 MR. ORTIZ: Wilfredo Ortiz,
12 Office of Counseling and Promotion
13 Standards.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Did we
15 get you all? That's quite a bit.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It sure
17 is.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you. Thank you, Dr. Ackerman.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
21 very, very much.

22 My questions come in no
23 particular order, and I'm going to start
24 first with follow-up raised by others.

25 You indicated that you have

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 moved to alter the number of young people
3 per counselor, with greater intervention
4 at the ninth grade level. Share with me
5 briefly the thinking around that, when we
6 know that we actually begin to see
7 signals of truancy around sixth grade
8 when we're discovering that they're not
9 reading to learn. And how is that
10 reconciled when the signals start to
11 appear at sixth grade, but the
12 intervention happens in a greater way in
13 ninth grade?

14 DR. ACKERMAN: I focused on
15 ninth grade because that's where we see
16 the actual drop-off. But when I talked
17 about hiring 200 new counselors,
18 secondary was inclusive of middle school.
19 So the counseling ratio at the middle
20 school is down to somewhere between 250
21 and 300, depending upon the school. It's
22 way down than it used to be. So we did
23 focus on -- the secondary school was
24 sixth through 12th grade.

25 We have early warning systems

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2 programs in place at the sixth grade. So
3 that's another preventive program that we
4 have in place where we can look at a
5 child and begin to plan prevention
6 programs when we see them at the sixth
7 grade. I didn't talk about that. But
8 the ninth grade was -- we were talking
9 about that because that's when they drop
10 out. So it's at the sixth grade and the
11 ninth grade that we put lots of
12 additional counseling resources.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. All
14 right, then.

15 MR. MASCH: And we're adding
16 the counselors in the large elementary
17 schools.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. We're
19 adding counselors in the large elementary
20 schools also.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

22 DR. ACKERMAN: But we focused
23 all of our resources on the sixth and
24 ninth grade.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Consistent

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2 with the Mayor's -- two of the Mayor's
3 primary goals around schooling, one of
4 course being the dropout rate, and
5 knowing that you say 49 percent of those
6 dropping out are African American boys,
7 what strategy or thinking have you given
8 to exploring raising the number of
9 African American male teachers so that
10 young people, boys, have those type of
11 models in their world during the teaching
12 process?

13 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, we are
14 aggressively going after minority staff
15 members, new minority staff members.
16 We're working with -- let me give you
17 some statistics, because I think it's
18 important not only for minority -- I
19 mean, males but for minority staff
20 members.

21 More than 80 percent of our
22 student population are children of color,
23 and almost 70 percent of our teaching and
24 administrative staff are -- it's about 70
25 percent. So we -- we have a lot of work

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2 to do just to -- when we look at teaching
3 and administrators.

4 We're working with a program
5 called Call Me MISTER at Cheyney
6 University, which is a wonderful program
7 to target young African American men who
8 are in college, and we're working very
9 closely with them. We're hoping to
10 expand that program to Lincoln also.

11 We believe we're going to have
12 to grow our own, which is why we now will
13 have three high schools that are Urban
14 Academies. We believe that if we can get
15 these young people identified at the
16 ninth grade, to get them interested in
17 becoming teachers and educators and then
18 get scholarships for them and then
19 promise them jobs -- that's another big
20 part of this initiative with the Urban
21 Academies, is to ensure that not only
22 they get through the 12th grade, but that
23 we have scholarships for them in
24 universities that will work with us so
25 that we get them through college and back

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2 into the Philadelphia school system with
3 a guaranteed job. So there's a short
4 range.

5 We're working with -- we know
6 we need to do more, and we haven't done
7 as much as we needed to do with both
8 Cheyney and Lincoln Universities. So
9 we're aggressively trying to work with
10 them now while growing our own.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: And actively
13 recruiting for teachers of color. I
14 mean, the problem we have with trying to
15 get teachers of color, which is why this
16 big incentive where teachers go to come
17 into the school system, what we pay them
18 is really important. Some 40 years ago
19 when I graduated, there were very few
20 options when I graduated. So we had lots
21 of men and lots of women, very talented,
22 who went into education. Now these young
23 people have more options. So we are
24 going to have to grow our own and to tap
25 them while they're in school and make it

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2 worth their while, or they will go into
3 other occupations where they can make
4 more money.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very much.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
10 Councilwoman, your time is up.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: On the
12 next round. Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you.

15 Councilman Clarke.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
17 Madam Chair. Madam Chair, how much time
18 do we have? Five minutes?

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm
20 supposed to give two or three, but we've
21 been letting it go for five. But you
22 probably only have one or two questions,
23 so you probably don't even need it.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: That will
25 determine what question I ask first.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're
3 fine.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: First of
5 all, good morning.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning.
7 How are you?

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I had a
9 question about utilities, and I'll come
10 back with my other question. I guess
11 it's for Mr. Masch, because I notice it's
12 referenced in his testimony.

13 As you indicated, Mr. Masch, as
14 we now all know that the termination of
15 the rate caps is quickly upon us and we
16 in the City are starting to wrestle with
17 that and have been looking at some
18 potential challenges as we come down the
19 pike, and the School District is also in
20 the position to have to figure out how to
21 deal with the potential emerging energy
22 costs as it relates to electricity, and I
23 notice the reference in your testimony.
24 I guess my question is, is there
25 currently a process underway to either

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2 aggregate or look at energy choices in
3 terms of purchases of supplier -- the
4 supply side of that? Can you just
5 briefly tell me exactly what you all are
6 doing?

7 MR. MASCH: Councilman, we have
8 actually been in discussions with the
9 Mayor and his Administration about the
10 potential for our coordinating our
11 purchases. Those are preliminary
12 discussions, but we think that that's a
13 worthwhile avenue to pursue. The larger
14 the amount of buying power that we can
15 aggregate, the better that will be. It's
16 always better to have more buying power
17 in the market, even though we are
18 dealing, for the most part, with
19 regulated utilities and competition is
20 more limited than we would like.

21 Our major focus in this coming
22 year is going to be on conservation. We
23 spend about -- we estimate that we will
24 spend around \$75 million on utilities
25 this coming year, and what we're struck

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2 by is that 61 of our buildings -- now, we
3 run 265 schools. Sixty-one of our
4 buildings consume 50 percent of our
5 energy, at a cost last year of about \$29
6 million, and that's because, as the
7 Superintendent noted, we have some older
8 buildings and we have a lot of deferred
9 maintenance.

10 So what we are looking at is
11 what some other governments have done,
12 which is, because capital dollars are
13 also short, is to secure the services of
14 what are called energy service
15 conservation organizations, which are
16 private entities that will invest their
17 capital in energy improvements in
18 exchange for shared savings. Usually
19 you're looking for about a three-year to
20 a maximum of five-year return on
21 investment in terms of the investment
22 that you make on shared savings. So we
23 think that there's significant potential
24 there. If we could reduce energy
25 consumption just by five percent, that

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2 would be close to \$900,000 a year.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Right. In
4 terms of energy purchases, it was
5 actually during a conversation with
6 members of the PUC there was actually
7 some recommendation that we look at
8 potentially aggregating opportunities
9 outside the City of Philadelphia proper
10 to some external counties utilizing if in
11 fact -- I guess I'm not supposed to talk
12 about this, because it's pending
13 legislation. I'll just reference it and
14 hope I don't get in trouble.

15 The potential implementation of
16 the Philadelphia Energy Authority, which
17 we are moving down the path. And so do
18 you have and the School District any
19 relationships to some of the school
20 districts in the surrounding counties as
21 it relates to shared purchasing power of
22 materials, vehicles or anything that can
23 subsequently possibly be used as it
24 relates to purchase of energy?

25 MR. MASCH: We do not at

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2 present. Remember, our scale is very
3 different from the other districts. You
4 would have to aggregate a lot of them for
5 it to make a difference for us. The
6 average Pennsylvania school district has
7 about 5,300 students compared to our
8 200,000 students. So as I say, we think
9 the greatest potential in fact is in
10 making this one of the -- an additional
11 area in which the City and the School
12 District are partnering with one another.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No. We
14 hope that we can pull that off.

15 MR. ARCHIE: Councilman Clarke,
16 we have -- the School District has joined
17 something called a coalition of
18 state-related agencies here in the City
19 of Philadelphia. We've entered into a
20 Memorandum of Understanding with the
21 Philadelphia Parking Authority, the
22 Delaware River Port Authority, the
23 Philadelphia Housing Authority, Temple
24 University, all State-related agencies,
25 and what we're looking at is basically

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2 how we can adopt and share best
3 practices. One of those practices would
4 be a bulk purchasing of utilities among
5 those agencies here in the City of
6 Philadelphia. The School Reform
7 Commission authorized and we executed the
8 Memorandum of Understanding. I'm sorry.
9 Also included in that coalition is also
10 the Pennsylvania Convention Center
11 Authority. We've looked at to see
12 whether or not SEPTA has been made an
13 offer, at least got an invitation to
14 join, and that is still pending. But
15 those agencies are now meeting on a
16 regular basis, hiring an Executive
17 Director and seeing how we can share best
18 practices, including the acquisition of
19 goods and services to those State-related
20 agencies.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Great.
22 That's great. Okay. Sounds like you all
23 are moving down that path.

24 At some point if and after we
25 complete our process about the

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2 legislation that I'm not supposed to be
3 talking about, we would like to be in a
4 position to have a point person from the
5 School District to talk about
6 possibilities, because beyond simply
7 aggregating energy purchases for the here
8 and now, I think one of the most
9 important aspects of the potential of
10 this is to look at alternative sources of
11 energy, and we want to get very
12 aggressive and creative in utilizing
13 water, our rivers, utilizing solar, all
14 of the opportunities, methane gas. There
15 are a number of things that we found out
16 that could potentially be of benefit to
17 not only our public facilities but
18 somewhere down the line, assuming where
19 the State legislation goes, conceivably
20 even our residents.

21 So we would really like to be
22 in a position to have a person from the
23 School District designated to be a part
24 of those discussions.

25 MR. ARCHIE: So noted.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: Will do.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you
4 so much.

5 Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll
6 come back.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you, Councilman.

9 Councilwoman Tasco.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
11 very much.

12 Good morning.

13 (Good morning.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I just
15 want to go back to a question of, I
16 think, Councilman Jones. You talked
17 about the disparity of programs in some
18 of the schools. You just got here, but
19 what is your thinking in terms of how we
20 might have decided that some schools
21 should have programs and other schools
22 shouldn't have programs, don't have
23 programs, and where did the commitment to
24 total education for every child go awry?
25 And you did talk about how you're going

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2 to try to put that back on point so that
3 all of the students have access to sort
4 of like the same programs. I hope I read
5 you right or heard you right.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: That's exactly
7 what we're trying to do. And I don't
8 have the history here, but I can tell you
9 some of the things I've seen happen here,
10 and the conditions are similar to other
11 big city school systems. And one of the
12 problems I think is what Councilman Jones
13 said, without a plan, which is why one of
14 the first things we did was to put a plan
15 in place, without a plan, then it's who
16 can articulate and argue for their
17 school, their community the loudest, and
18 that's where it happens.

19 So I think there was a lot of
20 that going on. So somebody would get to
21 whoever the powers that needed to be and
22 that's how it would happen, whether it
23 was at the school site, at the District
24 site or at the community site. And I
25 think one of the reasons Imagine 2014 is

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2 so important is because it lays out what
3 we're going to do and who we're going to
4 do it for, and to me, there should be no
5 exceptions to that. And it's another
6 reason why the master facilities planning
7 process and the plan will be so
8 important, the five-year plan.

9 I can't tell you how many
10 people come up and say, But I was
11 promised or my school was promised, and
12 there was no rhyme or reason for how this
13 community got new resources or
14 modernization as opposed to another,
15 other than one had the political
16 wherewithal or the influence to make it
17 happen. And what happens is what happens
18 in schools often where you don't have
19 parents who can advocate for their
20 children, the schools that can, get, and
21 those that don't, you won't see -- you'll
22 see those kinds of disparities.

23 And so what I'm trying to get
24 the school system to do is to be
25 transparent in what we do. And I say to

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 people almost once a day, I know you were
3 promised that, but here's the plan. And
4 when it comes to what they want us to
5 address, I say we're going to have a
6 five-year plan. You know, be a part of
7 this planning process, but be a part of
8 it, and we're not going to make decisions
9 outside of that.

10 So it's really hard, but it is
11 very much what I have seen in other
12 places. Then they got, get, and those
13 that don't, don't, unless there's
14 somebody there to articulate a vision and
15 a plan and then the School District
16 sticks to it.

17 But that's what's happened over
18 the, I think, years here in Philadelphia,
19 and in many ways it's, I believe,
20 Councilwoman, it's shameful, the
21 discrepancies in terms of what we see in
22 some schools. We actually have schools
23 where there are no libraries. The
24 libraries are in lockers. We actually
25 have schools where the restrooms would

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2 be -- would not be a place that any of us
3 would even want to have to use.

4 So some of the discrepancies
5 have happened because -- and it's why I'm
6 so big on empowering parents, because
7 parents have the most invested in a
8 school, and the fact that they're engaged
9 in these processes -- in the process of
10 changing their school is really
11 important. It's why I spend so much time
12 with parents, because I believe that when
13 they push, things will happen in a
14 school, and they won't -- we won't have
15 these blatant disparities that we see.

16 So part of it is having a plan.
17 Part of it is making sure that those who
18 have the greatest investment, parents,
19 are engaged in the process so they push
20 the system to get better for all
21 children. But it's happened over time
22 and it's happened because -- you know, a
23 lot of Superintendents come in and don't
24 want a plan, to tell you the truth,
25 because then they can sort of wheel and

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 deal, but in the long run it hurts the
3 least, those who have -- who can least
4 afford to not have somebody advocate for
5 them.

6 So putting in place all these
7 programs, whether it's athletics,
8 counselors, all of those things, are
9 leveling the playing field. It's not
10 always popular. It's certainly not,
11 again, newsworthy or noteworthy for some
12 people, but in the long run, I think
13 parents and communities are beginning to
14 see that the District is really serious
15 about addressing this issue of equity.

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
17 very much.

18 Can I have one more question?

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay,
20 Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: You don't
22 have me on the clock, do you?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
24 all right. We'll allow this question.

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Let me

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 just ask you one other question that came
3 up from a parent regarding special needs
4 students. How are they assigned to the
5 various schools? Do they have to -- say
6 some students qualify to go to Girls High
7 or Masterman or something like that. Do
8 they have to meet the same qualifications
9 as all other students or are they
10 assigned based on the need for the School
11 District to have a diverse population,
12 which also includes students with
13 disabilities?

14 DR. ACKERMAN: Right. Well,
15 that has been a problem we've tried to
16 address now in our report cards and our
17 performance targets, because it is true
18 that some of the special admit schools
19 have not been admitting students not only
20 who have special needs but are English
21 language learners. And because you don't
22 have English as your first language or
23 because you have a special need doesn't
24 mean that you don't qualify and can be
25 successful in a special admit school. I

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2 think some children have been left out
3 because that may have been the culture.
4 We are tracking that now to make sure
5 that all children have access to those
6 schools, because it's been an issue, and
7 I can see why some parents have
8 complained about it. They have
9 complained about it, and it's true. It's
10 kind of a little dirty secret, but these
11 schools now have performance targets that
12 they must meet. So that we are making
13 sure that children with special needs
14 aren't locked out.

15 The other thing we found that
16 we can do is related to program
17 placement. Maybe these young people --
18 some young people don't meet the
19 qualifications or the criteria for
20 admittance, but if you can put the
21 programs, some of these programs, into
22 those schools, they get the benefit of
23 interacting with some very talented young
24 people. So we're also looking at where
25 our programs are placed. Sometimes you

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2 have a school with six or seven programs
3 for young people with special needs. I
4 believe they need to be evenly
5 distributed throughout the City and that
6 they need to be placed in all schools
7 where there is space.

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

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you, Councilwoman.

12 Councilman Green.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. I do have a number of
15 questions. I'll get through a first and
16 a few in this round and then wait until
17 the end to, I guess, everybody address
18 the rest of them.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
22 morning.

23 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I want to
25 thank you for your testimony and say that

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 I've watched with -- I'm watching with
3 great interest Imagine 2014. I've read
4 the plan. I'm excited about a lot of the
5 direction in it, and I also -- you
6 mention transparency and how you've
7 attempted to make the School District
8 more transparent. I must say that this
9 year's budget detail and the amount of
10 information that's now available on the
11 School District website is tremendous in
12 terms of comparison to what we've had in
13 the past, and I want to commend you for
14 that also.

15 The unfortunate downside of all
16 of that information is, of course, that
17 we now have some detail and it results in
18 questions about that, but that's why we
19 need transparency and information there,
20 so that we and the public can hold people
21 spending tax dollars accountable.

22 So the budget includes \$180
23 million to implement Imagine 2014
24 initiatives, and that's, I guess, going
25 to be an annualized basis. I think if

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 we're going to have a five-year plan, one
3 of the things we have to make sure of is
4 that we don't start spending in the first
5 couple of years and then hit a wall
6 because we've run out of stimulus funding
7 and other stuff. So how much of the --
8 it's not broken down in a way we could
9 figure this out. How much of this money
10 is grant funded?

11 MR. MASCH: Councilman,
12 virtually all of the 180 million is
13 coming out of one of the grant funding
14 sources; that is to say, either Title I,
15 IDEA, ADTECH or School Improvement
16 funding from the federal government. I
17 mean, that's where our growth has been in
18 these past two years.

19 The growth in funding that we
20 received from the State has been -- we've
21 been able to use to fund our growth in
22 base operating expenditures. Keep in
23 mind that we could only receive and use
24 the stimulus funds for the introduction
25 of new programs or the expansion of

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 academic programs. The funds are limited
3 to academic purposes and can't be used to
4 supplant existing funding.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So
6 basically all of it.

7 What happens when that funding
8 runs out? Do we have a plan for much
9 less -- for far fewer resources from the
10 federal government and from the State
11 government that will allow these programs
12 to continue?

13 MR. MASCH: Yes, we do. Keep
14 in mind that this is a period of time in
15 which we are seeing actually a reduction
16 in funding from the State government in
17 terms of State dollars. The increase
18 that the State provided us in basic
19 education subsidy really was using the
20 stimulus dollars, and that's what the
21 State Fiscal Stabilization dollars were
22 intended for. Other State funding is now
23 actually seven percent lower than it was
24 two years ago before the recession. As
25 I've noted, the funding at the local

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 level also has not been growing.

3 As we showed you in the budget

4 in brief, our average growth in local

5 revenues has been about four percent.

6 Our average growth in State revenues has

7 actually been about seven percent, and

8 our average growth in recurring federal

9 revenues has been about five percent.

10 That's over the past decade.

11 If we were to resume a four

12 percent growth rate for local funding, a

13 more modest than in the recent past five

14 percent growth rate for State funding,

15 and five percent growth rate at the

16 federal level, we would have about \$115

17 million more in growth a year. We didn't

18 have that growth this year and we didn't

19 have it next year. That's basically \$230

20 million of what would be recurring

21 additions to the base.

22 So one of the things that

23 clearly the federal government is hoping

24 to see is that state and local

25 governments will fill in part of the hole

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 in public school budgets, school district
3 budgets as the federal money is
4 withdrawn. So that's one of the things
5 that we will need to see happen.

6 There is, however, as I noted
7 in my testimony, a second wave of
8 stimulus funding coming, and that funding
9 is not like the formula funding. The
10 formula funding was for two years only.
11 The new competitive grants are multi
12 year. So the stimulus School Improvement
13 funding that we will be adding to the
14 budget next year is three-year funding.
15 As you know, we are partnering with other
16 school districts through the Commonwealth
17 to apply in the second round of Race to
18 the Top. Race to the Top funding is
19 four-year funding.

20 There are two other competitive
21 stimulus programs that we are now
22 preparing applications for, the Investing
23 in Innovation competitive stimulus
24 program and the Teacher Incentive Fund
25 competitive stimulus funding. So a

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2 second part of the strategy is to replace
3 part of the formula stimulus funding with
4 competitive funding, which not only can
5 replace it, but will be sustainable for a
6 longer period of years.

7 Finally, we recognize that the
8 other thing that we have to do is reduce
9 our base operating expenditures, and as I
10 noted in my testimony, we have done that
11 in the amount of \$76 million this year in
12 base reductions. The increases that I
13 noted in spending were actually greater
14 than the increases that I've cited in
15 revenue, and the difference between the
16 two is reductions that we've taken from
17 the base.

18 We are committed to continuing
19 to identify and implement initiatives
20 that are going to reduce our basic
21 expenditures. We have a systems
22 improvement program underway --

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Excuse me,
24 Mr. Masch. I'm sorry to interrupt. My
25 question is about the revenue side, so

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2 I'd like to stay on revenue, if we can.

3 So in order to replace this

4 revenue, you're relying on competitive

5 grants, I guess is what you're saying.

6 Without winning competitive grants at the

7 federal level, without a five percent

8 increase in State funding and without the

9 City returning to a four percent

10 increase, we will not have the money to

11 continue Imagine 2014 through the five

12 years.

13 MR. MASCH: Right.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's sort

15 of the -- that's the implication of what

16 your testimony is.

17 MR. MASCH: Yes, and it's

18 important to note what an extraordinary

19 period of time we're in. The local tax

20 base has increased on a regular basis

21 annually. That's been the normal state

22 of affairs. The recession has been

23 extraordinary. Because of the recession,

24 that did not happen for a period of time.

25 Now, I think a question we're

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 all asking ourselves is whether the
3 federal government was correct in
4 thinking that two years was going to be
5 enough, and we are starting to see some
6 positive change in terms of growth in the
7 economic base.

8 DR. ACKERMAN: Can I say
9 something on that? Because I don't think
10 it's correct to think that we won't be
11 able to implement Imagine 2014. We may
12 have to reprioritize some other things.
13 But in a \$3 billion budget, we ought to
14 be able to carve out \$130 million. We'll
15 just have to look at what we're spending
16 and rethink about it.

17 So I guess I'm not willing to
18 say we're not going to be able to do it.
19 I think we'll have to reprioritize some
20 other things that we're doing.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And I'm not
22 suggesting you're not going to be able to
23 do it. I'm asking you specifically how
24 you're going to do it, because you're not
25 going to get a five percent increase in

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 State funding for the next five years.

3 In fact, this year you're not going to
4 get what the Governor has appropriated,
5 in my view.

6 Is there a plan for this year?

7 What are you going to cut if you don't
8 get what the Governor is appropriating,
9 and has any member of the Rendell
10 Administration or General Assembly
11 advised you that you're not likely not to
12 get that?

13 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, we
14 actually put together a three -- I'm
15 sorry; four, six and eight percent. This
16 budget is built on six percent. We
17 actually have a back-up budget of eight
18 percent cuts. So we're prepared that if
19 we don't get the amount that the Governor
20 has proposed, to do additional cuts, and
21 it would all be in central office. It
22 would not affect the schools for this
23 year.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you
25 please -- do you have a copy of the eight

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 percent cuts?

3 DR. ACKERMAN: We do. We can
4 get that for you.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you
6 please provide that to the Chair?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
9 I will come back.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you, Councilman.

13 Councilman Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
15 Madam President.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Can I be
17 recognized?

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
19 Madam President.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
21 Councilman Kenney, did you have --

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Am I on?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No,
24 but, Councilman Jones, would you yield to
25 your colleague, who hasn't had a chance?

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Absolutely.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
4 then we'll -- I'm sorry, Councilman. It
5 didn't show up for some reason.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

7 The first should be last and
8 the last should be first.

9 I kind of want to go into a
10 subject area for a minute, because if you
11 were around here long enough, you get a
12 chance to ask the same question over and
13 over every year or make the same
14 suggestion, and I don't think I made this
15 to you before, but I'd like to raise the
16 issue.

17 New Jersey schools work. Why?
18 Because they tell you every day on
19 television that New Jersey schools work.
20 Do they work in Newark or Trenton or
21 Camden? I'm sure some do, but I'm sure
22 there are a lot that don't. And over the
23 years, people have become dependent on
24 the fact that New Jersey schools work,
25 and people have moved out of our

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 communities to go to schools in New
3 Jersey.

4 There are literally thousands
5 and thousands of success stories in this
6 system. We have our struggles and our
7 troubles, but there are literally
8 thousands of students, teachers, staff,
9 programs that we could be just putting
10 out there for people to see. Now, some
11 folks may say, Well, you know, that's a
12 frill and we have other things to pay
13 for, but on many levels, I think it
14 works. I think it works with our
15 children because they see success
16 stories, not just athletic success, but
17 they see academic success and they
18 believe that they can do that also.

19 I think it helps our teachers
20 feeling that their work is being
21 recognized and they will strive to do
22 better. I think it helps with our
23 community people who live in the
24 community and don't send their kids to
25 public school by saying, Maybe I'll take

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 a chance on that local public school,
3 things are happening there. And
4 importantly also, it helps because of the
5 distance that our network hits, that we
6 hit all those people who vote on funding
7 for their schools, to show them on a
8 regular basis that people in our system
9 are succeeding.

10 We have a ways to go with some
11 folks, we have to bring them along, and
12 we have some schools that we need to fix
13 through 2014, but I get very frustrated
14 when I sit home and watch television and
15 I see New Jersey schools work. Our
16 schools work too, but we just don't tell
17 anybody.

18 Is there some way we can try to
19 find a grant or something that would
20 allow us to put that good story out
21 there?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: I agree with
23 you. We need to do a much better job of
24 communicating our story. I think that in
25 this school system in particular, we've

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 relied upon the mainstream media
3 resources to tell our story. I'm
4 convinced after two years they're not
5 going to tell it. So we need to find
6 another way to tell our story, if it's
7 going to the churches, if it's going to
8 the small community-based areas, if it's
9 getting parents to tell it. We're going
10 to have to come up with a plan that
11 addresses how we tell our story, because
12 it's just not going to happen.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Nothing is
14 as pervasive as that tube, and I think
15 once people see it and hear it and see it
16 and hear it on a regular basis, they
17 begin to believe it, because there's a
18 lot to believe in. And, again, it's just
19 when I go around to these schools and I
20 see these kids achieving, I see these
21 teachers working hard, I see you trying
22 to keep your facilities together and
23 improve them, I mean, School of the
24 Future, we should have that -- every
25 suburbanite watching television should

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 see the success of that building and
3 what's going on in our system.

4 So I would just make that
5 recommendation. I know money is short,
6 but I think it would be very effective on
7 many different levels.

8 And just finally, I just want
9 to publicly thank you --

10 DR. ACKERMAN: I want you to
11 look at Channel 52, because that's our
12 own television.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But it's
14 far down the channel.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: I always stop
16 when I go there, unless I'm on there,
17 then I keep going. But I do think that
18 we have to find an internal method to
19 message our story, and we haven't done a
20 good job in doing it.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well,
22 finally, I want to publicly thank you.
23 We had a really rough patch down in South
24 Philadelphia High School, and the
25 cooperation that we've gotten from you

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 and the principal and staff and District
3 Superintendent and the operations folks
4 in trying to put together kind of a
5 community down there of some of our
6 newcomers to the country and kids that
7 have been around the neighborhoods for
8 generations has really been helpful.
9 It's not perfect, but we went to the
10 Museum of Art recently on a trip with our
11 Sunny Hill and 50/50 Club, and those kids
12 were wonderful. I mean, they just
13 enjoyed it. As a matter of fact, the
14 tour guides at the Museum were astounded
15 at the level of questioning, at the
16 behavior, their thank you's and please's.
17 And we took them down to the Water Works
18 and had a barbecue, and they were just
19 wonderful. It was just a wonderful
20 experience. And I know that it's been a
21 lot of hard work and still a lot to do,
22 but I do think in this short period of
23 time, we began to address some of those
24 longstanding issues and I wanted to
25 publicly thank you for your cooperation.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: And I want to
3 publicly thank you for all of the support
4 you've given us, because you've been
5 there from the beginning. And that's,
6 again, not a story that's been told, but
7 of the 23 demands that were made by the
8 student group, we've done 22 of them, and
9 I'd like somebody to write the story that
10 you see and I see on a regular basis or
11 to go down and spend a day there. So
12 thank you for all your support.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: My
14 pleasure. Thank you.

15 Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
20 Councilman Jones, I told you you were
21 next, but at the end of our first round
22 is Councilwoman Sanchez. So we'll just
23 hold you up one more time.

24 Councilwoman Maria
25 Quinones-Sanchez.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
3 you.

4 Good morning, or almost
5 afternoon here.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: Good morning.

7 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I have a
8 couple of different themes, but I wanted
9 to touch on the issue of English language
10 learners first. So the question is, in
11 addition to the Welcome Centers that
12 you've established at the schools, what
13 are we doing at the school-based level
14 around services to the students and the
15 parents?

16 DR. ACKERMAN: I mean, we
17 talked about the translation services,
18 and that's been really helpful, I
19 understand, from the schools to be able
20 to call and to have people in a
21 translation center who can come to the
22 school. We are putting in place these
23 Parent Resource Centers across the
24 District for next year, so that parents
25 don't have to go to individual schools to

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 enroll and then go to a different place
3 to get their children assessed. They can
4 go to one place, one Parent Center, where
5 there'll be translators there for them.
6 That's different even than the Welcome
7 Centers for next year. And there'll be
8 one in each region and strategically
9 placed.

10 Next year we're going to
11 implement a full-blown new English
12 language, bilingual program that focuses
13 on students who are at different entry
14 levels into our system. We've hired, I
15 believe, 43 this year and next year
16 another --

17 MR. ARCHIE: Sixteen.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: -- sixteen.

19 They know it better than I do.

20 MR. ARCHIE: Forty-three this
21 year, 16 next year.

22 MR. MASCH: Twenty percent
23 increase over two years.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: So implementing
25 this program with fidelity, making sure

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 that the schools are committed to making
3 sure our children, without having to give
4 up their home language, do learn English
5 and move out of these programs, where
6 some of our young people we know stay in
7 them for six, seven and eight years.

8 But I think focusing on the
9 Family Centers, the Parent Centers,
10 putting in place the new program,
11 expanding our translation center is
12 really important for addressing our
13 immigrant families.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So does
15 that mean your administration has chosen
16 a philosophy around bilingual education?
17 Because you talked a little bit. Does
18 that mean -- because part of the issue
19 with the bilingual programs have been
20 every time a Superintendant comes, the
21 philosophy changes. We go from
22 maintenance to immersion to dual
23 immersion. So where do you think the
24 administration is going to be?

25 DR. ACKERMAN: I think we have

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 definitely decided that -- I mean, there
3 may have been these programs, but they
4 were, as far as my observations, they
5 varied from school to school, region to
6 region. And what we've come up with is a
7 comprehensive bilingual program.

8 We actually went to several
9 cities where there were large numbers of
10 bilingual students or immigrant students
11 and looked at the most successful
12 programs and then came back, and given
13 what we know our immigrant community
14 looks like, we came up with a strategic
15 plan for that. So we'll be happy to
16 share with you what that looks like at
17 three different levels, and we're
18 implementing it across the District. So
19 the schools and regions aren't making
20 decisions about what it should look like.

21 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
22 As it relates -- because I notice there
23 was an increase in funding as it related
24 to ELL, so I wanted to get a sense, does
25 that mean we're finally getting a plan

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 and some plan of action. I notice there
3 was about 6 million in additional funding
4 for ELL, and that's important.

5 As it relates to staffing and
6 you talked about 43 new teachers, where
7 are we as it relates to your leadership
8 team in terms of diversity and language
9 diversity?

10 DR. ACKERMAN: We are going to
11 be -- we are now looking for a new Deputy
12 Chief for -- we're elevating that
13 position, first of all -- a new Deputy
14 Chief for Bilingual Services in programs,
15 and that position should be filled by
16 July 1st.

17 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And it's
18 posted?

19 DR. ACKERMAN: It should be.

20 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So the
21 bilingual program plan, is that on your
22 website? Is that available yet?

23 DR. ACKERMAN: It is available.
24 I hope it's on the website, but we can
25 give it to you. We made the presentation

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 to the SRC a couple of weeks ago. It
3 should be on the website. If it's not,
4 it will be. But we can definitely give
5 you the plan.

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
7 Thank you.

8 Thank you, Madam Chair.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you very much.

11 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller.
12 Your turn is coming, Councilman
13 Jones. I promise you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank
15 you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 Good afternoon, SRC members.
17 (Good afternoon.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just
19 have a couple of questions for now. And
20 I do agree with Councilman Kenney, and I
21 was glad to hear, Dr. Ackerman, that you
22 don't advertise, that you need to do a
23 better job of advertising your services.
24 I found out about the Parent University
25 when I was at a rally at Germantown and

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 Cheltenham, and people were giving out cards
3 and the principal was also there, and
4 that's when we found out things, but I
5 never knew that. I mean, because we
6 could help get the word out too if we
7 knew about it. We do e-mail blasts and
8 all kinds of things, but if we don't know
9 about it, we can't help you. But I
10 thought the Parent Resource Center was a
11 really good idea. And I was just -- when
12 I read your testimony, on Page 2 in the
13 second-to-the-last paragraph when you
14 said that through partnerships we
15 established with local colleges and
16 universities, we now offer skill-based
17 and professional certification classes,
18 as well as Associate Degrees.

19 Who is that for? Parents or
20 for students?

21 DR. ACKERMAN: It's both. It's
22 for staff. But in our Parent University,
23 we have a partnership now with
24 Philadelphia Community College, and
25 parents can take courses through our

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 Parent University for free and get an
3 Associate's Degree.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's
5 really good.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: All they have to
7 do is have a child in the public schools.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
9 And I had to leave the room for a minute
10 to go to another meeting, so I really
11 didn't get a chance to read everything
12 and absorb everything. That's why I said
13 I have questions for now, but somewhere I
14 did read that in Mike Masch's testimony,
15 I believe, that you're spending -- there
16 was a quote dollar amount of how much
17 you're spending per child, I believe, in
18 charter school, but I was wondering how
19 much you're spending for a child -- I
20 guess I'll just say in regular ordinary
21 school. Because there's so many programs
22 that you have down here that you have,
23 it's just hard for me to kind of keep up
24 with this, because it's a whole lot.

25 Oh, I think you said you're

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 spending \$8,662 per child in charter

3 school, or is that for both?

4 MR. MASCH: Well, Councilwoman,

5 that is correct. There's a formula which

6 determines how much we pay per student in

7 charter schools, but the purpose of the

8 formula that the states established is to

9 basically give charter schools the same

10 number of dollars that we are spending on

11 students in what we call

12 District-operated schools, and those

13 rates this year are \$8,184 for a regular

14 education student, but \$17,789 for a

15 special education student. And the way

16 that the State formula works, we take all

17 the money we spend on all students and

18 then we make a couple of adjustments to

19 that. So, for instance, we deduct our

20 federal funding, because charter schools

21 get their own federal funding. We deduct

22 transportation, because we provide the

23 transportation to charter schools. So we

24 try -- the formula is intended to make it

25 apples and apples. And then we divide

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 that amount of money by all the students
3 in charter schools and regular schools,
4 and that's how the number is established.
5 So it really is a comparable number.

6 Charter schools basically get
7 what students in District-operated
8 schools receive, not more and not less.
9 The methodology is the same for special
10 ed. We take all the special ed dollars
11 spent in charter schools and
12 District-operated schools, divide it by
13 all the special ed students, and that's
14 how we come to the special ed per-student
15 number.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. If
17 you took that number and it would be not
18 just for -- it could be for any student,
19 how much of that \$8,000 is spent on
20 instruction?

21 MR. MASCH: About two-thirds of
22 it is spent on instruction, directly on
23 instruction. That's not counting funds
24 for counselors, librarians, athletic
25 programs, psychologists that are

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 instructional support. And then about 20
3 percent is spent on the physical plant,
4 the utilities, the custodial and
5 maintenance services, the transportation
6 of students, food services, information
7 technology.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All
9 right.

10 Can I just sneak one more
11 question in?

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just
14 need to know -- we closed down Gillespie
15 even though it's listed in the data, but
16 Gillespie Middle School was shut down,
17 and I just wanted to get an update on any
18 plans for the use/reuse of that building.

19 MR. MASCH: Councilwoman, as we
20 noted in our testimony, we are embarked
21 right now on what we call the facilities
22 master plan to look at all of our
23 facilities and determine which ones we
24 should operate going forward.

25 There are no immediate plans

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 for the Gillespie facility. I think we
3 should be straightforward about that. To
4 the extent that -- and as we've testified
5 here before, in total we have the
6 capacity to serve about 44,000 more
7 students than we have. That would
8 suggest that we really need to realign
9 facilities.

10 Now, that doesn't mean we want
11 to see abandoned facilities. That's why
12 the focus of the facilities master plan
13 is on sharing buildings and finding an
14 appropriate reuse for community
15 facilities, so that they continue to be a
16 positive contributor to community and
17 economic development, even if they're not
18 being used for the educational purposes
19 that they were used for previously.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
21 Fine. But just keep in mind that the
22 community does not want a big, empty,
23 abandoned school building. Depending on
24 the neighborhood, Gillespie is right in
25 the heart of a neighborhood. It's

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 different from a couple other schools
3 that I know that are vacant. They sit
4 away. But this is right in the heart of
5 a neighborhood. So that is one of the
6 major concerns of the residents in that
7 particular area.

8 Thank you, Madam President.

9 And I'll get back to you on that.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you, Councilwoman.

12 Councilman Jones.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Can I have
14 a point of information?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Point
16 of information. Councilwoman Tasco.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I'm sorry.
18 It's better to put this comment here than
19 maybe an hour from now. But I just want
20 to say, I think that's a good idea to
21 have a master plan about the future
22 schools, because we have the Kearny
23 School in my district, and when we opened
24 the Fels, we were told that the Kearny
25 would be closed, and the community was

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 promised the building for a police
3 station or something of reuse. Now we're
4 using Kearny -- not Kearny. The old Fels
5 School. We use the old Fels School to
6 house some of the Kearny students. At
7 the end of the day, if you think you're
8 going to need the Kearny School because
9 the neighborhood is growing in the number
10 of students, you determine that by the
11 census information that you're going to
12 garner, then you need to keep it open.

13 I just think the predictability
14 by the neighborhood to know what's going
15 on is better, because it's less stress,
16 when they don't know. So I just want to
17 say that I agree, it's important that you
18 do have a master plan. It gives you
19 some -- and you always reserve the right
20 to change. However, it's good to know
21 going forward what's going to happen with
22 a building.

23 So Fels is fine if that's going
24 to fit your purpose in the future, but
25 the community needs to know that, because

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 we get questioned about what's going to
3 happen with the building.

4 DR. ACKERMAN: And the goal is
5 to have this plan developed and voted on
6 by the SRC by December of this year. So
7 we have about a six-month timeline to get
8 it done. And then for the next five
9 years, we're going to use enrollment and
10 trends, census data to help us determine
11 what kinds of uses we need for the
12 schools, whether to close them, keep them
13 open, use them for other things.

14 One of the things we have
15 talked about also with the City is how to
16 have shared use in some of our buildings.
17 So this plan is really important. If you
18 have staff that wants to be involved or
19 you have people that you want to engage
20 in this process, we'd welcome your input
21 here.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

23 Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 Thank you, Councilman Jones.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 welcome.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: You're on.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,

5 Councilman Jones.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you

7 sure, Madam Chair?

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

10 I have two questions, both have

11 origins out of Harrisburg, one dealing

12 with the adequacy funding gap and the

13 second dealing with charter schools.

14 Recently, both have had actions in the

15 General Assembly.

16 One, the adequacy funding gap,

17 we're in the third year, as I understand

18 it, of a pledge by Governor Rendell to

19 provide additional funding. If we're in

20 that third year, if I get it right, does

21 this translate over to the next

22 Governor's commitment to the Philadelphia

23 School Board? Is that a question you're

24 going to have to take up with the new

25 Governor?

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2 MR. MASCH: Well, the goal of
3 doing a six-year plan to close the
4 adequacy gap was in fact legislated by
5 the Pennsylvania General Assembly, but
6 it's not binding on the General Assembly
7 and it's certainly not binding on the
8 next Governor. So first -- our major
9 concern is to advocate for the General
10 Assembly acting favorably on the
11 Governor's proposal so that we can in
12 fact see the third year of the six-year
13 program implemented. Then the big
14 question will be what is the commitment
15 of the candidates for Governor in terms
16 of funding for public education.

17 As we've noted -- and we're
18 being very straightforward about it --
19 the federal government is getting all of
20 our school districts through the
21 recession through the stimulus program,
22 but the question is, what -- in a very,
23 very challenging environment at the State
24 level in terms of their budget problems,
25 what is the commitment of the next

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2 Governor going to be to education and

3 what's the commitment of the General

4 Assembly going to be.

5 The only bright light for us is

6 the fact that we're not the only ones in

7 this situation and we're not the only

8 ones who benefit. As we note in the

9 budget in brief, although we are grateful

10 for the increase that the Governor has

11 proposed, there are 63 school districts

12 that will receive a greater per-student

13 increase in funding under the Governor's

14 proposal than ours. There are some

15 people that think that Philadelphia gets

16 a disproportionate or the largest amount

17 of funding, and that is not correct. It

18 is true that we have one of the largest

19 funding gaps to close, but it's not the

20 worst, and that's why some of these other

21 districts are getting relatively more

22 funding. But that means that there's a

23 much broader constituency out there in

24 Pennsylvania that is benefiting from the

25 plan to close the adequacy gap. It's an

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 adequacy gap for all Pennsylvania
3 schools, not just Philadelphia.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's a
5 question we will raise with all
6 prospective Governors, and as my
7 colleague says, underline and emphasize
8 to them that it is important to us.

9 The second part of my questions
10 are, in light of the actions taken by the
11 State to put forth a sweeping bill that
12 deals with increased oversight of 135
13 charter schools, what would be the
14 lessons learned, to coin Blondell
15 Reynolds Brown, that we have in recent
16 light of some of the issues?

17 All people agree that the
18 charter schools have made a difference
19 and have added value to the educational
20 process. How do we take from it lessons
21 and corrective actions going forward?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I think
23 there are lots of lessons to be learned
24 here. And in the past, I want to say
25 that there's been this sort of push

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 and/or tension between what's the role of
3 the District when it comes to charter
4 schools, because they're separate LEAs,
5 and I think having the role and
6 responsibility clearly defined is really
7 important. I've said that to our
8 legislators in Harrisburg, that that's
9 really important in this new bill that we
10 are clear about what those
11 responsibilities are and should be for a
12 school district.

13 What we plan to do is certainly
14 not -- we don't want to get in the way of
15 charter schools being separate LEAs, but
16 we need to step up our monitoring and not
17 be intimidated or pushed back when we ask
18 for the data. In the past, we've asked
19 for data, we've asked for things, and if
20 the answer was no, we just came back and
21 said okay. I think that we are going to
22 be much more courageous in our efforts to
23 provide on-site -- I mean, oversight and
24 monitoring of the charter schools, not
25 just when they come up for renewal.

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2 We've closed two schools,
3 tightened the requirements on a third
4 one, but to see some of the opportunities
5 missed in the Controller's report to more
6 closely monitor the finances in
7 particular, to make sure that every year
8 they turn in their ethics information --
9 we have to do it. They should have to do
10 it. It's going to be important. And I
11 think moving forward, we're going to have
12 spot checks. So we won't be
13 announcing -- unannounced times when we
14 come in and look at the records, the data
15 and the financial records in particular.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just think
17 it's important that it's okay to get
18 surprised. We should never get surprised
19 twice. We should be prepared and
20 anticipate what that resistance is. I
21 just wanted to know how you viewed the
22 legislation, and I'm pleased to hear that
23 it's welcomed and can only add to an
24 increased monitoring of what is a good
25 system that can be made better, and I

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 appreciate that.

3 Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Are we
5 okay, Councilman?

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: We're okay.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

8 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My next
10 line of questioning was actually around
11 the charter schools. You should know
12 that City Controller Alan Butkovitz when
13 he was here praised the School District
14 for being so forthcoming and forthright
15 and honoring the recommendations and
16 suggestions and questions that were
17 raised in his report. So to your credit,
18 that should be noted for the record.

19 You did mention that currently
20 the School District performs financial
21 audits for charter schools every five
22 years. So what is the new policy, if you
23 will, on more frequent financial audits?

24 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, we don't
25 have -- we don't need a policy for this.

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2 We just need to do it. So what we have
3 decided is that we will do, I think it's,
4 ten percent random every year of charter
5 schools. So make these unannounced,
6 random visits to look at the records to
7 make sure everything is in place, and ten
8 percent of the schools will get this
9 every year, in addition to those that are
10 up for renewal.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: To do
12 that, does that require additional staff
13 positions within that office?

14 DR. ACKERMAN: We believe we
15 have the resources there. I think they
16 are scheduled to get an increase this
17 next year. So they'll have some
18 additional staff.

19 We also are going to use
20 outside auditors for those services.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
22 I'll leave that there. Let me go to the
23 special education. One of my concerns
24 and, honestly, criticisms last year was
25 the very long process used in the

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 assessment and placement of special needs
3 children. Speak to, if you will, what
4 systemic changes you have made to
5 decrease the amount of time it takes once
6 a child has been entered into the system.

7 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm going to
8 actually ask Linda to come up and to
9 speak to that, just because she has the
10 extensive experience with it.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 DR. ACKERMAN: And I want to
14 say this is Linda's first job day as the
15 Interim Executive Deputy Chief for the
16 Office of --

17 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Office of
18 Specialized Services.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: You know it
20 better than I do.

21 And on Friday, Brenda Williams
22 who has been here -- I'm sorry; Brenda
23 Taylor, who has been in the District for
24 more than 30 years, retired.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: And we just want
3 to publicly thank her for her hard work.
4 And now Linda is here, and first day
5 she's got to answer the questions before
6 City Council, but she's been a strong
7 support and second for Brenda.

8 So Linda.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me say
10 also, Madam Superintendent, that my
11 office has worked closely with
12 Ms. Williams and has been deeply
13 encouraged by all of the intervention
14 that your office has done. So that needs
15 to be reflected on the record as well.

16 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
18 Congratulations.

19 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Thank you.
20 Please forgive my voice.

21 We have taken on an initiative
22 to thoroughly oversee our school
23 psychologists. We are now monitoring,
24 put a monitoring system in place to
25 monitor the number of evaluations that

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 they're doing weekly. We've also
3 developed a new procedural manual for
4 school psychologists. In addition, we
5 are looking at all of our babies that are
6 coming in from early intervention
7 programs, and we have been able to
8 partner with an organization who will
9 provide us with some psychological
10 support to ensure that the incoming
11 children through early intervention are
12 evaluated and assessed, and our target
13 date is by June 15th.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You say
15 "partner." Does "partner" equal
16 subcontract? What does that mean?

17 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Yes, it
18 does.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that
20 went through an entire internal RFP
21 process, if you will?

22 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: Well, it
23 was based upon the Department of -- the
24 Bureau of Specialized Education mandating
25 that we do that. So we had a specific

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 timeline we had to meet. We had a very
3 reputable organization who has done work
4 with the District. Delta-T is the name
5 of the organization, that we had to
6 provide that information to the State,
7 and that was on a timeline.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
9 very, very much.

10 MS. LINDA WILLIAMS: You're
11 welcome.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Next
13 round, Madam Chair.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you, Councilwoman Brown.

16 Councilman Clarke.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
18 Madam Chair.

19 Real quick. I'm going to see
20 if I can get two in.

21 Following up on Councilman
22 Green's question, I just want to make
23 sure I understood. In terms of the
24 stimulus dollars, they were not used to
25 supplant operations, correct, operation

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 expenditures? So it was basically
3 enhanced programs. If there's a
4 termination of those dollars, which there
5 will be, does that mean that the enhanced
6 programs could potentially be in jeopardy
7 but not the base programs that we had
8 prior to the stimulus dollars?

9 DR. ACKERMAN: The base
10 programs -- well, if we just look at the
11 stimulus money as providing the majority
12 of enhanced programs, it could be. What
13 we haven't had to do was to go back and
14 take a look at, reprioritize some of the
15 other programs that are in place to look
16 at what's needed, what -- we're doing
17 that, but we might have to do it in a
18 more serious, coherent manner. So, of
19 course, when you use some of the stimulus
20 money for some of the enhancements, if it
21 goes away, that could be in jeopardy.
22 But we are also in line for additional
23 dollars that could fund the same
24 enhancements with Race to the Top funds.
25 If the State doesn't get it on this next

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2 round, the District then would be in line
3 for another \$50 million over five years.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I
5 understand that. What I'm trying to
6 understand is -- because in last year's
7 testimony, I remember we had this
8 conversation, because you had more
9 flexibility with the stimulus dollars
10 than the City did, and I got a sense that
11 you were -- you didn't say it, but I got
12 a sense -- you probably won't say it
13 today either -- that you in some way were
14 able to fund programs that may be in
15 jeopardy of being lost by the School
16 District. And in my mind, that's not
17 necessarily enhancement, but to some
18 degree, it's supplanting.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: No, no. We
20 didn't --

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: If we're
22 not successful in getting additional
23 funds out of the stimulus program at a
24 level of the ones that are being
25 terminated, would we be able to, at a

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2 minimum, keep the base level programs
3 that we had prior to the stimulus and
4 maybe enhance them a little more?

5 DR. ACKERMAN: Right. The base
6 programs we didn't touch, and the
7 stimulus money didn't -- we were able to
8 keep all of those. In fact, we were able
9 to do some things differently with Title
10 I dollars than we hadn't done before. So
11 we were able to use how we're using those
12 dollars and reallocate them with some of
13 the enhancements. So that was one thing.

14 What I was probably trying to
15 say last year is, we were able to do more
16 because we got stimulus dollars. And so
17 we've been able to do more of the
18 enhancements because of stimulus dollars.
19 But the base program has not been
20 altered, because if the stimulus dollars
21 all go away, there will be some
22 reprioritizing of the Imagine 2014.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. I'll
24 try to sneak in my second one.

25 In the City of Philadelphia, we

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2 recently enacted a program called PSAs,
3 Public Safety Areas, and it started with
4 the Police, but we quickly found out that
5 simply having an additional police or
6 policing strategy is not going to resolve
7 the challenges in the neighborhood, so we
8 quickly brought in all of the various
9 departments, Health, Recreation, all of
10 the other types of things that the City
11 provides, and it has made a difference on
12 a reasonable scale. I don't want to say
13 it's successful yet, but you're starting
14 to see significant improvements.

15 My question is, from an
16 educational perspective, I've always been
17 a proponent that, in large part, the
18 conditions affect a child's ability to
19 learn. When the child lives in a
20 challenging community and he walks to
21 school, pass conditions that are, frankly
22 speaking, somewhat deteriorated, the
23 whole psyche of that child as they go
24 through that school day and after that
25 school day impacts their ability.

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2 Has there been given some
3 thought to, or could you conceivably give
4 some thought to, possibly being a part of
5 a PSA or some sort of program that
6 comprehensively looks at a neighborhood,
7 particularly in those schools that are
8 challenged in terms of test scores and
9 educational opportunities, that we work
10 on the needs of not only that child but
11 looking in that neighborhood, providing
12 services for the parents, job
13 opportunities, things of that nature,
14 just a real --

15 DR. ACKERMAN: I absolutely
16 believe that we have to look at this as a
17 school is part of a larger community, and
18 as I said before, I think some of what we
19 see in school is reflective of the larger
20 community. I think we need to do more,
21 not less. I think those kinds of
22 collaboratives -- I know that we did with
23 our lowest performing schools, we did
24 work with the Police Department to put in
25 our Safe Corridors Program. So they

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2 began to focus on those communities where
3 these schools were located, and I think
4 that has worked really well. I think as
5 I've talked to the Mayor and to Lori
6 Shorr, his education advisor, I believe
7 that we are looking at more opportunities
8 for us to collaborate and to combine and
9 put in, to me, the school programs that
10 are in the larger community.

11 And let me give you an example.
12 I'd love to see community-based health
13 clinics in the schools, and then not only
14 do you service the young people, but you
15 have their families coming there. You
16 have a captive audience, and you have
17 parents that are there. And now we have
18 Parent Universities, so they can go to
19 school. But I think we need to do more,
20 not less of that.

21 When we begin to see that we're
22 serving the same clients and that we need
23 to integrate those services in a school
24 community where we have a captive
25 audience, so to speak, I think that we'll

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2 see more sustained change.

3 So I am definitely on board for
4 that program and expanding our
5 opportunities. I mean, one of the things
6 we've been working with is PHA to see how
7 we can work together with --

8 MR. ARCHIE: Residents.

9 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm sorry?

10 MR. ARCHIE: With the
11 residents.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Yeah, with the
13 residents of PHA housing. And that's
14 been a fascinating conversation, but now
15 we're beginning to sit down and plan how
16 do we work together with the residents
17 who attend our schools in a certain
18 community, what kinds of things can we
19 do. And I know an example would be the
20 Lucien Blackwell Community Center that
21 we're putting near Sulzberger. We're
22 working with PHA on that. We're going to
23 do some other things around the high
24 school Vaux and University City.

25 So I am very much supportive of

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2 inner City-School District
3 collaborations. I think we save money,
4 too.

5 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yeah,
6 absolutely, and I'm glad you're
7 interested in -- I might as well throw
8 this in here, since we're talking about
9 that real quick, and I know my time is
10 up. We may want to look at as an example
11 where we set the pilot program, the PSA
12 for the City. It's actually in the area
13 where Hartranft School and Hartranft
14 Community Center is, which I know you're
15 very familiar with, working with Joe
16 Meade and the folks. We have a very
17 underutilized center just across the
18 street from the school, and our ability
19 to put those other type programs to
20 support the students and the parents of
21 the students would be extremely enhanced.
22 So that would be very helpful. Do it as
23 a model.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: Right.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Well, thank

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2 you for your interest in that.

3 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We

5 knew that would have to happen,

6 Superintendent, just because of the area.

7 He just couldn't help it. I keep telling

8 you, he had everything under the former

9 Mayor.

10 You got to share a little bit

11 now, Councilman.

12 Yeah. So that's what that is.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I can't

14 help myself, Councilwoman.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yeah.

16 Thank you very much.

17 Councilwoman Tasco.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: No. I'm

19 finished.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

21 you very much.

22 Councilman Jones.

23 Oh, he stepped out.

24 Councilwoman Sanchez.

25 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank

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2 you, Madam Chair.

3 I wanted to touch a little bit
4 around the violence, and clearly we don't
5 need to relive the South Philadelphia
6 situation or even some of the controversy
7 around the report subsequent to that, but
8 if you could give me what are the one,
9 two, three major things that you're doing
10 in South Philly now to enhance public
11 safety particularly to make the kids feel
12 safe and what of those things are you
13 using across the board. Because we do
14 have violence across the board.

15 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, one of the
16 things that we've done in South Philly
17 that I think is really important is, we
18 started major diversity training for
19 staff, and it's ongoing. We've engaged
20 Pedro Noguera, who will be working with
21 them all of next year and the summer, the
22 staff. Because some of this is
23 sensitizing staff to how to -- in terms
24 of how to use the cultural differences as
25 a strength. So that's one of the things

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2 we've done, and we will see more of that
3 happen across the District.

4 We've put in place more
5 opportunities for young people to come
6 together and know each other outside the
7 classroom. I think that's really
8 important. There are noontime clubs now
9 that are in South Philly, and we need to
10 see that same thing across the School
11 District, where young people are actually
12 getting to know each other around common
13 interests, and we find that that's really
14 working well, as well as some of the
15 outside -- bringing in the outside
16 organizations to help us, like the 50/50
17 Club. We like to see that expanded
18 beyond just South Philly.

19 We've looked very much at the
20 curriculum, and I think we're going to
21 have to look some more at the curriculum,
22 especially as it relates to the bilingual
23 curriculum. One of the things that
24 students have asked for is more
25 opportunities to integrate even with

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2 their classes. So next year you'll see
3 more integration, even if it's just in
4 the advisories. You'll see that next
5 year.

6 But I think giving young people
7 more opportunities to come together,
8 working with the adults, we've put in
9 place --

10 MR. MASCH: One million dollars
11 worth of cameras.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: One million
13 dollars worth of cameras. I was trying
14 not to talk about that.

15 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: One
16 million dollars worth of what?

17 DR. ACKERMAN: One million
18 dollars worth of cameras throughout the
19 entire school. It was a significant
20 investment, and there's certainly no
21 place that you can't see in that school,
22 except for the restrooms. And actually
23 it's very impressive, and I think it's a
24 deterrent. We're all kind of used to it.
25 It's just a shame that it's come to that.

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2 We will next year see our
3 police officers in polo shirts,
4 especially in the elementary and middle
5 schools, some in the high schools,
6 because we think that's important, so
7 that we have more opportunities -- so
8 that kids won't always feel like they're
9 in a police state.

10 And then I think the other
11 thing we have to do is establish more
12 opportunities for young people through
13 the PAL program, the Police Athletic
14 League. We want to expand those programs
15 throughout the City and the School
16 District so young people have a chance to
17 interact with the school police officers
18 and not see it always as a negative.

19 So we've put in place -- there
20 were 22 demands, and I don't know them
21 all off the top of my head, but I'd be
22 happy to share with you. We've
23 implemented 22 of the 23 demands.

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And
25 that's important. I think that to

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2 Councilman Clarke's point about how does
3 the school become more engaged in the
4 community is important.

5 I was over at the school on
6 Front and Hunting Park with Mr. Ben
7 Wright looking at the program. Some
8 challenging situations that these young
9 people find themselves in. The teachers
10 invited me to speak, and one of the
11 questions that I asked the group was how
12 many of the students there had
13 participated in the Department of
14 Recreation activity, PALs, out of school,
15 and only three raised their hand in the
16 room of about 100 young people. And so
17 what that showed me is that there's a
18 huge disconnect between those young
19 people and some of the other services
20 we're providing as it relates to
21 recreation and some of those things, and
22 therein lies why they end up getting into
23 trouble. So I can't even begin to say
24 how important that is.

25 You talked -- I'm going to get

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2 my last question in. You talked about

3 the schools getting more involved. Which

4 schools have extended hours and where are

5 we seeing that? How are we making that

6 really happen?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I don't

8 know off the top of my head the number of

9 schools. I know that a lot of our

10 schools have extended hours, but it will

11 be more structured in our new

12 empowerment -- I mean, our new

13 Renaissance and Promise Academies. They

14 will definitely have extended hours, not

15 only during the week and during the

16 summer, but on Saturdays. And we

17 anticipate that two Saturdays a month at

18 the Promise Academies, in the morning

19 there will be academic activities for the

20 young people, but in the afternoon, it

21 will be enrichment activities, not only

22 for the children but for their families,

23 because I believe if you expose the

24 families to some of those cultural kinds

25 of activities, you change what happens

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2 also to these -- you change the lives of
3 these young people.

4 So I can tell you for sure that
5 in our empowerment and in our Promise
6 Academies, you'll see more of those
7 extended opportunities for young people
8 to be at school, be engaged, in
9 intramural sports programs, enrichment
10 programs.

11 The other thing that I had
12 almost forgot, and I think it's really
13 important in this extension of what we
14 were talking about when I was talking
15 with -- for Councilman Clarke. On
16 Thursday, we will open up our new Talent
17 Center, and actually young people can go
18 there after school three days a week and
19 on Saturday and take lessons for the
20 comprehensive and creative arts. They
21 actually have opened already, but we have
22 the grand opening, so that we've invited
23 the news media. But they can take dance.
24 If they play an instrument and they want
25 a lesson, they can go there for free.

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2 We're actually going to have five of
3 those throughout the next year. We'll
4 have five Talent Centers open, so that
5 young people -- we started in the
6 Northwest, but we're going to
7 strategically put them, so that if they
8 enjoy something in school, they can
9 actually develop it after school.

10 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

11 Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you very much. Thank you, Councilwoman.

14 Councilman Green, if you would,
15 Councilwoman Miller has to go, but she
16 wanted to ask one question. Then
17 Councilman Green, you're next.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank
19 you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

20 Actually, I have another
21 question too about the Talent School.
22 Where is that first one going to be
23 located?

24 DR. ACKERMAN: It's located in
25 the Northwest at the --

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2 MR. MASCH: Martin Luther King.

3 DR. ACKERMAN: I'm sorry;
4 Martin Luther King High School, and it's
5 already open and kids are enrolled, and
6 they're taking everything from music to
7 dance to -- even learning how to become
8 conductors in an orchestra, which I
9 thought was fascinating.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's
11 great, because that's also in my
12 district. But one of the activities I've
13 been trying to put somewhere in a rec
14 center, et cetera, is a recording studio,
15 and I wondered if that's something we
16 could talk about later. I have the money
17 for the studio, the equipment. I need
18 someone to teach it. And we're not just
19 talking about teaching children how to
20 make a DVD, but we're talking about the
21 entire business of recording. So maybe
22 we can talk about that.

23 DR. ACKERMAN: That would be
24 great. That would be great in a Talent
25 Center, you know. It would be great.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. We
3 can talk about that.

4 DR. ACKERMAN: So we're ready.
5 You want to talk? We're ready to go.

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Whenever.
7 And is summer school going to
8 be free -- summer school is normally
9 free, correct?

10 DR. ACKERMAN: Right.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So it's
12 going to be free even for children that
13 are there to take like advanced courses,
14 et cetera?

15 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. It's free
16 for everybody.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All
18 right. Great.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: It's all day.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I'd
21 just like to get a list of the video
22 surveillance cameras and where they are.
23 I know you have 147 schools here, but
24 where are those schools?

25 DR. ACKERMAN: We will get that

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2 to you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Send it
4 to the Chair, by Council district.

5 And that's it. I mean, we can
6 always talk later. I have other
7 questions, but it's not like this is the
8 only opportunity to talk.

9 DR. ACKERMAN: Right.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We could
11 always talk. All right. Thank you.

12 DR. ACKERMAN: That's true.
13 I'm looking forward to the recording
14 studio. That sounds great. That's a
15 great opportunity.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you.

18 Thank you, Councilman Green,
19 for yielding. It is now your turn.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
21 Madam Chair. I'm just going to go
22 through all my questions, so if
23 there's -- okay.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Madam
25 Chair?

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

3 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I am
5 completely okay with that, as long as my
6 colleague understands that I still have a
7 series of questions as well.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you. And to my knowledge, these are the
10 last two questions from my colleagues,
11 and unless there is some other testimony
12 that all of you want to give, I know that
13 we are due to be on again tomorrow at
14 10:00, so I did not break for lunch,
15 which maybe some people would have
16 preferred, but I thought we would get as
17 much in as we could and then recess until
18 tomorrow at 10:00.

19 Is that acceptable to everyone?

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All
22 right. Saying that, we'll have
23 Councilman Green, Councilwoman Blondell
24 Reynolds Brown, and then we can look
25 forward to recessing until 10 o'clock

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2 tomorrow. But I think your staff,
3 Dr. Ackerman, in the back is saying no,
4 no, no, stay, stay.

5 Thank you very much.
6 Councilman Green.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair.

9 Sort of back to the line of
10 questioning I was asking as my time was
11 up, I'd like to talk about the long-term
12 plans for the sustainability of Imagine
13 2014, and I think in response to a
14 question from my -- I do not recall whom,
15 Dr. Ackerman said that Race to the Top
16 funding that we were going to apply for
17 potential grant is \$50 million over five
18 years, which I guess is 10 million a
19 year.

20 MR. ARCHIE: Other way around.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm sorry?

22 MR. ARCHIE: Mike, isn't it 50
23 for five -- 250 million?

24 MR. MASCH: Well, it depends --

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm

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2 repeating what was said. I'm not --

3 MR. MASCH: We actually think
4 the application the State submitted last
5 time -- we're preparing a new application
6 now and we're considering whether to
7 change it. That would have yielded us a
8 minimum of 25 million a year for four
9 years.

10 But the other thing that we
11 were referring to is, even if
12 Pennsylvania is not successful,
13 apparently there's going to be a third
14 round of Race to the Top where school
15 districts can directly compete.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I
17 understand that. But with respect to --
18 so that would be -- the last one was 25
19 million a year, and I guess demonstrating
20 the fact that you can't really rely on
21 this revenue in a planning process, I
22 guess you can make assumptions about what
23 percentage of it you may get or a total
24 aggregate you expect to get. We did not
25 in fact get any funding from the last

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2 round of Race to the Top funding, which I
3 think we were all disappointed with.

4 So if you could just go through
5 the potential competitive grants that are
6 coming up and how much we intend to apply
7 for, Mr. Masch. You rattled off the
8 different grants that were coming up in
9 the last round, and if you could just go
10 through them and then how much --

11 MR. MASCH: Well, as I say, the
12 other two competitive grants are
13 Investing in Innovation and Teacher
14 Improvement Fund. And I can't tell you
15 yet what we're going to apply for in
16 those, because we're in the process now
17 of preparing those applications.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. But
19 what funding -- what is currently part of
20 2014 that that funding could be used for?

21 MR. MASCH: Well, first of all,
22 Investing in Innovation, virtually
23 anything that's in the program right now.
24 Teacher Incentive Funds are -- everything
25 that we're doing in terms of extended

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2 day, week, year --

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you can
4 supplant --

5 MR. MASCH: -- teacher
6 training, I would say about 50 percent of
7 the things that we're doing now could be
8 eligible for funding under those sources
9 as well.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay; 50
11 percent. What was the other -- there was
12 one other grant fund you mentioned.

13 MR. MASCH: Well, and that
14 stimulus School Improvement, which in
15 fact we anticipate receiving for the
16 first time this coming year.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Stimulus
18 School Improvement?

19 MR. MASCH: Right.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: But that's
21 for capital?

22 MR. MASCH: No.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So explain
24 what that is.

25 MR. MASCH: Well, this is a \$3

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2 billion nationwide fund. You apply on a
3 school-by-school basis. It's targeted to
4 the lowest five percent of schools in
5 terms of academic performance. The funds
6 come to the State. We then apply school
7 by school, but we already know -- the
8 amount that's provided to the State is
9 known.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What is
11 that?

12 MR. MASCH: That is about \$140
13 million.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So how much
15 would we be likely to get of that?

16 MR. MASCH: We have estimated
17 that we will get between 35 and 40
18 percent of that, because that is our
19 percentage of the lowest performing
20 schools in the Commonwealth.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So
22 call that 40 million. And how many years
23 is that funding for?

24 MR. MASCH: That is -- we
25 expect to get that for the next three

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2 years.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Three years,
4 okay. So we are currently receiving \$284
5 million for the FY10 to '11 budget in
6 stimulus funds. We know that is going to
7 end. I don't think you've identified
8 near that number of potential grants for
9 the competitive grants, assuming we get
10 them. So it still does look like a
11 several-hundred-million-dollar falloff in
12 long-term funding for the District,
13 whether you find money elsewhere or not
14 to supplant it. But if we can make up 40
15 million with stimulus School Improvement
16 and 25 million in Race to the Top
17 competitive grant and maybe we get 50
18 from the Investing Innovation, Teacher
19 Improvement, we're not halfway to our
20 current stimulus funding. And then when
21 you take into account the fact that we're
22 getting 95 million from the State in the
23 Governor's budget, which may well
24 disappear, we're, it seems to me, 300 to
25 400 million just a few years from now

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2 short compared to our current level of
3 spending, and I'd really like to
4 understand what our plan is for that.

5 MR. MASCH: Well, Councilman,
6 as I said to you -- you stopped me before
7 I started addressing the other side of
8 it, which is the cost containment side,
9 but clearly that is the other side of the
10 equation.

11 We think that the kind of cost
12 containment that we did this year we're
13 going to need to replicate in the next
14 several years, and that's why we've built
15 a multi-year financial plan, and we are
16 drawing up plans now to reduce the cost
17 of our operations, so that more of our
18 available dollars can go to academic
19 programs. So that has to be part of it.

20 It's a three-legged stool.
21 It's the competitive federal grants, it's
22 reducing our operating base so that we
23 can put more money into replacing
24 stimulus funds, but I have to say too it
25 is not sustainable for this School

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2 District to have its traditional funding
3 sources have zero growth in perpetuity.

4 I mean, under that scenario, we will face
5 very difficult choices in terms of public
6 education in Philadelphia. But that
7 would be an unprecedented situation. I
8 mean, what we have now is the
9 unprecedented situation. We have zero
10 growth in local funding for three years
11 in a row. If that had not happened, we
12 would have an extra \$90 million in our
13 base, minimum, probably more.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, I
15 completely agree with you. Could you
16 discuss why local funding has not
17 increased?

18 MR. MASCH: Well, over the past
19 two years, it has not increased because
20 of the impact to the economy, and that
21 means both that assessments have not
22 increased and that we've seen an increase
23 in delinquencies in terms of property tax
24 collection.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How has the

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2 unilateral decision of the Administration
3 not to conduct assessments affected your
4 budget over the next couple of years?

5 MR. MASCH: Well, it has not --
6 I want to emphasize it has not affected
7 our budget yet, and there's a real
8 question as to whether it would affect it
9 in this coming year, given that it does
10 not look like we're still seeing the kind
11 of economic growth that would lead us,
12 absent an assessment freeze, to actually
13 see an increase in assessed values.

14 The question is how long that
15 is going to go on, and that's not
16 something that we're privy to at the
17 School District. Certainly if we were to
18 have an assessment freeze in perpetuity,
19 that would put the School District in a
20 very difficult situation. It's not our
21 understanding that that's what the City
22 is planning to do.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, I can
24 tell you that that decision cost the City
25 of Philadelphia \$225 million over the

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2 course of our Five Year Plan, and so it

3 cost the School District in excess of

4 \$350 million over the course of your

5 long-term planning. And those are sorely

6 missed resources in probably the most

7 important area of service that the City

8 of Philadelphia provides.

9 So I agree with you, we need to

10 get to full value and get back to regular

11 assessments and get the resources and the

12 kind of growth you need from the City, or

13 we're going to have to start looking at

14 increasing our millage, which I think

15 citizens would not prefer.

16 So I am a bit troubled. I

17 mean, I'd like to see your detailed plans

18 of what to do if -- what we're going to

19 cut if we don't get these grants. I

20 think in Dr. Ackerman's previous

21 testimony in response to somebody else's

22 question, or maybe it was mine, there was

23 a statement that we are going to cut

24 administration in order to make up for

25 this. The administrative budget the way

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2 it's broken down in the detail you
3 provided is \$191 million. If we zeroed
4 that out, that would not cover the kind
5 of dollars that we're talking about. So
6 could you clarify that? Are the cuts
7 coming from places other than
8 administration?

9 DR. ACKERMAN: No. I said that
10 the two, four, six and eight, the
11 differences the cuts that we made to
12 adjust for next year was from the
13 administrative cost. I didn't mean that
14 we were going to depend upon the
15 administration to make all those cuts in
16 the future. We're just prepared for the
17 next year. If there is -- we don't get
18 the amount of money, we have three plans,
19 four, six and eight percent.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: For next
21 year only?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: For next year
23 only.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So what
25 plans do you have for the long-term

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 sustainability of Imagine 2014? Do you
3 have a written plan for that in case you
4 don't get the competitive grants for when
5 the stimulus funding is gone?

6 MR. MASCH: We not only have a
7 plan, we have multiple plans, because --
8 and what I mean by that is, we've been
9 running different scenarios, because we
10 don't know exactly what the future is.
11 We don't control our revenue base. So
12 when we do these multi-year plans, we've
13 made more optimistic and pessimistic
14 assumptions about recurring local
15 revenues and whether they grow or not.
16 We've made assumptions about the whole
17 variety of different State programs that
18 we get funding from, and then we've made
19 different projections in terms of federal
20 revenues, because we really haven't said
21 this, I think, at the table yet, but it
22 has been the professed aim of the Obama
23 Administration to replace a portion --
24 and they have not yet been specific, but
25 to replace a portion of the one-off

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2 stimulus formula revenues that they
3 provided to K-12 education with recurring
4 revenues, because they understand that
5 the economic recovery's impact on state
6 and local tax bases is definitely a
7 lagging indicator of recovery and that
8 it's not realistic to expect state and
9 local government to fill in the entire
10 gap as the formula stimulus funds go
11 away.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: No, no.

13 MR. MASCH: And then we have
14 similarly, based on those assumptions,
15 we've begun to make contingency plans in
16 terms of the different ways in which we
17 might reduce expenditures.

18 Now, I'd note that one of the
19 reasons that we did relatively short-term
20 collective bargaining agreements was that
21 both our bargaining units and the
22 administration recognized that in this
23 particular climate, as we go out even as
24 soon as 2013, the future is very
25 uncertain for us, not just because of the

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2 need to replace the stimulus funds, but
3 also, as we have noted, because there is
4 a looming pension crisis that could be
5 affecting school districts across the
6 Commonwealth if the State Legislature
7 fails to act between now and then. There
8 are remedies. It can be fixed, but it
9 hasn't been fixed yet.

10 So we've been running a lot of
11 different contingencies. Our commitment
12 is very clear. Commitment number one:
13 balance budget. Commitment number two:
14 preserve academic reforms that raise
15 student achievement.

16 And so every day we have people
17 working on plans that will see fruition
18 in six months, in 12 months, in 24 months
19 to reduce the cost of operating our
20 entire program. We have a systems
21 improvement project that is intended to
22 replace really seriously out-of-date
23 information and business process systems.
24 Our finance and our HR systems were put
25 in place in 1999. They were not best of

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2 breed then. They don't talk to one
3 another. That's not something we can do
4 overnight, but we're pushing to do it
5 within the next two years because we
6 understand the kind of problems that are
7 ahead of us. If we had a completely
8 different information and business
9 transaction infrastructure, we would cut
10 a lot of positions from central
11 administration that we cannot afford to
12 cut today.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How much do
14 you expect to have in efficiency savings
15 once you modernize your technology?

16 MR. MASCH: Well, it is too
17 early for us to say, but our goal --

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is it more
19 than 10 million?

20 MR. MASCH: Oh, yeah, for sure.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is it more
22 than 20 million?

23 MR. MASCH: I think that it
24 ought to be possible for us to do savings
25 in that range. But this is a difficult

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2 discussion to have when we're talking
3 about a project that is just getting
4 underway, and my concern about it is to
5 go on the public record and make a
6 commitment when we're not claiming to
7 have a detailed plan in place.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm not
9 asking for any commitments. I'm just
10 trying to get a general sense of where we
11 are in terms of the long-term viability
12 of the things that are going to improve
13 student achievement that are part of
14 Imagine 2014. And when I add up the 95
15 million increase from the State this year
16 and I look at 284 million in stimulus
17 funds, that's close to \$400 million. I
18 don't see us, honestly, from the State or
19 from the federal government replacing
20 that money once the stimulus funds are
21 gone, and in this budget, I don't expect
22 to get 95 million from the State. I'm
23 going to go up there and fight for it,
24 believe me, as I know you are, but it's
25 not looking good right now, and I would

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2 like to know if you have a plan, if
3 you've done scenarios that show what it
4 looks like with \$200 or \$300 million less
5 than we're spending today once the
6 stimulus funding is gone.

7 MR. MASCH: We do have
8 scenarios that are that pessimistic. We
9 do.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Would you
11 please provide those to the Chair? I
12 mean, if you have them, we'd like to see
13 them. I mean, you're asking us to
14 approve a budget that has a lot of
15 assumptions. Some of the assumptions --
16 and we're creating a whole lot of new
17 spending programs in this budget, and it
18 seems to me if those spending programs
19 aren't sustainable, we maybe ought to
20 look at this budget from a different
21 perspective and say, Okay, what do we
22 know is sustainable, and put that in
23 place. And so that's why I'd like the
24 detail.

25 Let's see.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

3 Councilman, can we revert to Councilwoman
4 Brown and come back again?

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'd prefer
6 just to get through my questions, Madam
7 Chair.

8 What effect -- okay.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Madam
10 Chair?

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Point
12 of information. We do have tomorrow at
13 10:00, both of you realize.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fairness
15 in sharing time is in order and --

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN:
17 Councilwoman, at the beginning of the
18 hearing today, I said that I wanted to
19 wait until the end and ask all my
20 questions at once and not have an
21 interrupted flow, but you may not have
22 been here, and that's what the Chairwoman
23 committed to me, but, of course, I will
24 yield.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. I

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 have -- the last time I looked, it was
3 around 1 o'clock. So I figure a half
4 hour for each of us might be in order,
5 understanding that we want to come back
6 tomorrow, and it's been a little more
7 than a half hour. Thank you.

8 Thank you, Madam Chair.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're
10 welcome.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Arts and
12 culture. If you could please simply give
13 us an update on where that is. That was
14 a part of the 2014 plan as well. And
15 speak, if you would, a bit to the policy
16 around keeping a handle on where we are
17 with school instruments and the like.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes. In all of
19 our elementary schools, they have art and
20 music. In the middle schools, they have
21 art or music, and in our high schools,
22 they have to take two courses in
23 humanities, which could mean art, music.

24 We still have a long way to go
25 with the instruments. Our instrumental

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2 program at this point is limited in our
3 elementary schools, and one of the things
4 we want to do is to see that it is
5 expanded, which is another reason that
6 the Talent Centers are really important,
7 because it gives young people an
8 opportunity to not just to depend upon
9 the school once a week, lessons, they get
10 to have lessons after school. So we've
11 expanded in that we have more art, music
12 available than we've had in years, but
13 it's still not enough. It's very limited
14 and at all levels.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And
16 relationships with institutions like the
17 Philadelphia Museum of Art and Freedom
18 Theatre or Philadanco, where is the
19 School District with regards to filling
20 those gaps with those institutions that
21 have the resources and the expertise?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, they're
23 certainly partners with us in the summer
24 program and in many of our schools during
25 the year, and they're also partners with

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2 us as we open up the Talent Centers also.
3 And we hope to have even bigger, more
4 robust relationships with them as we
5 apply for grants. We applied for an
6 after-school grant which includes the
7 Talent Centers.

8 Somebody here can tell me how
9 much that was, because it was a
10 significant amount with our after-school
11 programs.

12 One point seven five million
13 dollar grant we just got.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: From
15 where?

16 DR. ACKERMAN: From the 21st
17 Century Grants, and it's focused on the
18 Talent Centers.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. The
20 issue of -- no. Let's deal with this
21 first. Your entire MBE, WBE piece is
22 comprehensive, and kudos for the enormous
23 progress and improvement that has been
24 shown in trying to level the playing
25 field. And thank you for my response to

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 a letter that spoke to what looked like a
3 single-source contract for a caterer.

4 Update us, if you would, on
5 what the department has done in terms of
6 a systemic change to ensure that other
7 MBE, WBE caterers get an opportunity to
8 do business with the School District.

9 (Witness approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: One of the
12 policy statements in here is to create a
13 level playing field on which M/WBES can
14 compete fairly for School District
15 contracts. And so the specific question
16 was regarding the caterer and what you've
17 done internally to allow opportunities
18 for others who can't fit that or won't
19 fit that bond.

20 MR. BYARS: Sure. Thank you
21 for your question. My name is John
22 Byars. I'm the Executive Director of
23 Procurement Services for the School
24 District. I have two primary
25 responsibilities. One is to oversee the

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2 entire purchasing operation for the
3 School District, and the second one is to
4 ensure that women and minority companies
5 are afforded fair and equal opportunities
6 at the School District.

7 Most recently, we significantly
8 extended the catering opportunities for
9 women and minority companies by again
10 eliminating some of those barriers to
11 entry, which are the very stringent
12 insurance requirements that were at the
13 District for a long time. We are
14 contemplating putting out on RFQ, but
15 while we're still holding off on that
16 right now, we significantly extended the
17 list of those companies who are now
18 pre-qualified to do business with us as
19 caterers.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that
21 includes MBE, WBEs?

22 MR. BYARS: It almost
23 exclusively includes MBEs and WBEs for
24 various different ethnic foods, et
25 cetera.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
3 then. Let me just check to see if
4 there's anything else around MBE, WBEs.

5 In the Controller's report, one
6 of the findings was that two schools did
7 not adhere to the School District's
8 manual bidding requirement and did not
9 obtain competitive bids for all purchases
10 over \$4,000. What has been done again
11 internally to fix that so that that type
12 of incident is less likely to happen
13 again?

14 MR. BYARS: Could you just
15 repeat that question for me, please?

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: In the
17 February 2009 Office of Controller, he
18 completed a review of student activity
19 funds. One of the findings was that two
20 schools did not adhere to the School
21 District's manual bidding requirement and
22 did not obtain competitive bids for
23 purchases over \$4,000. So the question
24 is, what has the system done -- what has
25 the School District done to remedy that

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2 circumstance?

3 MR. MASCH: Councilwoman, we
4 have had a number of challenges with
5 student activity funds, and we have a
6 comprehensive program that we've
7 instituted through the Office of the
8 Controller to improve the management of
9 those funds. It includes both bidder
10 training for school-level staff and the
11 institution of a new piece of software
12 that permits us to budget and account for
13 all of those funds and oversee them
14 centrally to ensure that we don't have
15 violations of School District policy.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
17 then.

18 One more question, Madam Chair,
19 and I'll punt the ball back to my
20 colleague Councilman Green.

21 Towards the Mayor's commitment
22 to grow a greener city, share with us the
23 policy or discussions you're having
24 around the use of green technology and/or
25 sustainability with regards to new

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2 construction and, where appropriate and
3 reasonable, existing structures, if you
4 would.

5 DR. ACKERMAN: Pat, would you
6 like to come up.

7 (Witness approached witness
8 table.)

9 MR. HENWOOD: Good afternoon.
10 I'm Pat Henwood, Senior Vice-President of
11 Capital Programs.

12 The School District has
13 incorporated green standards into our
14 design standards for every project that
15 we do. We have two Gold certified
16 buildings currently.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And they
18 are?

19 MR. HENWOOD: Barry and School
20 of the Future. And our next building to
21 open will be Kensington Creative and
22 Performing Arts. That is currently one
23 point over Platinum. So that may be the
24 first Platinum building in the City.

25 MR. MASCH: And then West

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2 Philly.

3 MR. HENWOOD: West Philly will
4 be Gold, and Willard will be at least
5 certified.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
7 Congratulations.

8 MR. HENWOOD: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We're on
10 our way.

11 MR. HENWOOD: On our way.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My last
13 follow-up on this specific topic is, I
14 fully understand 2014 and the priorities.
15 As we look to grow a generation of young
16 people that are going to be concerned
17 about having a greener earth, has the
18 District had a chance to look at
19 curriculum that addresses recycling,
20 sustainability, et cetera, et cetera, et
21 cetera?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: We have, and we
23 are in the process of doing that. We're
24 hoping that as we look at expanding our
25 career technical programs, that we will

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2 also be able to open up academies that
3 focus in jobs and careers. So I think
4 you'll see more, not less, of the School
5 District's involvement in developing
6 curriculum and curriculum that leads to
7 jobs and opportunities for young people,
8 development, job development.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I'll
10 look forward to an update on that next
11 year --

12 DR. ACKERMAN: Next year you'll
13 see that coming in.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: --
15 recognizing that through other
16 priorities.

17 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I'll
19 push the pause button, punt it back to my
20 colleague and hope that I'll have another
21 shot at this before we recess, and
22 looking forward to tomorrow as well.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,

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2 Councilman Green.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you. And, Councilwoman, we will recess
5 after Councilman Green is finished until
6 10:00 a.m., so you'll have plenty of
7 opportunity to resume your questioning.
8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
12 Councilman Green.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

14 First of all, Mr. Archie, let
15 me compliment you on your excellent
16 command of the facts and figures. I
17 consistently hear you helping School
18 District officials with, Oh, that was a
19 million dollars, that was a line --

20 MR. ARCHIE: I have a cheat
21 sheet. I have a cheat sheet.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's
23 excellent.

24 The Accountability Office
25 budget is going to increase by \$2.4

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2 million, which is grant funded. What
3 will this funding go for?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: David Weiner is
5 here.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 MR. WEINER: Hello, Councilman.
9 My name is David Weiner. I'm the Chief
10 Accountability Officer.

11 The increase in the budget is
12 to pay for our new assessment program.
13 We've dramatically expanded the
14 assessment program to identify challenges
15 that students may have in their skills
16 early on in the school year, so teachers
17 can make mid-course corrections and
18 provide additional interventions for
19 those students.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So when you
21 say evaluating performance, are you
22 talking about PSSA scores, are you
23 talking about new initiatives? What are
24 you talking about?

25 MR. WEINER: It's a new

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2 initiative, actually. We call them
3 benchmark assessment or predictive
4 assessments. So at this point, six times
5 a year we give kind of mid-course tests
6 for the students in different subject
7 areas, world languages, reading, math,
8 social studies. We give them about every
9 six weeks or so. And teachers get
10 results back within five days to actually
11 make corrections. So if the first six
12 weeks in school you teach lessons X, Y
13 and Z, you're actually getting an
14 assessment to determine how well the
15 students learn those particular areas.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So
17 are you also -- while you're there, I had
18 a few questions about adequate yearly
19 progress. Are you in charge of that
20 determination?

21 MR. WEINER: Well, the State
22 identifies adequate yearly progress and
23 which schools make or do not make it, but
24 we obviously communicate with the State
25 and they let my office know who has made

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2 it or who has not made it each year.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How is
4 adequate yearly progress determined?

5 MR. WEINER: The State has
6 basically set criteria that increases
7 until 2014 when you hit 100. But
8 basically every three years or so, the
9 State increases about ten percent the
10 percent of students, as well as all the
11 subgroups in a school that have to make
12 kind of proficient or advanced in reading
13 and then in math. That increases about
14 every three years, and then actually
15 through 2012 through 2014, it increases
16 about ten percent a year every single
17 year.

18 Having said that, I will
19 caution that the President has put out a
20 new blueprint for success. It's his new
21 Obama's Blueprint for Reform that has
22 signaled a change to adequately yearly
23 progress moving forward. He has said
24 that he's going to change that. So we're
25 all kind of -- he put out about a 45-page

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2 document that was somewhat vague about
3 the specifics -- I'm sorry; somewhat
4 vague, so we don't have the specifics
5 quite yet, but he has signaled that he is
6 going to change the way that's calculated
7 in the future.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is there any
9 chance that the School District in order
10 to determine at least the -- obviously if
11 a School District school doesn't meet
12 adequately yearly progress, you're in
13 control of that situation. Charter
14 schools often get their students from the
15 District, say, entering at third grade or
16 fourth grade, et cetera, and yet they
17 could be coming from schools that were
18 not meeting adequate yearly progress.

19 Is there any thought to using a
20 value-added assessment program in the
21 School District or in charter schools to
22 measure the progress that actual student
23 makes compared to their -- if someone
24 entered third grade at a first grade
25 level but they leave third grade

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2 essentially at a third grade level or
3 just below a third grade level, they've
4 made tremendous progress with that
5 student, but they would not have met --
6 they would not -- they get no credit for
7 that. Is there a way for us to --

8 DR. ACKERMAN: We're doing
9 that.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is part of
11 your expanded funding to measure that?

12 MR. WEINER: Yeah. Actually,
13 this past January, we created a new
14 program to rank our schools, and
15 Dr. Ackerman spoke about it right in her
16 first testimony. We're calling it the
17 School Performance Index. It basically
18 looks at schools and the performance, and
19 the biggest indicator for the School
20 Performance Index is exactly what you
21 identified, the measurement of how every
22 single student does from the beginning of
23 the year to the end of the year. So
24 we're actually measuring growth of each
25 individual student.

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2 AYP requires that you have a
3 subgroup of 40 students for that group in
4 order to be kind of qualified. So if you
5 only have 35 English language learners,
6 for example, the State doesn't even look
7 at that as a subgroup in a particular
8 school. We found either charter schools
9 or District schools because they're
10 smaller schools, they don't have these
11 subgroups. SPI looks at things very
12 differently. It actually looks at every
13 single student that's in a particular
14 school from the beginning of the year to
15 the end of the year and measures how much
16 each one of those particular students has
17 grown. Our expanded assessment system
18 actually allows us to do that. So we are
19 actually looking at a very small school,
20 maybe 150 kids. We look at all 150 kids,
21 measure where they start at the beginning
22 of the year and then measure how much
23 growth they made by the end of the year.
24 Our ranking system -- and we rank schools
25 on one through ten overall and by similar

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2 school --

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And that

4 will include District and charter?

5 DR. ACKERMAN: It doesn't

6 include charter right now.

7 MR. WEINER: No. We just

8 rolled it out for District schools.

9 We've been working with -- some charter

10 schools have allowed us to do it, but

11 we're working with the charters to have

12 all District and charter schools included

13 in this new ranking system moving

14 forward.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Because I

16 think if we don't measure charters the

17 same way we measure the School District,

18 we're going to have continuing conflict.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: We agree.

20 MR. WEINER: We totally agree.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: When you

22 compare AYP to, say, SPI, the charters

23 are going to look comparatively bad,

24 because they're not -- SPI I think is a

25 fair way to measure. So I'm glad you're

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 moving in that direction.

3 There is a substantial increase
4 in grant funding for summer programs,
5 nearly 27 million. Where is that money
6 coming from and what does it fund?

7 MR. MASCH: The funding is part
8 of the stimulus School Improvement
9 funding that we had testified about
10 previously, and as we noted in the
11 previous testimony, there's a significant
12 change in the design of the summer
13 program. We've really moved over two
14 years from a program that was morning
15 only primarily for students who had
16 failed basic subjects and were getting a
17 second chance to try to catch up and
18 advance a grade. Through the program
19 last summer, Summer Learning and More,
20 which added enrichment and the
21 possibility for advancement, as well as
22 remediation and credit recovery, summer
23 academies in the empowerment schools are
24 being budgeted and staffed to look much
25 more like a regular school year program,

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2 basically an extension of the school year
3 for students in our lowest performing
4 schools, and we are undertaking a very
5 aggressive recruitment effort right now
6 to encourage students to attend. We are
7 budgeting for up to 50,000 students to
8 participate, as Dr. Ackerman noted in her
9 testimony.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So
11 essentially that's really essentially
12 without mandating a longer school year,
13 following a KIPP-like model and trying to
14 have a voluntary longer school year?

15 MR. MASCH: We're not permitted
16 to mandate it. We've actually wrestled
17 with that. But we're going as close as
18 we can to that. We've basically tried to
19 set up the expectation for students and
20 their families that attendance is
21 encouraged and expected.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So with
23 respect to the empowerment schools, that
24 is one of the methods you're going to use
25 to improve performance, by having a

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2 longer school year for hopefully what
3 will be most students?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: Yes.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

6 Imagine 2014 calls for reducing class
7 sizes in elementary schools. Yet the
8 budget proposes a cut of 81 K through 8
9 teachers. Can you please explain that to
10 me?

11 MR. MASCH: Yes. The only
12 adjustment that's being made is because
13 of projected drops in enrollment at
14 particular schools. There is absolutely
15 no change in the maximum class sizes that
16 we instituted this year. And we haven't
17 said this on the record yet, so I do want
18 to note, we have reduced class sizes in K
19 to 3 across the entire district. We've
20 also reduced class sizes in grades 6, 8
21 and 9 in the empowerment schools.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. How
23 much does 81 teachers cost us?

24 MR. MASCH: Well, it's about
25 \$90,000 a teacher.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we're
3 saving \$6 million or so. What would
4 class sizes be if we kept K through 8
5 teachers at the same number as last year?
6 How much would that impact --

7 MR. MASCH: You mean if we
8 didn't reduce this number of teachers,
9 how much --

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

11 MR. MASCH: I mean, we can run
12 that number and get it for you. Could we
13 try to get it for you when we resume
14 tomorrow morning?

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's
16 great.

17 School Climate and Safety is
18 being reduced by 45 positions, including
19 a cut of 27 out of 34 positions in
20 Climate and Behavioral Support. Can you
21 explain to me what that is and what the
22 purpose of this reduction is?

23 MR. MASCH: Well,
24 unfortunately, the primary reason for the
25 reduction is that we have received

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2 funding for our school climate efforts
3 from the federal government under a
4 program called Title IV, and that funding
5 is being discontinued for the coming
6 fiscal year, and virtually all of the
7 reductions that you see result from that.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What is this
9 group in charge of?

10 MR. MASCH: Well, I think the
11 best thing would be if we could have our
12 Chief of School Operations come up and
13 talk to you about it, but this is
14 basically the central office for our
15 school climate programs.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The central
17 office for your school climate programs.
18 So are these people --

19 MR. MASCH: Not field staff.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are these
21 people in the \$191 million administrative
22 overhead cost?

23 MR. MASCH: They are part of
24 that, yes.

25 (Witness approached witness

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2 table.)

3 MR. FRANGIPANI: Good
4 afternoon. I'm John Frangipani, Chief of
5 School Operations.

6 The positions you're talking
7 about are Climate Managers. They're in
8 charge of non-instructional areas of the
9 schools. What we've done is, we've --
10 because we lost the Title IV funding, the
11 positions have been -- schools received
12 half the funding to either purchase an
13 additional Assistant Principal or they
14 could use the funds to purchase programs
15 that will support school climate, such as
16 peer mediation, the programs that -- the
17 in-school suspension could be expanded,
18 those types of programs.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So the very
20 thing that we're talking about with
21 respect to South Philly High, school
22 climate is -- and we're all talking about
23 as an important priority -- is actually
24 receiving a cut in funding, just for the
25 record?

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2 MR. FRANGIPANI: No. What
3 we're doing is, we have these School
4 Climate Managers. What we'd rather have
5 in the buildings is another Assistant
6 Principal to deal not only with school
7 climate, but instructional issues. Their
8 scope of work is limited. We really
9 weren't getting the value that we really
10 needed in the school.

11 DR. ACKERMAN: And we actually
12 instead of paying -- I mean, once the
13 District -- I mean, once the grant goes
14 away, one of the problems that school
15 districts have -- and Philadelphia is no
16 different -- is when a grant goes away,
17 do we continue to pay for it. When the
18 grant goes away, you have to make a
19 decision. We made a decision to pay for
20 half of those positions and let schools
21 then add their money to it.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I completely
23 agree. I mean, it's one of the reasons
24 I'm so concerned about what happens when
25 the federal stimulus grants go away.

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2 The District plans to adopt WSF
3 in a 57-school pilot program, and I think
4 this is a good thing, but just for the
5 record, can you explain why this model is
6 better than the existing model?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, the WSF,
8 or the Weighted Student Formula, those
9 that don't understand what WSF stands
10 for, is a way of allocating dollars based
11 on the characteristics of particular
12 students in a school. The way we fund
13 now is based on a staffing model that
14 doesn't really look at individual
15 characteristics. So what makes us better
16 is that it focuses on, This is the cost
17 of educating a young person who has
18 bilingual needs or special ed needs, and
19 it looks the same at every school. So
20 the money follows the student
21 characteristic. Now it doesn't. It's
22 just one size fits all. And it's very
23 transparent.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So what's
25 the impact? Like a Masterman would get

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2 less money and an empowerment school
3 would get more money under this formula?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: It depends on
5 the numbers of students that they have or
6 the characteristics, and it really -- the
7 committee is just beginning to work.
8 What we have to first establish is what
9 is a base funding formula for students
10 who have no special needs, and then what
11 do you give for students who have special
12 needs, whether it's English language
13 learners or gifted students or students
14 who attend special admit schools.

15 This is my fourth school
16 district in implementing it, the Weighted
17 Student Formula, and none of the special
18 admit schools actually were cut. In
19 fact, they ended up getting maybe some
20 money depending -- more money depending
21 upon the school.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I look
23 forward to following that.

24 DR. ACKERMAN: Okay.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You mention

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2 libraries and the need for libraries in
3 the schools. I note that there's a
4 central book allotment of 10 million. Is
5 any of that going to library books?
6 That's an increase over last year of \$10
7 million.

8 DR. ACKERMAN: It's not going
9 for -- some of it is going for -- I'm
10 sorry. The 10 million -- that's what I
11 thought. The 10 million is for a new
12 reading series in our empowerment
13 schools. That's what the 10 million --
14 we're going to open court.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's all
16 going to empowerment schools?

17 DR. ACKERMAN: Empowerment
18 schools for a new reading program. The
19 following year, our goal then is to look
20 at the other schools.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So
22 the whole library budget, I note -- you
23 said some schools don't have libraries.
24 I'm sure you're aware that most schools
25 don't have libraries or librarians.

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2 Funding was only increased for this by
3 \$400,000. In terms of getting people to
4 stay in high school and then graduate and
5 go to college, in the context of
6 everything else you're doing, it seems
7 like -- I'm not sure I understand the
8 lack of emphasis placed on this issue,
9 people learning how to research and --

10 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I think
11 our first step is to equalize or to
12 provide an equitable allocation of
13 resources for those schools that don't
14 even have libraries. We've been giving
15 library grants to schools to get books.
16 I mean, you go to Vaux and they have an
17 instructional center, but there are no
18 books. So we have this money, and what
19 we're trying to do, again, is to make
20 sure that there is a physical structure
21 in a school called a library. Now, once
22 that happens, then we can look at the
23 librarians. But it seems to me you have
24 to start somewhere, and the basic
25 structure of having a room where kids can

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2 go and check out books or there are
3 computers there for them to supplement
4 their academic programs, a place called
5 the library, is where we start. And if
6 we have to prioritize the money, there's
7 no need to get a librarian if you don't
8 have a library.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's true.
10 During a battle, I think, before you
11 arrived in 2008 on the City's budget, my
12 staff did research on school-based
13 library resources and compared us to the
14 top 20 cities in the country. I think
15 the average school district had
16 librarians and libraries in 85 to 90
17 percent of their schools. I can't
18 remember exactly what the number is for
19 Philly, but it was something like 15
20 percent of schools had both those things,
21 or 12 percent.

22 Do you think that that
23 disparity may explain some of our
24 performance gap in terms of English?

25 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I don't

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2 know that the librarian -- I mean, I
3 think the librarians certainly play a
4 role. I was a principal. I didn't have
5 a librarian full time. I had library
6 aides who were there to do the same
7 thing.

8 One of the things we've done in
9 the past is to allow principals at the
10 school site to make a decision about
11 whether they want to acquire a school
12 librarian, and maybe what we need to say
13 is, this is a part of the school
14 curriculum, we expect you to staff the
15 same. We haven't done that in the past,
16 and I think some of those decisions are
17 being made there.

18 You need to have some bodies in
19 the library who are staffing and manning
20 that. It could happen in multiple ways.
21 Ideally, you want an educator, a
22 librarian, to do that.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm not
24 asking you to answer these questions
25 today, but if you have time before

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2 tomorrow at 10:00, otherwise provide it
3 to the Chair. I'd just like to know how
4 many schools have libraries staffed with
5 certified librarians.

6 DR. ACKERMAN: We can do that.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How many
8 staffed with library aides, are there
9 plans to add -- you just discussed the
10 possibility of adding a plan to add a
11 line item to school budgets for
12 librarians, essentially requiring it.
13 I'd be interested to know if that's
14 something that the District is willing to
15 commit to at this point. And that's it.

16 With respect to the dropout
17 rate, last year Dr. Ackerman testified
18 that the dropout rate was 47 percent in
19 2008 and the goal is to lower it to 23.5
20 percent by 2014. Is that still the
21 District's goal?

22 DR. ACKERMAN: It's still our
23 goal.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And how
25 achievable is it? Are you on track given

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 the progress shown this year to meet that
3 goal?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, we will
5 know more by the end of the summer, but
6 we're certainly on track in tracking
7 where these young people are in the
8 summer and giving them the opportunity to
9 graduate on time, better than we've ever
10 tracked this before. We know who the
11 students are by name and putting in place
12 programs at the school site before and
13 after school, and then in the summer for
14 them to catch up and graduate on time.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The District
16 expanded from 38 high schools in 2002 to
17 more than 60 high schools today. I
18 happen to believe that high school choice
19 is one of the key things that will keep
20 people potentially in high school, and
21 getting the high school of their choice
22 is another motivating factor.

23 Are there any plans to expand
24 the number of high schools to offer even
25 more choices? Are we planning to

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2 continue, I guess, what the former Chief
3 Executive, Paul Vallas, started, which is
4 shrinking or eliminating the large high
5 schools and a continued expansion of high
6 school choices?

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, I think
8 the goal with this administration and
9 then 2014 is to provide all schools,
10 Here's the base, here are the quality
11 programs that should be in all schools,
12 and to make sure that happens. Because
13 what has happened as we've expanded the
14 number of high school choices, we've done
15 it at the expense of the comprehensive
16 high schools, and that's, to me,
17 unconscionable. These are some of the
18 places that have no programs and/or very
19 few programs.

20 I think expanding the choices
21 in small high schools, it's wonderful in
22 concept, but if you talk about being
23 fiscally viable, it absolutely is not.
24 You take a look at Oakland where they
25 expanded and made lots of options for

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 high school choices. They're now having
3 to close them, because they can't
4 maintain them. You can't maintain. And
5 I think we -- if we don't look at -- I
6 don't think we have the fiscal
7 opportunity to expand them. I think we
8 have to make sure that some of our
9 comprehensive high schools have programs
10 that make them viable options for --
11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's fine.
12 I'm not going to get into a policy debate
13 with you. I just wanted your answer to
14 the question.
15 DR. ACKERMAN: We won't do it.
16 I wanted to let you know why.
17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's fine.
18 And with respect to the possibility of
19 eliminating some of the comprehensive
20 high schools with extremely low
21 performance, have you considered allowing
22 or trying to find two or three charters
23 to move into an area and just closing
24 very unsuccessful comprehensive high
25 schools?

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: Well, you have
3 West Philly that's up now, Vaux and U
4 City, and they're part of the Renaissance
5 school program, and at least West Philly
6 has an option now to look at Johns
7 Hopkins or Mastery as an option for their
8 turnaround services.

9 So I think as we move forward,
10 that certainly is an option, as we have
11 providers who want to come in --

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's
13 something you're willing to consider.

14 DR. ACKERMAN: We're
15 considering it now.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.
17 Great.

18 What plans are there to expand
19 access to early childhood programs?

20 DR. ACKERMAN: We've opened up
21 our first early childhood center. I
22 think there are -- there are more. I
23 don't remember the exact amount. So
24 we're expanding the opportunities for
25 families --

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2 MR. MASCH: One more.

3 DR. ACKERMAN: One this year.

4 So there will be two at the end of
5 2010-2011. And then we're trying to --
6 again, this is a place where the State
7 has cut resources, and we're trying to
8 find a way to not only maintain the
9 number of early childhood programs that
10 we have, but to expand them.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The State
12 has cut, but all research in this area
13 shows the earlier you get to a child, the
14 more successful they're going to be, the
15 more likely they're going to have those
16 higher grades in third grade and we don't
17 have to build as many prisons looking
18 out, et cetera.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: Right. You're
20 speaking to the choir here. I was an
21 early childhood teacher, so I do know how
22 important, which is why these early
23 childhood centers are so important for
24 us.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So is there

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2 a waiting list for early childhood
3 education services?

4 DR. ACKERMAN: For some of our
5 programs, there are. Not for -- there
6 are not enough seats for some of our
7 programs. There's some programs where we
8 don't have enough, but I think there are
9 certainly some more that we can do to
10 expand on the programs that work.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Can you just
12 provide the Chair with a list --

13 DR. ACKERMAN: We can give you
14 that.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- of the
16 early childhood programs available and
17 whether or not there's waiting lists for
18 any of them.

19 DR. ACKERMAN: Okay.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then as
21 we're thinking about making choices of
22 what to do with stimulus funds and other
23 things or even what grants to apply for
24 and what to put in those grants, I guess
25 what I'd suggest is that we get the

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2 biggest bang for our buck there, and
3 that's going to have a benefit to the
4 school system throughout the whole K
5 through 12 process, and I hope it's
6 something the District would look at in
7 terms of when it has extra resources or
8 as it's applying for grants, to focus in
9 on that area.

10 Mr. Masch mentioned there were
11 43,000 surplus seats in District schools,
12 and I commend you for looking at a
13 facilities master plan. I have a lot of
14 questions about that, but I think I will
15 wait, if the master plan is going to be
16 finished this year, to look at it. I do
17 want to, just while we have an SRC member
18 here, make sure that as we're looking at
19 selling off these properties, given what
20 I think will be some constraints in the
21 years ahead as opposed to expansion of
22 funding from other places, that we don't
23 take these capital assets and use them
24 for operating money, but we do one of two
25 things with them, either reduce debt or

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2 take the resources we get from selling
3 these excess facilities and improve other
4 schools that kids are in in terms of
5 capital facilities, as we are far behind
6 in maintaining our schools. I'd hate to
7 have a capital asset sold and then not be
8 reinvested in capital. That would be --
9 I just throw that out there as how I
10 would spend the money.

11 I assume that the master plan
12 is going to look at the facilities
13 backlog, the maintenance requirements for
14 each facility. You're going to have by
15 the end of it a database of all your
16 facilities with -- you're going to put in
17 place maintenance schedules for all the
18 facilities in order to bring them up to
19 speed, et cetera. Is it that
20 comprehensive?

21 MR. MASCH: Right. The plan is
22 to determine what we need to bring
23 facilities to a state of good repair, and
24 one of the considerations in terms of
25 which facilities we invest in and which

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 we don't is the cost that it would take
3 to take us to a state of good repair, but
4 the competing factor is what the demand
5 is in that neighborhood. I mean, we've
6 engaged a demographer and we are doing
7 five- and ten-year projections on a
8 neighborhood basis, because schools are
9 neighborhood facilities and we have to do
10 neighborhood population projections and
11 not just the citywide ones that we have
12 that we use right now.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How many
14 buildings does the District have that are
15 not currently in productive use; do you
16 know?

17 MR. MASCH: I think we have
18 about -- I actually have the list right
19 here. I'm going to say about eight.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Only eight?
21 Okay.

22 I had a question about there's
23 a 3.3 million reduction proposed in
24 Maintenance and Repair Services and 52
25 fewer positions in Facilities. Given how

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120

2 far behind we are in maintenance, I'm

3 just wondering what the disconnect or

4 what the purpose of this is.

5 MR. MASCH: Well, as I said,

6 we've had to reduce operating costs. We

7 don't want to take money out of the

8 classroom, but the challenge at the same

9 time is to improve the efficiency of our

10 operations. I do want to note, we've

11 reduced our workload or backlog since

12 Dr. Ackerman and I have arrived by about

13 25 percent, but there's more to do. We

14 do not believe that we are deploying the

15 resources we have as efficiently as we

16 can in terms of how we schedule work, how

17 we schedule the crews.

18 One of the major changes that

19 we made in our new contract with our

20 maintenance workers, Local 1201, is the

21 ability now for us to add a third shift.

22 One of our constraints right now has been

23 that our workers are least productive

24 when they're trying to do repairs in

25 schools while the schools are in session.

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2 Under the new contract we just
3 negotiated, we will be able to send work
4 crews in to work uninterrupted when
5 schools are not in session, and we think
6 that even with the premium pay that we'll
7 pay for that, we're going to have much
8 higher productivity.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's
10 great.

11 A curious item, given the
12 conversation Councilman Clarke and you
13 had about the electric rate caps coming
14 off, is that your budget actually cuts
15 utilities by 5 million. Can you explain
16 that?

17 MR. MASCH: Well, that's right.
18 There's a \$6 million increase embedded in
19 there in terms of the increased cost of
20 electricity that we anticipate that we'll
21 have to bear after January, but there
22 also are offsetting savings from energy
23 conservation measures that we already
24 have planned and will be undertaking in
25 the coming fiscal year.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You will
3 achieve energy efficiency savings in the
4 next fiscal year of over 10 million bucks
5 or over \$7 million, I guess that would
6 be?

7 MR. MASCH: That is the plan
8 that we have underway.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you
10 provide details of that to the Chair?

11 MR. MASCH: Yeah.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

13 Page 38, there's 28.7 million,
14 nine percent, of the capital budget is
15 for Other. What falls into this
16 category?

17 MR. MASCH: I'm going to ask
18 Pat if he can come up again.

19 MR. ARCHIE: Madam Chair, may I
20 be excused?

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
22 Absolutely.

23 MR. ARCHIE: The staff is going
24 to stay and the Superintendant, but I
25 must run.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you, Mr. Archie.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
5 Mr. Archie. Please leave your cheat
6 sheet.

7 MR. ARCHIE: I have to take it
8 with me. Sorry.

9 (Witness approached witness
10 table.)

11 MR. HENWOOD: Good afternoon.
12 Pat Henwood again.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So the
14 question was about Page 38. There's 28.7
15 million of the capital budget is budgeted
16 for, quote/unquote, "Other," and I just
17 wondered what falls into this category.

18 MR. HENWOOD: There's
19 administrative costs, program management
20 costs, construction management costs.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So
22 administrative costs, are they outsourced
23 or are they within the District?

24 MR. HENWOOD: There's a
25 combination of both. Right now we're at

1 5/10/10 - WHOLE - BILLS 100119 & 100120
2 about 50/50.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And how much
4 is that?

5 MR. HENWOOD: Just give me one
6 second.

7 There's 17 million for
8 administrative support services.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And that is
10 applied where in the budget? Is that
11 administrative? That's in capital,
12 right?

13 MR. HENWOOD: That's in
14 capital, correct.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So I
16 wouldn't see it in administrative or
17 school-based sort of resources?

18 MR. HENWOOD: You would not,
19 no. There's also --

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then 17
21 million of that is outsourced?

22 MR. HENWOOD: It's about 50/50.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So of the
24 17, eight and a half inside, eight and a
25 half outside?

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2 MR. HENWOOD: That's about
3 right. There's also bond issuance costs
4 of about 5 million that is in that, and
5 owner-controlled insurance program costs
6 in that as well.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
8 you very much.

9 MR. HENWOOD: You're welcome.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: People
11 have -- I had some questions on shared
12 services, but I think people have asked a
13 lot of questions about that. And I had
14 questions about IT investment, and you're
15 going to provide to the Chair what you
16 think is going on. I wondered if briefly
17 we could just get a comment on what some
18 other school districts are doing from
19 your perspective and whether or not you
20 think they're working well, there are
21 things we should be looking at here.

22 First of all, New Orleans,
23 which has essentially gone to an all
24 charter model. Test scores have
25 seemingly improved very rapidly. I

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2 understand that probably the demographics
3 of the population has changed as well.

4 DR. ACKERMAN: Right. I was
5 going to say, they don't have but a few
6 schools at this point.

7 You know, I'm really pleased
8 with the kinds of things that we -- I
9 think we have a combination of new
10 initiatives that draw upon some of the
11 innovations that have taken place in
12 other school districts, San Francisco.
13 Some of this I brought from other places,
14 but New York and Chicago, I think. But I
15 think that what we are putting in place
16 in Imagine 2014 is just what we know
17 makes -- it's common sense. I
18 actually -- I think -- I don't want to
19 compare us to New Orleans, but we have --
20 we do have in some ways -- we have 66 of
21 our schools are charter schools. That's
22 more than any other city in the country,
23 including New Orleans. So I think to
24 have 36,000 of your children at a charter
25 school as part of a system of great

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2 schools puts us out front, even in terms
3 of New Orleans.

4 I think our Renaissance school
5 program is extraordinary, not because
6 we're just turning around schools and
7 we're making them charter or EMOs or
8 Superintendent's Academies, but because
9 parents are involved. And you can't find
10 that in any other school systems, where
11 parents are making decisions about how to
12 change their schools.

13 So I think that you'll see more
14 people writing about Philadelphia, what
15 we're doing here, because we've taken the
16 best of what we've learned in other
17 cities, but we've just -- we're actually
18 applying the tried and true.

19 You get parents invested in a
20 school, it will change. There was an
21 article a couple of weeks ago about
22 parents in the Jackson community. We're
23 trying to do that in every community in
24 the school system.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: No; I

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2 appreciate that.

3 DR. ACKERMAN: The Weighted
4 Student Formula, this is my fourth school
5 system doing it.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: There is a
7 friend of ours running for Governor who
8 is campaigning on the basic policy of
9 using a targeted voucher system. I just
10 wondered, given all your years of
11 experience, what you think of vouchers or
12 targeted vouchers.

13 DR. ACKERMAN: This is a friend
14 of ours, mine and yours?

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Senator
16 Williams.

17 DR. ACKERMAN: Oh, okay. I was
18 trying to see who that friend was. Oh,
19 okay. All right.

20 Well, I don't know. I'd have
21 to think about whether or not I see that
22 as a viable option, vouchers.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So
24 just I'd like to -- I know we're probably
25 not going to agree on this analysis that

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2 I'm about to share, but the way I add up
3 administrative costs for the School
4 District, we're actually at about seven
5 and a half percent, and I get there by
6 basically, as you mentioned, we have more
7 charter schools than everybody else and
8 we have very limited -- the District has
9 very limited sort of oversight of the
10 School District in terms of a percentage
11 of its overall -- of the charters in
12 terms of a percentage of its overall
13 budget. So if you take out the oversight
14 of the charters and then you take out the
15 \$500 million that actually goes to
16 charters and then you add back in, say,
17 Regional Superintendents, who I would say
18 are really not part of instructional but
19 they're administrative, and even without
20 adding this eight and a half million
21 dollars of capital that's administrative,
22 you're in a situation where you're about
23 seven and a half percent administrative
24 costs, which is basically the highest in
25 the country that I can find.

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2 DR. ACKERMAN: Whoa. Well,
3 that's not been my experience. You know,
4 I think --

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Even a major
6 school district.

7 DR. ACKERMAN: Even a major
8 school district, you know, that's not
9 been mine, and I've been in seven.
10 They're usually running somewhere around
11 ten percent. If you can get down to
12 seven, six -- I've actually been down to
13 three, and I can tell you, it's far --
14 you can't -- it's strained to run it with
15 three. I would never do it. I think
16 around six or seven is about, especially
17 a district this size, is reasonable, but
18 I've been in school districts where it's
19 been 15 to 20.

20 So we're certainly not one of
21 the highest. And, you know, with all due
22 respect, I would love to look at the
23 administrative costs of charter schools,
24 because they're one school, they operate
25 as a separate LEA, and if you count CEOs,

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2 if you count the administrative overhead,
3 it would be an interesting thing to see
4 how much they actually pay for
5 administrative overhead.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I think
7 because they don't have the huge debt
8 load burden that -- I've looked at this.
9 Because they don't have the huge debt
10 burden that you carry as a school
11 district, they don't have paying for past
12 bond issuances, past things on a huge
13 basis, they have fairly new buildings, so
14 they don't have utility issues like you
15 have and things like that, I think you'll
16 find that far many more dollars may get
17 directly into instructional.

18 DR. ACKERMAN: That may be. I
19 guess I was talking about the
20 administrative overhead as it relates to
21 bodies and the cost of those, the
22 administrative layers.

23 MR. MASCH: Councilman, I'd
24 just say we'd be happy to provide you
25 with a copy of it. I mean, we do

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2 benchmark our administrative
3 expenditures. We engaged a firm called
4 Educational Resource Strategies out of
5 Boston to look at exactly this issue, and
6 what they found looking at some of the
7 larger school districts in the United
8 States is that we have one of the lowest
9 administrative overheads, and we'd be
10 happy to share the analysis with you.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'd love to
12 see it.

13 MR. MASCH: That's not to say
14 that we're not going to try to do
15 everything we can to get our percentage
16 down.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We did a
18 brief study and I think most major ones
19 were around five, but I'd love to see
20 this study. That's great.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Point of
22 information, Madam Chair.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
24 Councilwoman Brown. Point of
25 information.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please.

3 With those five, Councilman Green, were
4 they like the Philadelphia School
5 District in terms of size?

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We looked at
7 big school districts, yes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Forgive
9 me?

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes. We
11 looked at big school districts.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So they're
13 profiled much --

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We have one
15 of the biggest, but yeah.

16 DR. ACKERMAN: Do you mind
17 sharing which ones they were?

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I don't have
19 the list with me. I did the study last
20 year, but, yes, of course.

21 So, Mr. Masch, you mentioned a
22 pension issue. The rumored number for
23 that problem, which is not currently
24 reflected in your budget, is \$100
25 million; is that correct?

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2 MR. MASCH: Is what \$100
3 million?

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If State law
5 doesn't change with respect to the
6 pension issue you raised.

7 MR. MASCH: Well, our estimate
8 is that -- as I said, our pension costs
9 in FY11 are going to be about \$36 million
10 higher than this current fiscal year, but
11 net of State aid that the Governor has
12 proposed, we would have a \$13 million
13 increase. That net number; that is, the
14 growth in the number after an increase in
15 State aid, would be 30 million in FY2012
16 and 123 million in FY2013 under current
17 State law.

18 But I want to emphasize that
19 that's not actually based on the only
20 reasonable set of actuarial assumptions
21 that one might make. It's based on a
22 formula that was embedded in State
23 statute some years ago and which could
24 and, in the view of school districts
25 across the Commonwealth, should be

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2 changed in the period between now and
3 2013.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I mean,
5 according -- there's apparently a memo
6 that the State Department of Ed has sent
7 school districts that talks about a
8 miscalculation of the pension
9 contributions that they've requested. Do
10 you have a copy of that memo?

11 MR. MASCH: I don't have it
12 here, but --

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Rather if
14 you would just provide it to the Chair,
15 that would be fine.

16 MR. MASCH: I just note on that
17 that to the extent that the Commonwealth
18 were not to appropriate at the level
19 required under the formula in one year,
20 then they are obligated to make that up
21 in the next year. So whether there's a
22 revision to the budget or not, we'll
23 eventually either this year end or in the
24 subsequent year we'll get an adjustment
25 to the pension reimbursement.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The District
3 just received its second
4 multi-million-dollar grant from the
5 Department of Labor for 26 million for
6 four persistently dangerous schools. The
7 first grant was for 40 million for seven
8 schools. What's been accomplished with
9 that grant money at those schools and how
10 has data supported the evidence that
11 those efforts are working?

12 DR. ACKERMAN: We're going to
13 have to get that to you. Can we provide
14 that breakout --

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure.

16 DR. ACKERMAN: -- that data
17 broken out by school? Because the grants
18 look different at each school.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. If
20 you could provide that to the Chair, that
21 would be terrific.

22 DR. ACKERMAN: Okay.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So with
24 respect to contracting or -- can you tell
25 me how many people in the School

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2 District, either employees or consultants
3 or private contractors, receive in excess
4 of \$150,000 in compensation?

5 MR. MASCH: We'll be happy to
6 put that list together for you.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That would
8 be great, if you could provide that to
9 the Chair.

10 Could you also please provide a
11 list of all contracts over \$100,000 in
12 the current year, whether they're
13 capital, consulting, and break them down
14 between administrative and instructional,
15 and then do the same for what you're
16 planning to do in 2011.

17 And those all are my questions,
18 Madam Chair.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much.

22 This hearing will stand in
23 recess until -- before that, let me
24 acknowledge we did not mention the
25 presence of the Secretary of Education

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2 for the Mayor, Lori Shorr. Thank you for
3 being here.

4 Having said that, this hearing
5 will be in recess until 10:00 a.m.
6 tomorrow.

7 Thank you all.

8 DR. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

9 (Committee of the Whole
10 recessed at 3:30 p.m.)

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