

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD RETREAT**

February 26, 2020 – 5:34 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent
Robert Murray, Esq., General Counsel

Comm. Vincent Arrington
*Comm. Emanuel Capers
*Comm. Oshin Castillo
Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Manuel Martinez, Vice President
Comm. Joel Ramirez
*Comm. Nakima Redmon
*Comm. Corey Teague

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Simmons.

Comm. Ramirez read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused notice of this meeting:

**Board Retreat
February 26, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
Administrative Offices
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was moved by Comm. Ramirez, seconded by Comm. Arrington that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be opened. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Comm. Simmons: While people are signing the list, I just want to remind everyone that each speaker has three minutes. Please adhere to the time limit.

Ms. Dana Glasspie: Good evening Superintendent, district administration and guests. I'm here to represent Young Men's Leadership Academy and all young men and to stand up for what is right. I have sent out many emails to the district in reference to why schools are failing our boys and educating boys for success. I don't know whether you had the opportunity to review any of them, but I'm hoping that you did as they represent why we are where and what we are fighting for. My grandson is currently attending Young Men's Leadership Academy and he has been there for two years now. Yes, there were some challenging times in the beginning, but as he adjusted to the different environment and structure everything began to change in a positive direction. I'm very proud of my grandson and the progress that he has made now in fifth grade. It's a beautiful experience. Principal Mr. Medley began Young Men's Leadership Academy and brought in a whole new vibe that is very impressive. He strategized and used a different approach to capture the boys' attention, maintain it, execute it, and complete. The end result is successful.

*Comm. Capers enters the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Ms. Glasspie: I would like to be able to share at least one of those experiences from the things that he has brought to the school. I know that in most cases not all boys take the initiative to pick up a book and read, but Mr. Medley started a weekly reading program. Every Wednesday the boys would stop everything and obtain a book of their choice and begin to read for at least 30 minutes. No noise and complete silence. When the parents were informed, I gave it a thumbs-up to support the idea. How I know it was really working was when my grandson came home and told me that he had finished one of those books from a series that we had purchased some time ago. Of course, my reaction was that I didn't believe him and he said it's true. He showed me and then he purchased another book and brought in another book to the school. I was blown away at his approach and getting the boys to actually settle down and focus on reading, which was a great success. I know that we're all pressed for time. In closing, I would like to say to each and every one of you here in the district that you start off good, but then you don't follow through to put in the work and the resources necessary to make our schools great. We are still trying to figure out and find a way, after all these years, to surpass just better. We need this school for our young boys and the male role models as leadership for them. We need to step outside the box and take the risk to create the changes necessary and go with the flow. We need to seriously work on becoming the greatest, one and only, all boys' academy school in Paterson to turn all that negative news into positive news. I would just like to say to all of you, don't give up. The fight for success has just begun. Stop disappointing our boys. Thank you.

Mr. Bobby Faison: Good evening everyone. I'm the PTO President at Young Men's Leadership Academy. Basically, we want to know what the future of the school is. I and all the other parents have made the decision to remove their child from the home school for a reason. Most of it is because of the sizes of the classrooms. At this school, we are getting more one-on-one interactions with the teachers. The classroom sizes are smaller. Mr. Medley has been a great change. He has brought so many different things to the school in terms of the reading program. He brings in different guest speakers. I was there for a Saturday program and the boys were answering questions about what they learned from the speakers that have come so far and they were all interacting and answering questions. Everyone had their hands up. It's working. The test scores are improving and we just want some consistency. We want everyone to support our school to make sure that we don't fail. Our parents are getting involved more and more. We're working together. We're contacting each other. Mr. Medley is bridging that gap between the communication with the parent and teachers. The teachers are awesome. My son is excited to go to school. I've seen so much change in

the past two years that he's been there and we don't want to lose that. If they get sent back to their home school, we're dealing with the same problems and issues that we had when we made the decision to pull them out of it. I think it would be counterproductive for our children. We just want to know the future. Like I said earlier, we want to make sure that we have the support that we need to continue to grow. Don't give up on them. That's all we ask. Thank you all.

*Comm. Castillo and Comm. Redmon enter the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Ms. Kathy Morgan: Hi. My name is Kathy Morgan. I had the opportunity of working throughout the district since I started as a substitute. I saw a lot of these boys in their home schools. I saw that a lot of the home schools didn't use Young Men's Leadership Academy for what it was set up to be. Instead of them sending young men that we want to build into leaders, they use that as a dumping ground to send anybody that they didn't want to deal with. Boys learn different from girls. Anybody that didn't want to sit quietly with their hands folded, they labeled them a behavior problem and shipped them out to Young Men's Leadership Academy. Young Men's Leadership Academy is not a grammar school, middle school, or alternative school. It is a leadership school. I had the opportunity to work with the prior principal and as a Board employee I'm working with Mr. Medley. I see a difference already. I see a difference in everybody not running downstairs and leaving out of class. When they come to speak to Mr. Medley, they come with a pass and they want to tell him about the word of the day. They want to tell him how they went around the building where our words are placed, they researched the word, got the meaning of the word, and was able to use it in a sentence. They get excited about telling him what they've learned. This school is an asset for our community. I've seen how young boys are labeled as behavior problems and get tossed around. They deal with it in their own little adolescent way until they get to high school. By freshman year, we've lost them, if not eighth grade. This is a way to keep our boys engaged, in school, and wanting to go that extra mile to do that high level of education. With the speakers that we're having, they're very engaged. They're talking about things. What's the school Chris wants to go to? Chris is in fourth grade and he's already talking about the college he wants to go to. This is what our boys are talking about. It's not just the mediocre conversation. They're having intelligent conversations about what they want to do in their lives. Mr. Matthews came in and he talked to them the other day. They were talking about having a backup plan in case plan A doesn't work. They know it's not all about wanting to wear a suit and tie. These boys are learning. It's a good thing. I'm hoping and praying that it's not cut. We can start doing our application process where we can pull more young men in that want to be leaders. We have so many grandparents raising kids, and aunts and uncles raising other people's children. We have so many children with no fathers in the household. We have at least four or five male teachers. It's a strong asset for this community. Please don't kill the program.

Mr. Keith Edghill: Good evening everyone. I'm currently the science teacher at Young Men's Leadership Academy and this is my second full year. Developmentally, our boys are becoming great leaders. Their confidence level has skyrocketed since I've been there. It's not just classroom academics that are going on there. There's a lot of social and emotional learning development where our young boys are starting to speak up and stand up for themselves with some of the things that we promote in them. Speaking on behalf of the staff and students, our school has become a real family to me. I've been in education for a very long time and I wake up in the morning excited to get to work and I get there early. When we see our boys on a daily basis, they're just full of energy. They're active and they have conversations for you and they're ready to go. To stunt their development at this stage would be a disservice to the young boys there. I'm

hoping that for the future we receive more boys in there because word should be getting around of the great things that have happened at Young Men's Leadership Academy since I've been there. I'm not one to dwell on the past. People tell me stories about how it used to be. I didn't come to Young Men's Leadership Academy based on what somebody told me. I came here to see it for myself. I can tell you firsthand that the love our children are receiving there is great and their development in skyrocketing. Hopefully, that will continue in the future and we'll look for more great things to happen. Thank you.

Ms. Stephanie Brown: Hi. My name is Stephanie Brown. I have three boys at Young Men's Leadership Academy. I have two fifth graders and one eighth grader. My eighth grader has been there since the school opened. It was disappointing for me to hear that you guys are trying to close the school being that we live in a world where the streets are raising our men. I'm not going to say that it's perfect because no school is perfect. We have our fights. We have this and that. But what I can say is that they're getting taught life lessons in this school. They're getting taught more than "one plus one equals two" and "ABCD." That's all I wanted to say. It's just very disappointing. I would like to see the school continue to try to grow and get more help, especially in the world that we live in today where the streets are raising our boys. That's it.

*Comm. Teague enters the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Mr. Mike Beydoun: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say something. I'm one of the parents of two boys who belong to the school that we are talking about. The first year I brought my kids to school I was not satisfied. With the next year coming up, I started to see changes and a difference in my kids. I'm truly trying to do everything I can as a parent to help the kids. We need you. They need you. Everyone needs you. If you don't help us, who else will? We need you to give these kids a chance to become somebody. Finally, I'm starting to see movements and changes and that makes me so excited. This upcoming Friday I'm going to come as a guest speaker. If I don't care about those kids, I wouldn't take the time to go and say something to them. I'm not going to be talking about things like other speakers they have seen already. I'm going to be telling them stuff I wish somebody had told me when I was a kid. I want them to open their eyes now. At least I'm trying to do a little bit to try and help them out. We count on you guys to give them that chance and help them a little bit. What else can we do in this case? Take them back John F. Kennedy School? With all due respect to Kennedy School and whoever is in it, I don't want my kids to go there. I've been trying to sell my house because I don't want my kids to go there. I was raised in Kennedy High School. I don't need anyone to tell me about Kennedy. I couldn't sell my house for the past five years because I don't want these kids to go there. If this school closes, they will be going there very soon. We are counting on you to help us out. Thank you.

Ms. Gwen Tyler: Hi. I have a son. He's in the seventh grade and he's been going to the school. My son is going to regular public school and I had no idea my son had a learning disability. I sent him to the school and the teachers were saying, "Why is he getting bad grades? Why didn't he want to go to school?" He went to a public school two years ago. He got jumped by a bunch of boys in the cafeteria and nobody saw it happening. Do you know how we found out what happened? The kids put it on Snapchat. When they found the video, the principal called me in. She talked to me and told me this is what happened and they were going to put all the kids on bullying. I took my son to counseling ever since then. He's been going to counseling and he's been going to school. He started to show a lot of resistance. He didn't want to go to school. He would stay home. I would go to work early and they would tell me that he's not in

school. Sometimes they call me and sometimes they don't. I didn't know that my son wasn't even going to school until he got a certain amount of absences. When I found out that he was being absent, they come tell me that we have to go to court because he has all these absences. I said let's backtrack while I find out the reason why he was absent. They didn't help me at all. They just said that I have to pay the fine and it's my responsibility to make sure my child gets to school. When I send my child to school, it's your responsibility to make sure my child is safe when he's in the school. When something happened, they didn't offer him counseling. I took it upon myself to get my son counseling. I took it upon myself to make sure that he was okay. He was getting low grades. But at the time, he was passing the tests that he took. I asked myself how he keeps getting D's and F's, but they move him to the next grade. They said he's passing tests, but he isn't doing anything in class. I spoke with someone to get him into the Young Men's Leadership Academy. By him going there, things are starting to change. The teacher is starting to see that Brian is smart. He does his work and he's good. He can verbally tell me things, but I knew my son can write. You can ask his teachers. He can tell you anything you want to know. He does so much with hands on. They said he could be an engineer. He does that. All the time he was in public school, nobody told me anything. They just passed him along. I want him to be able to learn the hands-on skills. He built a nice house. He comes home and is excited by what he learned. He loves science. He can talk about it. But at the time, he couldn't write anything about it. You can ask him. Why is my son not writing? I asked for a 504. For two years straight, I've been asking them to help me out with my son. They just said they'd put it in. I went to the school, did the paperwork, they came to see me, and they talked to me. He was getting frustrated because the teacher would tell him, "If you don't get it, you just don't get it. I have other kids in the class." Don't leave my son out because you have over thirty kids in the class. That's not his fault. I feel like he got left behind. Since he's been at this school, he's learning. They take time with him. He can get his work done. The teacher has great communication. They don't feel like he's frustrating. I just don't want this school to close because it's a great thing that's going on for young men. If young men want to go to that school, if they want to learn and grow up in Paterson and be somebody, the foundation is that school and I'm a witness to that. Thank you.

It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Castillo that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be closed. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND/OR NEGOTIATIONS

It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Ramirez that the Board goes into executive session to discuss collective bargaining agreement terms, conditions, and/or negotiations. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board went into executive session at 6:00 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

YOUNG MEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY TURNAROUND PLAN

Ms. Shafer: A year and a half ago, the Board requested that we put together a turnaround plan for Young Men's Leadership Academy. Ms. Warren was in charge of that plan and Marc Medley just started in July as principal.

Ms. Cicely Warren: Good evening everyone. Before we get started with our presentation, I just want to walk you through the materials you have in your folder. On the left side, you have a copy of this presentation as well as the spring update presentation that was prepared for June. It was not included in the agenda so it wasn't given. However, you did have an update presentation in December which showed where we were in terms of the cycle goals which were met at that time. You will also see there's a Young Men's Leadership Academy overview memo written by Principal Medley that describes everything that is going on at the school currently. In addition to that, you have the suspension comparison data comparing this year to last year and the recruitment plan. That's all on the left side of your folder. On the right side, you have some research that I won't get into during the course of this presentation, but you're welcome to look at it at your leisure. It includes advice given on single-sex schools in an article from Ed Week, and the study done by Pedro Negara regarding best practices for single gender schools. There are some commonalities that were identified in that study and those are part of the turnaround plan at Young Men's Leadership Academy. Additionally, there's an excerpt regarding a study about discipline for young men of color. We have a couple of articles from COSEBC. You have documents related to what we're currently doing as well as some research to justify why we're doing what we're doing. The purpose of our presentation today is to give you an update on the turnaround plan that was presented last June. As you may recall, there were four domains in the turnaround plan. The first is academics and instruction, professional development, character education, leadership development, and parent and staff collaboration. All our efforts have been in one of those four domains. To refresh your memory regarding the premise of Young Men's Leadership Academy, it was designed to address historical disparities in achievement and discipline for young men of color, in particular, disparities in achievement and discipline between males and females. The premise is that those issues could be addressed in a single gender setting. We intended to capitalize on opportunities that arise in a single-gender setting such as gamification of learning, having house themes, competition, hands-on kinesthetic instruction, and the like. Research has identified common characteristics among successful single-gender schools. We're working to avoid the growing pains that other single-gender schools have experienced, and those are in the research packets that I've provided for you. In light of all this, we implemented a curriculum that's grounded in common core, which are the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, enriched with high-interest content. Last year we finished all four units of the customized curriculum for the school. Supported by a strong social/emotional programming that allows us to adopt guiding principles, which set the norms for how everything operates in the school. That's why we're following this model. The first domain is academics and instruction. As I said, we did some work regarding the curriculum at Young Men's Leadership Academy. I just want to give you a baseline. The research shows that if there is a sound, strong ELA instructional component, it has an impact on all other content areas. I just want to provide some baseline data in terms of cohorts regarding how our students are doing at Young Men's Leadership Academy. This is just the first unit assessment. Based off this information we're driving all our other efforts. As a cohort, our current fourth graders are showing a 10.3% increase on their baseline assessment in Unit 1. The current seventh graders showed a 20% improvement from year to year. The current eighth graders showed an 87% improvement from their baseline last year to their baseline this year. This drove all our work. We know Young Men's Leadership Academy was designed to address disparities in discipline and academic achievement for young men based on the demographics of our district and it was designed to admit

students based on needs and interests. There was no academic requirement for enrollment. We know that interventions are necessary. It's designed to address students who are at risk. We're not screening out based on academics. If you make the school, which is meant to address the needs of students who are typically at risk, you have to do more than just the norm. These are the interventions that we're currently using. Some of them are consistent across the district. However, the Lunch Bunch, the daily intervention block from 2:39 to 3:39, is something that's unique to Young Men's Leadership Academy and has also been implemented at our other turnaround schools. How are we doing in terms of reading intervention? If you recall last year, our goal was for 80% of the students who were two or more years behind in terms of their reading levels to go up one reading level during the course of the year. Those are the students who are targeted for working with our reading specialist. Here we are this year. 96% of those students who were two or more years below at the start have grown at least one reading level since September. A third of them have increased 5 or more. 43% of them have increased between 3 and 4 reading levels. Bear in mind these students started two years below. 20% increased between 1 and 2 reading levels. This is just in September. We're also doing math intervention. Like the rest of the district, we're doing Success Maker in grades 3-5. It's an adaptive intervention for math. The students take the IPM and that tells you exactly what level they need to be at. Our students in grades 3-5 have achieved a 98.91% mastery of the skills identified after their IPM. They're making progress there. Our middle school students are using ALEX, the new program that we're using for RTI. All of the middle school students were placed on RTI level 3. RTI stands for Response to Intervention. 56% of those students have advanced to their grade level RTI course. They're not filling in basic skills anymore. They're filling in gaps in grade level content. That's progress.

Comm. Hodges: What is RTI?

Ms. Warren: It stands for Response to Intervention.

Comm. Hodges: I know that sounds good. What does that mean?

Ms. Warren: RTI is a cycle of assessing where students are, where are their deficiencies, addressing those deficiencies, monitoring that intervention practice, and modifying if necessary. It's a constant cycle of examining and readdressing any skills that are lacking. Does that make sense? 56% of the middle school students have already advanced out of the initial level that they were placed on. Students demonstrated an average gain of 24% after they were placed in their grade level course. Mr. Medley is going to join me to talk about other variables that have contributed to the academic progress of our students and our general approach to instruction at Young Men's Leadership Academy.

Mr. Marc Medley: Good evening everyone. I had no idea who was going to show up or what they were going to say. The parents actually gave my piece of the presentation for me. A lot of the things that are in this presentation you actually heard from some of the parents as they were speaking. From September through December, our suspensions were down and our attendance was up. A lot of that was based on relationships that we built with the boys. As a matter of fact, every morning one of the last things they hear before they go to class as I ask the question, "What is our job?" they yell back at me, "To love us!" I say, "What is your job?" and they say, "To love each other!" They have that family feeling of love that you heard the parents talking about. We do the flag salute and the last thing they say before they go to class is "Go be great!" The boys are constantly hit with positive messages. You heard one of the parents say their son is now loving to come to school. That's exactly what's going on in terms of why our

suspensions are down and our attendance is up. There's a book that we're doing as a book study called "Teaching the Male Brain." As I started reading through this book, there's not one thing this author has listed in terms of how boys think and what they do that I haven't seen in the school. Research has shown that boys love competition. We love being competitive. The research has shown that the boys will actually do better academically if you can set it up in terms of a competition. Some of the stats that you're hearing about the increase in reading scores, these are the students that work with our reading specialist. You would be amazed at how excited these boys get about their cars moving around that track and because they're excited about those cars moving, that's contributing to their reading levels going up. We do an intense focus on vocabulary and word of the day. Every day there is a new word of the day. There's a mindful moment. A few of our teachers actually put the mindful moment on and we have discussions with the boys about what that meant to them. They have the opportunity to, in their own words, share what that means to them. The word of the day we give every day and a testament to that is on Saturday when I was talking to the boys about what they learned from the many guest speakers. They were able to articulate that. Mr. Matthews was with us on Friday and he used the word 'resilient.' I was sitting next to a young man and he turned around to me and said, "Mr. Medley, that was one of our words of the day." I said you're absolutely right, son. That tells me they're listening and they're looking. You're going to see in the next slide our entire building is a word wall. If you go into our multi-purpose room, you will see words plastered all over the place. Two days ago, on Monday, I saw two boys down in the multipurpose room and they had their phones out. I was wondering what they were doing. They came down with their phones and started taking pictures of the words so they could study them later. That was a wonderful use of technology because we're constantly telling them they can't use their phone. They actually brought their phones out, took pictures of the words so they could actually study them whenever they were home. And they began to use them in their vocabulary. We're doing a lot of work with our social/emotional and self-esteem that you keep hearing us talk about. In this classroom the boys get a chance to see themselves whenever they produce something. They see their picture go up on the wall. They excited by that. I have a student that when I got there in September, every time he came to me it was, "I can't." He was one of those two suspensions that were on the board. Whenever we talked about why he was suspended, he said, "I deserved it." He would literally come in and say he's not worthy. This is the same child that now comes to my office and says, "Mr. Medley, look what I did." I have two of his essays hanging up behind me in my office. He cannot wait to get to school now to show what he has done. It was hard for me to put into words what the experience is like here in terms of dealing with the boys. Then it finally came to me. Many of our boys, as you know, are growing up in single parent homes. Generally, in the "functional" family, you have the male that's the leader and that's who the boys will look to as the leadership role. In a school like this, it's there. Those boys are hungry to be able to show what they can do to a male leader. They cannot wait to come in and say, "Look what I did," to the male leader, which would normally be done in the house with the father. That's when it finally occurred to me the difference. I knew about his school prior to being assigned here. I didn't quite understand. Now being there in those relationships with those boys, I really got a chance to see. Because of our numbers, we have one-to-one in terms of our Chromebooks. Every day I have the opportunity building relationships to distribute Chromebooks to them. They have to get their Chromebook from me as I hand them out and they turn them in at the end of the day in the same way. (Video Presentation) The boys are going over their own academics and sharing with each other where they can improve. They're goal setting. They're going over their own report cards. We actually go over their grades and they have the opportunity to themselves come up with what is their plan going to be to improve themselves. We're a uniform-wearing school. From September to December 21 they

wear their polos. From December 21 to March 21 we're dressed just like I am today. They're in the shirt, ties, and vests.

Comm. Martinez: What grades were the youngsters?

Mr. Medley: Fifth grade.

Comm. Martinez: How many scholars enrolled per grade?

Mr. Medley: It varies. In one grade you can have 17 and in another you might have 6.

Comm. Martinez: How many classes per grade?

Mr. Medley: It's one class per grade level at the moment, with the exception of fifth grade, which is two classes.

Ms. Warren: The next domain in our turnaround plan was professional development. When the school was originally opened, we understood what the research said about what was needed to address teaching in a single-gender situation. However, the professional development wasn't built in at that point. That's something that had to be addressed in restructuring the school. These are the efforts that have been ongoing. Eagle Institute occurred during the summer. The entire school solutions team is how we refer to them. They went to New York and learned the Eagle model. Part of our work with Eagle also includes onsite coaching. There are two site visits. One of those already occurred and that involved work with the staff and the parents. We'll hear more about that later on. Social/emotional learning is essential. I understand that it's a district initiative, but in reference to how boys learn, you have to address the relational aspect before you get to the cognitive level of engagement. If I don't think you care about me, I'm not necessarily going to be available to receive what you're trying to teach. That has to be addressed first. That was done in multiple ways. You have to start with the adults because SEL is about self-regulation, recognizing your own emotions and managing them. The adults have to master that before they can impart that to the students. There was a lot of one-on-one coaching with staff, observations on how they interact with students, feedback after those observations, and a lot of articles and digital PLCs. None of that can occur without trust so that was essential. Restorative Practices are a component of SEL. Part of SEL is also negotiating and resolving conflicts. We went from being punitive, which was part of the reason chronic absenteeism was so high in the early years of the program, to being restorative. If you are absent, it hurts the community. If there is a disciplinary infraction, harm has been caused and you need to restore that. It's a separate strand, but restorative practices really are a component of social/emotional learning. There's been job imbedded instructional support from our supervisors who are responsible for customizing the curriculum resource guide. Our focus this year in terms of our annual school plan, which all categorized schools are required to develop, is shifts in classroom practice, going from lecture to small group instruction and using data to identify how you are going to interact with each of those small groups. The teachers had to do a self-assessment in that regard. They're working in their PLC's around those issues. We hope their assessments will increase by the end of the year. As I said, PLC's are supporting the work around shifts in classroom practice. Mr. Medley mentioned one of the texts that we are using, "Teaching the Male Brain." That's an author who had the opportunity to present when I went to COSECOB conference. She is an expert in single gender education, not just for boys, but for boys and girls. We've used her research in the school as well. There are also other books that you will see in your resource packet. Of course, the teachers at YMLA participate in all the district mandated PLC

professional development. Here are samples of some of the other books that we're using. "Soar" by David Banks from Eagle Institute and "Solutions to Educating Black and Latino Males." If it's not the whole book, there are excerpts, as well as "Reeducation of African American Child in Today's School System." We are working all our plans, our annual school plan, professional development plan, and the turnaround plan simultaneously. We are optimistic and we are realistic. Again, I want to reiterate that there is no academic requirement for attending YMLA. We take students as they are. Our job is to address their needs and build them in terms of their leadership capacity because eventually we are going to turn this community over to them. These are all the various ways we are working our plans, highlighting social/emotional learning. Continued focus on order and structure. I don't want people to misinterpret the change from punitive to restorative to mean that any time a student does something wrong we say it's okay. They actually have to repair the harm that they've done and that is reinforced by rituals and routines that occur throughout the school day. Students know exactly what to expect when they walk in. It's not haphazard. The other part of us being realistic is acknowledging that there are some components of an instructional program that don't exist at YMLA, such as music, art, and computers. The special that they currently have is physical education. To address that, we've had to create a green light culture, meaning do whatever you have to do as a teacher and incorporate whatever you need to incorporate to make sure students are mastering the content. If that means going outside because we are doing engineering, design, and measurement and getting your hands dirty and build things, the teachers have the green light to do so. They incorporate art whenever possible. The students were so excited about the project that I showed you in the previous slide. They went home and built that. That wasn't an assignment. They were thrilled to bring it back the very next day. You can see everyone is congregating around it as soon as the boys came in and said, "Look at what I made." Our teachers are really stepping up and taking on the responsibility of giving students interdisciplinary projects so that they can incorporate the arts, music, and design because the students don't have it in their schedule. This is another example. They were doing measurement. This is a science class. Anywhere art can be incorporated, they do it. This is another project that the students were working on. You'll see students are engaged from the moment they walk in the door. They are not sitting in traditional seating. They are collaborating because that's what the world requires. They are doing problem-solving together and referring to technology as a resource whenever necessary. They are learning life skills as you heard one of the parents say earlier in addition to their academics. These are students who are working with the reading intervention specialist. She can tell you to a tee every student's level and how much growth they've made. Mr. Medley will talk about the next domain in our turnaround plan, character education and leadership development.

Mr. Medley: A lot of our work in terms of relationships is around this character education and leadership development. As you also heard Ms. Warren and some of the parents say, we do things nontraditionally over there. Let me walk you through our day. The kids come in the morning and they get off the bus. From 8:00 to 8:15 is their little time. As long as they are not killing each other, I don't say a word to them. At 8:15, I have a bongo. When they hear that, they know their conversation has ceased and their activity has ceased. From 8:15 to 8:30 is my time. We have theme days as well. Monday is Libation Monday. The students have an opportunity to come up and do a ritual which is called Libation. They can share anything on their hearts and on their minds. They pour some water into the plants. We all yell back, "Ashe, Ashe". Kids have an opportunity to practice public speaking skills. From the first time we did Libation up until now, you would have to see the improvement of the students getting up there and being able to express themselves loudly and proudly from kids who were timid and afraid to get up and speak publicly. We have Drop Everything and Read

Wednesday. That's what the parent was talking about earlier. At that point, from 8:00 to 8:15 is their time. But at 8:15, everything in that building shuts down. If you walk in that building between 8:15 and 8:30 on a Wednesday, you will be reading as well. Everybody is reading from 8:15 to 8:30 on Wednesdays. On Fridays, we have House Fridays. We've taken on a house model which was shown to us by Eagle Academy. That's where we've broken into houses. We have six houses. The boys had the opportunity to name their own houses and they did it on historical figures. We have Mandela House, Ali House, X House, Chavez House, Latimer House, and Carver House. The boys came up with their own slogan. For example, Malcom X house, if I go in there and say, "X House," they will yell back, "By any means necessary." If we say Chavez House, they say, "Si Se Puede." They have made their own statements that they yell back. They've broke into houses and they have the opportunity to work together in their houses. That's the house model. We've talked about the restorative practices and social/emotional learning. That has been a game changer there. It's a way of life. I was talking to Mr. Reed earlier when we were in the conference room. For us, the social/emotional learning and the restorative practices are a way of life. There's a chart that I am going to show you in a couple of minutes that gets into the five components of it. That's the language that the boys are speaking. We have our Cub Scouts. They meet twice a month. Our success mentors are really our teachers. We're just making sure the boys are doing what they're doing. I'm going to talk about guest speakers who come in in a second. We kicked off our Saturday program this past Saturday. We had a wonderful time with the boys. Then we have what we're calling our guest speaker series. In my previous assignments, we always had Career Day once a year. Oddly enough, I told the guidance counselor in my previous assignment that we're going to do Career Day more than once. When I got to this assignment, because we do things nontraditionally and do things differently, we started doing guest speakers almost every week. Since September, we've had the following people in there. We've had district members. We've had an attorney. Jason Foy was the attorney for one of the prison guards, one of the correction officers who was supposed to be responsible for watching Jeffrey Epstein. He was representing one of those prison guards. He came to us one day and he was in the paper the next day. It blew the boys' minds. We've had a pilot in. We've had folks from the Police Athletic League. We had an ESPN sports analyst, Mr. Jacobs. We've had local folks, our Reverend Jason Moody and Emmanuel Capers. We had a freshman from Yale that I know that came in and talked to the students. He's a freshman and the boys got a chance to talk to him. Because of that, I have a student now who wants to go to Yale. You heard Ms. Morgan ask me about the student. We have one that wants to go to LSU and one that wants to go to Yale. I call them Mr. Yale and Mr. LSU. We've had our police officers in there and the gang unit. We've had folks from the Department of Public Works. They have a group called The Street Keepers. They came in and they shared with the young men. They are getting a wide variety of perspectives and careers that they can look up and say, "I think I want to be that." As I said, Mr. Matthews was our last speaker. He was on this past Friday and the boys are attentive. As soon as he said the word "resilient" the child turned to me and said, "Mr. Medley, that was one of our words of the day." That's our list of speakers. As we go through the year, more are coming. If you are interested, please let me know. One of the parents that were talking is going to be here this Friday. That was his son who built the table that you just saw. Here's a picture of some of our speakers who are going to get it. Because I'm an AV geek, when the pilot came in, I was worse than the kids. I was worse than the kids when he came in. On the social/emotional learning, this is what we were talking about the five tenets – self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. We're literally having the boys think and talk in these terms. If they're doing something that's an infraction, we'll ask them which one of those was that. Self-management? Do you think you could do that a little bit better? Those are the

kinds of discussions we start having, responsible decision-making. As a matter of fact, when the two boys were talking, that was part of this in terms of them looking at their own grades and what decisions they may need to make to get better. Here it lists what social/emotional learning is all about. The response to intervention I just heard Dr. Hodges talking about. That's in here. The individual group counseling and goalsetting conferences, that's what the boys were doing. In terms of our parent and staff collaboration, they spoke for themselves tonight. As I said, I had no idea what parents were coming. We just told them we had a meeting tonight. We let them know that the retreat was on and they did their thing. I was sharing with Ms. Warren earlier, when I first got there one of the parents made it very clear to me that he was tired of talking. Mr. Beydoun wanted to see some action. He said, "I'm tired of talking. I want to see it." There's been a mind shift. He came to me and said, "Mr. Medley, I see it." He moved from "I'm tired of talking" to "I see it." When we're talking about parent and staff collaboration, it really is like a family. There's not one person who's visited the building yet that hasn't shared with me that it feels like a family in here. Not one. We had a meet-and-greet. We had that back in August. That's when I first met everybody and they met me. They were working on some PTO fundraising. This past report card night we had a vaping presentation that Ms. Olsen came to the school and did. We're part of the grant that's going on these ski trips. Last Thursday was the first. Tomorrow is another one. Parents are acting as chaperones and coming in as guest speakers. When we had our Eagle Academy professional development, they attended that as well. The parents are eager and willing, as you saw tonight. It's there. We just have to continue to cultivate it. On an average report card night, out of 55 kids, we get 30 parents. (Video Presentation) You heard one parent saying her son was beginning to learn because they were doing hands-on. This was an example of parent collaboration. This project had to take place at home with the parents. The project was you have \$35 dollars. You are budgeting. You saw us in terms of the building with the engineering and measurement. When we did Unit 1, one of our strongest strands was measurement from those kids having to build that bench. In terms of budgeting, numbers, and math, a project like this will help them with that. This is one more video. It's the last one. Again, just to show that parents are working with us in terms of working with their kids at home on these various projects that the teachers are assigning. (Video Presentation) This was filmed in their house somewhere. As we know, the best way to learn something is to teach it. I'm not sure whether he wrote his own word problem or not. I think he did, but I'm not sure. I don't want to give him credit if he didn't, but I think he wrote his own word problem. We notice that in math that's what our kids struggle with, word problems. Ms. Warren will take you through this piece.

Ms. Warren: What's the point? Once you've addressed social/emotional learning, you've focused on relationships, and you provide the interventions necessary, what is the impact? If we look at our unit assessments for Unit 2 for grades four, five, and seven, YMLA students are actually performing at a higher level of proficiency than the district. For ELA Unit 2, grades five, six, seven, and eight are actually performing at a higher level than the district. For our running records, which are part of the assessment for our third, fourth, and fifth graders, you will see that our students are doing well relative to their peers in the district. In terms of next steps, Mr. Medley will talk about recruitment and retention. But of course, we want to ensure that we are increasing staff capacity, giving them professional development on culturally relevant pedagogy, and social/emotional learning across all content areas. They've been introduced to it as concept. But now, how do you introduce it and link it to the content areas that they're supposed to be teaching? Reinforcing response to intervention - what is this constant cycle of assessment, evaluating, re-teaching, and modifying instruction? Leadership development in terms of mentoring - our goal is always one-to-one. Every student has a mentor. Exposure to college and career - we have several college visits that are in

the pipeline. Fostering and supporting parents and community/staff collaboration. Mr. Medley will speak to the recruitment plan that is currently underway. That's on the left side of your folder.

Mr. Medley: In terms of recruitment, it's almost like a marketing campaign, if you will. There are a couple of things. There are two areas that we're chipping away at. One is the notion or perception that it's an alternative school. It's not. As you heard Ms. Warren say, we don't have academic requirements. At the same time, we ask the principals to identify students who have leadership skills that may be getting distracted in their current schools. The second piece of it is you have parents always wondering if the school is going to be there. Do I want to go through this process of putting my child in something that may or may not be there once I go through that? Those are the two things that we're up against. But this is what's happening. Because the word is getting out about all the different things that we're doing over there, word of mouth is now surpassing those two things. I've had at least five principals already that have called and asked about placing students there in September. I've had parents of siblings at the school that are now saying they want their next child to come here. Letters went out to principals. At the principals meeting with Ms. Shafer, I presented it at the unit meeting. We're going to be filming a video that's going to go up on the website and it's going to go out to the schools letting parents know what we are and what we're not. Let the kids talk just like you saw here tonight letting them know. We have our numbers of what we're looking for per grade and per class. We're at about 55 now. If we got 20 per grade level, that would double our numbers. That's six levels. Six times 20 would give me 120 kids. That's what I am shooting for, 20 per class. The principals know our numbers. They have boys. They've identified our guidance counselors. They're going to be meeting with the guidance counselors at the other schools as well. You have the videos and the letters. If I have the opportunity to speak at PTO meetings, I'm looking to do that at various sister schools. I have no problem going to the community. I have no problem being the cheerleader for the school. I don't think other folks are having an issue with it either. That's what we're doing in terms of recruitment. I've met with the principals at School No. 16, Old Roberto Clemente, School No. 10, and School No. 29. They've all sent folks to come and take a look at the building. Word of mouth is getting out there. Folks are saying they want to send their children there now. As that perception continues to filter out in terms of it being an alternative school and once people figure out if the school is going to exist or not, it's going to be even higher. I was sharing with Ms. Warren earlier I honestly think we're going to have to turn some folks away. I honestly think that's where it's going to get to.

Comm. Martinez: 120 is the goal for next year. What's the current number?

Mr. Medley: 55.

Comm. Hodges: Being one of the oldest people here, I recall conversations around forming this school. One of the ideas was to develop a successful curriculum which we can export outside the school to the rest of the district because of the fact that African American males were the lowest performing students. I'm curious as to whether you're stockpiling successful practices which we can then use to export to the other schools and other programs throughout the district. I know you're just one person and there's a staff and professional development involved. But there are some elements that can be taught and passed. I'd like to see that, particularly because of what I heard from some of the parents today in terms of what's happening with their children. I'm disappointed that's still going on. I'm very curious to see how we stockpile that and export.

Ms. Warren: To answer that question, it's about refining practices, not necessarily a program. It's an approach and we're not isolating it to Young Men's Leadership Academy. My administrative goal is reducing the number of suspensions at Young Men's Leadership Academy and Dr. Frank Napier Academy by implementing restorative practices. We're already showing progress in that regard. I have an action plan around increasing the capacity of staff to make their schools more restorative instead of punitive and we're seeing the results there. There are many schools that have been trained so far. We have more that are in the pipeline to be trained. The practices that we found to be successful in one setting we're replicating in other high need areas.

Comm. Hodges: I'm particularly interested in academic success. Even from talking to students in later grades, they will tell you when we went to college that we don't challenge them enough. We let up. We don't ask them to do things that they're asked to do at the next level. Your success is special and I'd like to see that across the board. I'd like to find ways to replicate that in other schools throughout the district.

Comm. Capers: Thank you for your presentation. I'm a big advocate for single-gender schools. I went to a single-gender school, Don Bosco, so I believe in this program and I love what you're doing. When we were at the COSEBOC conference in Boston we had a great conversation and it was just a plan and now I see it today. This is a 360 turnaround going on and this is the kind of stuff we like to see where schools go from being the worse to being one of the best. These are the same kids that were in the schools that were failing behind. Now they're up to speed and are progressing forward. I love everything in the presentation. I think that the district has to continue to give more. I know we need to increase the number in each grade level, but how would that get supported if the classes are going to be the same? Are we going to add more teachers? Are we going to give more resources? Class sizes are small and that's due to a lot of student success, especially in reading and math. That's what Don Bosco taught us. When I went to that school the energy around learning was amazing. The students bought in, the staff buys in, and most of all the parents buy in. That's just amazing to me. That's going to be my one concern. I don't want to see class sizes grow. I want to see that same type of low classroom sizes because those boys need it. Great job! Great presentation! Keep up the good work.

Comm. Teague: Between your tenure at Napier and here, what are some of the differences that you've seen in terms of the environment and the overall culture?

Mr. Medley: We have to be willing to do some of the non-traditional things. Because of our size we get a chance to do that. One of the differences is I actually don't feel like I'm talking to a wall in some respects. In other words, what I share with people is there's not one thing that I'm trying here at Young Men's Leadership Academy that I haven't tried in all my other assignments. The difference is folks are more receptive to it - parents, students and staff. That would be one of the main things. This school has the best Drop Everything and Read I've seen. I've done that in every school I've been in. This morning we did it from 8:15 to 8:30 and you could hear a pin drop.

Ms. Warren: I think another aspect of that is the intention. In order for students to enroll at the school there is an application process. The parents and students are interviewed. We're not looking at academics, but were looking for some feedback from their sending school about how they learn. During the interviews we talk about how you deal with conflict. When you don't know something, what do you do? That's regarding the students. In terms of the staff, that was intentional as well. In the first iteration of the school people were force placed and transferred in. In this instance, because it's a turnaround, we're not force placing staff. When staff applies to the building, these are

the expectations. This is the package. Are you up for it? Even with Mr. Medley, we had a conversation. This is what we're doing here. Are you up for it? He was wholeheartedly. It's about having the right people in the right seats on the bus. Then you can proceed moving forward.

Comm. Simmons: Unlike Comm. Capers, I need the enrollment to increase. I know you talked about the recruitment plan and the applications. Have we had applicants for this upcoming year?

Mr. Medley: Yes. That's what I was saying earlier. Already I have at least five that I know of. We haven't really done a full-blown press for putting the applications out there. We're doing that now. We're shooting the video. We have until March 24. We're in process now.

Ms. Warren: The other aspect I'd like to address is that recruitment doesn't occur in a vacuum. The first call I got saying that the school isn't going to be here was from a staff member. I didn't have that conversation with anybody. They heard it from a colleague across town. We're recruiting in a context. This is the second turnaround school that's been under my purview. When I was originally appointed, I had all of the elementary Choice schools. This program has had a level of interest, discussion, and scrutiny that the other programs didn't experience. That kind of contributes to a narrative that the school is constantly in peril, that it's a dumping ground, and that it's problematic. We designed a program for students who are at-risk and then wonder at the fact that the data shows they're at-risk. That's the context in which we're recruiting. The goal is to recruit on a level that we have at our GNC program, 20 students in a classroom.

Comm. Capers: I do want to see the school expand in numbers, but I just don't want to see overcrowding in the classroom. If it's going to be overcrowded, the program is going to go down. The district needs to support the school. If we are going to increase the numbers, we have to increase the number of teachers as well. I want to be clear on that part. The district rolled out the P-Tech program last year. I think it was great when the freshmen were coming in. They did a sign-in day. I think that would be great for the boys to understand that bond coming in. These are your brothers going into the next school year and they get to meet the other students. I think that could be implemented in the school just to build the culture even stronger than what it is.

Comm. Castillo: I would love to see single-gender classrooms in the schools moving forward so that more students have the opportunity throughout the district as well. What would it look like at School No. 16 or School No. 25? It's giving those boys and girls those opportunities that we're seeing. I would love to see that in our regular buildings. Granted, it's a little more difficult because you have way more students. But I think it's something that will take some planning, even just having the conversation of what it would look like in Paterson. More parents would love the opportunity and would be having those conversations. They would love to have their kids close. Some parents don't like sending their kids anywhere too far. They want those same opportunities closer to home within walking distance.

Ms. Warren: I do want to address the question or concern that Comm. Capers brought up earlier about the class size being enlarged to 20. I think we know more now than we knew when the school opened about the instructional strategies and culture and climate components that are essential. Being that we know that strong relationships, social/emotional learning, and intervention have to go hand-in-hand with the curriculum, unless we're going to make it an academic requirement for enrollment, then we have to

support that. You can have 20 students, but we have to do what the research says is necessary. We're either going to commit to do that or not.

Comm. Hodges: And we need to train staff.

Ms. Warren: Absolutely. Professional development is essential.

Comm. Redmon: How many staff members are in the school currently?

Mr. Medley: We have about 10. We have eight teachers and two guidance counselors.

Comm. Redmon: For a total of 55 students.

Ms. Warren: Most of them are teaching multiple grades.

Mr. Medley: We're broken into two schools. We're grades 3-5. Then we have the middle school. Those teachers teach 6-8.

Comm. Martinez: The ratio that was just described and the work that's taking place right there is ideal. I would love to see that ratio across our district. Is it sustainable to maintain a 1:10 ratio as the school potentially grows? Throughout our district that's very difficult - the smaller groups with more teachers devoting individualized attention to those scholars. Of course, you're going to see upticks in their performance and such. How sustainable is that to continue to grow a program in that way and to spread it throughout the district? That's where my thoughts are right now. How do we replicate that?

Comm. Hodges: That's why the practices are so important, getting that package put together and seeing how you can expand it. That was one of the reasons the school was brought into being, to do just that because of the difficulties with those groups of students.

Ms. Warren: All of our classes are inclusion classes. Students have IEPs. Being that that's the case, you're going to have to have resource staff included as well. That adds to the head count. Once you hit sixth grade, then we're talking about people having the proper certifications. There's no more general education. When you expand the grade levels, then that requires additional staff. Yes, we're looking to expand within the context of the environment, which interplays with our recruitment efforts, but we also understand that we're to expand without increasing the current staff head count because of our fiscal situation.

Comm. Hodges: How many students can the school hold?

Ms. Warren: What is the physical capacity of the building? I would have to get back to you.

School No. 14 and School No. 17 (Urban Leadership Academy)

Mr. Neil Mapp: Good evening. I was asked to do an existing conditions survey on two of our old schools in advance of the Board action I'm going to be presenting shortly to the Board to recommend hiring Diamond to do our major long-range facilities plan update along with the demographic study. We are also trying to describe the scope of work for the long-range facilities plan and we realized that we had to do a couple of things. We had to get information from curriculum, the administration, and the Board in

terms of where we go in terms of placing programs. What we will be doing is not only the demographic study to see where the population is coming from feeding our schools, but also how we may possibly redistrict the district and how we portion out elementary, middle, and high schools in maybe quadrants throughout the city. What do we do with some of our buildings and what's the capacity of some of our buildings? We just highlighted two of our buildings, which are School No. 14 and School No. 17. They are roughly the same age, about 134 years old. They were opened in 1886. Both of them were designed and built around the same time. I should have done a side-by-side comparison because the layout of both buildings, the construction type, and the current conditions are primarily the same. They're two-story brick block structures. The building envelope consists of shingle roofs, brick masonry units, and relatively new metal windows that we put in recently 20-25 years ago. They're probably reaching their useful life. They're no longer wood windows, but they're metal windows. Some of the issues with both buildings are the doors aren't fire-rated. The central staircases to both buildings are not enclosed. Staircases in buildings should be enclosed with a two-hour fire rated partition. It's a safe zone where people can go and stay for two hours until they're rescued. That has an open staircase through the middle of the building to upper floors, which flame and smoke can spread throughout the building. It doesn't meet fire codes. The building is not fully sprinkled. The building is wood framed and is not handicap accessible to upper levels. You may be able to get into the ground floor, which is the basement of the building, but you can't go throughout the building. It doesn't meet current handicap requirements. General classrooms don't meet educational adequacy standards because the majority of the classes at School No. 14 are around 500 square feet. It's the same with School No. 17, which is around 600 square feet. This is a quick layout of the building. This is the basement at School No. 14. You come into the basement here. This is Union Avenue. When you come in, this is the mechanical room. It says conference room, but this is the main office. The ceiling height is about 10 feet. It's not really conducive for office space for a principal. Then you go through the building where there's a central staircase and an area down here that they use as a cafeteria with toilets on the ground floor only. You have to come from the second floor all the way to the ground floor to access toilets. There is a teaching break room in the area and then you go to the outside. There are staircases on either end of the building and fire escape staircases that were put in after the building was open. This plan is similar to School No. 17. It's pretty much the same plan going all the way up with a central staircase in the middle. Some of the issues we're having with the building, as you can see in the building envelope, we can't tell how bad or what condition the roof is in because there's no access to the roof through the building. To get to the ceiling, the staircase is probably a story and a half high. There's no access ladder. You need a crane or a man lift to get up on the roof. You can see the façade. There's a lot of repointing and stabilization that needs to be done to the brickwork. This too is consistent with School No. 17. This is a typical classroom with tin ceilings. You don't see sprinkler heads anywhere else. The building is partially sprinkled in the hallways to protect the wood structure. In the building there's no gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, or media center. Outside when you go out to the playground at School No. 14 there's a tiered sloped playground area, which is dangerous. This is School No. 17. 129 years old. It was built in 1891. It's pretty much the same condition. It's pretty much the same layout also. You may come through the front. I think this is North Fifth Street. That's the basement. There's a central staircase and classrooms around that staircase. There's no protection coming through the core of the building for smoke and flame. All rooms open up into the central corridor. Some of the issues you see are falling masonry. It needs to be repointed and stabilized. The chimney needs some structural work. In a typical classroom the wood doors are not rated. The glazing in the doors does not meet code because too many square feet. You'll see no sprinklers in the classrooms. Although there's fluorescent lighting, it's not

adequate. They don't get enough candles on the desks. There is a myriad of things that are wrong and we'd have to put a lot of money into just bringing this up to code. The wood floors are nice, but they undulate. Outside around School No. 17 we have a retaining wall system that goes from six inches to eight feet on the backside of the building and that needs to be stabilized also. There is a lot of structural work that needs to be done to that. This year we're looking to get rid of these wrought iron railings around the building because they're dangerous. They exist around a lot of our schools and we're getting rid of them at School No. 6 and School No. 10. You'll see ornamental fencing going up instead. We're doing that to at least bring the aesthetics up to the majority of our schools where that type of fencing is our standard. As a safety measure, we're going to get rid of all of that. We've started stabilizing some of the masonry as people walk into the building if we're going to continue to use the school through the next fiscal year. That's it.

Comm. Teague: At what point did you decide that it was time to have this discussion? For years we've been complaining about School No. 14.

Mr. Mapp: In beginning to hire an architect to do the master planning for the district and the long-range facilities plan, they were asking me those questions. What's the capacity of this building? Where's this program going? If the demographic study shows that you have an influx of 1,000 kids, where are you placing them? We have to be able to say we want you to take a look at this building. Between School No. 14 and School No. 17, we're looking at \$500,000 to bring them up to code. Is it worth doing that? What's the best possible use of that land if we decide to do something different with it? Those are some of the determinations we'd like to make during the course of the master planning and the redistricting.

Comm. Teague: Do you think that the National Preservation wants to grab that building?

Mr. Mapp: Let's talk about that. A lot of our buildings can be designated historic. I've had a conversation with the city. But we have to realize that once we go historic in any building, we'd have to meet those requirements for maintenance and any renovations that we do. It's very costly. I said we will try to maintain the architectural integrity of the building as we do construction. At School No. 5 the state is about to start construction there. It's an \$8 million project to replace the roof and rebuild the parapet walls. There is artwork all the way around the building. I told them we have to try to preserve that because we made that arrangement and understanding with the city. We'll continue to do that.

Comm. Hodges: Isn't that part of the conversation of the long-range facilities plan committee, to come back and bring that discussion to us?

Mr. Mapp: You'll have them have charrettes to present to the Board and the community. We'll have those discussions.

Mr. David Cozart: It will also be discussed during the facilities committee as well.

DISCUSSION ON THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET PRIORITIES

Ms. Shafer: As we move forward, we've put together a series of cost-saving strategies to share with the Board in order to close the fiscal gap that we're experiencing right now. I'm just going to ask the cabinet members to come in. You're getting a packet that has all the information. They will go through and you can certainly ask any questions and

we will answer them. We would like to know tonight though because we are getting our allotment tomorrow from the state. We need to make some decisions so that we can prepare to balance the budget.

Comm. Simmons: As Boris makes his way and we move into this discussion, there was an item on the list that there has been concern about. I'm going to entertain a motion to remove the privatization of aides from this list.

It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. Ramirez that the privatization of aides be removed from the table. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Mr. Boris Zaydel: One of the strategies we've been discussing and that was implemented in 2018 was a reduction in our insurance deductibles. This year we're expected to spend between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million on settlements. That's because those cases arose prior to the new deductibles. Had those same cases been filed after the new deductible kicked in, our liability on each of those seven cases would be limited to \$50,000. Based on what we currently have in the pipeline from before the new deadline, we're anticipating that next year our settlement costs will be reduced significantly and range between \$300,000 and \$500,000 compared to the \$1.2 to \$1.4 million that we have this year.

Comm. Hodges: Just because of the deductibles? Is that the only reason? Or are there new strategies?

Mr. Zaydel: This is a new impact that we will see in the next year that will contribute to our budget savings. Are there any other questions? Thank you.

Ms. Shafer: Another budget savings strategy was to buy buses and decrease routes, specifically around field trips and athletics. We have June Gray, Lance, and Lisa.

Mr. Lance Gaines: We did an analysis on the privatization of buses. Specifically, we looked at field trips and athletics and what that would entail if we were to buy a fleet of buses to maintain that. As of right now, the current cost is about \$400,000. If we were to buy some buses, we're looking at about \$100,000 per bus over the course of five years. We could do a lease/purchase. We'd need about 10 buses to service athletics and field trips. We can do that over the course of five years. Some of the concerns we had with that were storage of buses, maintenance on buses, and down time when there were issues with buses. A lot of school districts have in-house mechanics and places to store their buses so there were some issues with that that were a little concerning. After we did this whole analysis, it did not come up to be a savings. We'd be losing about \$800,000 by doing that amount of buses. We could decrease the amount of buses, but then we wouldn't be able to capture the whole demand for the privatization.

Comm. Capers: How much are we spending on field trips and athletics, for both?

Ms. June Gray: Athletics is about \$268,000 and field trips came to \$132,000.

Comm. Hodges: I know in the past we've had this problem. I don't know if we still do. We use the buses that bring our children to school so the kids on the field trips had to wait until the buses were returned and had to be back before they were needed again in the afternoon to take the kids home. It shortens the day that they were going out there. Apparently, that's still a problem.

Ms. Gray: That was one of our major concerns, the timing of the buses and having to service both areas in the time frame.

Comm. Hodges: That still remains a problem with field trips.

Ms. Lisa Vainieri: In some cases, but in some it doesn't. Alden is our number one field trip company and they have reserve. They have additional buses. There are times in June where we can't even get buses because there are too many trips in one day. There are times trips can't even happen. There are times where students pay for their trips. That budget amount is just what's paid from the school budgets. There are other trips that happen that schools, grants, and companies pay for. That's why you're thinking that there's a lot, but no because other people pay for it.

Comm. Capers: This is just one company.

Ms. Vainieri: Alden is our number one. If we can't get a bus from them, we go to our second, which is Jersey Kids. Then we go to our third, which is Madison Coach.

Comm. Capers: All of that is in that \$400,000?

Ms. Vainieri: Correct, because field trips don't come out of transportation budget. It comes out of the school budgets.

Comm. Capers: That's another major concern for me. These companies are charging these schools \$300-\$400 just to go up to Tech. A lot of the Board was at an event for STARS Academy. They were just going up to Tech and they were saying you have to raise \$500 to get a bus. Everybody is looking at us. It was a community event. These bus companies are charging the schools \$400 or \$500. Another school was going to Medieval Times and they charged them \$600 just to go down Route 3. These are other costs that the schools are coming up with that are very detrimental because they have to come up with tickets and then just the bus cost alone is crazy. I don't think all of those costs are entered. If you go to Clifton and Tech, all of the buses are in their schools. We have big parking lots at Eastside and Kennedy. We have a big parking lot here at 90 Delaware. We have big parking lots in some of these schools. Some of these other private companies that we're hiring, they're just sitting in regular parking lots. They're not being damaged and used. Those are no concerns to them. They're not locked up or anything like that. These numbers are not sitting right with me. It would still be cheaper to do it in-house for athletics. We have a cost savings there. I just don't see how we're spending that much.

Comm. Redmon: To answer the first part of the question that Comm. Capers was talking about, we were at a community event and it was brought to our attention that STARS Academy went to the second level of the Special Olympics and their bus was not included. The PTO took it upon themselves to do a fundraiser. When we found out about the fundraiser, I came back to the Superintendent to ask why the PTO was raising money for a trip that should be in their budget. We know that if they make it through the first round, they should be automatically going. They should have transportation as part of the Special Olympics. The Superintendent reached back out to the schools and that is now taken care of. When it was brought to our attention that all PTOs sometimes raise money, we asked the Superintendent to go back and check the budgets of all the schools when it comes to field trips. She's in the midst of doing that. We have to let her do her job before we can continue.

Ms. Vainieri: I just want to add to what Comm. Redmon is saying. I personally work with STARS. In some situations, we have taken them to Special Olympics for free with my field investigator and our bus here. We have absolutely done everything we can to get those kids there. I have spoken to Alden about lowering the price because of the fact that the kids were paying and made a deal with them. I've gotten them to come down on their price. I wheeled and dealt and found ways to get those kids there using our own guy or whatever we can do. We work well with STARS and we have done a lot for them, this year more so than any other school when it comes to busing. I'm just trying to make sure those kids get everywhere they can. If it's \$79 an hour, they're going to do a minimum of four hours. If you're going on a local trip and they don't need to stay, that's okay. But when you're going beyond an hour, it doesn't make sense for them to come back and leave the kids because sometimes they're only there for a couple of hours. A lot of these companies don't want to do it. It doesn't pay for them because they have to stay there. That's the going rate for the field trips. Like I said, I don't pay for field trips. I don't know those numbers. I just know what they charge us. I do know that most of the companies that we work with do know Paterson and do help out. You don't see the little things that they throw us here and there. I can tell you that with STARS specifically, I have seen that happen myself. I have made deals with them and they are more than willing to help out. It's not a district driver. He's a field investigator, but if he's not working on call, we need him to go here. When you say that money seems low, it's because we're finding other ways to get it done without a cost.

Comm. Hodges: I've chaperoned on at least two trips. I went to Liberty Science Center. We got there late. We had to run through the center and we had to leave very quickly so the total experience was actually ruined. Liberty is a hands-on facility and the kids didn't have time to go through and appreciate all that was available for them to see. We also went to New York City with HARP Academy to see the body exhibit and we had a bus for that. It was all day so we had the full time to enjoy and those students really appreciated and got a lot out of that experience. I think we're cheating our kids by not giving them the adequate experience. I felt very bad for those students at Liberty Science Center because other people were still going through and we were rushing to get on buses to get back. That's just not a quality experience. You're basically wasting your time. I think that we have to do something to take a look at that. Our kids don't get experiences that they need now and I'm really troubled by that continuing. I know that we have purchased a few small buses, but the need is to do it on a much larger scale over time.

Comm. Capers: We've looked at and talked to other districts. Wayne was at our basketball game and we talked to the driver. He said he was a maintenance worker. You only have salaries for full-time. Other districts are just giving them stipends. Here you have full-time benefits and employees.

Ms. Vainieri: They have their own fleet and their own drivers.

Comm. Capers: These are ways we can follow. There's no plan for that here. Here it just says full-time employees and this is how much benefits are going to cost. You guys just throw it out and it drives up the number. You say it's going to cost \$800,000 because of health benefits and all this other stuff. These other drivers in other districts are not getting health benefits for being a driver. They're just getting a small stipend just like a coach. That's all they're doing. There's no plan for that.

Mr. Richard Matthews: We do want to include coaches to go out there and get their CDL. That would drive the number up because you have to keep those buses busy. That's really a baseline number there and then having the coaches getting their license

for some of the midday runs would drive the cost up. That cost was considered, but we didn't want to inflate it because we wanted to give the baseline number. You can't have a fleet without having people keeping the bus on the road so you can get your money back. There has to be a payback.

Ms. Vainieri: You can't just use it for athletics. You can't just use it for field trips because you have to be back in time for the athletics.

Mr. Gaines: You can't give them a stipend during the day.

Comm. Capers: I'm just talking about athletics. They have it on the weekend.

Ms. Vainieri: But they're full-time employees. They're drivers. They have a whole fleet. Wayne has their own buses and drivers.

Comm. Capers: But they didn't start that way.

Comm. Martinez: What you're describing is what they just outlined. What they just said was in order for us to start to get there, it's going to put us \$800,000 in the hole and take at least five years before we break even. In order to get to where Wayne and these other places are, we have to start there. The starting point is \$800,000 in the hole and five years before we break even. That's the beginning of the plan. Right now, we're not in a position to wait five years to be out \$800,000.

Comm. Teague: Right now, we have to be very careful because we're at the cusp of returning back to local control. They're watching everything we do. If we don't have a strong basis for what we're doing, it can throw us back again. We have to be careful.

Ms. Vainieri: The two buses that we have as a start are working out. We only have one person right now who has their CDL with a PNS endorsement, and he's being used constantly between helping out during the day, picking up a kid here, doing on-calls, as well as doing his other job. He's not hired as a bus driver. He has a full-time job, but he is helping out. We're working out those kinks. This saved us money by having this bus because I spend less on-call. Now maybe the next step would be getting another driver for the other bus and seeing how it works with hiring a part-time driver. Are they out there? Are they willing to just work 40 hours and not have health benefits? Then we can see if we can take that driver and make that a constant route. It's best to start small and work out the kinks. It seems so black and white, but like Dr. Hodges said, they have to get back for athletics. That's the reality of these companies. They don't have all these buses laying around. It wouldn't benefit us financially to have buses laying around and not being used.

Ms. Shafer: Lisa, do you want to talk about the charter school bus tickets, please?

Ms. Vainieri: Right now, we give bus tickets. The law is 2.5 for high school. Currently, charter schools that are 2.5 get on a bus. There are about 129 of them currently. We're looking to give them tickets, which is what we do for our own students. Since before I came, they have been giving courtesy bus tickets to those that are under the 2.5. My proposal is to stop that and just give tickets to students that are 2.5 across the board, which is the legal number. That would save about \$300,000 to \$350,000.

Comm. Capers: I know it's a cost savings, but I disagree with that one just because of the climate that our city is in and what some of these kids have to endure going through some of these communities. They walk home after the after-school programs and

sometimes taking the bus is safer for them. It's going to cost the district more, but we have to look out for the well-being of our students.

Ms. Vainieri: The alternative to that would be these discount card tickets. They're a yellow ticket. You give it to the parent and they can actually purchase the tickets at the same discounted rate that we get. We're just saying that the parents would have to pay for the student discount tickets.

Comm. Capers: Why are we going to take away something we've always been giving them?

Ms. Vainieri: Since I've been in transportation every year we're taking something away so this is nothing new to us. When I first got on, we took away International and John F. Kennedy. We've taken away buses because of the financial situation and that's why this is proposed. It's the last legal thing that we can do. It's a way to save money and it's something you can do. That's the only reason I'm proposing it. I hear you about the safety issue, but we also have kids who walk to elementary schools that have the same problem. I get you.

Ms. Shafer: We are going to address the after-school and the athletes about giving them the tickets. You just mentioned the after-school programs walking. Anybody having an after-school program or involved in athletics would get the tickets regardless of the 2.5.

Comm. Martinez: Was there anything else regarding the busing?

Ms. Vainieri: The charter school taking away and giving them the tickets was already decided. That's a minor savings. It's not a big one, but the tickets were combined with that.

Comm. Capers: You said the lease/purchase cost of buses isn't in here? How much would that cost? Was it about the same, about \$100,000? That's for a 2020 bus?

Mr. Gaines: Yes, brand new.

Comm. Capers: How many buses are you looking at?

Mr. Gaines: That would cover on average the amount of field trips we would have during the day, but even in the springtime that wouldn't cover the need at all.

Ms. Shafer: Neil, custodial supplies?

Mr. Mapp: Currently, we are purchasing our custodial supplies from Pritchard. They are accounting, providing, and delivering custodial supplies to us at an annual cost of \$729,873. What I'm proposing is that we bring that service in-house and we purchase those supplies ourselves. We account for it, order it, and deliver it ourselves. Currently, I don't have an idea of whether or not \$700,000 is buying \$700,000 worth of supplies. I have challenged myself and my group to bear down on our chiefs and custodians and begin to account for what we use on a monthly basis and begin to purchase those supplies ourselves. I'm looking at auditing what we use on a quarterly basis and ordering supplies as needed. A couple of issues associated with that is a lack of central storage space available to house those supplies when we purchase them, timely distribution of supplies when it's needed at the various locations, and an accurate accounting of supplies when needed. Hopefully, we will take care of that once we staff

up. We're in the process of staffing up and freeing sector supervisors and managers. We're also looking at data folks who can do the tracking and accounting for us. We're looking to save between \$50,000 and \$100,000 annually. That's my charge moving forward.

Comm. Hodges: Does that cost include the increased staffing?

Mr. Mapp: No. This is just supplies. Staffing is already in the operating budget. I have not increased my operating budget. I've moved numbers around and hired people.

Comm. Hodges: What else would they be doing?

Ms. Mapp: The accounting person? We need someone to manage all of our utility bills. We have a tremendous amount of invoices that we manage on a daily basis and right now we only have one person doing it, who is also managing our School Dude system. We don't have enough staff in facilities. We're looking forward to managing data and how we handle it.

Comm. Hodges: The increase in staff will not just be to handle the...

Mr. Mapp: Absolutely not.

Ms. Shafer: We were also asked to take a look at bringing our custodians back in-house.

Mr. Mapp: Currently, we're purchasing custodial services from Pritchard. They're providing us about 190 staff. If we were to hire and manage that staff in-house, we'd have to look at bringing in 190 people into the district under our salary structure that we now pay for PCMA members. They would be part of the PCMA union. We'd be providing benefits for them. What we're getting from Pritchard now are 190 employees at our schools and then they also provide management for those 190 folks. There is a project manager and supervisor during the day and three supervisors at night. That's the managerial portion of the custodial services. We're paying about \$7.4 million a year for that service. We looked at day shift, mid shift, and night shift. If you were to look at the handout, it's probably best stated on the colored sheet presented. We allocated employees across those different shifts. I spoke to human resources and came up with an average salary that we would pay at \$13 an hour. Annually we're looking at a cost of about \$5.7 million to bring those custodial services in-house. On top of that would be the benefits package, which would be about \$20,000 per employee. That adds another \$5 million to that cost. We're looking at a \$10 million cost. Currently, we're paying \$7 million. We're looking at a \$2.8 million overage if we decide to bring it in-house. That's just the custodial services cost. There's a cost that we would also incur by having to have our own managers. I'd have to staff up during the day and at night. Someone needs to manage those custodians at night. We're looking to bring in three people during the day and four persons at night at around \$50,000 a year. They would probably be part of the union also so they would be entitled to benefits and that whole package would add another \$539,000 to our expense for custodial services to bring it in-house.

Comm. Redmon: It's an additional \$10.5 million?

Mr. Mapp: Yes, with the \$100,000 savings for supplies, you can subtract that.

Comm. Redmon: \$10.4 million.

Comm. Capers: Are we getting the best out of the company that we're using?

Mr. Mapp: There are architects and engineers who come into our district to look at various projects and they say our schools are really well maintained. It depends on what your expectations are. We have to understand where we were three years ago. Right now, we've reduced the original complement of custodians significantly. I don't think that I'm getting the best service that my money can buy, but if we bring it in-house, I think it's probably better managed. I'll get fewer calls. But the answer is no.

Comm. Capers: Do our chiefs have managers?

Mr. Mapp: No.

Comm. Capers: There are two managers that we're paying because the chief is not directly over custodians. Pritchard has another manager that oversees custodians.

Mr. Mapp: Our chief during the day manages the building. He has facilities responsibilities making sure that the custodians respond to health calls during the day and clean bathrooms. There's no chief at night. The chief leaves at 3:30. There's a Pritchard manager who opens buildings and provides supplies for them at night.

Comm. Capers: So, there's no Pritchard manager during the day?

Mr. Mapp: There is a Pritchard manager during the day because they order supplies. There's a project manager and supervisor.

Comm. Capers: Do we have a manager over them?

Mr. Mapp: We direct Pritchard. For instance, if there's a chief out, we ask them to provide a black seal for us. If we have a leak or flood in a school during the day, we will ask them to take two guys from this location and send them over to that location so they can help in the cleanup. We instruct them. The means and methods that they use are theirs, but we make sure that we're getting the service that we need.

Comm. Capers: How much is Pritchard paying their employees?

Mr. Mapp: I can't tell you offhand.

Comm. Capers: I think \$11 per hour.

Mr. Mapp: You have to understand if they come into the district they would have to fall under PCMA.

Comm. Capers: They get \$11 per hour with no benefits? I'm just asking.

Mr. Mapp: I don't know.

Comm. Teague: Let's say you have custodial staff who wants to get certified for boilers. Do you have any programs in place for those who want to get trained?

Mr. Mapp: No.

Comm. Teague: I spoke to some of them, and there are a lot of them who want to be trained in that. I don't know if there's more money in that, but you do have some who want to be trained to be able to be certified.

Mr. Mapp: That's aspirational for them, but they don't work for us. We don't provide that benefit to them. We have maintenance workers who work for the district that we would pay a boiler black seal license contractually.

Ms. Shafer: Are there any other questions for Neil?

Mr. Matthews: We've put together two strategies that are going to realize substantial savings to the district. One is a Newark model where we would allocate either 13 or 15 days for each school for substitutes per employee. We ran two years of data in terms of what schools are spending on substitutes and it is way out of control. We've plugged in a model of giving every teacher per school 13 days off as far as their allocation. If you have 100 teachers in your school, you're going to have 1,300 available days off. By plugging in that model, we're going to realize \$5 million in savings off our substitute costs just by doing it at the elementary level.

Mr. Luis Rojas: We would reduce the amount of substitutes allocated at the high school to 15 days. We picked 15 days because a teacher is allotted 10 sick days and 5 personal days. We're going to assume that each teacher is going to use their allotted days. If they do, a principal gets a bank of substitutes to draw from. Once he or she runs out of 15 days per employee, at some point they're going to have to combine classes or do what they have to. If they have vacancies or some other outstanding issues, we have a little bit of a reserve to take care of those anomalies. If someone goes on a leave of absence for a full year and we need a replacement teacher, those items will get adjusted. We're talking about the daily in and out of a substitute being allotted to a school for the purposes of absences or professional development as well.

Mr. Matthews: We're going to give each principal a monthly report on what their absences are for the month. They're going to have a dollar amount and a monthly report that says where they are. We're supposed to meet with them three times a year. We haven't decided which months we're going to meet, but it will probably be in November, January, or March so they can see what their current budget is year-to-date for substitute costs and where they are so we have them matched to a number. Right now, substitutes are just being filled and we're spending \$10 million. By them having a number to manage we can hold them more accountable. We'll be working with the assistant superintendents and the principals by having them have a monthly report so they track their substitute budgets.

Mr. Rojas: In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 16,488 substitutes used in one year at the high schools. That was roughly \$2.4 million in substitutes. We would like to offer one for every two absences. When there are two teachers that call out, you get one for those two absences. If you get four that call out, you get two substitutes for those four absences. We predict that there is going to be a savings of roughly \$1.2 million if we do that small adjustment. At the elementary schools, last year we used 47,709 substitutes. That's a lot of substitutes. The cost was almost \$7 million. That's why we want to give them a pot of money. The way it works right now, just imagine if you guys had kids. I give you a free credit card, you get to charge whatever you want, you never see the bill, and every time you go to use it, it never gets rejected. You're going to keep using it. We want to put some accountability back at the schools and let them manage their own money. If they're going to be the CEOs of their buildings, fine. Here's an allotment and work within your budget just like we all have to do. It's a one-

year trial. If we do that at the elementary schools we're projecting about \$4.3 million. Between both, we're looking at over \$5 million. It's a significant savings.

Mr. Matthews: We're reassessing this strategy because it may not work 100% the first year. In our risk assessment we save \$5 million on paper, but we're only going to reduce the budget by \$4 million, in case we have people who go over. We're not going to go dollar for dollar on the savings. We're going to be smart and say let's start at \$4 million and leave that \$1 million savings on paper open for people who are not compliant.

Comm. Hodges: Is there an expectation that these substitutes are teaching while they're there? If you're only going to pay for half of the substitutes, is the expectation that they're going to double up the classes? If you already have 25-30 students, how are you going to do that? Will there be 60 in the classroom?

Ms. Shafer: All of our high schools are now one-to-one. A lot of them are using Google Classroom. The students would go to the auditorium and be supervised in there. They would get the assignment from the teacher and they would be able to do it right there. Right now, when we pay for each substitute in the classroom it would be the same.

Comm. Capers: This model works in the school I work at in East Orange and Ridgewood. They have three substitutes in their whole school. Because they're one-to-one, they just combine the classrooms. They go into Google Classroom, they submit their work, and the substitutes just watch them. There's no teaching going on. They're just watching and making sure the kids are acting appropriately.

Comm. Hodges: But there's no teaching going on.

Ms. Shafer: There's no teaching going on now with the substitutes.

Mr. Rojas: The substitute is still following the lesson plan provided by the teacher.

Comm. Capers: I see it every day. The substitute is just making sure the kids are online and doing what they're supposed to be doing. Some schools in the district use substitutes for hallway duty and lunch monitors. How are we going to control that? Let's say a principal says they want to use 30 substitutes. How are we going to control that?

Mr. Matthews: I'm going to answer that a couple of ways. We have the actual cost by school for the last two years. We're not going to be able to stop some of the inefficiencies that happen with substitutes. My kid was a substitute in the schools and I know what's going on. We're going to have them manage to a number. We're going to meet with them and make sure that they have to be at this point. If they're not at this point, what are they going to do to get to their number? We're managing a number. When they run their buildings, they have to work with their staff and assistant superintendent. They have to incentivize their people to come to work and be a partner with the district in terms of keeping that cost down. This is a cost-saving strategy.

Comm. Capers: I get the cost-savings, but how are we overall managing the...?

Mr. Matthews: We're going to ask them to manage to the number.

Comm. Teague: I know you guys only handle the financial part of it. Who handles watching over these people? I went to a school recently. The principal is walking

around. We got to the classroom with the substitute and the lights were out. She intercepted me and made sure I didn't even look that way. I saw the lights were off and the kids were moving. Who is it that oversees them?

Ms. Shafer: Once they're in the building? It's the principal. Every principal gets a budget. They get 'x' amount of dollars and they're in certain lines. They manage that budget and they don't go over. We're saying that we're now going to give them the budget for the substitutes. Right now, they have no idea how many substitutes they're using or how much money they're spending. If you give your child \$100, they know they can't spend \$101. They have never gone over. We're going to be monitoring it and meeting with them quarterly to say this is not good, you're on track, or what have you.

Mr. Rojas: That's an easy report that we can run internally. I know what your allotment is and where you're at on today's report. We can do a quarterly report that says you're trending to exceed the amount so you may want to look at how you're managing yourself.

Comm. Martinez: Therein lies the distinction of what Comm. Capers is saying. You have your number and how you get to that number, that's your discretion. If you want to hire five substitutes because you want to put them in the hallway for this and that, that's your discretion to do so, but you're not going to exceed that number. It's likened to you having a credit card and no one is checking it, you're just going to keep getting substitutes. But if you say you can only spend a certain amount of dollars, you're going to be a lot more frugal on how you're spending and who you're bringing in because you don't want to exceed.

Comm. Capers: What happens if that principal goes over?

Comm. Martinez: You cut the credit card off.

Comm. Capers: Principals are using substitutes as guidance counselors and hallway monitors. They're doing that and then they go over, but they need it for real teachers. What happens? You still have to give that school the substitutes.

Ms. Shafer: We are going to be monitoring them quarterly. We run a report monthly and the three of us will get together and see. We're not going to wait quarterly for School No. 1 because something is going on there.

Comm. Capers: You're going to run a report for teacher absences?

Ms. Shafer: Substitutes period. What is hitting the substitute line in every school? If we see a red flag somewhere, we're going to be there.

Comm. Castillo: Is Neil Mapp still in the room? Can we have him turn on the air conditioning?

Ms. Williams: They can't turn on the air conditioning. It's a system that only works in the summer for air conditioning. The heat is off.

Comm. Redmon: Going back to the budgets in the schools, in personnel when we do the substitute costs, you're getting a true cost from each school. We've noticed for the last four years that some schools use PC numbers to use the extra cost as a substitute cost. A human capital person pulled those PC numbers. A lot of the money that was going out for substitute costs has now gone down. They're now finding other creative

ways of budgeting money for substitutes. I understand where you're coming from as far as usage. Right now, you have a \$500 budget for the year. They know they're not going over \$500 so they're going to cut costs by any means necessary because you're not getting additional money. That's what we're suggesting. They just don't have a random cost for substitutes. At any given time they can pull four substitutes in the school and that's a cost driver to that school's budget.

Mr. Matthews: This is also a strategy that ties the district and schools together. A lot of our strategies are for the district or the schools, but this binds us together in terms of working on a strategy to save money for the entire district. We are forced to work together with the schools. I've always said to Ms. Peron, the schools are 55 different entities and individual contractors. We're not tied together. This would tie us together in a strategy that can help us save money for the district.

Comm. Capers: I don't want to see the extra substitutes.

Mr. Matthews: We're going to meet with the people and have them see what their number is. As managers of a school, you have to run it like a business and make sure you're coming in under-budget. We know how to have those kinds of meetings.

Comm. Hodges: That should be something from day one in terms of the principal and the absenteeism of the staff. I just want to make sure we don't sacrifice education. I'm very concerned about that.

Mr. Matthews: We have to get rid of the inefficiencies and wasteful spending.

Comm. Hodges: That's also part of the job of the principal, to make sure those things don't happen and encourage the staff to show up along with the \$1,000 they get a year, which I'm not happy about.

Mr. Rojas: As we sit today, we have \$10.1 million. As of January 29, it hasn't changed much. We've had around \$10.1 million in budgeted vacancies. We're looking at all our vacancies and we want to reduce \$3 million of the \$10 million, leaving \$7 million behind. That's including health benefits. Around \$2.2 million in salaries and \$750,000 worth of benefits to those \$2.2 million gets us to around \$3 million. We want to reduce vacancies by \$3 million. Nobody loses jobs. It's just a vacancy. We get about 47 retirements on average per year. If you're retiring, you're usually at the top of the salary scale. If you're at \$100,000 and you leave today, that position is budget at \$100,000. We're looking to reduce what we budget for a new position looking to bring someone in at \$100,000. We will budget it down with health benefits to around \$70,000, which is a savings of \$50,000 per position. By just doing those small adjustments, we predict to save \$1.7 million to the district.

Mr. Matthews: Our budget this year is going to be under a lot of scrutiny. We had a meeting with the county last week. Last year we laid off 226 teachers. We can't submit \$12 million in vacancies and lay off 226 teachers. We really have to reduce our vacancies if there's going to be any kind of impact to our head count. Hopefully, there is none. It's very important that we reduce our vacancies. A lot of special education stuff is not being touched as part of those vacancies. These are positions that we feel that are reducing the number. We feel it's important we make an adjustment to the vacancies before we submit our budget to the county. They're watching everything that we do right now.

Comm. Hodges: Reducing the vacancies means we don't have the money to pay for the teachers?

Mr. Matthews: This is a way to reduce your appropriations in your budget. We're trying to close a big gap. By reducing the vacancies by \$3 million, you reduce your appropriations by \$3 million.

Mr. Rojas: Teachers are included in that \$10 million. We're saying all vacancies across the board. You may have whatever other clerical positions out there that are unfilled. We're talking about including that as well, certificated along with non-certificated positions.

Comm. Hodges: People who aren't necessary because you haven't filled them.

Mr. Rojas: Pretty much. If we haven't filled them by now and we've lived without it, we may be able to get away with it, excluding teachers. Just because you haven't filled a teacher doesn't mean you don't need it. I have over 30 special education vacancies. I had a special education job fair last night and we only had 13 people walk through the door. I hired 8 out of the 13. Our percentage is high, but there just aren't enough folks. Just because there's a vacancy doesn't mean that there wasn't an attempt to hire someone. It's possible we just couldn't find someone. There's a difference. The positions are going to be looked at one by one to see what we can live without. For the past couple of years, we have been combining positions. I have four positions in my title alone. One paycheck, but four titles. We've looked at combining many positions. If you look at these vacancies, it's possible to combine two or three positions or pile it on someone else. We have to do more with less. We want to scrutinize teacher vacancies and see what we can and can't live without. Hopefully, out of the \$10 million we can come up with \$3 million. I don't think it's a far stretch. I think we can get \$3 million pretty easily.

Ms. Cheryl Coy: The home instructional budget was reduced this year by \$150,000 because of the out-of-school suspension program that opened up. The goal was to reduce the amount of students that were homebound and send them over to that program opening in January. There was a little delay in the cost that we could save, so we're going to monitor it next year going in to see how many of those students can go into the program versus being homebound for suspension. We have a lot of students that are out for medical reasons. We have some students who will never set foot in a school.

Comm. Capers: How can we reduce that number? Only 55 kids can fit in that program.

Ms. Coy: They're turnover. The goal for the program is they go in for the suspension and if they require a disciplinary hearing, it's supposed to occur within an 8 to 10-day window so that the child can return back to school or whatever other appropriate place for them within 18 days. That falls under Mr. Cozart so you can ask him. I just know the amount of students that we have on home instruction is slowing down because they're now going into that out-of-school suspension program. With out-of-district, we currently have 22 students that are proposed to graduate in June, which would save us \$1.5 million in costs next year. I did a review on Monday and it's 20 guaranteed and 2 are proposed. We're still waiting for those other two to find out if the academics have been completed and the transition supports for them to see if they're definitely graduating. We have 12 students that are moving from eighth grade to the high school that are in the BE program that we need additional space for. We've identified space at Silk City. Instead of those students having to go out-of-district because we don't have

the space, we're going to save \$750,000 with them being able to go into the program at Silk City Academy. We're looking to identify some more students that we consider super seniors that are in the out-of-district programs. They may be in year 5 or 6 and are only there for transition support. I'm currently meeting with William Paterson for a transition program that will give them exposure to college experience, college programs, becoming security guards, or home health aides. It's a yearly program for students with disabilities. If those students have an IQ of 70 or higher, they qualify for that program. The out-of-district team is now meeting with a group of students who are those super seniors in out-of-district programs to see if they can be brought back into that William Paterson program. Instead of us paying \$60,000 to \$70,000 per student, we'll be paying about \$4,500 to William Paterson for them to have a college experience program. Those 12 students alone would save us \$750,000. One student coming back in pays for a whole series of students going into the program.

Comm. Capers: Those students would be going to Silk City or Great Falls Academy?

Ms. Coy: No, the old Silk City.

Ms. Shafer: The building, not the program.

Mr. Anthony Traina: What you see here is the reduced police officer list. Right now, the budget is \$415,000. We cut that in half. We cut it from six officers to three officers. To keep a level of security, we hired retired officer SROs in the place of a regular police officer. A regular police officer costs us \$66,000 per year. An SRO would be \$52,000. You have that savings. They would not require health benefits if we hire a retired Paterson officer. We have a savings of \$116,600 for the year. Over a five-year period, it's about \$500,000.

Comm. Hodges: I'd like the Superintendent to indicate which one of these measures will have an impact on the education of the students. When you do present it to the county, there's an understanding that there's an educational cost as well plus the budgetary cost. It's important to highlight that as well. I'd just request that be added and indicated on this list and on any documentation that you forward to the county for review.

Ms. Shafer: We reviewed this with them last week.

Mr. Traina: The county and the state.

Comm. Hodges: Did you indicate the possible impact on education?

Ms. Shafer: The impact on the educational outcome is if we don't do this, then we lay off.

Comm. Hodges: That's not the only impact. There has to be a realization that there's an educational cost for doing some of these things. That's what I want to make abundantly clear.

Ms. Shafer: Absolutely. Let's move on to the high school restructuring. The Board gave us an assignment to look at the number of principals and come up with a recommendation. You have the document and the recommendation was to have one principal at Eastside and one at Kennedy. I added to that an executive director for operations. I have seen our students for years where we have something really extensive and specific for a role. We do it for a little while and then take it all away and

it doesn't work. I'm suggesting we have a principal and an executive director of operations. We do that for a couple of years and then we make sure that it's working. If we want, then eliminate the executive director of operations. I don't think you can go from what we currently have, which is a principal of each school and a person of operations. It's a huge leap and we're trying to make sure our kids go to college, are successful, graduate, and have all kinds of opportunities such as dual enrollment and internships. Having to worry about the operations of the building, athletics, security, discipline, plus academics when no one has had that is just a bit much. I'm just asking that we take a step back and let's have more than one administrator over the building. Then we would have for each school a vice principal and someone who is an expert over the theme and a dean of students, which right now we have a teacher coordinator for discipline.

Comm. Ramirez: Having this conversation is a step forward in the right direction. Creating a position of this executive director of operations when one of your assistant superintendents can possibly take on this task is something that in my opinion would be more feasible than creating a whole position of someone who is just going to handle operations. You have supervisors. Like Mr. Rojas said, we have to start doing more with less and reassigning people that already have pretty hefty salaries just taking on some of these tasks instead of creating a position for someone.

Comm. Simmons: A large part of that is handling disciplinary issues and movement throughout the building. And athletics is part of that. Given the load that the assistant superintendents have, I don't think that will be feasible.

Comm. Ramirez: What about all these other supervisors?

Ms. Shafer: Assistant superintendents right now have 18 schools. Two of them have other responsibilities and less schools. One has facilities and security, plus the schools. The other one has academics, instruction and program, plus the schools. We just eliminated 29 supervisors last year and 23 vice principals. It would really be difficult and have a negative impact on the building if the person wasn't assigned there specifically all day. At Kennedy we have five principals and at Eastside we have four. We're going down to one principal and one executive director. We're going from nine to four.

Comm. Capers: This plight is throughout the state. People call it different names. Every person has that and that person is as key as a principal because they run the building in terms of all the operations. Everybody else is over instruction in different grades. At Kennedy and Eastside you've got one building principal, but at International you have three principals. The IB program is good, but it's a program. Why do we need a principal?

Ms. Shafer: Right now, there are three principals at International and there are two schools. There's the IB program and Garrett Morgan. We don't need three principals. We need two.

Ms. Peron: I just want to make an additional point to the assistant superintendents. They really make it a point to do classroom walkthroughs and oversee instructional practices in the classrooms. The prominent point and the critical piece of their work is to oversee instruction and ensure that the curriculum and programs are being implemented with fidelity. I want you to think about the work that needs to be done in academics and the work they do overseeing classrooms. It's a lot of classrooms and it's a lot of work.

Comm. Hodges: Which brings me to my concern, which is the academies have struggled with adherence to their themes and having personnel with the talents and the experience and expertise. That fell in part to the principals. I recognize why we're doing it and I don't want to fight you in that, but I really want to see a dramatic effort at putting people in place who can develop the themes in those buildings like they have never been before.

Ms. Peron: That's duly noted.

Ms. Shafer: Just so everybody knows, the Board charged us with Plan A, which was to look at the administrative structure, and then Plan B, which is our planning year coming up, is to look at the themes. Are they good to go? Do we need to change, refine, or improve them? We need to also do surveys with the kids about the themes as well.

Comm. Hodges: If you can do the surveys with the kids, you need to expose them at sixth grade and even earlier as to what the various opportunities are for them moving forward.

Ms. Peron: We also have a plan for that. We're redoing the middle grades and the curriculum to add electives and do an exploratory class throughout the different semesters so that they have some orientation and learning around careers and themes to integrate and create that pipeline.

Comm. Castillo: Is there any way that you can send us the minutes from that last retreat where we made all these decisions? I don't know if everyone was on the Board or if some of these changes that we are going to see on the budget are part of that action that we created with the Superintendent. I don't think Comm. Arrington was back on either. At least he can see what we charged the Superintendent with, restructuring all of our high schools and adding some things to our middle school program as well.

Comm. Redmon: Two years ago, we charged the Superintendent in the elementary schools to bring the guidance counselors in sixth grade. When you were doing exploratory programs with those guidance counselors, we included in that to have an...

Comm. Teague: As you phase out the administrators, I'm looking at the savings. Would it be possible to implement any kind of art or music?

Ms. Shafer: We're not going to know that until tomorrow.

Comm. Capers: In that Eastside and Kennedy structure, you have a dean of students. Instead of having three, why not have two, one for the lower class and one for the upper. Between the two schools you will save about \$200,000 just to clump them together. Here you have three. At International, you still have a principal over the IB program. It's a program.

Ms. Peron: The idea around having a principal for International Baccalaureate is that all the students will become only International Baccalaureate students. They will be accepted through the interview process and they will either go for a diploma or a certificate.

Comm. Capers: What's the difference in price between having a principal and a regular program coordinator over that?

Ms. Shafer: Like a supervisor?

Comm. Capers: Like a curriculum supervisor that's over that.

Ms. Shafer: About \$15,000.

Comm. Capers: So it's not much.

Ms. Shafer: Do we want to look at having two deans?

Comm. Capers: You have two principals in one building.

Comm. Simmons: That's 1,000 kids per dean. That's a lot.

Ms. Shafer: We had three deans at Eastside and four at Kennedy. You said we should have two. If we had two, it would be 1,000 per dean. They would be responsible for 1,000 students.

Comm. Simmons: That's a lot.

Comm. Capers: If they're over freshmen and sophomores, then you have the upper class. You could put that money back into teaching.

Comm. Simmons: We have different issues than they have in East Orange.

Comm. Capers: I've worked in both schools in both positions.

Comm. Castillo: It's 100% different.

Comm. Simmons: I still live here. I coach those kids. It's different.

Comm. Capers: And I coached. Just to have a cost savings, if we're going to cut teachers we can't have three deans and still have principals.

Comm. Simmons: Ideally, I would have gone the other way and I would have said a dean per grade.

Comm. Capers: If you have the budget for it, that's ideal.

Comm. Simmons: I wouldn't overload the person that has to handle discipline given the amount of discipline problems we have.

Comm. Capers: I'll agree to it if we get a big influx of money tomorrow. If we get a lot of state aid and we're able to do it, I'm all for it. Have four deans for all I care. If come tomorrow we're flat-funded and we have to cut teachers out of Eastside and Kennedy...

Comm. Castillo: This is why we're doing the restructuring.

Comm. Capers: That's what I'm saying. If we go to two deans, that would save some money for an extra teacher instead of a dean.

Comm. Martinez: We're talking about doing this to avoid having to cut teachers.

Comm. Simmons: That's the point.

Comm. Capers: I'm just saying if we don't get the number we want tomorrow.

Comm. Redmon: This budget from October that has been presented to us several different times is a flat budget. We asked for a flat budget because we wanted to make sure that we did not want to be in the position that we were last year. What you have been seeing since October is a flat budget. It is a baseline budget and these are the realities that we have to look at.

Comm. Capers: If you have teacher vacancies and if you can cut a dean, you can use that same money in the classroom. That's all I'm saying.

Comm. Castillo: The idea of this restructuring is to make sure we don't cut more teachers and that we're not too top-heavy. You also can't put the safety of the kids in line when you're talking about discipline. If we get way less money than we assumed and we have to make another cut, then we will cross that bridge when we get there.

Comm. Capers: That's why I'm having the conversation.

Comm. Castillo: That's the Superintendent's job. If she decides that after tomorrow she has to cut a dean or a teacher, it's her decision to make. This is the proposed to make sure that we don't and if we do, she will come back with a proposal of what we should be cutting. We can't tell her what she needs to operate a building. She needs to tell us what she needs.

Comm. Capers: I didn't tell her what she needed. I'm just having the conversation.

Ms. Shafer: I just want to go through this because I need to know yes or no so we know what we're facing tomorrow.

Comm. Simmons: Let's be clear, the answer is just yes or no. We're not going to go into extended discussion.

Ms. Shafer: I'm going to go through these one by one:

<u>Ms. Shafer</u>	<u>Board</u>
Legal cost projections and settlements?	Yes.
Charter high school bus tickets?	Yes.
Bus tickets 2.5 miles for all students except athletes and after-school programs?	Yes.
Custodial supplies?	Yes.
High school substitutes and elementary substitutes?	Yes.
Retirements?	Yes.
Vacancies?	Yes.
Home instruction?	Yes.
Bring back students from out-of-district?	Yes.
Eliminate police?	Yes.
High school restructuring?	Yes.

I want to thank all my staff for putting this together. We've been working on this for a couple of months. It's the first time that I know the district ever did it because we're trying to be proactive. The last thing anyone sitting here wants to do is eliminate a teacher. We cannot. If you went to any community forums that I've been at, and some of you have been there, all the parents tell me it's about class size. We cannot continue to eliminate teachers. We met in Trenton the other day and we made that very clear to everyone who was there. We told them what we're looking at. We told them about the

strategies. We eliminated central office non-salary items. That's what we've done so far. We've met with every department person in this building to shave down their budgets. We have a marathon on Friday until we balance it. We will know our numbers tomorrow and we're just going to stay here Friday until we can get all the way down. I just want to thank them because a lot of work went into this. Right now, there's a water main break on Ellison Street.

Ms. Peron: The city needs to close Ellison Street from Washington Street to Church Street.

Ms. Shafer: We're partnering with the city. We're having a census week. It's starting on March 9. We're doing something each day around the census with the students. We're going to roll that out next week. Saturday at 12:00 at Wayne Valley Eastside plays Kennedy. Come out and support the kids. Tuesday the Commissioner and all of our local politicians are coming to see where we are with the budget. The county and everybody is coming.

Ms. Peron: 2:30 here at 90 Delaware.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. Castillo that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.