

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

March 18, 2019 – 6:27 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Oshin Castillo, President

Present:

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

Comm. Castillo: Good evening everyone. I know we had a 6:00 p.m. start, but we're having a little bit of technical difficulties. Just bear with us for a few more minutes as we get everything settled and ready to go. I do apologize for the inconvenience. Just give us a few more minutes and we will be ready to go. Thank you.

Comm. Emanuel Capers
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Manuel Martinez
Comm. Eddy Olivares

Comm. Nakima Redmon, Vice President
Comm. Robinson Rondon
Comm. Kenneth Simmons

Absent:

Comm. Joel Ramirez

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

Comm. Martinez 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:

**Special Meeting
March 18, 2019 at 6:00 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.

Comm. Castillo: I want to welcome everyone to the special meeting. I want to thank you all for coming. We're going to have a very important conversation. As we continue

to get settled and still have a few documents missing because of our problems with technology, I'm going to ask the Board if it's okay to go into executive session while we get everything else back.

It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. Martinez that the Board goes into executive session to discuss litigation and personnel issues. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board went into executive session at 6:31 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ON THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Comm. Castillo: Welcome back and thank you everyone for your patience. I do want to make sure that we did add a thorough and efficient education litigation conversation. Madam Superintendent, I'll lead it right over to you and to the Business Administrator's presentation, and then we will have further discussion. Thank you everyone for your patience.

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Madam President. Before we begin with our final conversation around the budget planning for the 2019-2020 school year and our presentation by our Business Administrator, Richard Matthews, I want to just welcome all of you here and go over where we are with the budget as it stands right now. Cost drivers are individual items that automatically increase your budget and that you have no control over. That could be something like special education out of district tuition, transportation, salaries, gas and electric bill, and all of special education. These are all cost drivers, as well as charter schools and PCTI. Cost drivers go up and right now they're up to \$43 million. The State gave us \$13 million. Perhaps when you saw that the State gave us \$13 million you thought that was a great idea and that would really help us. If you take that \$13 million and take \$9.5 million away from it for charter schools and you take \$1 million away for PCTI, you have \$2.5 million for Paterson Public School District children. I'm not against charter schools. I just think there is a better way to fund charter schools and it's not to take away from the Paterson Public School District children and staff. That's exactly what happens. Right now, we're paying charter schools \$68 million a year. If we had that money, you could imagine the things we would have available for our children and the buildings that we could renovate and fix for our children. What happens is the children of Paterson have two different paths of education. If you go to a charter school you have all the resources you need, small class size. It's the same children, though. They might live next door to a Paterson Public School District child and Paterson Public School District children get whatever is left. You're going to see in this presentation tonight that when we had to cut \$31 million out of our budget, the impact it's going to have on staff, children, and programs that we have for children. Just a quick example is that after 27 years of State control, the first thing the State took away from our children was art and music. It took 27 years to get art and music back. If you go into any of our schools now, you will see children in bands, playing instruments, and performing. Come to the Board meeting Wednesday night and you'll see them perform. You saw them perform at Black History Month last month. Because of the cuts they won't have art and music once again come September. They won't have science labs that are operational. They won't have SAT prep programs. They won't have the amount of dual enrollment programs that we have now. The list goes on and on about what they won't have. Charters will be fully funded and they will have the resources that they need. The State needs to figure out a different way to fund the charter schools.

Our children don't come in nice little cases of 24. When they go to a charter school, they go a couple from this school and a couple from that school, but we still need a teacher in that room where they came out of. We still need a building. We still need electric, heat, oil and everything else. We don't get to cut that whole classroom because our children don't come in little cases like soda and other things you buy 24 in a pack. They don't come like that. If they did, then funding it would be different. But because they don't, they're taking the money from our school district, giving everything to charter school needs, and our children are left there with the minimum that doesn't provide for a thorough and efficient education. Not even close. You're going to see tonight in the presentation what had to be cut. Those cuts go from the top to the bottom in order to make it fair. Also keep in mind that when Governor Christie was in over eight years, we lost \$280 million. Every year we cut and cut and cut 526 bodies from this district. There is nothing left, unless we don't mind having classes of 40 and higher and having safety problems when you have 40 children in a class. That's what we're being asked to do, to continue to cut programs that are beneficial for our children. We have turned the corner on student achievement. We have a long way to go, but we have worked extremely hard over this past year and a half to turn the corner and provide our children every opportunity to be successful. Now we have you turn around and say to our children, "Sorry. That was only for a year and a half or two years. We have to take it back now. Put the instruments away. Put the intervention programs and the SAT programs away. It was just a tease." As a Superintendent, I don't appreciate teasing our children. That's exactly what we have done and what we're going to continue to do until the State funds us appropriately. It's not fair that children who could live next door to each other in the City of Paterson and we're paying for that education, they have totally two different types of education and resources going on. They have science labs that work and media centers where there's a media specialist in the media center. We have media centers, but guess what? When we do the cuts that you're hearing about tonight, we're not going to have the media specialist again. We just put them back. We started to put them back gradually, two each year. Now the two we put back we're going to take back again. It has to stop. Too many of our children have missed opportunities because we have not been properly funded. We expect high expectations from our staff, children, parents, and then we let them down because we can't provide them what they need to meet that high expectation. We can't provide them with textbooks. We have a textbook plan that we have tried to start now for two years. Once again, this year we are not going to be able to do it. The State isn't going to say, "It's okay if the kids don't pass the PARCC." They're not going to say that. They have the same expectations for us that we have for our children and our staff. But what are we supposed to do without any money and resources? That's impossible. On Thursday we're taking two buses to NJIT for a budget hearing and I ask all of you to come with us because the State needs to hear what we have to say and what we demand for our children. Again, on March 27 is the Assembly hearing and we will be there. We're taking two buses there down to Trenton. There are flyers around. I think they're in the back. If you want to go, just be here. If we have to get another bus, we'll get another bus. We have to be in this together. If we're going to move this district forward and improve and get local control and let folks know we know what we're doing, we know how to do it because for 27 years you didn't do it, we need to join together hand-in-hand to let the State know we cannot take this anymore. We can't. There's nothing left. Thank you.

Comm. Hodges: I've been here for soon to be 17 years and what frustrates me is the original Abbott decision which brought an increase in money to this district was because the State deliberately underfunded our children. We had 22 court battles which say Paterson and 30 other districts are entitled to funding to provide a thorough and efficient education for your children. Then we had a series of additional lawsuits to make sure

that they understood that what the court said was what the court said. Then we had \$280 million shortfalls over eight years from the Christie administration, which underfunds and hollows out our educational programming for our children. Do you want to know why they can't read? Do you want to know why they can't do math? \$280 million was taken from our system. We laid off over 500 teachers. We trained those teachers. We put millions of dollars into education for those teachers and then cut them loose. That money doesn't get recovered. It goes out to other districts that benefit from our funding, your children's funding. Those skills are not captured or retained here in this district. Now we're in a situation with this latest outrage. I can't contain myself when I hear about what's going on in other states. I understand 75 districts lost money, but there were some that made out and in one case the School Board members channeled money away from the district schools to private schools. The State turned around and gave them \$30 million. I thought it was \$15 million. It was \$30 million. We're getting \$13 million. We were sharing nurses between schools in an asthma corridor, which is life threatening. You cut security, SACs, Substance Abuse Coordinators, and counselors. You're struggling with math textbooks. We're putting a stranglehold where we're told if you don't follow the law, we get sanctioned, but your kids are getting sanctioned. They're the ones that are suffering. We have degrees here. It's your children, our children that are suffering from this nonsense. We can't accept it. You're going to hear what you're going to lose and it has real meaning. It hurts. It's not out of my pocket. It's hurting your kids. They can't do things because we can't expose them to it. I'm going to ask the impact on every one of those things that you put up there, Madam Superintendent, because I want the public to know. I want you to understand how serious this is. We can't come back from this very quickly. I won't delay it any further. Madam President, please go ahead with your presentations.

Mr. Richard Matthews: I just want to say thank you, Madam Superintendent. That was very powerful, your words about what's happening to our district. Board Commissioners, I want to thank you guys as well. I want to go through this PowerPoint presentation. Some of it is going to be repetitive, but I think we have to make sure that we understand how we got to this point. Let's keep having some discussion. I know at the last meeting Ms. Rosie Grant asked us to talk a little bit about structural deficit. I think it's really important that we understand what that means and how we move forward. I was going to show you this first slide. This is the budget impact. You guys saw this last week. Again, this is really what a structural deficit talks about. On a year-end annual basis our expenses are going to increase at a higher rate than our revenues. For 2019-2020, the impact is \$43 million. Charter schools went up \$9 million. Employee salaries and benefits went up an additional \$10 million. Transportation costs, special education, legal. This is going to happen year over year over year. We had a one-time revenue last year of \$12 million, which helped us close the gap last year. Even though we got \$20 million, as Ms. Shafer said, we've been underfunded \$280 million over the last 10 years. That \$20 million hit that we had last year was still not enough for the district. We still had to do some things to get to a balanced budget. This is just an important slide that we need to understand. That's just not going to happen to us this year. Next year salaries are going to go up again and charter schools. If the revenues remain around the same from year to year, we're going to be in the same boat next year. We really have to think about how we not only balance the budget for 2019-2020, but also 2020-2021. We have to start making long-term decisions that can really impact our structural deficit. Just to repeat what you guys already know, if you just combine the cost between Passaic County Tech and the charter schools, that's \$83 million going out the door on a budget of about \$525 million. Those are the increases, \$10 million. As Ms. Shafer said, we got \$13 million. There's \$10 million gone right there.

Comm. Hodges: What concerns me is we have a group of students who are not college oriented. They're not our A students. If they're not our A or B students, Tech won't take them. Somebody has to find a vocational track program for those kids who Tech won't take. Those kids are not going to go to college. That costs money. Those kids can't walk out of this building uneducated or undereducated and try to survive. We're paying Tech who takes our top-level children, but won't train, won't give the vocational services to the children that need it. We have to do that. That costs more money. You need to understand that. Thank you, Mr. Matthews.

Comm. Castillo: Another thing that's not included in this is one of our other school districts who got those extra \$30 million. They talked about their out-of-district and their special education. We have about 315 students who go out of district daily. That's about another \$20 million apart from the \$85 million that gets taken right off the top because we're sending our students out of district. That's one of the many reasons that other districts created this line item for the extra \$15 million. We're investing another \$20 million right off the top. That's \$100 million.

Ms. Shafer: In response to your comments, Dr. Hodges, about vocational education, if you recall last year when I meet in roundtables with parents, they made it very clear to me that some children need vocational education and want vocational education programs. This current year that we're in was a planning year for vocational education programs here in the district. That \$2 million that we got is not going to cover vocational education. It's not going to cover anything that we need. Vocational education will get put on the backburner once again like everything else we have tried to do here in this district.

Mr. Matthews: Having the conversation about structural deficit, I briefly mentioned a little bit last year that the net of it all is that our annual appropriations are going to increase at a much faster rate than our revenues. \$43 million in appropriations and \$13 million in revenues - this is not sustainable. It's chronic. It's year over year. We have to get ahead of it. We have to realize this is our world going forward as far as what happened to us in 2019-2020. Going into next year we need to plan much further in terms of making systemic cuts that are permanent that can't come back. We can't make Band-Aid cuts. We have to make real cuts. As much as we have to keep on making cuts, the bottom line is that it's all revenue driven.

Comm. Redmon: You're saying right now we're on the trend of cutting no matter what we sit at this table and do. Based on the numbers you're presenting us tonight and based on the revenue that we received from the State, we have to sit here and get used to cutting major programs and staff each year. This is a trend that we need to keep going with, based on what you're presenting to us.

Mr. Matthews: What I'm saying is our cuts are going to be permanent. They don't all have to be people. It could be processes, how we do our business, how we organize, how we structure our schools.

Comm. Redmon: I'm going to go back. We did that a couple of years ago. We sat here and we restructured. We put some things into play and this was after we lost 520 teachers. Then we came back to the table and restructured some more because we said we were trying not to cut the classroom. Now based on what you're presenting to us at this particular time we can't restructure anymore. We don't have enough staff to keep restructuring.

Mr. Matthews: We're down to the bone. I agree.

Comm. Redmon: Because we're down to the bare minimum, after a fact we're going to have to start cutting bodies. We can't restructure anymore. We can't make room for anything else. You can't plan for anything else to come in. You're telling me right now my trend is we need to start planning for more bodies each year after we sit at this table. It's not fair to our students that we're giving an education to because we have teachers that are dedicated here. They want to stay here. When they come out of college, they want to come back to a community like Paterson. They get the training that we talked about. We spent millions of dollars in training, but we can't afford to keep them. By the time we can get the money to come back in here, it's hard to fill those positions because other districts have now got the cream of the crop in teachers that we can have in this district. It's just disheartening sitting at this table and day after day we're looking at this trying to restructure and bring things to the bare minimum, but it's people that we have to start getting rid of. Who wants to come to a district when they think that they have their whole career set here year after year and I'm not sure if I'm going to be here for the year, two years, or ten years later? I wouldn't want to come to a district that I know is not stable. I understand what you're presenting to me and this is not your fault, but it's real frustrating sitting here and listening to these facts every time we sit at this table during this time of the season. It's disheartening.

Mr. Matthews: If I could just interject a little bit. An example of how you attack a structural deficit is in place now. ESIP is a way that we're attacking our structural deficit. Maybe consideration could be privatizing some of the things that we already do. That's another way that we can attack our structural deficit. Every move that we're making to be able to attack and address it doesn't require cutting people, but just making moves that are sustainable within our budget and they don't come back to hurt us.

Comm. Hodges: The Commissioner was being nice. We're not restructuring. You're hollowing out our educational system here. You're gutting it. You can't put resources in to help bring our students from where they were, as the law says we're supposed to, not only have funding to overcome the tribulations that occur because of poverty, but to catch up. You can't catch up. You haven't got the funding you need to get to where you're supposed to be. There's no amount of restructuring that's going to do that. Not like this. If you're swapping nurses between schools to address the needs of children, if you're cutting guidance counselors, and librarians when our kids can't read now, how do you sustain an improvement in education? You can't. I know we've tried some things which are very good, but it's not enough.

Mr. Matthews: I totally agree.

Comm. Martinez: I'm just trying to gather my thoughts and catch my breath here. A lot of these cuts that we're discussing right now seem to be of support staff, librarians, and all those things, and while the impact of that alone is going to be felt tremendously, our Superintendent stated that we still have a long way to go. We've actually started turning the corner and we've actually started to show some progress. What we can least afford to do at this point is to even consider taking teachers and leaving them out in the cold. As someone who has more than 10 years of experience working in schools as a classroom teacher, I can tell you the single biggest driver to student success is the quality of the teacher that you have in front of that classroom. Period! This is the position we're put in right now. If we even have to consider or take action to cut teachers, we are doing a tremendous disservice. Disservice is light. It's an injustice. It's a shame what we would be doing to our scholars moving forward if we have to consider or actually take action to remove any of those teachers. All the gains that we have worked to see would be undone and the damage is generational.

Mr. Matthews: Getting to the cuts, this is where we are in terms of working together with the staff, central office, meeting with the principals, talking to the department heads. These are cuts that we're going to propose to balance out the budget, which is due to the County on Wednesday. Central office, non-salary, purchasing, security, transportation, central office staff, central office staff in terms of salaries is \$2.4 million. Vice principals, \$2.7 million. Supervisors are \$1.3 million. Vacancies are \$5 million. There's a number there for teachers as far as what we see that's going to be the gap of how many people may have to be let go. I'll give that to Ms. Shafer to provide some clarity.

Ms. Shafer: Let me just go through what the cuts look like. Non-salary is all of our programs, our instructional model, our textbooks, and our science labs that we wanted to remodel. Not remodel for the purpose of doing something extravagant, but to make them operational with water, gas, and electric, so our children would be able to perform experiments in them, just like every other child can do. The other non-salary cuts, professional development. Professional development would be limited. Instrument repairs, the music program that we had, in order for us to repair the instruments. Forget about buying new instruments, just repairing the old ones. Some of our supplies, materials, large equipment, computers, the textbook replenishment, these are textbooks that are old, but because we can't buy new, we need to replenish the old ones. FOSS science kits, Infinite Campus training, which is our new student system for parents as well, and security supplies. The list goes on and on about the things that are non-salary that we are not going to be able to do. Once again, those are supports. If you remember last year, we increased the failing rate from 60 to 63. In order to get our children to still be able to pass we had to have supports for them. We're not going to be able to have them anymore. We're not going to be able to continue to increase that failing rate. You can't raise that expectation and not give children what they need to get there. That's just one example. Central office staff - anyone retiring or resigning, we're not filling their position. The Supervisor of SACs, the HIB Coordinator, the Director of Physical Education, Health Driver Education, Nursing, and Athletics - we're not going to fill that position. Then arbitrarily I asked every department to cut two positions. Vice principals - every school that has two vice principals this year will have one. 24 vice principals will be removed. We cut 35 supervisors. Supervisors provide professional development, feedback to teachers to improve instruction so children can learn, they monitor curriculum, and they develop PARCC strategies so our teachers can use them and children can perform better. We cut \$5 million from vacancies. Vacancies are positions that were assigned to the school, needed at the school, but right now does not have a body in them. We want to soften the blow about the individuals that would be RIF'd in the process, so \$5 million from vacancies. Then 150 teachers will have to be RIF'd. This means class size in every building will go up, which impacts instruction and learning. Not all children learn at the same pace. If you want to differentiate instruction so that you're able to challenge the child who is on grade level and moving ahead, and you also want to meet the needs of the children that might be lower and you want to meet the needs of the children that are right on target, you're not going to be able to do that with 40 children in a room with one teacher.

Comm. Capers: When we're talking about these different cuts at central office, central office staff, vice principals, supervisors, how is the school going to look? What types of resources is the principal going to have? What is he not going to have? How is this going to look in terms of day-to-day operations? What type of support is the district not going to be giving that principal? How is this going to look?

Ms. Shafer: If you're at a school with 1,000 students, you'll see one principal and one vice principal. In the past, when we administered the PARCC, we assigned 54 supervisors to schools to help assist whatever is needed so that they can take the PARCC assessment. We won't have that luxury anymore. We will just have a principal and a vice principal. We will not have support for the schools at all.

Comm. Capers: How about away from PARCC just day-to-day?

Ms. Shafer: Day-to-day is going to be difficult. We had supervisors at the high school. Supervisors did cafeteria duty during lunchtime to monitor student behavior so that we didn't have fights, food fights, and things of that nature. We don't have that anymore. We're not going to have supervisors going in and out of classrooms monitoring curriculum, monitoring instruction, and providing teachers with feedback. They're not going to be there.

Comm. Capers: Who's going to do that now? That's what I'm saying. If we're cutting that, who's going to do it?

Ms. Shafer: There isn't anybody to do it. The principal will do it on their own. If you have 60 teachers in an average building, if a principal went in a classroom each day, it would take almost three months to get in every classroom because we only have 20 school days in a month.

Comm. Olivares: I see that we have 150 teachers on the list that would be cut loose. I would like to have an estimate for the sake of accuracy. We have to close that gap for \$23 million. I would like to see what that number looks like, please.

Ms. Shafer: These would be non-tenured teachers. If you just took an average salary of \$75,000 to \$80,000 with benefits, you're looking at anywhere from \$14 to \$15 million.

Comm. Olivares: That would go beyond the \$23 million if you do the math.

Ms. Shafer: That is part of the \$23 million to balance the budget.

Comm. Castillo: Even that's a high number.

Ms. Shafer: That's a high number.

Comm. Castillo: Most of our teachers don't make that. They're more in the \$50,000 range. At an average salary of \$50,000 or \$55,000 plus benefits, it will probably add up to even more teachers.

Comm. Redmon: Just to get back to what the Superintendent said, when you talked about getting rid of supervisors, I know I was in a classroom as a teacher for the day just to see how teachers work in this district. In my experience, the teachers already don't have enough time to get what they need for the students when it comes to prepping or making sure the equipment works since sometimes we have problems with our technology. Right now with those supervisors not being there we're going to ask these teachers to be in these rooms by themselves and stripping them down to the basics. Now that 15-minute prep period that they have is now down to 5 minutes. Now we have to make sure that we can control our students, that our lesson plans are done, and that we organize our class. Not only that, the class that I was in had shrunk, but now we're going back to increased class sizes. Now when we have students of maybe 20, we may be going back to a 40-student classroom. That 5-minute prep time that

we're just talking about is not really 5 minutes. We really have to take into consideration what that classroom is going to look like. Comm. Capers, I'm bringing it back to you because you made an interesting point. That classroom is not going to look like what we have now. Right now, our teachers can't just focus on one student. Instruction is going to be moving just like that and we're going to lose students because of that.

Comm. Hodges: It's not the role of the vice principals, supervisors, and principals to go through and to gauge the degree of implementation of our curriculum. We don't have these people doing that and we have a brand-new curriculum. We won't know how well the teachers have mastered the curriculum or whether or not they're employing the curriculum in a proper way. If our children don't do well, we won't know whether it's because of the curriculum or because of the performance of the teacher, not to the degree that we have now. What we're doing is we're cutting our own throat in terms of managing our buildings around curriculum. That's why we're here. If we can't do that, if we can't determine what's going on in these classrooms with these students, then close the doors.

Comm. Castillo: On our part as well the content experts and the intervention period and how we design the curriculum for each classroom and each grade.

Comm. Simmons: With regards to the change to the grading scale, do we know what it looks like for those students that are on the cusp of passing or failing with the supports? Do we know what it looks like in terms of the graduation rate?

Ms. Shafer: Yes. I just spent the last two weeks meeting individually with every high school principal to go over what our graduation rate looks like. Right now, we have about two schools that are in trouble and that we're monitoring very closely. Mr. Cozart is meeting with them weekly with a plan. At least at this juncture we have the supports to help the students. We're not going to have those supports going forward. It's going to impact instruction in the classroom on a daily basis because your principals are not content experts in every content area. They have one content. Therefore, the reason you have supervisors is just for that. If you don't have a principal whose content is mathematics, then who is going to be offering feedback, coaching, support, and professional development to those math teachers? It can't be the principal if that's not their area. You do more damage if it's not your area if you try to. That is going to be a big gap as we try to move our students forward when you don't have that expertise in the building. It's going to go right back to the actual basics of reading, writing, math, and language arts. It's exactly what it was when the State took over and you see that we didn't get too far with the State taking over.

Comm. Simmons: Last week we talked about some options in terms of the charter school payment increase of \$9 million and just looking at the fact that Lakewood got an additional \$15 million after their \$15 million. They received \$30 million because of destabilization of the district. It simply means you're sending students out for special education services for transportation, which we also do, and also because they have a high amount of students in private schools.

Comm. Hodges: Which they vote for. You need to understand that. They vote to do that. They starve their city's community schools to send kids to private schools. They vote to do that. They're destabilizing their own children by choice and they're getting a \$30 million reward for that. Meanwhile, we're sitting here... I have to stop.

Comm. Simmons: I want to make sure he answers the question.

Comm. Redmon: Just to add to that point, the private schools get triple the amount of money. The State allows them to do triple the amount of tuition than we get initially. Besides voting for private schools, they get more money for private schools and then we're asked on top of that to send more money to private and charter schools. Our public education doesn't have a fair chance here at all.

Comm. Simmons: Can we make the same argument? We have a high amount of students in charter schools. That payment has increased \$9 million. What happens if we withheld that increase?

Mr. Murray: Withholding the increase raises a different set of problems because there would be administrative remedies which would be straightforward requiring the budget to be reset or other administrative actions even perhaps challenging duly achieved local control. The destabilization that you refer to is just the \$9 million which is a 17.3% increase in one year for charter schools in Paterson. The argument would be the thorough and efficient education which is what Dr. Hodges has mentioned and Ms. Shafer has so eloquently pointed out of two school pathways for children in Paterson. 17.3% increase in the charter school and that is the destabilization. I don't know the percentage of increase. It's certainly not 17.3% for Paterson children, the 30,000 children that you educate every year.

Comm. Hodges: You would essentially be driving kids into charter schools because they're going to look at the services we can provide and say Paterson can't do this for us. They can do it. We're undermining our own system for our own children. We'll become Lakewood in essence because we'll be closing our own doors and opening up paying charter schools to do the services that we're supposed to be doing for our children.

Comm. Simmons: You're saying if we pay the increase.

Comm. Hodges: If you take it to its logical conclusion, what will happen is we're providing them better services at charter schools than we can provide here. They have music. They definitely have art. They have science labs and science programs that we read about in the papers. If you're a parent, it's not going to take you very long to say the district can't do this, so I want my child to go someplace where they can, which hurts the vast majority of the students here because that's more money that goes away from the majority of students in the City of Paterson.

Comm. Simmons: We can't continue to cut teachers. The hard decision is, are we going to pay that increase? That's the question that we need to grapple with.

Comm. Castillo: If we don't pay the increase, then local control can be on the table for them as well. But if we do pay the increase and we continue in the route that we're going in, we can't provide a thorough and efficient education, meaning local control is still... We're set up for failure.

Comm. Hodges: Either way.

Comm. Castillo: Either way, we're set up for failure.

Comm. Olivares: It's even worse than that.

Comm. Redmon: The funny part about it is last year we harped on getting local control. You're giving us a budget, you're giving us the money, and you're saying to us to figure

it out. Are we really figuring it out? No, because right now we can't provide a thorough and efficient education. You're not giving us the resources that we need to provide a thorough and efficient education, but you're also telling us to make sure we stay on target with your two-year transition plan that we just obtained. Right now, we have to meet all the benchmarks that you gave us in the midst of this transition and still try to make sure that we use the resources that you gave us to meet these benchmarks. We know we can't meet them if we keep restructuring the way we're going on. Overall, local control is right back in your hands. I just needed to hear that again to make sure that I understand the rationale of what we're trying to do here. I know it was a great thing, we clapped, and we were so happy. We went down to Trenton and we got this back. But you gave us a two-year transition plan and we're going to have State monitors that are going to be on our back explaining to us we're not meeting these grades, you're not meeting this benchmark, you're not doing this, and then they're taking back the five components that we gained to get local control back.

Comm. Castillo: So we were given local control and essentially put in a situation where they can take it away so they can say that we weren't responsible enough to maintain it, even though they didn't give us any of the tools which we would need to maintain it.

Comm. Hodges: You're not educating your children.

Comm. Castillo: We're not educating the kids.

Comm. Olivares: Just to piggyback on what Comm. Simmons was saying about paying the \$9 million increase, I just want to underline that that does not solve the problem because we're \$23 million in the hole. If we pay the increase, that's only \$9 million. We still jeopardize losing control. Am I correct, Mr. Murray?

Mr. Murray: There are many parts to that issue. The answer is yes. You do raise that question. However, you have the issue of thorough and efficient and whether or not this destabilizes and how best to make that argument, whether that's by action or litigation.

Comm. Hodges: Does that not put us closer to not cutting 150 teachers, not cutting principals, and not cutting supervisors whose sole job and responsibility is to supplement the education of our children? It's not all the way back, but it's closer than where we're going to be without it.

Comm. Capers: You're talking about the increase.

Comm. Hodges: Yes.

Comm. Castillo: The \$10 million.

Comm. Hodges: Every dollar matters here. Maybe it's 100 teachers as opposed to 150. Maybe it's half the supervisors. Whatever it is, it's something closer to where we are now than we should be if we did nothing.

Comm. Castillo: Correct.

Comm. Simmons: Another question for Mr. Murray. Using the destabilization argument, is a lawsuit an option?

Mr. Murray: Yes, a lawsuit is definitely an option. The challenge that exists is the time period it would take to go through the litigation. Certainly, one would hope that if the

argument was made in a cogent fashion that there would be attention given to it as other districts received attention from the State on the funding problem. The unique difficulty that Paterson faces, as the Commissioners have outlined, is with respect to the demands that charter schools place on your budget. As I hear the Commissioners speaking, you're not asking for more money. You're asking for the right to control the money that you're given.

Comm. Castillo: We definitely want more money too.

Mr. Murray: But you want to control it in terms of how you spend it.

Comm. Castillo: If other districts can make the argument that they're destabilized, why doesn't Paterson have the opportunity to make the same argument when we can definitely prove the amount of money that's going for special education out-of-district, the \$65 million for charter schools, and the \$21 million for Tech? Why can't we be categorized in the same idea? Clearly, I think the increase is outrageous and it's something that shouldn't be taken away because \$10 million can save a lot of these people that we need to educate the students so we can provide a thorough and efficient education. We're not where we need to be even with that, but we're closer than we would be without the \$10 million. I think that's the conversation that we have to keep focused on. Is this going to be a discussion of the possibility of non-payment of this increase? That means we can save maybe 100 teachers.

Comm. Hodges: In the 90s, I was one of many people, including the PEF, who marched down State Street demanding the money that we were supposed to have, fighting for that money to come to this district because of how our kids suffered educationally. I'm going to look at each and every option to make sure that those children get a thorough and efficient education. I can't do anything other than that.

Comm. Castillo: I agree.

Comm. Redmon: I really don't even know what to say anymore. I'm at a loss for words at this particular point.

Comm. Hodges: It really hurts.

Comm. Redmon: We sit here night after night. We're here dedicated. We represent the public. The public sent us here to do the business. We sit here bumping our heads against the wall trying to make sure that we make the right decisions for all our children. Right now you're telling me we're not going to do anything with this right now. We can't even save jobs. Like I was telling Mr. Matthews, we're still cutting bodies. Each year we're going to continue to cut bodies. No matter how we look at it, we're cutting bodies no matter what and that's the sad thing to say.

Comm. Castillo: Have we explored every single possibility outside of these items to save?

Mr. Matthews: Yes, we have. We've looked at every line item in the entire budget. We've discussed with all department heads.

Comm. Redmon: Everything that you guys are presenting to us tonight is the last resort. We have nothing else. We don't have any reserve. For so long this district was operating on their reserve with the fund balance.

Mr. Matthews: That isn't true. We have about \$2 million that we can put into the budget for 2019-2020. Other than that, that's it.

Comm. Redmon: But that's dangerous.

Mr. Matthews: Yes.

Comm. Redmon: You would not want to put \$2 million into your budget just to put it in there like that. You would not want to do that.

Mr. Matthews: We don't want to do that.

Comm. Redmon: That is something that we were supposed to have just in case.

Mr. Matthews: We're not recommending that.

Comm. Castillo: By law, we have to keep a certain amount in there in case of an emergency.

Comm. Redmon: The total amount that you said was in our fund balance at this point is \$2 million.

Mr. Matthews: No. I said we would put \$2 million in as the most that we would put in.

Comm. Redmon: That's from our fund balance.

Mr. Matthews: Yes.

Comm. Redmon: What is the total amount of money that's in your fund balance?

Mr. Matthews: There's \$10 million that's available, but we don't want to use all of it.

Comm. Redmon: We can't afford to use all \$10 million of it.

Comm. Hodges: So we're looking at cutting real programs.

Mr. Matthews: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: Whole programs.

Comm. Capers: Which programs can we cut? What's available? Do we have a list of programs that the Board can see?

Ms. Shafer: \$7.3 million was programs. One of the new programs was the reading program, which was phase two. That was cut out. In order for us to work through that program, we had to eliminate some supervisors.

Comm. Capers: What other programs? Is that the only program that was cut?

Ms. Shafer: I just wanted to give you an example.

Comm. Capers: Is the Newcomers program still up there?

Ms. Shafer: Instead of \$2.3 million, we cut that down to \$700,000.

Comm. Capers: How did you get to that number?

Ms. Peron: We moved the resources into grant funding because we're freeing up the grant funds with other things. We drastically cut the staff in half. We're working on phase one. We are reclassifying a position as well so that we have at least a teacher for every content area and ESL education. The curriculum writing is drastically cut by more than half as well. We've worked to at least begin with a minimum. We had projected 200 students and now we're lessening that number. We're going to begin with 50-100.

Comm. Castillo: I'm sorry. I missed that. How many students would be affected?

Ms. Peron: We had projected about 200 and now we're talking about 50-100 students. That's beginning with our Hispanic population. We're going to work on phase two for Bengali and Arabic. We had to cut that out for next year.

Comm. Castillo: How is that affecting the students? I know we had planned for the program.

Ms. Peron: I've asked for some of the data to be looked at. Last year we had 36 dropouts that were ELL students. We're losing students because we're not servicing them and meeting their needs. I also asked for how many of those students are graduating through the EPP process, which is the Portfolio process and not the way that we would like them to graduate, which is through an assessment and meeting their graduation criteria. I also asked for students right now in the ELL population who are failing two or more classes. That number is also very high. I don't have it with me right this minute. I have it in my information. We're not actually providing the services that our kids need. We're not connecting with them and supporting them to the level that they need support and they're hurting.

Comm. Rondon: How many teachers do we have in the district?

Ms. Shafer: About 2,500.

Comm. Rondon: Any field that anybody works in, after you dedicate your time working hard and giving your best, and our teachers have given the best for our students, you expect some type of raise. Our children are being cut every year. We get less money every year. I don't think this is fair for our students. We have to definitely take a look at this because this is ridiculous. I came from the Paterson School District. It saddens and breaks my heart and makes me furious that our students get less than other districts when they don't deserve that. It's unfair.

Comm. Simmons: How much money are we moving into grant funding?

Mr. Matthews: ESSA says \$9.7 million right now.

Ms. Shafer: What's the number going in? It was resources. They have it.

Ms. Linda Herald: We moved all the resources for the Newcomers program into the grant. It's probably about \$380,000. We're waiting on the number for the supervisors. We won't have that number until tomorrow, but those are also going to be placed into the grant. Not all of them.

Comm. Castillo: Correct. The original amount allocated was \$2.3 million and we were able to put only \$300,000 in the grant?

Ms. Herald: No. Then we have the positions for the new teachers that are going to go into the program, but those are going into the general funding.

Comm. Simmons: You're still looking at over \$1 million.

Ms. Peron: No. For the Newcomers? No. The only thing we're putting into local funding is the curriculum writing, which would be \$15,000, either four or five positions.

Ms. Herald: Five positions.

Ms. Peron: It would be six, but we're reclassifying one position. We're going to be using that position as a sixth. So it's five. We need content area teachers for every content area – ELA, math, social studies, science, and ESL.

Comm. Simmons: So we're looking at impacting about 100 students.

Ms. Peron: Yes.

Comm. Simmons: How many students are impacted when we cut the reading program?

Ms. Peron: Our new reading program was k-3 and we added fourth and fifth grade. That's a lot more.

Comm. Olivares: I wanted to see if I could get some information on the Newcomers. We instituted that program for the elementary?

Ms. Peron: Yes.

Comm. Olivares: How much did that cost? How long ago did we start it? Do we know how effective it was? Do we have any information so we can gauge it and see what it is that we can expect from this Newcomers program?

Ms. Peron: We do. I can't answer those questions right this second. I don't have the information in front of me, but we do. We did a study for the Newcomers when we began. We began our program from fourth through eighth. That was the initial program that was started. Since then, we have expanded into the lower grades for Newcomers. I would have to get that information for you, but we do have information on the Newcomers program. We have a small study that we conducted on its effectiveness.

Comm. Olivares: Can we get that before we make a final decision on the budget so that we can..?

Ms. Peron: Yes, I have to give that to you tomorrow.

Comm. Olivares: Everything that we're doing is last minute right now. Thank you.

Comm. Capers: How much does it cost?

Comm. Castillo: How much does the elementary cost at NRC right now?

Ms. Peron: I would have to put that together for you because we would have to look at staff.

Mr. Matthews: It's about \$1 million.

Ms. Peron: We have it at School No. 15 and NRC.

Comm. Capers: Both schools are costing about \$1 million. Is it \$2 million, or \$1 million altogether?

Mr. Matthews: It's \$1 million altogether.

Comm. Capers: For two schools, it's \$1 million together.

Mr. Matthews: Yes.

Comm. Capers: Then for the high school you cut it down from \$2.3 million down to \$700,000. For Newcomers altogether it rounds up to \$2 million between elementary and high school.

Mr. Matthews: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: This reading program is a real sore spot for me, as I'm sure you know. Are our students performing in language arts at the top of the charts?

Ms. Shafer: Absolutely not.

Comm. Hodges: Are they performing mid-range?

Ms. Shafer: No. We have too many students not reading on grade level. This reading program is a consistent program that all of our teachers have had professional development in on phase one of the program. We are waiting to get the results on how it's working, but we wanted to implement next year phase two. That money had to be removed and put into the grant once we removed the supervisors.

Comm. Hodges: We're not talking about advanced calculus. This is a reading program which is basics to the needs of our students who have historically had problems with reading. We're going to cut that, the support for them.

Ms. Shafer: Right.

Comm. Hodges: Which goes across the grade levels because we're not talking about grade two. Every single grade is going to lose support in language arts where we already trail.

Ms. Shafer: That's absolutely correct. If you can't read, you can't do anything. You can't do any other subjects. You can't do social studies. You can't do chemistry. You can't do mathematics. You can't do anything if you can't read. This was a big reading campaign because we knew that our children were not reading on grade level and we had an opportunity. This is really more important than anything. Last year we received \$20 million. Mind you, \$280 million in \$20 million, we're not there, but we were able to hire 44 positions for the schools. One position was here and the rest were for the schools. Then we did the reading program. If you don't give us the \$20 million again,

you can't continue the programs you just started last year. The reading program was one.

Comm. Redmon: Madam Superintendent, I just think that we have the public that's still here. I think we should move to public portion and then come back. We can talk about everything else after the public portion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Comm. Redmon: If this is your first time visiting with us at the Paterson Board of Education, we just wanted to remind you that you have a three-minute speaking time. Please be mindful of those that come after you. We want to hear everybody's concerns so we want to make sure that everybody gets a chance.

Ms. Nikki Baker: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the Board. My name is Nikki Baker. I work at Dale Avenue Elementary School as an Instructional Assistant to special education k-2 autism. I'm also the ESP chairperson. For those of us who don't know what ESPs are, we are Educational Support Professionals. We like to call ourselves "extra special people" because we work with students who are in need. We give the extra class support. We're not just aides. We're assistants. We instruct and give support to the teachers who are there. This is very disheartening. It seems like we're here all the time. This is a very serious situation. We do understand that we are underfunded, as most districts now are, but Paterson in a much worse way. I can't imagine cutting off all these essential and necessary programs and the staff members that we need to help educate the students. We bring in the finest educators and support professionals. All of us have college credits. A lot of our support personnel have degrees, even some doctorates. They may not have all stayed because of the situation that we are currently in. We've brought in tremendous special education teachers. How are we going to keep them? How are we going to support our kids who are always in need? I can give several instances of children who went through this public school system in Paterson who if they didn't have that special education help, gifted and talented included and all the teachers that teach the regular subjects in between, they would not be the stories that we see of excellence. We do need to promote that more. We won't survive. We won't be able to contend if we keep killing our programs. I hope that we get a lot more people on board coming to these meetings. I hope that we get people who can go to Trenton, NJIT and places like that because we absolutely need it. What I'm also saying to our community, staff, and employees is we need to step up and come out and understand what's going on. It is important. Thank you for your efforts, but I really hope that we can find other solutions so these drastic ones will not be taken. Thank you.

Ms. Shirley Arturo: Hi. My name is Shirley Arturo. Good evening. I just have a few questions. I'm a resident of Paterson. I'm also an Instructional Assistant at School No. 15 for kindergarten students. I've been in the district for over 22 years. I do have some budget concerns as well as something I did not hear mentioned tonight. I hope that we will broach that subject about the taxes. I'm not sure where we are with that. I know there was supposed to be an increase, possibly up to 14%. I know a lot of our residents would like to hear about that. I'm a little confused about some of the numbers I'm hearing this evening as well. Maybe Mr. Matthews can clarify. We started with a \$39 million deficit. That was reduced to \$22 million. I'm not sure where we came up with

that \$17 million in cuts. I'm not sure if it was part of this picture. Maybe we can itemize those things a little bit better. I think we need to go through the tax situation a little bit more this evening on whether we're doing a 2% increase each year or the possibility of a 14%. I believe the 2% was listed as a \$20 increase in our taxes, whereas the 14% increase, because we have not increased all these years, would amount to a \$200 increase in most of our taxes. I'm not seeing the reasoning of not increasing our taxes gradually rather than all at one time. I'm not sure if that's the best thing that we should be doing in our city. I went over your numbers here and I come up with \$29 million, which is why I'm not sure if this is part of the \$17 million. I added all those figures plus the possibility of 150 teachers being cut at approximately \$70,000 with benefits. I come up with \$29 million, not \$22 million. I'm not sure where that extra money is coming from, if it's part of the \$17 million, so if we could clarify that. We were all here a couple of weeks ago in reference to our health benefits. I'm sure that's a big driver in our budget as well, so a big consideration of where we're going with that and if that cost of whatever we're doing has been included in this budget. I think Nikki said it very well. You are perfectly right, Ms. Shafer, this is unfair. If we're anywhere involved in what we read in the newspapers we see that there's an initiative here to drive the public schools and underfund them. It's going to take the whole community to do something. That means your employees, your community, and your parents. It's everyone. Everyone is involved in this one. If you could answer those questions, I'd be happy for tonight. Thank you.

Comm. Castillo: If you can just hang around, Ms. Shafer will respond to all the questions towards the end.

Mr. Ernest Rucker: Madam President, I'm representing Save the Village. I would like to ask for a five-minute time period. Thank you. What I've heard here tonight is scary. This is like stone-age education, what you're proposing tonight. I understand it's not the Board's fault. These are things that are being placed upon you. But I'm still listening to this Newcomers program and I don't understand why we're having that conversation now this year with this budget crisis. We don't have that money. Anything that's going to lay off one teacher I'm totally opposed to. We can't keep gutting the system and expect to bring qualified children out of this system to leave this city. I've always advocated for the homeowner as far as taxes, but I also know that it's time for the City of Paterson to play its part in helping to fund education better than we have before. This is sad. We are not talking about improving education. We're talking about dismantling it. We talk about local control. You're not going to get local control. It was a ruse from the beginning. They gave us a red herring. They said do this and you have local control, but we're taking all your tools from you. We're going to gut you. If you don't pay the \$30 million they're talking about, then they're going to say you didn't pay that, so it jeopardizes local control. I say don't pay it. Let's work on that throughout the year. Let's figure another way into it. We can't gut the system. Whatever Ms. Shafer said scared me, and I'm not an easy guy to scare. But I know children will suffer if you make these cuts that you're taking about. They will gut the entire educational system. Why are our political leaders allowing us to pay charter schools and they send our kids back to the district and don't send the money back with them? This is not an issue that we can take lightly. This is a very serious issue. We need to gather together and mobilize community, educators, and politicians throughout the city. Where is our Mayor in this situation? Where are his relationships? Bring those relationships here. Help the educational system. What hurts education hurts the city. We have not put this together yet. If we have another generation of children to come up uneducated, your streets will be filled with more gangs. They won't be able to support themselves. They have to do what they have to do. Where is our Mayor? It is time that those relationships that he said he has, he needs to come over here to this building and share them with you. We

need to make sure that we do not give our system back. As far as that part of it, I want to also reach into another issue. You saw the newspapers earlier this week that Clifton went to court and changed its board of education elections back to April. Other districts have done the same thing. It is time that this Board does the same thing. We should have never been moved to November. When we moved to November, it took years before people realized where the ballot question was or where you were on the ballot at bottom. In some cases, they never voted for the candidates running for School Board because they couldn't find it. We need to go back to April so it doesn't cost a candidate \$30,000 to run a campaign for School Board. That is ridiculous. We have to take the party system out of the system. Let's be honest. Some of you will not agree with me, but party politics has played a great deal in making sure that certain people got elected. We need to stop that. The people of the City of Paterson need to elect who they believe will be good for this Board of Education and the city. Thank you.

Ms. LaVonne Jones: Good evening. I have so many questions that I've written down. It's very disheartening to stand here because every year I've been here at this podium, I've been to Trenton, I've been to Newark, and my first question is, when do we move past Trenton? I asked the question last year, what do we need to do to get people to take a look, stand up, and get some attention? If we're saying fill buses to go to Trenton, then maybe we should fill buses to go to Washington. We need to get somebody to take a look because we're sitting here beating our heads against the wall trying to get blood from a stone. If the money is not there, you're not going to get the money. We can sit here all night and talk about it, but we need to come up with some viable solutions that will help us educate our kids. Right now, it seems like we're being set up and it seems like we don't want to educate our kids. With the cuts and taking away, what are we going to do? How do we account for funds being returned back to Paterson Public Schools when PCTI or charter schools send our kids back? How do we account for the funding that is being returned? Are we keeping track of that? Are we just losing it? I've heard of a great number of kids getting sent back from PCTI. Now they're double-dipping. We're paying them to educate and they come back and we have to educate them. That's twice the money we're paying for one kid. How are we controlling that and keeping track of that? We have to go to some outside solutions. We need to get some buy-in. We need to look at some corporate organizations. When they are going Chapter 11, we need to look at how they cut and take the fat out. We need to do that. We need to look for some corporate partnerships. You say we can hardly get used books. Let's get to the book publishing companies and see if we can get some buy-in from them. We have to do something along with, as they said, getting our Mayor to the table. Honestly, they're talking about another tax cut. I'm ready to run from Paterson. I love this city and I've worked hard. I'm on the bus every time going to Trenton or Newark, but we have to come up with some solutions that are not going to kill the taxpayers. Taxpayer money is going to run out. People are going to get tired and people are going to move out of the city. We have to start looking for outside solutions. I was a volunteer. Nobody really knew, but I did transportation. I offered some solutions to PAGT when they first got started free of charge. I set up bus routes. I rode the streets looking to save our transportation department money, but then we did other things. We need to involve people that are experts from Corporate America that are willing to volunteer their time here. We need to take advantage of that to fix our budget and cut the fat out. That's the biggest thing. Cut the fat out and get it moving. We need to get our district moving. Reading is fundamental. We can't do away with reading. There's just no way. If we do away with reading, then we all might as well pack it in. We need to look at solutions because we know the money is gone. I saw different expressions when I said go to Washington, but drastic times require drastic measures. We need to do whatever it is we need to do to get this done. I don't know, but we need to do that.

Mr. Corey Teague: Good evening members of the Board. I know I'm not supposed to be out tonight. I'm supposed to be in bed, but I couldn't miss an opportunity when I heard what was going on. I want to read one letter that I wrote in 2016 and something that one of the Board members stated in 2016. The article that I wrote in February 11, 2016 said Paterson School Board given control of an empty purse. That was the name of the article. As a former Board of Education member, I was delighted to hear that the New Jersey State Board of Education voted unanimously to return control of two key DPRs to the Board, finance and personnel. While I celebrate this landmark decision which ends decades of State control, I'm equally concerned with the timing of this decision. Paterson Public Schools faces yet another year of excruciating cuts due to the budget. It would seem rather odd to give the Board finance at a time when the district is in financial deficit. Paterson Public Schools has already been flat-funded for the current fiscal year by NJDOE and I doubt that they will release any additional funds at this time. I fear that the Paterson Board of Education has been given control of an empty purse. The community must take their rightful places at the meetings. Take a look around in this room. There are almost 30,000 students in this school district. Take a look around in this room. It's pathetic. If it was a football game, the parents would be here. It cannot be the same faces at every meeting advocating for all of these children. Where are the parents? I have run myself in the ground advocating on behalf of families and children and they never show up. Why are we so lazy here? Why is it acceptable here? We can come here and blast the Board all we want, but we're not holding up our share of the weight. There's no reason why the parents could not be here tonight. If there was a letter that went out to the community and said that everyone that showed up at the Board of Social Services by 8:00 tomorrow morning will get \$500 in food stamps, that line would be stretching from the front of that building to City Hall. You know I'm not lying. I'm telling the truth. People don't seem to care until they realize how it's really going to hurt them. I don't know if you were really paying attention to what's going on here with this budget. What they're basically saying is we're doomed. Where else can we go at this point? Comm. Redmon said it best. She said she's at a loss for words. Let me go back to one more thing. The minutes of the Paterson Board of Education, February 17, 2016, Dr. Hodges made some remarks there. This was during the budget process then. He said this exercise that we're being forced to engage in of cutting funds that we don't have, the Superintendent through an audit projected that by 2018 we will be facing a \$186 million shortfall in our budget. There are no cuts that we can make to get that, unless you close doors, more than a few schools. Try a third of them. I'm angry and I'm alarmed because there has to be pushback. The community has to push back. The Board already knows this. Dr. Hodges has been screaming about this for a long time. I have been screaming about this for a long time. Where is the community? If the State doesn't see the outrage of the parents, they're not going to do a thing. Even if we go to Trenton, I'm sure it will be the same group of folks that are always on the bus. We as parents have to do more in our community. They keep saying we don't get enough notices. Everybody is on Facebook. You can go on Facebook at 3:00 in the morning and everybody is on Facebook. You can't tell me you didn't know about the Board meeting tonight. There's no way you can say that. Some of them are watching live right now, so they know there's a Board meeting. You can't say the Board has to do a better job. You know to get your kids to school. You know what else is going on. You know if there's a basketball or football game. How do you get that information and spread it around, but then you don't consider a budget hearing? Don't you know everything goes from the budget? If it's not in the budget, it won't be in the classroom. Don't they understand that? The impact of what happens in the classroom will trickle down to what happens in the home and vice versa. If you go to affluent communities such as Rochelle Park, River Edge, Paramus, and those other areas, those communities would be outraged. They would need to have police out front

to make sure they don't burn the place down. But in the Black and Brown communities we seem to be okay with it. Over the course of the decades the State has put us on the backburner because we have been okay with being on the backburner. When we get to the point where we're tired of being pushed to the back of the room, that's when Trenton is going to respect us. That's the kind of support that the Board of Education needs.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening. I'm saddened that the BA was not able to finish his presentation. I want to ask for a copy of the presentation so that I can use it to inform my testimony. I will be going to Newark this week and to Trenton the following week to give testimony and would like some of that data to be able to share with our legislators. I hate looking back, but Dr. Evans warned us about the fiscal cliff five years ago and started some planning going. The Board didn't like it and they fired the BA. This is our problem that we have to grapple with. Getting rid of the person who tells the story doesn't help us fix anything. I'm sure there were other things that the public is not privy to, but that's how it appeared to us because we don't know the rest of the information. The fiscal cliff is now here and we're having to cut people. I encourage you to take your argument to the State. I'm sure if you call them, if you're not already on the list and it's closed out they will make room. Call your Senator and Assembly people. They will make room for Paterson Board of Education members to come down and speak. Fighting about it here doesn't solve anything because right now what we have is a zero sum game. You have to take from some to give to the others or cut some. The discussion about the Newcomers program was interesting listening to. Not having all the facts, I want to ask have you looked at the data. I did some research and there are some places it worked and some places it doesn't work. Is it working for our kids in Paterson? Some suggest that perhaps segregating Newcomers into one school is violating their civil rights. Others say it's not because it's the best way to get them to catch up. I don't have an opinion here. I'm just asking have we looked at the data and the bottom line is, is it working for our kids? If it's not working for our kids, then we need something that does work and indeed we need special programs for kids coming into the district. I was worried that someone might think it's okay to be without arts, music, science labs, SAT prep, dual enrollment, or all of the things that kids in wealthy communities get without question. Why is it okay for Paterson kids? Why is it not necessary for Paterson kids to get these? How are our kids going to be competitive if we sit back and say we have to cut? Granted, we're limited by our funds, but let's fight for it. Let's at least go down to Trenton and fight for the money that we're entitled to. We'll never recover the \$280 million and it's going to take them seven years to get us to full funding. Thanks to the Governor for the extra, but seven years. The extra doesn't get us where we need to be. Please join the fight. Anyone who thinks that we should encourage charter expansion really doesn't belong on the public School Board because it is hurting our children. You were elected to serve the children of the Paterson Public School District. Please align your priorities so that our kids can be served. Our children are watching and waiting. Thank you.

Mr. John McEntee: Good evening, folks. John McEntee, Paterson Education Association. I don't know if you know that Governor Phil Murphy is in Paterson tonight. He's not at the School Board where we're cutting jobs. He could care less as far as I'm concerned. \$13 million is a spit in the ocean when you're sending more than half of it up to the Tech program. Meanwhile, he's dancing around with all the politicians like Fred Astaire and we're arguing amongst ourselves where we're going to cut and which child is going to lose next. Which teacher is going to go to the unemployment line? Which ESP may not be back next year? I'd like to challenge this School Board. Chicago, West Virginia, Denver, Oklahoma, Arizona, Los Angeles, and Oakland - do you know what they all have in common? They struck. I'd like to partner with the Superintendent. I'd like to have her call me this week and say forget going down there.

It's not worth the gas you put in that bus. You want to walk out? We will walk out with you. You want money? Let's demand the money. Let's close the schools until they figure out a way to fix this. We can't keep going on like this. I'm tired of looking at my members in the eye and saying you're not going to be able to provide for those kids. How do you tell a teacher, "I want you to teach a class, but you can't have a schoolbook?" That's not acceptable. I wouldn't accept it with my kids and I know none of you would either. You want to shut this place down? I'm right there with you. I'll shut it down tomorrow if you give me the green light. If we're going to bring what Paterson deserves to this school system, let's send a statement to all those folks who are dancing around tonight at that political event that this was a more important place to be than over there. I got a ticket. I said no way. This is where I need to be. We have the motto let's put our kids first. Let's do it. Let's shut this place down until we get the money that this school and our children deserve because you know what? Everything else is just window dressing. They don't care if we go down there on a bus. They could care less. Some of them won't even sign on to a bill that will protect these same teachers that are in jeopardy of losing their position. I challenge the whole School Board. Enough of the talk! Let's do something about it. Thank you very much.

Comm. Capers: I'm with you.

Ms. Darlene Morris: Hi everyone. Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you. I was sitting here listening to what everyone was saying and it just makes me quiver because when you are actually at the schools and working in the schools and you see the struggles that these children go through, when you look at the family lives that they come from, it's not just a matter of teaching. It's also a matter of being there for them to help them get self-esteem. It's someone that they can talk to. There are so many aspects of education that are not in the academics perspective, but also in the social perspective that brings value to the lives of these children. Those things are very important and you can't even put a dollar amount on it. In addition to that, it's the help that is given to the teachers when you have behavioral problems. Besides the academics, there is so much more that goes on in the schools. Everyone needs help and to cut anything would be detrimental. I look at kids come and they actually look to some of the staff for strength, encouragement, and love, some of those things they don't get at home. It's very difficult. In making these decisions I know that you care, but those things have to be considered too. In addition to that, I was thinking with regards to the \$9.9 million. If it was imperative that we gave the PCTI money, why can't they give the percentage of whatever the \$9 million is to our budget? In other words, if the \$9 million was .5% of our budget, why can't they just get .5% of the \$9 million? Why would we have to give them their full amount when we don't get our full amount? That's another way to look at it. In addition to that, I think we should go after corporate money. There's a lot of money out there. Another avenue that we can use is letter-writing. If we got 30,000 people to write letters and to follow them up and aggravate people, sooner or later they will start moving on something, if it's no more than to shut us up. Most importantly, I agree with Corey Teague. It doesn't make sense not to support your children in the school system. Why would someone give more to you than you're willing to get for yourself? That means that you need to come out and make sure that your children are getting what they need. You have to make sure that the school is supported. I don't even care what you think about the School Board. At the end of the day, your children are still coming to this school and that means that they need to be educated and you need to be here to help us educate them. I get incensed sometimes when we work very hard. It's 8:30 at night and we're still here. Parents will sit up there and watch TV and criticize, but won't come and make the difference. So I implore parents to get involved with this bus ride or whatever we do to make sure that we get what we need in our schools and that the kids get the support. Thank you very much.

Ms. Alicia Anderson: Good evening everyone. I come here as an employee of the Board of Education and as a mother. It bothers me to stand here at this point to have literally prayed to work for the very school district that has made me into the person that I am and see the issues that we face. I have a two-year-old daughter that in a year is going to begin going to school. I would rather see her go to the same school district that I went to, to be able to see my teachers when I come to work and understand what they have instilled in me. I went to School No. 24. For high school I did go to Tech not understanding now what that would cost. I went to Rutgers University in New Brunswick where I graduated. I can honestly say that outside my home, my morals and values, the way I speak, and the way I carry myself is from my teachers. They cared more about me and about my peers than you probably would get any other place. Like you said, we teach these teachers. We train them to be who they are and a lot of them do care. I can't speak for everybody else. What does it look like for us to donate a week of our vacation time or a week with no pay? Could that save our budget in any way? I've only been here for a year. It's not much. Do we have a number on that? Is that possible?

Comm. Castillo: Just give us a second. Let's get the next speaker, close it out, and we will get your questions answered. Hold on for one minute.

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

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Ms. Shafer: I'm going to ask Mr. Matthews to come up and just go through. We started at \$38 million. Could you just break that down so that everybody can understand where we are now?

Mr. Matthews: Last Friday and last Wednesday we presented the budget gap of \$22 million. In that gap there's a 2% increase in the tax levy. The amount is \$829,119 and there's \$5.1 million which is considered bank cap to bring our revenue down to \$519,926,367. Within that number, you see the charter school number of \$63.8 million, a \$9.4 million increase. Non-salary is at \$144 million. Budget priorities were \$4.2 million. That number, along with the budgeted vacancies of \$5 million brought our appropriations to \$542 million, which gave us a budget gap, the difference between total appropriations and total revenues, of \$22,204,908. What you may have missed was the \$4.2 million that was included into the appropriations and the \$5 million in vacancies. We started at \$38 million and we landed at \$22 million as of March 13 and Friday of last week.

Comm. Hodges: There's a discrepancy between the 2% and 14%. Would you please explain what that is?

Mr. Matthews: If you take the raw number of \$41,455... The new tax levy for 2019-2020 is about \$47 million and the old number was \$41,455,956. That increase that we received from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 is your 14% - \$47 million versus \$41 million.

Comm. Hodges: The 2%?

Mr. Matthews: 2% is the statutory limit that we're allowed to do every year. The bank cap is money that's built over years based on different adjustments that we have through increases in the health care, pension, and student enrollment numbers. For 2019-2020 the full amount of the bank cap is \$5,160,682.

Comm. Hodges: Okay.

Comm. Simmons: Can you just explain? I don't think people understand what the bank cap is and that we didn't raise taxes and how we arrived at that?

Mr. Matthews: Over the last 11 years we raised our taxes two times. Average annual increase is less than 1%. Over time, when you don't use your 2%, that money gets stored over time. Based on enrollment adjustments, increase in health care costs, and lack of using your tax levy, it's a number you're able to use to balance out your budget. You have to do a three-year lookback and every three years the number trues up. For 2019-2020, we've earned bank cap of \$5 million. We've applied that bank cap to our revenue line, which is a tax increase. This brings us from \$41.4 million to \$47 million for the 2019-2020 budget.

Comm. Hodges: It should be pointed out, Madam Chair, I can't remember which year it was when the State came to us and said initially that they wanted us to raise our taxes \$5 million. 2015. I pointed out to the State they've been here for 27 years and you have not raised it a dime. Here you are saying we're about to get local control and suddenly you want us to raise taxes in a distressed city when you wouldn't do it and you had the control. What you wanted us to do was give us local control and be the front people for taking away additional money from our community, which is a distressed city. But you wouldn't do it while you were here and you had the power to do it, which we didn't have. That was 2015. Now we're in the same position. We said to them you are going to give us the district back when we are bankrupt. We will get the blame for decimating our education. Then they'll say, "See? They couldn't handle it." That's what's happening now. We forecasted this years ago.

Comm. Castillo: What would the impact be?

Mr. Matthews: The impact to the taxpayer is \$190.19, a monthly increase of \$15.85. The annual increase \$190.19. The monthly increase is \$15.85. We did talk about the furloughs in our budget meetings. We had thought that that may not be a thing to do. It was unpopular a couple of years ago. It was recommended to the Board a few years back about doing furloughs and we just dropped it. We didn't take it any further than that to be honest with you. It was recommended a couple of years ago and it wasn't a very popular move.

Comm. Redmon: Also, when we considered furloughs we would have to in negotiation with the PEA. That's a decision the Board can't make itself. It would have to be in negotiations with the union. You would have to go to your union representative. They would have to come to us. They will try to make that decision for you guys. We can't put that on you like that.

Ms. Shafer: There was one other one about the funding returned from charters and PCTI when they send the students back.

Mr. Matthews: That gets trued up every two years. Before the year starts, Passaic County Tech and the business office agree on a number based on what they feel is going to be the enrollment. They also look back three years, we look at what our actual

numbers are, and we come to an agreed price. We pay the price that we agreed to and once it gets reconciled how many kids are coming back to the district that gets trued up two years later and they reduce our bill by the amount of money the kids get returned back to the district.

Comm. Castillo: If a child goes to Tech and they return to the district, the money doesn't follow them right away.

Mr. Matthews: No.

Comm. Castillo: We're essentially paying for a student twice in one year. That's when they look back for two or three years and we hope that they see that amount that's extra and they return it to us.

Mr. Matthews: Yes. They reduce the number that we have to pay for that particular year.

Comm. Castillo: So it doesn't come back. They just reduce the number.

Mr. Matthews: Right.

Comm. Castillo: It never really comes back.

Mr. Matthews: No, we don't get a check.

Comm. Martinez: October 15 is that date.

Comm. Castillo: All of our students miraculously come after by October 30 or November 1.

Comm. Hodges: There are no interest payments then.

Comm. Castillo: We do have another executive session. If you have any more questions, Madam Superintendent?

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. Capers: Just talking about trying to close this gap and looking at different programs, I'd like to put a motion on the floor to make a cut of the Newcomers program in the elementary and the high school. We just can't afford it.

Comm. Martinez: Cut the new one and the old one?

Comm. Capers: Correct.

Comm. Castillo: Cut the program that we have in the elementary school at NRC?

Comm. Capers: Correct.

Comm. Martinez: Cut the one that was proposed and the one that's been in place?

Comm. Capers: Correct. It comes up to a \$2.7 million savings.

Comm. Martinez: That's the only one?

Comm. Capers: I'm looking at everything.

Comm. Martinez: Yeah? You mentioned some other things to me before that you're not saying right now. That's alright. Go for it, man.

Comm. Castillo: Let's take one second at a time. Clearly, that's a deeper conversation if you even want to cut a program. You have over 100 students in that program that you'd have to figure out what to do with, and that would be cutting teachers as well. If we want to have a discussion, that's okay.

Comm. Martinez: Call it what it is, man. Let's not dance around it.

Comm. Olivares: I would be in favor of entertaining closing the Newcomers, the one that hasn't been instituted but not the one that has been working already because there are a lot of ramifications to that. We're cutting teachers and what are we going to do with all these students? The school that we haven't instituted is a different issue for me. I just want to let everybody know where I stand with that.

Comm. Castillo: I'm going to break it into two different parts so it's easier to have a conversation. The elementary program that we have has been in the district I can't even remember the actual amount of years. They were at School No. 11 at one point. They were moved to New Roberto Clemente. These are the students that not only do not know the language, but are also behind...

Comm. Hodges: I second the motion so we can have the discussion.

It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Hodges that the Newcomers Program be eliminated at the elementary and high school levels.

Comm. Castillo: Thank you, Dr. Hodges. These are the students who come into the city who don't know the language and are behind in their native language. They get instruction in native language. Right now we have it at NRC. Our students are getting taught in Spanish so that they can catch up to their grade level, and are being taught in intensive English as well. That's the idea. I just want to make sure that we know what the program does and how it affects our students. The idea was to maybe delay the program, not absolutely cut it, which is the conversation we had with the other Commissioners at the last meeting because of the budget situation. Cutting a program where there's a need and one that already exists, that's a whole different conversation. One is delaying once we figure out what to do with the budget. Another one is cutting. We're talking about grades 3-8. Our babies coming to this country would essentially be lost if we cut a program of this magnitude.

Comm. Capers: When I was coming up in school what happened when newcomers came in, I'm talking about restructuring the whole program in terms of they are taken out of the class and being taught different stuff. That's how it used to go. It's not a Newcomers program.

Comm. Castillo: That's ESL. ESL students are students who are up-to-date academically in their own countries and are just getting the intensive English. I'm telling you because that was me. When I came into this country I was in ESL. I was not a newcomer because I was academically on my grade level in the Dominican Republic. I just didn't speak the language. I was an ESL student that was taken out and was given intensive English. If I was at that age, a seven-year-old little girl that wasn't in school

frequently in the Dominican Republic, like many of our students are, many of them have gone to school very few times a year. I would come into this country not only with culture shock, but now we're trying to catch you up. If you're 10 years old and you're on a third-grade academic level, we try to catch you up as fast as we can so that your age and grade match. Then we give you intensive English. That's what the Newcomers program does, as opposed to me, where I was on grade level. I was in second grade. I just didn't speak the language. I just want to make sure that we understand. Though we understand the budget situation and that's an educated conversation that we can have, delaying the Newcomers program is affecting 300 students - just the Newcomers, not the ESL. Now we're talking about our babies that are from third to eighth grade. As you may know, Comm. Capers, since we're on the instruction and program committee, we have had these conversations when we first knew from School No. 11. The idea was not only the facilities, but those students were being segregated. We moved them into New Roberto Clemente where they were in the same school with other students. Now they're practicing their English, they're being part of the community, and the shock of the culture was being changed. Now they were gradually stepping in. That's why we went from School No. 11 to New Roberto Clemente. Now we're having the issue of our students who come at 14, 15, and 16 years old that need that help, but that's a whole different conversation. That's why I want to make sure what the motion is. That's just me. If your motion is to cut both programs, I just wanted to clarify. The problem is not even the beginning of how I feel.

Comm. Hodges: I don't like what's happening with the high school Newcomers program. I worry about whether it's going to be appropriately designed given the funding. I would prefer to have that delayed until we know where we're going and we have the appropriate resources to prosecute it the way it's supposed to be done. That's one thing. The other thing is that I want to submit a resolution that says we do not submit the full funding for the charter schools. I give one motion my position on somebody else's motion. That's what I want to put on the table.

Comm. Olivares: I just wanted to underline that the reason I asked about the Newcomers is just to have some idea of how this program is working. The one that we haven't instituted I don't have a problem with discussing. But again, it was just to have some idea if this program is working properly, how much it costs, and to get some idea of what it would entail.

Comm. Castillo: On my behalf, I'm not even going to touch the other one. Dr. Hodges, I'm in agreement with the idea of us having a thorough conversation of what it would be to not pay that extra money for the charter schools. I think that's a conversation and idea that the district needs to explore and see legally how that would work and for the Board and community to be on board and do it together.

Comm. Hodges: I'm not quite sure I can vote for a budget that included that money, personally. I'm not speaking for the Board. I couldn't do that, not with what we're looking at here tonight.

Comm. Castillo: That I agree on. Absolutely! If we're talking about educating all of our students, then giving that extra money to the charter schools is a more extensive conversation because we're doing a disservice to Paterson Public School students.

Comm. Hodges: When you have a district that deliberately destabilizes itself and they get \$30 million... I know they have children too, but that money is not going to their school district. It's going to private schools. This district has suffered, not because of its own account, but money has been taken away from it which was proved by the

Abbott decision. This is not just me talking wildly. This was a Supreme Court decision. Then you have the Governor come along and decide to hollow out your system to the tune of \$280 million, the same kids who suffered and were behind because of the first rip-off. Now we have to sit here and pitch pennies, scrimp, and cut teachers, while this is going on in other places because they have better protections? That to me is unfair. I'm putting that resolution on the table. I simply cannot vote for that without sending some strong notice that this district can't be sacrificed for anybody else's district, given what's happened to us in the past. That's the resolution that I'm supporting.

Comm. Redmon: I'm in total support of your resolution, Dr. Hodges. I agree with you. We definitely have to take a stand someday somehow. Year after year we keep coming back. The charter school budget keeps going up. That's a cost driver to this district. I'm definitely in total support of your resolution.

Comm. Capers: Let me amend my motion. Let's cancel the rollout of the high school and keep the elementary in place. I want to amend the motion I put on the floor. I want to withdraw the elementary and keep it in-district.

Comm. Hodges: Delay the high school.

Mr. Murray: Present a new motion. Withdraw the first and present the second.

Comm. Hodges: I withdraw my second to his motion.

It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Hodges that the original motion be withdrawn.

Comm. Capers: I withdraw my motion and put a new motion on the table delaying the high school rollout in the upcoming budget.

Comm. Castillo: Can we get a second, if there any discussion?

Comm. Martinez: Discussion about that?

Comm. Redmon: You need a second.

Comm. Olivares: I second the motion.

It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Olivares that the high school rollout of the Newcomers Program be delayed.

Comm. Martinez: Discussion about that?

Comm. Castillo: I just want to ask the Deputy Superintendent before we move on just because I want to make sure that we are going to allocate the monies properly, if I'm not mistaken. I want to make sure we're on the same page. I know some of the monies went into title or grant. I just want to make sure where exactly we are to make sure if we're delaying it, where that money is and where we would move it to. You want to have a plan. You don't want to get rid of something or delay it and then not have a plan for those monies.

Comm. Capers: I totally agree with that.

Comm. Castillo: Thanks. From Mr. Matthews' presentation there is a percentage of those dollars. You've reduced the amount that was originally allocated for the Newcomers. That amount was then changed or moved to a grant or title. If it's title money, can we use it for anything else? Or is there any specification on this amount? If we move it and it's title money and we can't do anything else with it, it's wasted money.

Ms. Peron: We can't use title money for special education.

Comm. Capers: What can we use the money for?

Ms. Peron: The money that we moved into the title grants are for resources – instructional materials or anything that goes into the classroom that's not core and doesn't directly deal with curriculum. It can be an intervention program. It can be other resources. We moved \$15,000 into local funds because we have to write curriculum. It is our responsibility. It's a local responsibility to write curriculum to provide the core. We moved staffing into local funds because that would entail hiring teachers that are bilingual content high school certified. It's something that's very hard to come by, which leads into our strategies for recruitment. It's needed to educate bilingual children in their native language. They have to be bilingual certified, ESL certified, and content specific certified for the high school. We moved that money into local funding.

Comm. Hodges: So we could not move that money into the elementary school in the short-term at any level because you're talking about kids who are dropping out that you didn't expect and some other issues. You could not reinforce that program with the one-year delay of the high school program and make sure that you have a better situation at that level?

Ms. Peron: These are our children that are here in our schools. These are children that we have to educate.

Comm. Hodges: That's what I'm saying.

Ms. Peron: They're going to be in our school regardless. We have to provide services for them. The service that we need to provide for them is bilingual education, for which we have to hire bilingual teachers. A Newcomers program is a program within a school. We're not building a new building. We're not moving them into a building. We're providing the best strategies that we can for these students. When we talk about newcomers, we talked about students with interrupted education. They're coming to us at a lower grade level, as Comm. Castillo explained, and they're coming with a deficit of a language. We present a modified curriculum to them. We have to find strategies and ways to do this in their native language because you don't want an eleventh grader to be sitting at a desk with a fourth-grade book. You don't want to do that to them emotionally. You want to provide education in a social setting where they have typical peers so that they can see teenagers in the same building, they can share, and they can practice their English in lunch, socially, and things like that. It takes seven to ten years to build academic language. In today's society we're educating children to go to college, to be career-oriented, and to practice 21st Century skills. That's collaboration. That's critical skills. That's problem-solving. Beyond the fact that they have to do their basics in ELA and math we want to move beyond that. To get them ready to put them up to par, we have to do what's necessary. If it's educating them in their native language, then we have to find the teachers to do that. We have to find the program that will modify that curriculum that will provide those best strategies. They're our kids.

Comm. Hodges: I'm only hoping to bolster the elementary school and make that stronger because you had mentioned before that you weren't seeing the kinds of results that you wanted. You can use next year's funds to channel into that area mindful of the fact that we are delaying Arabic and Bengali. It would just add three of them now instead of two, but the money could go to strengthening the elementary school.

Ms. Peron: We're still leaving behind our high school students who drop out dramatically because they don't have a place and they don't feel like they're in place in that classroom. We kept looking at the effects of what's going on in the high school with our young men and women who walk into school and leave out the other door because they don't feel like they belong. They're not heard. We don't have translators in the classroom for them. Hence, we took a good look at this. We took a good look at data and we said we should begin to develop a program. We have something that's called ACES in the high school. One classroom, one room, and one ESL teacher providing services to these kids is just not enough.

Comm. Castillo: I want to go to Comm. Olivares, and then I have a comment of something I'm missing, and then Comm. Martinez.

Comm. Olivares: It's not that anybody does not feel empathy for these children. We know what the needs are, but we have a big problem. We have a crisis. We have to deal with that. First of all, I understand that some of that money has already been spent. If we can delay that program, how much of that money can be transferred into something else? If it can't be done, then let's move on with the program because we already have it. If we have to spend the money, the only reason we're talking about this is to see if we can close that gap. If by delaying it we're not closing the gap, then by all means I would vote for the program.

Comm. Castillo: It's \$15,000 going into local funds. We're having this conversation, Comm. Capers, just so were clear. It's \$15,000 in local funds for curriculum writing and local funds for staffing.

Ms. Peron: Yes.

Comm. Castillo: What went into the grant or the title money? How much of that?

Ms. Peron: The money for the resources.

Comm. Castillo: How much is that?

Ms. Peron: It was around \$387,000.

Comm. Castillo: \$387,000 went into grant or title?

Ms. Peron: Title I, which is grant.

Comm. Castillo: And you're asking for how much for this program?

Ms. Peron: \$500,000 was the staffing. It's coming out of local, so it can be put back into local for positions.

Comm. Castillo: \$500,000 is essentially what we're asking from this budget. We all know about the resources that we invested looking for certified teachers. That's about, give or take, another \$15,000 that we technically spent. If we delay the program, that's

\$15,000 that we're not getting back and teachers that we went to go get that we won't be able to retain that are certified. That \$387,000 can be used to what?

Ms. Peron: Other resources.

Comm. Castillo: It's a conversation that we need to have, but it also doesn't speak of the best management. Granted, I understand the situation we're in. I just want to make sure we're having the appropriate conversation. We did go to great lengths to find high school certified content specific teachers.

Comm. Martinez: At the onset of discussions about how we're going to close this gap, the whole Newcomers program came to the surface and was being discussed and I was very uneasy about it from the onset. I think these young people are an easy scapegoat for some folks who had trepidations about the program to begin with. With time, my cooler head prevailed and I realized because of the budgetary constraints that we're facing we could not altogether eliminate that conversation. That conversation had to be on the table. It's a painful reality for me and for many others, but I accepted it. My cooler head prevailed. But the fact that this evening not only were the high school students who that program was designed for put aside and delayed by one year, but the program that's been in place for all that time is also being targeted, that's an affront. That's straight garbage. Simple and plain! We're not getting off the hook that easy. You rescinded it because you tipped your hand. You showed what, in my opinion, that was really about. It's an easy way to say we don't have the money for that Newcomers program. I get that. The fact that you would even bring to the table that we're going to go after the program that's already existing for those scholars, do we not have a responsibility to educate those scholars? Are they any less a priority? That suggestion to me says exactly that. We don't need to educate them. We don't have to put money into that. That's not important. That's not a priority. Bringing that to the table says that to me. I take a personal affront to that. These kids deserve to be educated like any other kid in this district. They're expendable. Why do we have to spend money on them? We don't have the money. Cut that. Of everywhere else in this district you could have looked to cut you went there? That's very convenient and it speaks in volumes to me. We don't look anywhere else. We didn't bring up any other program, but that one? Come on, man.

Comm. Castillo: Before we move on, let's make sure that we are having a levelheaded discussion.

Comm. Martinez: While my volume may be high, my thoughts are very level. That's fair.

Comm. Castillo: I completely understand that you don't agree. We all understand that. We want to make sure that we still have a professional conversation. Do I agree? I absolutely don't agree with the idea as well, but we need to make sure that these conversations are going to be for the benefit. There's a disagreement. We can have a proper conversation. We can come to a consensus.

Comm. Hodges: I did not support the removal of the elementary school. Let me make that very clear. But I get phone calls from the Bengali community. I get phone calls from the Arab community. We don't have teachers. We don't have this. We don't have that. Everybody else gets that. I don't have personnel. I tell people all the time I can't get you jobs. I can't hire teachers for you. But they're out there complaining. They look around and they think that they're being underserved. I don't come out here and push that. So does the Black community. Let's be very clear. They all think that they're

being shortchanged and we try to stay away from that or get into situations where this becomes a problem. As I said before, ESSA will take care of this. ESSA is going to tell you if the kids aren't receiving, I don't care what you're doing, you're going to have to put the money in there and take it from someplace else. That's ESSA. You're going to have to come to terms with this. Somebody told me the majority rules. No, it doesn't. It doesn't work that way. Kids are kids. You're absolutely right. The equity model simply says if the child needs more, the child has to get more. That's the way the law is. I've tried to stay away from all of that. But there are some realities here and I don't want us to be fighting when we're not the ones who created this nonsense. Understand that there will be equity changes to our budget because of what the law says has to happen. That's the reality of it. The Bengalis have kids too coming here who have language issues. Arabic students have children. Forget about Turkish and all the other ones who aren't getting what they're supposed to get. Equity says we're going to fix that. We have to fix that. So get away from the mindset that this one is losing this and this one is losing that. We're all losing. We can't do what we need to do if we're fighting amongst ourselves over pennies. All these kids are suffering. What do you tell the Turkish kid on Getty Avenue? What do you tell him or his parents? They're sitting there saying, "What's he talking about? I'm in the classroom." What happens to them? We hear about this. Understand folks, there's supposed to be a melting pot. We have to find ways to reach out to all these different groups and make sure that somehow they're made whole. Right now, we don't have the funding for that. We're going to have to make some very tough choices over and above what ESSA is going to tell you to do anyway. If I'm wrong, Ms. Shafer, please correct me. I just want us to focus on what we should be focusing on.

Comm. Redmon: Just to join in with what Dr. Hodges said, it's all about the money. It really has nothing to do with the nationalities that they come from. We want to make sure that narrative is out there. It's not about race. It's not about ethnicity. It's about the children of Paterson. When you're picking dollars to figure out what programs we can fund, then that's a problem. We're actually talking about dollars and cents. It has nothing to do with color or race here. I'd rather have a program that we can roll out that will be successful and we can have some statistics behind it than to have a program that we just put out there and two years from now we're still spending money to make sure that we have a corrective action plan to go along with that project. My only concern about this was that we had enough money to do it right the first time. We already have programs that we rolled out in the district that were not rolled out properly and we're still feeling the effects of it. That's my only concern about that. The conversation is uncomfortable, but we need to have that conversation sometimes. It's all about dollars and cents. It's not about the ethnicity of our students at all.

Comm. Castillo: I think it's a valid conversation to have. At some point we were going to have it so we might as well have it now. I understand Comm. Martinez. I do. I was one of those kids. Obviously, I understand it more than many of us on this dais. I was that child who when I came, I went into a classroom where I hadn't the slightest idea what was going on. I understand that we're here to educate all of our students and that's of extreme importance. We need to make sure that everyone is getting as much from us as we can give, given the circumstances, and coming together to come up with these moneys and this funding that we need in order to educate all for our babies. I didn't want to break it down from the Deputy Superintendent because I think there's a sense of us that any student that you can save is a dollar well spent. This is where we are. We're back here tomorrow to make last adjustments and voting on this budget. I think there are conversations and numbers that the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, and the BA still have to crunch down and give us information for tomorrow so we can have that final discussion.

Comm. Hodges: I was born in this country and I had to steal my education. I had to use false addresses, which you can get arrested for now. My mother walked the streets and knocked on doors and said can I use your address so that my child can go to your schools because their schools are better than my neighborhoods. I'm extremely sensitive to...

Comm. Castillo: I'm only interrupting you because I'm trying to be as levelheaded with this whole situation, but I was in the middle of a thought and you jumped right in. I'm not saying that your education or my education is any different and how we got to it, or that any one is less than the other. I'm saying I understand that student. I'm sure that in many different ways many of us do. It might not be a language. It might be an economic standard. It might be a race issue. It might be so many problems that we have. In this particular area, I get it. It's the language. That's the idea that I was trying to convey, not to make anyone else's situation or how we got here any less important or different from one another. I just wanted to clarify that statement.

Comm. Hodges: That's okay. The only point I'm trying to make is because of my experience I'm extremely sensitive to those issues. I had to work here. We had to fight and struggle. My friends from fifth and sixth grade, some of them are dead now because their parents did not do what my parents did. I understand that issue. When I get a call from a Bengali parent or a leader, I can't explain to them why their teacher didn't get a job in the district. It means something to them. They see teacher listings and they don't understand why they're not getting hired. It happens in the Black community too. There's a sensitivity that I've grown up with because of what we went through. We had to fight to get the schools to allow us to even be in some places. I went to segregated schools most of my life. It's a problem. All I want to say is we're in a situation now where we're basically all in this together. We have to recognize we're all in this together. Sometimes it's very difficult to sort this out. That's all I want to say.

Comm. Castillo: I completely agree. We do have to recognize that we're all in this together and sometimes we need to be careful and mindful of the things we say. Coming after a program that has served so many students, I'm going to harp on it because that's not fair. To just want to remove that entire program for our babies just because of a budget, and a program that is already in existence, that's where I have a problem. That's why we always want to make sure that we think things through before we say them and how that can affect.

Comm. Capers: I just want to clarify a couple of things. By no means am I targeting anybody or any certain ethnic group. Everybody knows I fight for every child in our district. I care about educating all of our kids and making sure they're getting a quality education here in this district. We're looking at this. I'm looking at all these programs. I have a couple of other programs I would love to cut that have been in existence for years. We have to close the gap. I'm not targeting anybody. I just want to make that very loud and clear. Thank you.

Comm. Castillo: We're going to move into executive session. We'll go to the motion. We'll close out this motion and go into executive session and move on. We went in a whole different direction.

Comm. Olivares: I hear so much frustration and it would seem as if we're at each other's throat. The bottom line is that we're in charge of educating 28,000 kids. It's not the Bengalis. It's not the Arabs. It's not the Latinos. It's not the African American kids. These are all of our kids. I'm at a loss for words. I see here that we're trying to scratch

this program and I'm having second thoughts about even voting against the program because we're talking about pennies. We need to come up with \$23 million. We're going to have to take drastic measures. For what it's worth, we need to worry about 28,000 kids, not just a handful of children.

Comm. Castillo: We're voting on Comm. Capers' motion to delay the high school Newcomers Program, correct?

Comm. Capers: Yes.

On roll call all members voted as follows:

Comm. Capers: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: Yes.

Comm. Martinez: I'm letting my cooler head prevail and looking at this in the larger sense, the bigger picture of what's more important to the district as a whole. I'm still not pleased about what just occurred right now. I can't understate that enough. I feel like I've been put in a real tough spot right now. For the greater good of our district, I'll vote yes.

Comm. Olivares: Yes.

Comm. Redmon: We already rolled out a partial plan. My vote will be yes.

Comm. Rondon: No.

Comm. Simmons: Yes.

Comm. Castillo: No.

The motion carried.

Comm. Hodges: I'm not looking for a vote on my resolution tonight.

Comm. Castillo: It's a conversation that we need to have.

Comm. Hodges: I don't seek to have that voted on tonight.

It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Redmon that the Board goes into executive session to discuss labor relations and legal counsel. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board went into executive session at 9:54 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 p.m.