

MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

March 29, 2016 – 6:43 p.m.
John F. Kennedy High School

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Present:

Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent
Ms. Eileen Shafer, Deputy Superintendent
Lisa Pollak, Esq., General Counsel

Comm. Oshin Castillo
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Errol Kerr
*Comm. Lilisa Mimms

Comm. Nakima Redmon
Comm. Flavio Rivera
*Comm. Kenneth Simmons

Absent:

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves, Vice President

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

Comm. Irving 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 29, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.
John F. Kennedy High School
61-127 Preakness 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.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET

Comm. Irving: I want to welcome everyone this evening. This meeting was put in place in advance of the Council meeting tomorrow to have the Board have an opportunity to view the presentation of the budget. The Board already has the budget. We received it a little over a week and a half ago. Thank you, Dr. Evans, for providing that. I am hoping the presentation should help give some clarity. Remember, at this meeting we

will be able to have discussion and questions. Formal action on the budget will take place next Tuesday when we all get together. So I'm hoping that between the conversation that we have today and the conversation we have with the Council, and also this is the week that if Board members want specific meetings with the business administrator and her team they can do so, specific recommendations will be given to the Board to decide and vote upon at the Tuesday meeting on the 5th so that we can have the budget adopted and turned around for the 6th. Then we'll have our workshop on the 7th. With that said, let's just get right into it.

Dr. Evans: Before you is a PowerPoint presentation that provides an overview of the budget. As Board members are aware, what we typically do is provide an overview with the PowerPoint illustrating the status of the budget development process and where the budget stands as of today. Again, this is preliminary to the conversation we're going to have next week which will precede the public hearing that will occur on Wednesday. The format is for Ms. Ayala to come forward to provide that overview, which means literally we're going through the PowerPoint and sharing with you the highlights, and then the Board engaging us in questions and discussion.

*Comm. Simmons enters the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Ms. Daisy Ayala: Good afternoon Commissioners. I went quickly with the two slides because we know who our Commissioners are. This is our mission and vision. This is basically a summary of our calendar for the budget process. It starts in October. We meet with the principals to develop the budget in consultation with each department, which are curriculum and instruction and special education, as deemed necessary for each school. As you know, each school is a little different. Once that is done, the budget is then presented from the school principal to the assistant superintendent. In January we take a look at the Board as a whole, the Superintendent, Deputy, and myself, and we also review with the Cabinet to ensure that everything is there in accordance with the data, that it's data-driven and according to instructions. We submitted the first draft to the Board for their approval and as we know it was not approved. These are the budget development priorities - effective academic program, family community engagement, creating and maintaining healthy school culture, and efficient and responsive operations. Here it is in more detail if you have the PowerPoint presentation. For the sake of time, I think we will just go over this quickly and you can read it at your leisure. Again, it goes to effective academic programs, family engagement, priorities, and the goals are right below. These are our five pillars - planning, preparation, adoption, implementation, and evaluating and monitoring throughout the year. These are some of our financial management achievements. With all the budget constraints that we've had in the past seven years we've been able to achieve the following. In seven years the district continues to improve the audit and reduce audit findings significantly. Increase QSAC resulting in financial local control - as you know, we just got local control in finance and we've been able to prolong the fiscal cliff. As you know, according to the auditors our fiscal cliff was supposed to be upon us in 2016 and we did not face it. We continue to manage our appropriation so as to not achieve that early. These are some of the working strategies - work with the principals in budget preparation, budget line items being data-driven, review consultant list for reduction, review existing leases that are not cost-effective or efficient when other locations are available. We reviewed and streamlined the process to eliminate redundancy to promote efficiency. With that being said, the next item that we looked at was reviewed central staff, consolidated positions as a result of streamlining procedures, and that eliminated positions. The directive was not to touch classroom staff. Anything direct with instruction in the classroom was not to be touched. Remove and eliminate programs. Support and supplement services that have been minimally

effective, have no return on investment, or are not required by regulations. This is our enrollment since 2010. We've been having a little increase. We had a little decrease in 2012, but we continue to have an increase in enrollment. This is from the Department of Education, which is the budget software. If you go to page 179 in your budget you'll see that we're underfunded by \$68 million. This is a comparison and you'll find that information in the budget and in the state aid. According to the state aid, the SFRA that everyone is talking about, this is the funding that we should be receiving. This is the funding that we do get - the proposed 2016-2017 budget. As you see, there's underfunding there for this one year of \$36 million. In addition to that, on page 180 the required local share is \$85 million and the current tax levy is \$43 million, a shortfall of \$41,122,000. Since 1991 to 2015 we took a look at the local tax and the increases that we've had. You see that in 1991 to 2015 it's pretty flat. We've had a small increase and then a decrease. Here's another slide showing us the same information. From 1991 to 2015 the county got an additional \$27 million in increase, the school got \$2 million, and the municipality got an increase of \$107 million. These are the revenue actual. It's 2014-2015. The revised budget is the middle column, the proposed budget is the last column, and that's your variance. You'll find that information in the budget. This is just a chart for some people who are more visual than others, just to show you that 85% of our funding comes from state aid. A small amount, \$3.4 million, comes from fund balance, 9% comes from local taxes, and the other one is less than 1%. This is the appropriation. As you can see, it's by category. This also ties into the budget. We have instruction, support, transportation, facilities, security, technology, and central office. Employee benefits and outside benefits. Other benefits such as tuition reimbursement and any contracted obligations that we have, capital outlay, out-of-district tuition for our special education students and some other students as well. The Adult School, which we contribute to, and we have charter schools. Contribution to school-based is an increase there as well. From the current year to next year, from \$236 million to \$245 million, 3.7%, the place that had the most significant increase is at the school. Again, here it's showing you in the pie chart. Then we break it into a different pie chart that gives you a little more detail. Total administrative costs per pupil - the budget says this is what we're spending and this is what the north region spends. The north region spends the top line. This year there is actually \$2,138 per student and Paterson Public Schools is at \$1,500. We're below what the DOE says we should be spending on administration. This also gives you a comparison cost per pupil. You have two bars here. You have cost per pupil and classroom spending. We looked at our neighboring district and as you can see Paterson Public Schools allocates more funding per pupil and classroom. We're all the way at the right. We spend \$15,629 and Clifton only spends \$12,000. Some of our cost drivers are the increases that we get from collective bargaining agreements, health benefits, pensions, worker's comp, and unemployment. Pupil transportation and substitutes due to staff absences has increased. We have new schools. We have expenditures that are going to be coming in that are not supported by the SDA and additional needed positions for the growing student population. That means that we only budget positions that currently are staffed and if we grow we did not create positions anticipating a growth in the population of students. Here we have the fund balance. We looked at 2009. In 2008 we had a fund balance of \$29 million. In 2009 we got \$437 million and we only appropriated \$228 million. This information can be found in any audited CAFRs. At that point when we closed the year we had \$39 million. In 2010 we got some ARRA money which is \$59 million. We used some of that money and you see we have a negative. Actually, they gave us ARRA money. If you look at the \$391 million, that's money that was reduced from one year to another and the federal government gave us the difference. That brings us to \$34 million. In 2010-2011, we did not spend everything that we budgeted, so we contributed another \$5.4 million to our fund balance. In 2011-2012 we got another \$13 million from equalization for EdJobs and that brought us to a total of \$68

million. We pretty much went into 2013 with \$68 million and in 2012-2013 we contributed \$1.6 million to the fund balance. In 2013-2014 we did the same thing and we contributed another \$4 million leaving the balance at \$74 million. In 2014-2015 we spent \$30 million and part of that, approximately \$20 million, is the collective bargaining. We settled our contract and we finally caught up with some of the salaries and health benefits. That left us \$43 million. The current year, obviously since we increased our salaries and health benefits, that \$30 million continued to come in. We've been surviving on that \$74 million that we had. Once we negotiated the contract and health benefits continue to go up, we've been using the fund balance to balance our budget because we've been flat funded. Right now we're monitoring our budget not to spend \$13 million and use that to balance the budget next year. If everything comes out at the end of next year's budget, all we have is \$1.5 million in fund balance. Here we go again with utilization of fund balance to support the budget. Again, we show that this year we're going to project unexpended \$13 million, leaving us \$24 million to use next year. Reality check of the financial situation - we are upon the cliff. The cliff is here. It's no longer down the road. It's caught up with us. Limited state aid, resisting increasing the local tax levy, unsustainable financial model, structure deficit - we're heading in a deficit and actually closer than what we think - dependency on the use of fund balance, and reserves are no longer available. Protection of asset is necessary for program delivery. It's a trickle-down effect. Obviously, if we continue to go in the direction that we're going we're going to have deficit and as much as we don't want to impact the classroom and programs, if we don't have other resources we're going to be heading in that direction. Paterson has some of the oldest schools in New Jersey and increasing operational costs will continue to be a challenge. Our desire is for stability of operations. That concludes the PowerPoint presentation.

*Comm. Mimms enters the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Ms. Ayala. I'm going to ask for the record that a copy of this presentation be available on the website for the community. I understand there aren't copies available at this point in time, but I want to make sure that those in the community have at least the access to view the overview. The budget, as I understand, has been put on the district website as well. Am I correct?

Ms. Ayala: I'm not sure because I just got back. I was under the impression that we did put it, but I'll double check on that.

Comm. Irving: It's not? That needs to go up immediately because public comments have to be derived from the view of the budget. Folks should be able to view it internally at the district office but also in PDF form. If effective tomorrow both documents can be uploaded to the district website on the home page that would be great. Thank you very much.

Dr. Evans: The caution is between now and the official submission of the budget in another week or so if anything changes then what's up there is not exactly accurate. So I'm going to ask that we make sure that it's stamped draft.

Ms. Ayala: We can do the friendly budget. That's the one that we're allowed to put up. Then when it's finalized we can do the full budget.

Comm. Irving: The community just needs to have this presentation which does illuminate the realities of where we are. It's pretty spot on for that, but I think there are those folks who want to be able to drill down with the numbers and they need to be able

to see it and have it, especially in preparation for the budget conversation and recommendations on Tuesday and the actual adoption on Wednesday.

Ms. Ayala: We'll do that tomorrow morning.

Comm. Irving: We've had the presentation of the budget overview. As you all know, this is the process that we typically do have. The Board has received the budget. What I'd like to do now is entertain questions from the Board members either on the presentation or on questions which you received physically within the budget. That will help inform the recommendations the Board members will make next week on Tuesday. I was just informed by Ms. Jones, and thank you for the reminder, that if any Board members want to set up personal meetings with the BA's office to please schedule them through Cheryl so that we can have those conversations this week or earlier next week as well. With that said, I'll open the floor up for questions from the Board members. We do have community members here and folks who I'm sure want to speak. The time is now 7:11. Around 7:45 I'm going to stop and entertain a motion to hear from the community and then come back for more discussion and conversation. I just want to make sure we have time. We can be here for as long as we need to be. I just want to make sure the community gets heard as well. I think it's important for them to hear some of the discussion and then be able to talk.

Comm. Kerr: What kinds of questions are we allowed to ask tonight? You just mentioned that if any Board members have any concerns they should go to the BA. Are we permitted to get in-depth and ask those questions tonight? Or do we go to the BA on a one-on-one basis?

Comm. Irving: Let's try to get answers to the questions you have tonight. There are things that might require some drilling down. There might be several spreadsheets that Ms. Ayala may say this may require a longer explanation. That might be helpful as well. Are there any questions?

Comm. Rivera: Daisy, I have a question. Let's start off with your last slide. You pointed out that we have \$24 million in surplus.

Ms. Ayala: I said that we anticipate not spending \$13 million this year, which would result in \$24 million at the end of June.

Comm. Rivera: Correct. Let's just hope for the best. We're going to have \$24 million. How realistic is that number? We have discussed several times some outstanding bills from prior year transportation. Did you take that into account when doing that calculation of the \$13 million?

Ms. Ayala: We're actually doing the analysis and that will be ready tomorrow.

Comm. Rivera: So that number might go down. I use the word 'might' so there's no compromising you in any way.

Ms. Ayala: Yes, it may go down depending on the outcome, but we're hoping that it doesn't.

Comm. Rivera: That's one of my questions. I have a line on page 3 of the actual document. There's a line called 'purchase technical services.' It's page 3, line 3040.

Ms. Ayala: Are you referring to the budget?

Comm. Rivera: Yes. I don't know if you have it in front of you.

Ms. Ayala: I do have it in front of me.

Comm. Rivera: I just need some clarification. I'm sure you have an explanation, but I just need to know. I'm assuming maybe the expenses were shifted between line items. What I'm looking at is that is fiscal year 2014-2015 we spent \$137,000 and we're budgeting about \$1.8 million. It's called 'purchase technical services.' I just want to know what that entails.

Ms. Ayala: You said line 3200?

Comm. Rivera: 3040 on page 3. I just want to know what that is.

Ms. Ayala: The 3.4?

Comm. Rivera: No. Line 3040, which is the first line on that sheet.

Ms. Ayala: 3040 is \$947,000.

Comm. Rivera: The amount budgeted is \$1.7 million.

Ms. Ayala: Right, and last year it was \$800,000.

Comm. Rivera: We're not looking at what was last year. I'm talking about what we spent in 2014-2015. When you say last year, we're still in 2015-2016 still.

Ms. Ayala: I'd have to go and drill down on that.

Comm. Rivera: Let me proceed. You don't have that? Look how thick this document is. It's over 400 pages. Let me continue. When I first came on board, I noticed that we had a huge contract that was presented to us. It was a maintenance contract. This contract was for close to \$10 million and right away I asked if we have ever done a cost benefit analysis to see if we're getting our money's worth. I also noticed throughout the year that this number continues to change because when one of our employees are out this company will provide an employee and then they will bill us for it on top of it. The contract is probably for close to \$10 million but we exceed that amount. I asked the administration to do an analysis and for whatever reason we have never done one on our maintenance contract. Hopefully we'll do it in the upcoming year just to see. We need to see numbers. We need to have that practice done often. It's the responsible thing to do. I also have another question regarding our energy budget. If you look on page 8, in 2014 we spent for natural gas \$1.8 million and we're budgeting \$2.2 million. I need to know what's causing that drive. Electricity is the other way around. We actually spent more and we're budgeting less now. Maybe the payments were mis-posted. I just need to know what happens.

Ms. Ayala: I have to do an analysis on that.

Comm. Rivera: Just give me a response when you do your analysis. I don't have to be provided with a report. Just tell me what took place. Something I'm going to ask the district to do is this – I understand we need to make sure our kids are secure in the school district, but we need to also look into the security expenses that we have here in this district. It's getting out of hand. I asked Daisy to provide me with a report on how

much we pay yearly to the City of Paterson for off-duty police. I also need to know the security contract that we have and the security that we have on staff. I need to see details of what's going on. If I have to choose between putting teachers in a classroom and putting cops in the schools... When I went to school at Eastside we didn't have cops. We had security guards. I just need to know from the district why there's a need. There might be a need. I'm not saying that we shouldn't have police officers in the school district, but I need to know why so many. I'm just curious to see that payment that goes to the City of Paterson for off-duty police. I will give you some numbers just for the public to entertain. In 2014-2015 we spent \$6.8 million and we're budgeting \$7.2 million. That's pretty close. But we're making cuts everywhere and we're increasing our security line. I just want to know what's going on. I'm just curious. Also, I'm going to offer my opinion on this line and I think it's reasonable to even reduce it. I know we're looking into maybe increasing the municipal levy, but looking into transportation during the fiscal committee meeting we asked you for a report one time. Going back a few years we had some numbers. The amount that we spent the most in any of those years was \$16 million. I guess you must have gotten some old bills and you just paid them, but over here it's showing that you spent \$17 million the previous year. I'd like to say this assessment. From my understanding we're bringing it back in and right now we're budgeting \$16.8 million and this is after reducing the courtesy busing. I believe we just hired some staff to improve the operation of the program. I would like to cut that line and I would have a conversation with whoever I need to have it with. We don't need \$16.8 million in that line budgeted for transportation. We don't. Based on prior year expenses if we do the route planning and bids early and given that we don't do courtesy busing already and we're running an efficient program, I don't think we need to budget almost \$17 million when the year before we spent \$17 million when the program wasn't running efficiently. Also, we put the bids out late. That needs to be cut. Before we even contemplate any increases to the city, I need to get realistic numbers on how much it would cost for the district to provide transportation. \$16.8 million is excessive. You know what we're talking about. Tomorrow we're going to get some heat for something that we didn't even put together and a budget we didn't have much input in. My input to this is that line. If the proposal is to increase it by \$5 million, let's cut that line tremendously, maybe \$1.5 million. That's my take on that one. That's a fair assessment. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: There are a few recommendations, Comm. Rivera. I assume the BA will get back to you with that information over the course of the next week or so before the actual adoption. Is the expectation that you want that information given to the Board?

Comm. Rivera: Correct. I need the administration to look into those areas. I already put in the request. I officially did it now to the administration. I need to see that. I also want to see security. The maintenance is going to take some time. You have to do that assessment. I just want to see some accountability, Dr. Evans. We can't just put numbers together after we're making all these reductions. We're reducing services to the people. We used to have courtesy busing. Basically what that means is that we were providing transportation to people that lived 1.5 miles away. Now we're going back to the state mandate which says that we're only required to provide transportation to people that live around 2 miles away. That's a decision the district took so we should see the savings in there. I don't see it in this budget at all.

Comm. Hodges: I do apologize. I'm not at the point where I want to talk about cutting the budget. Quite frankly, my whole issue is looking at this situation globally. We are a district that in the 1970s and 1980s was illegally underfunded, which caused damage to be done to this school district. We took the state to court along with 30 other districts and the Supreme Court said, "Yes, you are. You have been illegally underfunded." As

a result of that court decision it said that we are supposed to be putting together budgets based on need. Not on what the state is prepared to give you, but need. So Dr. Evans, my question to you is, are we responsible as a Board for providing a thorough and efficient education?

Dr. Evans: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: My understand, and I could be wrong, is that the Supreme Court defined what that funding cost for that thorough and efficient education was, not the State Department of Education. The Supreme Court said in a court ruling that a thorough and efficient education will be provided by the full funding of the School Funding Reform Act. Am I off base on that?

Dr. Evans: On the outcome of the decision of the Supreme Court?

Comm. Hodges: That's right.

Dr. Evans: That's my understanding of the Supreme Court decision.

Comm. Hodges: Currently we have not received full funding of the SFRA. So what we're doing now is basically compensating for what the state has failed to do. We don't have thorough and efficient funding so any measure to cut and compensate is going to leave our children with less than a thorough and efficient education. I don't need you to answer that, Dr. Evans. I know you're in a very difficult position. I've been here through a number of superintendents who had to sit where you're sitting and had to go through that same situation. Some of their approaches were different and unfortunately the result is that they're not here anymore. So I understand what your position is. But this is my issue. I looked here and I saw all of this here, particularly the area about the municipal tax, which we didn't have in prior budget reports, which is very curious. I didn't see a discussion about the average salary of the people in the city. I didn't see any discussion or treatment about the fact that only 24,000 people pay taxes for the entire 150,000 people in the city. I didn't see that the average salary was \$36,000 and that the reason we have not raised taxes is because we haven't been able to afford it. I've heard preliminary discussions here about how we want to raise taxes and I have an issue with that in face of the fact that the city is forced to raise taxes because it doesn't have the business ratables or the housing ratables to maintain their costs. To raise taxes puts a burden on everybody else because we have nowhere else to go. They have the same fixed costs problems that we do. To sit here and show this graph about we have raised taxes only once in 20 years is misleading. The truth of the matter is we're a distressed city and the state recognizes that because they give us distressed city aid. When you put that up here it suggests that we've been negligent. It's not a question of negligence. It's a question of inability to absorb the taxes. Every time you raise taxes here we lose homeowners and businesses, which causes us to have fewer people to be able to pay the tax burden. That spirals out of control. I just wanted to create that framework from the discussion that you had up here preliminarily because I can't imagine where that came from. I suspect I can guess if I put my mind to it. The Board needs to understand its job is not to balance budget. It's job is to provide a thorough and efficient education for the city's children. It's not to balance the budget. The thorough and efficient requirement is in the constitution of the State of New Jersey. The budget balancing is a state statute for this district and for every district. The constitution trumps statute and law. You need to understand that. The reason I'm saying all that is next year we don't have what we had this year to cut. If we don't push back effectively against this cut you're going to be destroying what's left of this system and you're not going to be able to provide education that's even subpar to the students

of this school district. That's all I wanted to say as an opening framework. I haven't asked my questions yet, but I will get to those later.

Comm. Kerr: I would like to continue with some questions regarding some numbers that we were presented with here. I realize on line 3200 under regular program and instruction on page 3 I see where we are cutting \$3.4 million from program and instruction.

Ms. Ayala: That's basically substitutes. We're working on a new procedure. So instead of someone calling for a substitute without any reference they now have to call and provide a PC number, which is a position control number, in order to get someone in place. Also, we reduced some of the stipends for curriculum and instruction, which falls under that.

Comm. Kerr: So what we were doing before was excessive.

Ms. Ayala: In some cases, yes. There was no true monitoring to that level of detail. It was a standalone area, but we've now consolidated that. We have a new leadership in the department who's overseeing that and drilling down on some of those issues.

Comm. Kerr: \$3.4 million worth of nothing.

Ms. Ayala: There were some substitutes in the classroom. Personal aides are some of the substitutes.

Comm. Kerr: Let me go to line 10300 for special education instruction.

Ms. Ayala: Same page?

Comm. Kerr: Same page. For the past year, I've sat here on many occasions and listened to parent after parent coming to this microphone complaining about their lack of service regarding special education. I see here with all that's happening we were only able to increase special education by a mere quarter million dollars. Maybe I should address that to Dr. Evans. In light of what our experience has been over the past year, is this adequate in terms of the need we have to address in special education?

Dr. Evans: No. This particular page doesn't represent the dollars that we get from the federal government. We get IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, dollars that can only be spent on special education that's not represented in that figure. It's several million dollars. How many, Daisy?

Ms. Ayala: I don't have it in front of me, but in addition to that we have special education by school. When you see 11, to this level they're basically staffing in our building.

Comm. Kerr: I'm going to give everybody a chance. This has been a pet peeve of mine, the family engagement piece of our operation. I've always believed that you have to engage parents and find a way of getting them to get involved in our structure here at the level of the Board of Education. If you look at the budget priorities development you have family and community engagement as one of the plans in that program. I looked at page 4, line 29560, and we can also take it over to line 29680. What's the appropriation for family engagement?

Dr. Evans: The line that's here appears to be from state. The larger portion of funding for family and community engagement, if I recall correctly, is NCLB, federal dollars. It's not reflected in that line.

Comm. Kerr: So how would I find it in the budget?

Ms. Ayala: It's all comingled. That means we have to pull out NCLB and show you how much of that is allocated to family and community engagement.

Comm. Irving: Would it make sense for you to do that, Comm. Kerr?

Comm. Kerr: They're not going to be able to supply that information.

Comm. Irving: Not tonight. I assume Mr. McDowell submits the budget within Title I.

Dr. Evans: That's correct.

Comm. Irving: That should draw down what the expense is and what it relates to. The Board can at least get that to reference and use.

Ms. Ayala: We also have salaries that are allocated to the schools. That's why I said you need to take a look at it as a whole because the school liaisons are actually allocated to each school. That's not reflected in any of these numbers here.

Comm. Kerr: But we can aggregate the numbers.

Ms. Ayala: That's why I said we have to go back and pull that out and give you a number.

Comm. Kerr: That's what I would hope that I can get. Can you tell me the line for guidance?

Ms. Ayala: If we're talking about guidance counselors that would be at the school level, unless you're looking for the department at 90 Delaware.

Comm. Kerr: Just aggregate the numbers and I will get the numbers. Alright, Mr. President, I'm going to let someone else get a shot at this.

Comm. Irving: I'll go to Comm. Mimms and then I have a few questions myself. Then if it's okay with you all after Comm. Mimms goes I'll take a second to hear from the community and jump back into it.

Comm. Mimms: Good evening. When taking a look at the budget and doing an analysis one of the reasons last year that I was very adamant about cost benefit analysis is because when it comes to looking at the budget you're able to determine what programs we have, if they're effective and successful, how to measure the success, and then we can determine how to allocate resources towards it. Because we're continuously not doing that in totality we come back to these same concerns every year when it comes to the budget. So one of the things that I looked at, and it's good that it was in the PowerPoint that we got tonight, and this was one of the concerns when I was doing an analysis, is the budget development priorities. They're in four different boxes - effective academic programs, family and community engagement, creating and maintaining healthy school cultures, and efficient and responsive operations. When doing this budget how do you allocate a budget in the line items to

ensure that these things become a priority? The reason I'm asking that is because when I went through the budget I did it based on the revenue and the appropriations in total. Then I did it by the schools in particular to get an overview of things like family and community engagement. Based on conversations I know it's Title I, but I didn't see it in this packet. This document is 424 pages, but it didn't really show us definitively how much is given for that. So when we're looking to identify a priority for family and community engagement in particular, how do we really know that we're really doing what's need? How do we know if we should move different funding into that particular area? Some have been identified, but when you look at things like on page 3, line 3060 it says 'other purchase services' and there's a \$744,000 difference. Then when you look at textbooks the anticipated budget is \$18,000. We have this document and it gives us some things, but we're missing so many other pieces to really be able to give a true educational guidance in this process. So when it comes to saying effective academic programming with the consultants, who are they? What do they do? What are they providing? How much are they being given for the services? Then the effectiveness - how long have they been here in the district? What are they doing? Is it helping? The issue I have is when I look through I see we have some salaries that are being removed, whether they've been vacancies or not, and we see that we have schools that we're moving and reallocating. Then when you see we have consultants that are getting this big chunk of money in the budget and we don't have the instructional piece that needed in the classroom there's an imbalance. We have to really take a look at these line items because the variances are very scary. When you look at a variance of \$18,000 in textbooks, there's a variance of -94.12. That's very scary. Our kids need textbooks. They need resources. They need supplies. Then we have a line item that says 'general supplies.' You look through the budget on various pages but it doesn't say what those general supplies are. It's not specific. It doesn't tell us what they are. Then you have instructional programs, as someone has already mentioned. -3.4. The reason we have these variances and differences is because we don't do cost benefit analyses. It would save us so much money, time, and we wouldn't even have to go to a joint council meeting tomorrow to negate tax levies if we really did our due diligence here in the district by doing a cost benefit analysis of all the programs that we offer, checking to see if they're effective, and how much money we're putting into things that we find out later for \$3.4 million we really didn't need to utilize it. It probably would be more cost effective for us as a district if we're going to really supply a thorough and efficient education for all our children to do that cost benefit analysis across the board. It would cost us whatever the amount is upfront, but on the end it's going to help us in many ways. It's going to help us with the budget because we'll be able to clearly have a budget that will give our children the education they deserve. The other thing it will help with is with the state and federal aid that we receive. When you receive this aid from the state or federal, they're looking to make sure that what we're doing matches. So we have to make sure we're adhering to their guidelines. So if we don't have a cost benefit analysis in the district when it comes back to us asking are we in adherence to those guideless we can't effectively answer it because we can't even answer it on this level. I think it would be a benefit for us to do it, but to do it for the school district. We have a lot of programs that we offer and I know at some point when we came up with this idea for programming and all that it probably was a great idea. But now the question lies in how effective are those programs and what the sustainability is. I think that's the key. Just because something will last for a year, will it last for 10 years? Will it help our children get into the best colleges? We have the line item as well on consolidating the athletic program, which I think is ridiculous. I think consolidating the athletic program is going to hurt a lot of our children. Some children don't even make it to the team because of nepotism. There's favoritism that goes on. If the coach doesn't know you or like you some kids can't get on the team. If we consolidate a team so we can have one team that has the best of the best, what

happens to kids that want to try? What happens to kids that want to be a part or they're proud Patersonians? We have to be very careful that we're not the ones that are causing the mental instabilities in our children or causing them to be connected to special education and all those things. We can't be a part of the problem. We have to be the solution for our children. We have to fight on all levels. I'm totally against combining athletic programs because our kids deserve recreation. We have the city that has a 0.01% of recreation. Now in our budget we're cutting recreational opportunities. We have to be very clear-cut on what it is that we're trying to do as it relates to our children. They need to be holistic. They need to succeed academically. They need to be able to succeed when it comes to creativity. They need to be able to succeed when it comes to going into society and being able to adapt with other cultures. I think all of that needs to be put into play when we look at the budget. There are so many questions that I have so I know I'm going to come back. I just wanted to put that out there as an opening for my 50 million questions later.

Comm. Hodges: Very well said.

Ms. Ayala: The principal actually submits a different budget through the ALIO system and every line item is supported by data. If it's an intervention they have to show that there's growth in that intervention. Because Paterson has a diverse population, what may work for one school doesn't work for another. Everything has to be supported by data and return on investment.

Comm. Mimms: I understand the process because we were coached very well last year. It's given to this principals and then they allocate what they feel is necessary.

Ms. Ayala: We've actually changed that a little bit. I work closely and visit with them. I went there with some of their programs, their growth, their student achievement, where there's growth, where there's no growth, and talked about if it's not working where they can move forward with another program.

Comm. Mimms: That's a good crawl, but we're looking to run at this point. The problem I have is that we have some schools that have libraries or resources in those areas and you have schools that don't have that type of accessibility. So when it comes to children that don't have computers at home or they don't have access to that technology that provides an issue for our students. Those are some of the things we need to tap into when it comes to really looking at it from even a principal level. I understand we give principals an opportunity, but even after they look at it we need to say in this district the scores say whatever. Even based on what they present and the scores we see these areas are still lacking and there needs to be this type of intervention or resources provided in this capacity for whatever those dynamics are. What happens is the budget is presented early and the principals give it. In the past we said now it's changing. We come back to the same reallocation in the next year with the budget and then we still have low test scores. I think one of the big pieces is we have to get the budget for curriculum. We need to know what that number looks like to develop our own curriculum. We need to get that data, but we really need to get the number on what it would cost us to develop. We have some outstanding teachers and people that can work hard on developing our curriculum so we can move our district forward.

Comm. Irving: Ms. Ayala, I'm going to give you a break and let you sit down for a few minutes while we move to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Mr. Ernest Rucker: Good evening, Ernest Rucker, Paterson. First, I want to thank this district for the excellent staff that you have put together for our trip to Trenton. First, let me say I'm enjoying this conversation. I'm hearing about cutting and cost analysis and all these good things. We do need them, but the point is we need adequate funding first, full funding of education. Every year we're going to go through the same identical thing as we're going through this year because you can't cut but so much. We can make speeches, but let's be central on what is necessary. When we went to Trenton to testify we didn't go begging. We went demanding. We asked for what was fair and what was supposed to be ours by law. I hear people talking about cutting this and that. Where are you cutting it from? We can save some dollars, but you're going to do it again next year and the following year. Instead of us just talking about where we can save a few dollars, let's talk about what your plan is for full funding. That's what I want to hear. I also come here and I'm going to speak to one of your Commissioners. The other two have their turn coming up. Comm. Mimms, I've always believed in your intelligence. Please never get it wrong when we go back and forth on Facebook and I ask questions. That's the arena that you've chosen to get into. A question has been asked by other people. You have the intelligence to be a great member on this School Board. Forget who I support, may it be McCoy. That has nothing to do with my question. We had this conversation at Mr. G's. I'm one of the first persons to tell you that one day you're going to make a great councilperson. In 2014 you ran for this seat. In 2015 you began to run for council. This has never been done in the history of this Board or City Council. People want to ask this question and I'm asking it. I'm not asking it to put you on the spot. But when you became part of this arena we need to have those answers. We need to know. If you tell me you're going to be committed to education during a crisis, if you tell me that, then I expect you to be able to answer those questions.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, sir. I'll allow the Commissioner to address that once all the speakers are done. Thank you for your patience, Comm. Mimms. You're a godly woman.

Mr. Brent Nation: Thank you for allowing me to speak. I guess Mr. Rucker must have been looking at my speech because a big part of it was what Dr. Hodges said. Why are we struggling to budget when we're underfunded? Why? Isn't the Supreme Court still the supreme chamber of the country? Why are we trying to cut and cut when the Supreme Court told the state fund this properly? It's admirable that you're cutting, but when you cut and cut until you get down to the marrow, when do you stop? Until you have a dysfunctional school system, worse than it used to be. I'd like to make it perfectly clear as an accountant I'm concerned about the release of an in-house legal counsel. In 2010 we had a budgetary outlay of \$1.5 million for legal expenses. After hiring an in-house legal counsel these expenses were reduced to half a million dollars, a savings of \$1 million. After reading a Facebook posting and listening to your response, Comm. Rivera, it struck me that you may not have introduced that proposal. My question to you is, how did you vote on that proposal? Or did you vigorously oppose it? As we all know, you took charge of the finance committee in 2016 during a volatile period for our school budget. I'm just concerned knowing that you're running for the Third Ward council seat and wondering why you would take chair of the finance committee with the prospect of you winning and you and your able abilities would have

to hand it to someone else. This question is for my friend, Comm. Mimms. I like you. We met many moons ago. But here's my concern. Let's put aside the fact that you never planned to run for a full term on the School Board. Let's put aside the fact that you began running for City Council after a few months of being seated on the School Board. Tell me, Brent Nation, why would you get involved with this notorious editor of the New Jersey Post, Mr. Serrano, and join his ticket Team Paterson? I'm quoting Mr. Serrano. He has stated in one of his videos you will be a councilperson that will march to his agenda. His words, not mine. Thank you for your time and have a good evening.

Ms. Denise Pelosi: Good evening. I just have two questions. I went over the budget at 90 Delaware and I did not see a line item for the special, PE, music, art, and computer technology teachers. I'm just wondering where it was on the budget. It's not on 2014-2015 either. There's a proposal that certain schools will be closed and children will be transferred to the other schools. Will that mean a whole new budget will be produced if this comes to fruition? Those are my two questions.

Mr. Bilal Hakim: Good evening. I just want to say that I was one of the people that went down last week, March 21, to the hearing. I appreciate all the people who were there to advocate on the part of Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly for our case. However, for the record, the Assemblyman mentioned something about charters and that if the State of New Jersey would have redirected \$35 million for charters as they sent to Newark that would have been a good thing. As a person that voted for the Assemblyman he was not speaking for me when he spoke. He was out of turn when he spoke there. There is a movement in this country to destroy public education and as we sit here going through this charade, we shouldn't sit here – and forgive me for using this word, but it's in the dictionary that is sanctioned by this Board – like jackasses like we don't know what's going on, like we're stupid. There's a movement to destroy public education and they're using charters. I'm telling you right now if money is being redirected from the public treasury to fund these charter schools I pray that those who beat that drum will see segregation back again. You can't see it. I know you don't see it. It's above your head, but trust me, that is the pattern. The Assemblyman was not speaking for me when he said that. Also, I want to thank the community engagement people for coming down there and PEF. They've always been fighting. I want to say that the community engagement parent liaisons have their guidelines that they operate from. We as parents don't walk to their tune. We have to find our own voice and then come and collaborate with them. We're going to have to up the ante. The reason I say that is because when I was there my name was submitted to come and speak and there was a whole controversy as to whether or not I was going to speak. We had to fight for me to get to that microphone. Nobody writes my notes. I don't have a battery in my back. I thank at that time Comm. Hodges for his advice and counsel out in the hallway. We presented what we presented. We're not under their jurisdiction and parents need to know that. I have more. I hope to see you at that joint meeting tomorrow. There is a serious effort. The Governor is in there and he's in charge pushing that engine. He threatened the Mayor of Newark if he didn't tone down what he was going to do about charters. I'm saying to you - charters, no! Those who bit the bullet, you just don't understand what's going on. You think you understand, but you don't. I'll be here if you want to get more information about it.

Mr. Corey Teague: Good evening. First of all, I want to thank Brother Bilal for those words. Honestly parents, just like he said, if I had said it they would have said I had different intentions. It's the truth. You have to go there for yourself. A lot of the folks who went down there from the district were basically going down there to save their jobs. It had nothing to do with the kids. I'm going to say it. One of the points I'll make is that on April 6 there's going to be another rally in Trenton. We're going to be rallying

against the State Board of Education because they're trying to push new legislation to make the PARCC a graduation requirement. There are going to be activists and advocates from across New Jersey down there on the 6th. I'm going to see if they represent and bring the parents down on April 6 to fight against PARCC. Now I want to see where everybody is at, what their true colors are. I just want to announce to the parents you have the right to refuse. They cannot hold your child's hand to that test. They can't physically hold your child's hand down and make them take it. The first time there were refusals it was a very low number and Commissioner Hespy was not very worried about it because the opt-out level was very low. Last spring it was 125,000 students who refused the PARCC. This year we're hoping to get at least 250,000 students statewide to refuse the PARCC. It's very important that we understand that there are other alternatives out there for our children than to just use them for data. These are human beings. These are not computers. These are not machines. We need to make it very plain. To that point, I would like to know how much money in the budget has been allocated to the preparation for the PARCC. How many millions of dollars have been spent? If I'm not mistaken, last year or the year before they spent \$5 million to prepare for this test and then they tried to come back and see if they could raise the tax levy \$5 million. I want to know this year how much money because I know it's probably not even listed in the line items. How much money is being used to prepare for this test in the district? How much of that money can be used instead of going to this test to other programs and services that our children can actually benefit from? In addition, I want to announce that there's going to be a rally in Newark on Friday at 3:30. A friend of mine, John Latner, and several other activists from Newark are going to be protesting Corporate America, the powers that be, and we're basically standing up. Newark is rising up. I'm trying to get Paterson to do the same thing. People are going to tell you that you need to keep them in school, you need to keep them here, and you need to just go along to get along. As long as you go along to get along everything will continue to be the way it is. If you don't shake anything up, nothing is going to change. It's just that simple. We can talk all we want, but until we actually stand up and go for it, nothing is going to change. I believe you want change, so let's get it going. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: If folks haven't noticed, there are copies of the BA's budget presentation. The Board has asked for them to be copied. They're over here at the table. I just want to make sure folks from the community have that. There was another copy that was just made and put over there.

Ms. Valerie Freeman: Good evening. I'd just like to make a suggestion. Whenever there's a special meeting of this nature, I ask that a robo-call go out to the parents and the community so that the people can be informed. If it had not been for Dr. Hodges putting it on Facebook, we would not have known about this. Had Comm. Mimms not put it on Facebook, we would not have known about it. It's important that the parents know about special meetings like this. Secondly, I'd like to thank Comm. Simmons for paying for one of the buses to go down to Trenton. You don't see that from a lot of people, but I want to let you know thank you and I appreciate it. I'm here because if I bring my ream of paper tomorrow to the Board of Education can I get a copy of the budget? Is there a cost? Tell me what I need to do to get the 400-page budget.

Comm. Irving: We can give you one or you can bring a flash drive - whatever you prefer, Ms. Freeman.

Ms. Freeman: Okay. I'll come tomorrow. Also, I know when I was here before we asked about the consultants. I'm very concerned about the number of consultants that are in this district right now and the money that they're making. I truly believe that's

where most of the money is being spent, consultants. I only think it's fair that we get a list of the consultants and what they're making per day. I think it's only fair. I know some Commissioners have asked for it and they haven't received it yet. Have you received it? I can't wait for an answer on that because I need to know. It has been asked several times. That is very important to me. If you can't show me who these consultants are and what they're making, then I'm going to continue to believe that you're trying to hide something, that you don't want to reveal something, or that some of them are being paid and don't even have a contract. I'm beginning to believe that. I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt and the only way you can prove me wrong is to show me a list and show me what they're making. Make sure that they're approved because I believe some of them are not approved and they're making a lot of money. The public just doesn't know. Some of the public knows and some don't know. I think that's important. I don't know if I can get a list tomorrow when I come with my flash drive. I'd like to have a list of the consultants because I'm very concerned. I think that's where the majority of the money is going. I know you said that you weren't going to touch any of the classroom staff and I appreciate that. But also what I'm saying to you is you want these children prepared for this test. They need computers. They need to know how to work the computers. They need technology teachers. Without that, how can you hold them to a test that they won't be prepared for because they don't have the equipment to use? How? I just want to know how it can be. How can you expect these kids to take a PARCC test that's computer generated and you want to cut out technology teachers and they don't have the computers to do it? Those are my questions. My main thing is I need that list of consultants. I don't want to scream out some more names, but you're going to force me to do it. The only way you can prove wrong is to show me on paper that I'm wrong. I can take correction, but I think there are a lot of consultants. You guys know they're here and they're making a hell of a lot of money and our children are suffering. I don't think they need to be here. They're retired. They left. Stay retired. You left this district and you're retired with full health benefits from your pension? Then live like that. Don't come back wanting to make \$750 a day to answer a phone. I'm telling you I need that list.

Mr. Charles Ferrer: Good evening, Charles Ferrer. Thank you, Mr. President, for requesting that by tomorrow. The budget is online. I was having a serious problem with the fact that I was being told that I was going to have to come and sit down at 90 Delaware with my busy schedule to look at the budget when I can pull it up through my email or something and leisurely look at it at home. I have to agree with Dr. Hodges on the fact that the constitution is the constitution. It's the law of the State of New Jersey and it's being violated. We've known that it's being violated because when Commissioner Hespy came here a few months ago he said it was. My concern is, as Dr. Hodges said, we understand Dr. Evans is between a rock and a hard place. But the Superintendent in Jersey City is also and for the last couple of years Jersey City has just about gotten all of the money that they needed to get. My thing is take a risk. He did. Roll the dice. Present the budget that is supposed to be presented that will give the children a thorough and efficient education according to the law, not according to a budget that we continue to cut. Everybody is concerned with their job. At the rate we're going, if we don't close that \$45 million gap, somebody is going to lose. Why is it always the little people? I've been saying this for years. I tell my students we're nothing more than pawns on a chess game. The pawns are always the first ones to go because they're the first line of defense that you put out there. Every position control number should be disclosed in this budget. Board Commissioners, if it's not, you need to ask why. All health benefits should be matched up so that they are properly in line. Maybe there should be a comparison to make sure that the money's being spent the correct way. There are a lot of things that bother me because sometimes you Board members don't know that sometimes this district gets money. We settled our contract, but did

they tell you that for every contract that was settled they took retro on our health benefits for the years that had already gone by because the law allowed them to do it? So I lost \$2,000 in money for a couple of years that I couldn't go back and get medical services for because they had passed, but the district took that money. You times that by the amount of people in all the bargaining units and that becomes a lot of money. You have to put the budget out there that the district needs to fully take care of this district so that there are no librarian shortages in any school, that there is a nurse in every school, that there's a music and technology teacher in every class so that we don't have to worry about the substitute money. Yes, there are going to be teachers absent because they're sick. There are going to be teachers that are out because they're on maternity leave. Whatever! We know we're going to need substitutes. But don't allow us to start the school year with substitutes because we didn't put together a budget that says this is what we need and state this is what you need to give us. My response to this district is for once do it right. Send the budget that needs to be sent. Let them tell you no. Jersey City has been doing it and you know what? If you send the budget that gives us all the money we need and they come back and short us by only \$600,000, we'll deal with that. But why should we be shorted by \$68 million last year when Jersey City was only shorted by \$612,000? Put the budget out there that we need. What do you have to lose? What can they say? Either yes or no! Or maybe instead of giving you all of it, they'll give you half of what you're going to be short. You won't know until you put it out there. That's your job by law. Thank you.

Ms. Marcella Simadiris: Peace and blessings. First, I want to thank all the people that came up to the microphone. There are a lot of people tonight speaking truth to power and that's not easy all the time. It's actually very difficult. Dr. Evans, I've challenged you to start speaking truth to power because our children need you to start speaking truth to power when it comes to the Governor and all those meetings that take place that we don't have access to. People think it's starting trouble. I know sometimes I get labeled as a troublemaker. What really drives me is being a witness to the oppression and the damage that is being done to these children in this city. I didn't have the copy of the PowerPoint when they were presenting it, so it was difficult for me follow along. But it was clear that there were so many blurry lines. Ms. Ayala compared costs per student to other districts and showed how much more our kids get than other kids. She left out the piece where we're required by the state to do all these different things by RAC. That's their way of having their people come in and funnel out this money that's supposedly is for the children. It's not for these children. These children are not seeing this money. I understand that we're all under difficult situations, but to come up here and paint this picture that our kids are getting more than other children is wrong. I don't appreciate it. Then to talk about the increasing costs of health benefits, I'm glad that Mr. Ferrer came up here and pointed that out. Teachers have been contributing into our health benefits since 2008. We've been putting into our health benefits. You're getting more money from us. I'm sure health benefits are increasing, but you leave out the part where teachers are contributing more and more each year. We are contributing. I did go to 90 Delaware. It's difficult. I need help reading a budget. I'm not trained to read budgets. I know people who can help me read them. I tried to compare School 4 to School 28. School 28 had 10 more line budget items. I'm trying to determine how our Full Service Community School gets funded. I'm not sure if it's reflected in our budget for our school. Things that I'm seeing for our school that appear to be for community service schools are in School 28. I'm trying to figure out are you just throwing a title on us to look like you're covering these children. I don't feel like you're covering the students at Dr. Frank Napier Academy. We have some wonderful beautiful precious children there. I appreciate you, Dr. Hodges. I want you to know I appreciate you, but you're a doctor and if you're doing a surgery I assume you know where the patient is bleeding the most and that's where you have to focus on, right? At School 4 we need

you. They make the data say whatever they want. When they say it's data-driven we need to look at that. The drilling down with the BA, if someone can please find out where the Full Service Community School piece goes. I would really appreciate it. I don't like it when people go and act like they're covering students and they're not. Thank you.

Ms. Lavonne Jones-McEachen: Good evening. When the PowerPoint opened and was presented, it was stated right off the bat that we're underfunded by \$68 million. I shudder to think about that number. We've been coming here now week after week and it's like we're beating a dead horse. Yes, we're hearing we are able to say the things that need to be said or that we want to be heard regarding. What do we need to do to get adequately funded? That's the bottom line. We can come here and talk about the budget and where are we going to cut. Me listening to that I may need to bring a flash drive to 90 Delaware myself because it sounded almost like you had two sets of books realistically. I'll use Family and Community Engagement as an example. On one proposal we saw that there was going to be cuts to that department. But then tonight you started talking about federal money, Title I money and how much was there. Now you don't get a true picture because you don't know how many dollars are allocated to that department because you are not showing every dollar that's available for that department. I'm just using that as one example. My question is what do we need to do to get funded? I'm in agreement with everybody else. If we need to just go ahead, and Dr. Evans you know we have your back. We went with you to Trenton the last time you made the presentation. If we have to get some buses and sell some pencils on the corner to get enough money to get buses to get to Trenton, we'll be there. But we need to get adequately funded because right now it seems that we are just dealing with the crumbs. We're still dealing with reading, writing, and arithmetic. We didn't even get to the space programs and things like that, just to name a few jobs that we can't even fathom here. These are future jobs. We can't even fathom bringing qualified staff to this district because we haven't even gotten over the beginning hurdles. Just to throw out a few, we have alternative currency bankers. We have space-based power system designers and Avatar designers. We see those things. Augmented reality architects. Waste data management. That's a big one. These are things that we haven't even begun to fathom to put in these schools that we've divided up in Eastside and Kennedy and places like that more or less bringing in staff because we can't even get over the beginning hurdle just to get funded so we can get the education our kids need. That is my question. What do we need to do to get adequate funding? We need to put it out there and we need to go for it. We are suffering. Reading, writing, and arithmetic is good. Those are the basics. But in the technology world that's coming about we have to have what we need or our kids won't be able to be removed from these local places. We'll still be retail and working at K-Mart or Costco. We have to broaden our horizons. Thank you. I would like an answer. I don't know who's going to give me that answer, but I would like an answer to that question. What do we need to do? When? How? We need to do it.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening Commissioners, Dr. Evans, staff, and audience. Today, I'd like to use my PEF report on the school budget to deliver my comments. I want to start off by saying we're actually underfunded \$281 million. I know we're talking about next year's budget, but over seven years under the School Funding Reform Act what we're entitled to and what we've gotten is a difference of \$281 million. So let's keep that state campaign pressing. One thing that jumped out at us as we prepared and analyzed the budget report is that total revenue is down by \$8 million. That's how much less money we're spending this year than last year. How much money are we receiving even though we know costs have gone up? I did notice also that the local tax levy is being increased by \$5 million. I expect that to be a piece of the conversation that

happens at the City Council and School Board joint meeting tomorrow. On the back of our report where we look at the total expenses some things stand out and I do want to call these to your attention. Regular programs and instruction at the district level is down by \$2.5 million. Our kids aren't doing very well right now. It's tough to look at a budget that is going to reduce regular program instruction. Attendance and social work is down by \$300,000. Speech-related extra services are down by \$800,000. Guidance is down by \$300,000. That's at the district level. While in fact we are sending just a little bit less money to the schools than we did last year, the blue number, last year we sent \$267 million to the school, this year they will get \$252 million. When you look at the details of what's happening at the local schools, there's even more cause for concern. The zero numbers in certain categories are troublesome. There are 26 places where there are no attendants or social workers. There are nine school buildings that have no guidance counselors assigned according to what I'm reading in the numbers. There are 31 that have no librarians. Assuming that the schools that share Eastside and Kennedy also share a librarian, then that would still bring the number down to 24 school buildings that have no librarians. One of those, by the way, is Rosa Parks High School. That's the only high school that causes concern. In the variances, when you look in the third column in the school line, YES Academy, which is an alternative program for some of our high school kids, is down by \$1.3 million. I'm also concerned that there is no school-based budget for the two new schools that are to be opened in September. Thank you.

*Comm. Castillo leaves the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Ms. Sailys Cabral: Good evening, Board members. First, my name is Sailys Cabral. On a lighter note, I want to first extend an invitation to each and every one of you this Thursday, March 31 to School 19 where we the parents arranged for the New Jersey Hall of Fame Bus to come to our school. The children will have this wonderful experience to see an actual light bulb from Thomas Edison.

Comm. Irving: What time?

Ms. Cabral: It starts at 8:30 until 5:30. It's going to be open to the community from 3:00 to 5:00. For the students it's from 8:30 to 3:00. On a very distasteful note, Dr. Evans, I would like to ask you a very important question and would love for it to be answered. I would love to know how much more disrespect do I have to accept from your administration. I would love to know why New Roberto Clemente called DYFS on me - a mother and a woman that sacrificed her life for her children to be born. Not only have I fought for them to be born, I have sacrificed every fiber of my being since they've been on this earth. I'm here every single time present. Why do I need to keep getting disrespected by your administration? You know nothing of this? That's why this budget and everything happens the way it does. There's no communication. You think that something is going to happen positive here? Nothing is going to happen. Why was he unaware of this? Why are you unaware of this? They're coming to my home on Thursday to inspect my home and interview my children. Not only after the fact that they went to my home and pounded on my door. I had to leave work because my children thought they were being attacked and something was going to happen. I had to call the police while I was on my way to my house. Board members, you've seen me here. Why? You saw me right after I was in a car accident on my way to one of the meetings. What was my only concern while I was in the emergency room? My car was totaled. My back is done. What was my only concern? How can I get into that meeting? He heard me. It's the only reason we even spoke. It was my only concern, not my back, my head, or the concussion I just had. Why? Explain this to me. I'm there. I'm the president of my son's PTO. It's not a label. I'm there at every single

meeting. There's a gate there because of me. There's extra security because of me, because I stood up. The stairs were fixed because I stood up and my son stood up here. There are handrails because I stoop and my son stood up and spoke up for safety. I'm here again today when I was only made aware of this meeting today. I left work and I'm here, as I'm here every single time. I make it to every single meeting that I'm asked to be at. I'm disgusted. I'm appalled. It's a disgrace. I just arranged for such a wonderful experience on Thursday and instead of me being there until 5:00 I have to leave at 4:00 because they're coming to my home.

Ms. Regana Bracey: Good evening Board members. First, I would like to say, Ms. Mimms, don't let them discourage you. I told you before - you might be a voice that we need on City Council as well. These taxes are just not affecting us from the schools. They're affecting us from the city and we feel as though we're being attacked from all sides. The issue at hand that I'm here for today is the school budget. I was hoping to obtain the 400-page document, but we didn't know it was made available online, which it wasn't. It would have been good for us to have it beforehand so that we could review it. Some of us parents can review budgets and we do understand the things that go on in budgets. In the budgets we do need the narrative so that we can see how it's going to be spent. I have a question and I'm hoping someone can answer it today because I heard it from various speakers. I think I was in grade school when all of this was going on. Since we said the state underfunded us and we fought with the Supreme Court, how many years have they underfunded us before we went to the Supreme Court? Were we being underfunded after the Supreme Court?

Comm. Kerr: The funding formula was adopted in 2009. Prior to that is not relevant to the funding formula, so we have to calculate from 2009 up until this point.

Ms. Bracey: From the ruling we've never received the adequate funding that was needed from year to year afterwards. It started from 2009 and now we're in 2016.

Comm. Hodges: Mr. President, that's not altogether true. There has been intermittent and very spotty funding. We've had to sue occasionally.

Comm. Irving: But not full complete funding.

Ms. Bracey: So they would give us pieces of increase, but not a full increase.

Comm. Hodges: Correct. We did have full funding after we sued.

Ms. Bracey: But there was no collection.

Comm. Irving: No.

Ms. Bracey: Why were there no collections?

Comm. Irving: I believe the state didn't decide to appropriate the funds.

Ms. Bracey: We didn't force collections? I know if I owed the state or federal government money they're going to levy me. My bank account is going to be drafted. That's the best way I can put it. My bank account is going to be drafted when I owe them money. The IRS is going to take theirs from the top. There's a way to collect from the state. With that in mind, it brings me to my next statement. We are aware. Don't think that we are not aware of what's going on in our schools as parents. Some of our parents do the job for other parents. We are aware of what's going on. I heard the

mention of IDEA money not being included in this budget. We also know fundraising money is not in this budget. I buy books, candy, and my kids take pictures. They do all those things and I know there's a profit being made. That's not included in the budget. We need to know those numbers. Those are true numbers that we need to know as community members that are paying taxes, whether or not we have kids in this district. As you're seeing today, it's affecting all of us so we all have to stand together. Another thing I want to say is if we paid attention to the newspaper article about a week ago, we know that the charter school had 1,300 parents from Paterson at an auction for 80 slots. We couldn't even get 100 to go to Trenton. That should tell the community to wake up. Some things are going on and a lot of speakers have brought it to your attention. I didn't hear any mention of what our kids are going to get. Did that budget increase any for direct services for our children like technology to move them into the 21st Century? Do we have any of those things like laptops? I know the charter schools have laptops. By next year they're going paperless for their high schools. That's going to save them money on their budgets. I need to know what's going to directly impact our children as a benefit. I expect those line items to be increased not decreased and definitely not the same. We are going to get an audit done. We are going to audit the appropriateness of the services.

Mr. David Gilmore: Good evening, David Gilmore, Paterson. There's so much to say in so little time. First, I'd like to say I really enjoyed your comments, Apostle Mimms. You made some very good points. I'm not going to get into the politics of what's going on over there. I just thought you made some very appropriate points. It's March Madness and I'm watching basketball. I'm reminded as a student athlete myself of all the scholarships that are available for student athletes. I look at the band, cheerleaders, players, sports medicine people, and all the others that are offered scholarships through the college experience. Then I look at Paterson. I'm a graduate from Eastside High School from the Marching 100. No more band. Music and art is being cut. Athletics is being combined. Every cut is a scholarship that we can't get for our kids. Scholarship opportunities are gone by the wayside. I have ad-nauseam talked about the 60-minute minimum passing grade. We're not even educating, so there's no opportunity to participate. I was blessed enough to be an honor student coming up, but I was still ill prepared for college graduating out of Paterson schools. We're not doing enough. There's not enough focus on raising the standards and educating these kids when in fact that's not even the conversation. How many people have talked about the cutting of technology or the funding of other programs and activities outside of academia? I'm just dumbfounded by the lack of attention that's being given to the fundamental causes for education. I don't have anything against charter schools. My problem is the funding formula for the charter schools and how they drain the general budget. Some charter schools are very good, but not the way they're funding them. I think Mr. Rucker said earlier that the plan was to destroy public education. I don't think that's the plan. I just think that's an outcome of what it is they're doing. I don't think anybody is planning to...maybe they are. I'm just trying to stay positive. I think that we need to change the way we're looking at it and start talking about more of the outcomes of education and what the children get and do not get. Then maybe we can get more empathy to the cause of educating our children. Thank you.

Ms. Elizabeth Elias: Hello. Good evening everybody. First of all, there are some parents that weren't here today that attended with us on March 21. I'm proud of some of the parents that came out, but it's sad that there weren't any teachers. I hope they hear me because we're fighting for you guys too. It's not just the students. It's sad that we keep coming up here and there's always a problem with the budget. I don't know about numbers, but it's no cuts and more increasing. The PARCC test is an issue. I'm worrying about the school budget and the kids taking the test next week. I have a

question for you, Dr. Evans, and please do not ignore me because you can talk. Nobody is forcing a gun to you. Are the kids able to opt from the PARCC test? Is there an obligation for them to take the PARCC test? Can you answer me that? We need to know.

Comm. Irving: When we're done with the public comments we'll let the Superintendent respond. Are there any other questions?

Ms. Elias: I asked about the PARCC test. That's what I want to know. This is something important. Next week our kids are going to start taking the PARCC test and they're going to be three to six weeks frustrated about PARCC test when they didn't even have teachers for the whole year. It's embarrassing and it's going to set our kids more back. It's going to make them stress. It's making me stress. As a parent I feel so bad for my children. It's not because they can't do it, but because they were not ready and they haven't been applied the right tools to get taught to take these tests. When the lady right here asks you a question, no disrespect, you can't even answer some of the things about the budget. I don't blame you because it's a lot of pressure. I know some of you do it humbly and you don't get paid, but when we're going to get a meeting can to give us a week ahead? Call our parents. Somebody go to the Board of Education or give me the key again and I'll do it for free. I'll make sure I state in Spanish and English we're going to have a meeting. We will never be on track. If we go to war for education we would lose. It's like all of you are lost in la-la land. One says one thing. The other one says another. It makes me sad because that's how the teachers are. I heard again and I'm going to tell the parents, don't let your kids take that PARCC test because they're not ready. Last year I let my children take the PARCC test because I knew I was going to have to come back again. I was one of the parents that let all my three kids take the PARCC test. Ms. Shafer, I did it for you because when I met you one day it seemed like you were down to earth and you cared. But at this point you can't even answer me when I ask you, Dr. Evans. Do you understand the pressure that we parents are taking? When you retire you're going to be known for the worst. Can you go to sleep with that? I don't understand you.

Ms. Shemaisha Canty: Hi, my name is Shemaisha Canty. I'm a student at John F. Kennedy STEM program. JFK students have worked together to design a substance abuse prevention program that resulted in us being one of five schools selected to receive a \$500 sponsorship to produce a PSA video highlighting prevention. 25 high schools participated in the Passaic County Teen Summit at William Paterson University. Voting ends on April 15. We need as many votes as possible. There's one simple way to vote. You can go online at uppc/videocontest.dot, select John F. Kennedy, and vote. Thank you. If you have any questions call our youth group leader, Anthony Wilson, at 201-757-2291. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: I think the young lady has flyers that she is giving to Board members. I'd like to encourage everyone this evening to vote for our young people and pass the link on.

Ms. Darlene Morris: Good evening. I'm Darlene Morris and I work with the Department of Family and Community Engagement. I want to start off by saying too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought. It was indicated tonight that some of us may have gone to Trenton because we were free from our jobs or whatever. I'd like to speak to that. First of all, I've been married for 41 years and between god and my husband I've been well taken care of. When I go, I'm not getting paid overtime. My colleagues aren't getting paid overtime. Some of them are here tonight. We work diligently to try to make the difference in this community, in our schools, and in our

department. I know for a fact that over the last three years I've seen significant growth in our department. We have become more strategic. We have become more focused. If I might say it myself, we do a great job. I know over this past year I've worked with parents that are out here. My parents walk the street and they put flyers in people's cars. They stop cars at stoplights. They call us all the time and we work diligently. We may not be perfect, but like I said, we put a lot of thought into what we do. Some things we get at the last minute and we have to respond and move according to the way that it's coming at the time. We try to do it as efficiently and as effectively as we can. I know for a fact for the majority of us in that department we work diligently. I have to drive an hour home tonight and I don't mind because it's going to make a difference in this community. I like my job. I go to court with people to keep them from being displaced. I find homes for them. I find apartments for them. I even find services for them. We do more than just these meetings. These meetings are a thing that came up as a result of this budget. We do a lot more that you may not even see. Our feet are on the ground daily and I take issue with anybody that tries to diminish what we do. I take issue with that and what I'd like to say is come to my place and I'd like to see you do half the job that we do. Thank you.

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

Comm. Hodges: I just wanted to let the Board know that Comm. Castillo wasn't feeling well so she had to leave. That's why she's not at the table.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Evans, if you want to respond. Comm. Mimms, there were some specific comments addressed that I'm sure you'd like to answer. Then Comm. Simmons can get on with his questions for the business administrator.

Dr. Evans: I'll begin with the last question that was raised regarding PARCC. By state regulation the district cannot support opt-outs or in any way encourage students not to take PARCC. Then there's another big reason. In fact, we just received a reminder from the state and federal government that if we don't have 95% participation...

Comm. Irving: The question is can folks exempt from the test.

Dr. Evans: It's not a yes or no question. When students sit for the test no one can put a pencil in their hand and force them to fill it out. However, the district can't encourage that. If we don't have 95% participation we lose federal dollars. At a time when our budget is tight...

Comm. Irving: Folks, we are not going to have the back-and-forth. Folks have had the opportunity to be heard. You all have posed questions to the Superintendent and he deserves the right to respond to those questions as well.

Dr. Evans: There was question regarding special PE teachers. I'm not sure what the nature of the question was. I think teachers were cut from last year and those positions actually were cut at the school level. School principals were given the option to cut and we at the district office made some cuts in addition last year. This year we have not cut any positions from schools, except where a program was actually closing for reasons that may or may not connect to budget reduction. How much money is being spent on PARCC? I think Mr. Teague asked that question. He's right. Last year we spent about \$5 million, but most of that \$5 million was to purchase new computers. That's an expense we don't have to make this year so the expense this year is very little. I don't

have the exact figure in front of me, but I can get that. It's probably less than \$100,000 as compared to \$5 million mostly for prep work and ensuring that those computers are working, buying some peripheral equipment and those kinds of things for them. The list of consultants is available. I think Ms. Ayala prepared it a month ago because the first request came in about a month ago. It's simply a matter of reproducing that list and getting it to those who request it. Full Service Community Schools is in two places in the budget. Full Service Community Schools are supported both by federal and local dollars. The local dollars are aligned with individual school budgets. When you look at a particular school that's a Full Service Community School their budgets are enhanced by local dollars to support Full Service Schools. Then there's a separate federal budget that supports them in addition to that as well. No budgets for the two new schools. We actually do have budgets for the two new schools and those can be made available. That's supported in large measure by redirecting funds from where those students are coming. I'll use School 9 as an example. School 9 is a severely overcrowded school so we're shifting students in School 9 to the new Hani Awadallah School, but the teachers from School 9 who teach those students go with them. Similarly, other accommodations go with them as well. So a lot of that money may reside in another school's budget this year, but will be shifted over. We do have budgets for those two. That concludes my remarks, Mr. President.

Comm. Irving: I'm going to let Comm. Mimms and Comm. Rivera respond because there were two specific questions addressed to them. Then Comm. Simmons can take it from there with your questions.

Comm. Mimms: Good evening. First of all, let me just address the community about the bus ride that went to Trenton. We were asked which Commissioners were able to go. I did not opt to be on the bus because one of my best friend's mother was transitioning and she actually died the same day. That's why I was not on the bus to Trenton. I was in hospice caring for her mother. I want to make that clear. It was not that I did not want to be on the bus. I'm dealing with my uncle, which the Board knows is very sick. Then on that day I was in hospice with my girlfriend and her mother who passed away. The second is that I don't really get into combativeness to defend my stand because I really don't think we need to do that. We already have a constitution that states that we have the right and the opportunity to serve in any capacity that we choose. In our city because we're in a situation where there are so many different concerns and issues any one has the right, as long as they're able to fulfill the obligations and qualifications that are required by the law and the mandate, to run in any capacity or office in this city. I think it's repetitive that I have to continually say the same thing over as it relates to my run for another office in this community. I've proactively fought for children all my life. I have four children of my own. I am a single parent. I fight. My children are very educated. It's not a thought of my intelligence. It's a fact that I am educated and I am intelligent. I'm not going to get into that combativeness being that I was valedictorian of two programs, masters and doctorate. I don't want to get into whether I'm intelligent or not intelligent. As far as serving and going to another place, I'm never going to leave the children. I fought for the children before I got to the Board. I fought hard on the Board as we volunteer. I'm in numerous meetings, committees, and sitting on the Board and fighting. I don't voice what I say because I'm looking for a stand or platform. I do it every single day. I'm going to do it when I leave the Board, while I'm on the Board, and after I leave. To continuously have to defend my stand, it's amazing to me because I'm not the only Board member that just got on the Board, but obviously I'm the threat. That's fine. I thank you for the publicity. I thank you for that. The other thing that has been stated and I'm glad that I have this opportunity, because I don't do the combativeness on Facebook or social media. They have a button called 'delete' or 'block' and I've used that button. But let me address this

– there's a difference between endorsement and alignment. I was endorsed by Mr. Serrano and NJPulse. I am not in alignment with any of the issues or initiatives. I know nothing about an initiative. There's no verbal agreement. There's no contractual agreement. My alignment is to the effectiveness and betterment of the City of Paterson. I've lived in the City of Paterson for 46 years and I am a taxpayer. I'm a pastor in the City of Paterson for over seven years. I've been in ministry for over 20 years. At my church the Board of Directors came to me five years ago and they wanted me to go into where the law allows us to have our house as a parsonage. Because of my heart for this city I chose not to be in a position where I don't pay taxes as some people are doing. I'm not in that position. I pay taxes because I want to help the community out. When I have to keep answering the same question, I am a product of the city. I'm a resident of the community. I fight hard. I provide scholarships for high school students. I've done it for eight years straight out of my pocket before I got to the Board. I'm being honored on April 21 here from SET Academy for my outstanding community leadership. To have to defend my fight for kids and what I do for kids and how I fight for them to be educated, to go into school, and help them with their FAFSA applications. I worked in community engagement so I know the hard work that they do. I see them passing out flyers. I see them on the corners. I get out and I talk to the parents with them so I understand their plight. I'm not sitting here to build my platform. My platform has been built. I'm coming off this stage and I'm going down where the people are to understand their concerns. If we had the leadership in the Third Ward, I wouldn't even be running. I would be voting because I respect the person that's there. I have no issues with him. Actually, I voted for him four times. It's no personal issue. The people are crying for change. The community is crying for change. So as a resident of the city and as an educated experienced person in the community, I chose to step up to the plate. That's all I have to say tonight. There are no bad feelings. We all live in the same city. Once the election is over, we're still going to have to get along. This is my last point. I'm not waiting until May 10 to claim victory. I've already won. The fact that in our community no one wants to step out to even run in an elected office or to be on the City Council in the environment we live in, I've won. I won when they took me into back door meetings and tried to tell me to drop out because of the statistical situations that are going on and I said I'm not listening to them. I'm still running. So May 10 is not over 40 days away from now. May 10 is today. It was the very day that I chose to step up to the plate and say I'm not waiting for someone to dictate in the community what we need to do. I'm going to be a part of the solution of the city. This is my last time defending it. If I hear it on Facebook, you'll be deleted. I'm making it clear because our community needs a change. We have tax increases. People are abandoning their properties. Children are leaving the city. People can't afford to live here, but we have this high bracket. It was talked about tonight. 24,000 people are paying taxes in the city where 150,000 people live. It's a crying shame. It's a shame. We have not-for-profits and different people in the community that don't pay anything towards the taxes. But when you have someone that fights hard, advocates, makes phone calls, writes letters, send emails, those people you want to intimidate or antagonize. I'm not the one. I'm not easily intimidated. You can't take me off my stand. I've been fighting for 46 years and I'm going to keep fighting. That's my plight. My name is Lilisa Mimms. I'm fighting hard for our children. I'm going to fight from this day until further.

Comm. Irving: You thoroughly addressed the comment.

Comm. Rivera: Before I start, I want to thank everyone that's here holding us accountable. I've been going to the City Council for the past eight years and have held accountable to all the decisions they make. It is interesting how most of you have been here through this whole budget process and know that this whole Board was not involved in the process. A gentleman here came to the podium and asked a question

regarding the finance committee and us allowing the district to just make a decision regarding the outsourcing of legal counsel. We don't have the authority and the power that the City Council has to act on the budget or to make any decisions. We only can hold them accountable as much as they allow us to do. I have another nine Board members here that can vouch for this. During this whole budget process the first time around we're presented with a list of budget cuts that included a higher amount of consulting cuts and then it was reduced. What I'm saying is we can question many things, but the power that we have is limited being a state-run district. I know a Board member here told us that it's not our job to balance the budget. The budget determines the plans we have in place to provide services for our kids. So we need to play a role in our budget as Board members. The people put us here to hold the district accountable, to look after the best interests of the taxpayers and our kids, and we also owe it to the teachers. In the past few years we have relied so much on surplus that when we no longer have it you can see what happened last year. We had to lay off so many teachers and we couldn't afford to lay them off. I agree with many of you regarding the state funding. We deserve our fair share. The state is only giving us so much. But right now we're faced with a situation. I'm not here to play politics on the podium. I have to tell it to you like it is. The way a budget is put together is if you only have a \$1, you cannot spend \$1.50. That's the bottom line. Should the state give us more? Yes! Is this the time? According to what some of my colleagues said, we haven't received our proper funding in the past six or seven years. I'm in no way defending anything on this budget, but even if Dr. Evans submitted a budget that's not balanced, they're not even going to review it. Any one in this administration can tell me if it's possible to submit a budget that's not balanced. Again, I always feel strongly about the budget because that represents the level of service that we're going to provide our kids. I don't understand what the issue is when some of us propose some cuts that are not going to affect our teachers in any way. Also, we're making sure that the cuts that are there like two things I proposed today are not going to affect the level of service when it comes to education that is affecting our kids. To make a long story short, we need to do what we need to do to hold the district accountable when they let us. The key is when they let us. I just want to tell the crowd that is here tonight that my intent is never to use this position to promote my candidacy in any way. Some people feel threatened and they're going to continue to send people here to question me. If you want to know, now that you mention it, what we have done in the finance committee, we're only allowed to do certain things. We have been monitoring overtime for a while now and we have seen the results. That was never done. Another thing that we required of the administration, and they only do it if they want to, is that every contract comes through finance just to make sure that we have the funding available. That wasn't my idea. That was as a team. We make sure that every contract that's presented to us comes with a report from its corresponding committee stating that the program is beneficial to the district. Again, if I had it my way, there are a lot of things here that were done last year that are affecting us now. For example, transportation - that wasn't consulted with us. They sent it to Essex County. We ended up spending \$4 million more than what we spent the previous year. What this district does is every time somebody fails to do their work, we hire a consultant. You're telling me that this Board is for that? No. We're not for that. If somebody is not doing their job, and I'm not for laying off people, but we have to hold people accountable in this district. You shouldn't just get a promotion when you don't do your job. It's costing other people their jobs when you don't do your job. That \$4 million that we overspent last year we probably would have had in surplus right now and we wouldn't be trying to tap into the city for \$5 million. I welcome you holding me accountable. It gives me an opportunity to promote my candidacy. As you can tell, I respond to every question on Facebook. Feel free. But I will not use this podium to promote my candidacy. I'm going to try to answer your question as best as I can, but I will not promote my candidacy through this podium. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Simmons, you had a question for the business administrator?

Comm. Simmons: I have to get my thoughts together. I wasn't sure if I was at a candidate's forum or a Board meeting. Ms. Ayala, you mentioned earlier there was a question asked about substitutes. You mentioned some excessiveness.

Ms. Ayala: That's correct.

Comm. Simmons: I just need to understand when you say excessive, what exactly does that mean?

Ms. Ayala: The substitute is there. When a teacher calls in we have a substitute for that. People also call in if the secretary is not in in order to help the school because some schools have a lot of activity. Some calls have been made and they have not tied that to a PC number. A PC number is a very important piece because that's what I budget on. They call the substitute office and they have gotten services without having that correlation.

Comm. Simmons: I get that. But how do we arrive at it being excessive? Is it that the substitute is called and is not needed because that person is actually there?

Ms. Ayala: I don't know all the logistics of it because that's a human resource issue. We've been looking at the whole integration and bridging of programs and other software. That's one of the ones that was discovered because when we were going through the process we said each line item or request has to be tied in to this system with that number. When we did a filtering some of those requests did not have a PC number.

Dr. Evans: I can more completely respond to that question. There are circumstances that are well intended on the part of principals where a substitute may be called because they're doing an in-house professional development activity, for example. The teachers may be in the building and as a result it doesn't get tied to a PC number. But to relieve that teacher so they can participate in, in some cases, mandated professional development that may relate to performance or other kinds of things, then a substitute is in the classroom while down the hall or downstairs that teacher is provided professional development to help improve their performance. That's one example. In the end, that substitute isn't tied to a PC number because the teacher is not absent.

Comm. Simmons: Secondly, with all of the cuts what I didn't hear tonight and what I haven't heard as we've been going through this process is what the impact is going to be academically. How is it going to affect academics? How is it going to affect services? When we get down to the classroom, how does it actually affect?

Ms. Ayala: That's not going to affect it. If you look at it, we actually increased the classroom. That was the directive. That's one place we were not touching and we did not touch that. If you look at the school based contribution you see it went up about \$7 million from last year to this year. You can see that on my PowerPoint presentation as well. If you look at slide 17 on page nine, last year it was at \$236 million for school based and now it's at \$245 million.

Comm. Simmons: The reason I ask that question is because we've increased that spending in the past, but those dollars haven't actually trickled down to the classroom.

Ms. Ayala: This comes from the classrooms. This is basically something that goes into the system. It's not something that we create behind closed doors. This is directly into the DOE. You're probably saying we budget for it and we don't spend it all, and that may be the case. If we have vacant positions and we budget the position at \$50,000 and we have a substitute for the full year, that salary is saved by \$30,000. There are a lot of different variations. You may have a teacher who is at the top of the guide and then retires and leaves. Teachers start at about \$51,000 so there's a savings there of \$50,000. There's attrition there as well. Even though we budget for it, it doesn't mean it's all going to be spent, especially when we budget on what's here today. It may be different in September and the same population may not be there. That would definitely be a reduction in actual.

Comm. Simmons: I'm not sure if this is a question for you or Dr. Evans. Specifically with the athletic program I know there's talk of combining it. As I've stated in the past, and I want to be clear, I'm for the consolidation of the athletic program if it is done correctly. I've been coaching in this city for a long time. I understand that the city and the district actually benefit from a consolidation because we lose less students to parochial and private schools. More importantly, how likely is someone to fight or be violent with their teammate. There are all kinds of benefits that go along with that, as long as it is done correctly. I know we have issues with competing – and I'll use football as an example – where we struggle to dress 30 kids and we play a school like Clifton who dresses 95 kids. It also becomes a safety issue and we can't continue to compete that way. I just want to make sure that when we're saying combining that we're not cutting the program. I want the Board members to understand that if you cut this program we're going to do damage. Typically when you cut you don't get it back, so we have to be very careful not to cut and that it's a true consolidation.

Dr. Evans: Mr. Cozart is hearing you. He is the person who is meeting with staff now to look at the options and obviously will take seriously what you've just said to make sure that we don't cut the programs. Very soon he's going to be coming back with a plan to look at and we'll vet that with the Board as well before we actually take any action on it.

Comm. Simmons: Just to add, there is value to consolidating the program. I've actually run the numbers myself and you do actually save about \$1 million, if it is done correctly.

Comm. Redmon: On the substitutes with the PC numbers, is it just excess? Or do we not have enough in that department?

Ms. Ayala: In the past we've had a lot of training. We had the teacher evaluation system that came on board. That whole year of training getting the teachers on board with the standards and the rubric we actually spent \$8 million in substitutes. We budgeted at \$6 million this year.

Comm. Redmon: That's my question. That's all.

Comm. Kerr: Let me piggyback from a question that Comm. Simmons asked. When we were first given wind about the athletic program it was listed on that sheet of paper as a cost saving...

Ms. Ayala: As a reduction.

Comm. Kerr: So let us not fool ourselves about consolidation. It was for a cost saving reason why we are even giving thought to that process. It's not going to enhance our kids' ability or give them greater opportunities to play sports. It is going to definitely

reduce the opportunities to them. But let me go back to some of the budget lines here. Let me go to the legal piece of it. I see where we're cutting the salaries of attorneys by 68%. We're increasing legal services by 15%.

Ms. Ayala: Where are you looking?

Comm. Kerr: Page 6.

Ms. Ayala: That's actually the labor relations.

Comm. Kerr: Does this mean that we're totally dismantling our legal services? Nothing is appropriated for legal services.

Ms. Ayala: Yes.

Comm. Kerr: Tell me what is appropriated.

Ms. Ayala: It's \$900,000.

Comm. Kerr: Salaries for attorneys and legal services are two different things.

Ms. Ayala: Salaries for attorneys is being reduced.

Comm. Kerr: That includes Bob Murray?

Ms. Ayala: He's not salary.

Comm. Kerr: Who falls under that line?

Ms. Ayala: Legal staff. Bob Murray is in the legal service line.

Comm. Kerr: We're reducing that line by \$303,000. Is that so?

Ms. Ayala: Yes.

Comm. Kerr: We're only leaving on that line \$137,378.

Ms. Ayala: Correct.

Comm. Kerr: That number, \$137,378, what does that represent, the salary for one attorney?

Ms. Ayala: Risk management.

Comm. Kerr: So we will not have any legal services outside of risk management in the building.

Ms. Ayala: Correct.

Dr. Evans: No. That's not the plan. There will be services in the building. It's how we provide those services and the specifics on that won't be available for another...

Comm. Kerr: So on what line would I find...

Ms. Ayala: 45040.

Comm. Kerr: Will we be having somebody outside of risk management attorney here? Or is this the cost for outside firms?

Dr. Evans: I'm working on that now.

Ms. Ayala: It's a combination.

Dr. Evans: There isn't a complete answer to your question. By next Tuesday I will have completed the work that I'm doing across the entire district office staff for the 83 positions that are being reduced and developing a plan for how we're going to do it, who's going to be impacted, and if I want to make any adjustments one way or another. The final decisions will be made in advance of that. Then I can more completely answer your question.

Comm. Kerr: This is a budget and I'm going by the numbers presented here. I've been here long enough to know seven years ago when our legal fees were way over \$1 million a year. For us to allocate \$946,000, I think we are playing with just numbers and not being truthful of what this can purchase if we don't have an attorney in the house. That's the reason we fought to get one inside here, to save us that money. I'm just looking at this going through and hoping that we know exactly what we are doing. I'm getting confused here with purchase of technical services and professional services. I find it difficult to pull all of these lines together because they all mean different things. What I'm going to do is come to the office and see if we can sort some of these lines out because I just want to make sure that they mean what they suggest here. Line 47020 on page 7 is for purchase of professional services. If you look at the 2014-2015 budget, you appropriated \$308,000. Last year you appropriate \$720,000. It was a 51% increase from year to year. This year the appropriation is 18% less. What did we have in between there?

Ms. Ayala: That one line is probably like 20 lines behind it. If you come to the office I can drill down to that level and tell you exactly where it's coming from.

Comm. Kerr: I will rather come to the office so we can walk through.

Ms. Ayala: This doesn't capture location and that's important for us to know where the expenditures are coming from. This only captures program, function, and object - nothing else.

Comm. Kerr: Okay. Page 8, you can discuss that Wednesday or Thursday when I get to your office. Page 8, line 51020, I need to know exactly what that line captures.

Ms. Ayala: Sure. That one is pretty simple. That's security. That's what Comm. Rivera was talking about, the increase in security.

Comm. Kerr: We increased security and decreased programming. We're in the business of educating kids and for the life of me I just can't understand why we would find it possible to appropriate less money in our budget for instruction than we do for security. That's a question that I need to get answered. I'd rather come into your office where we can have further discussion on some of these things.

Ms. Ayala: We've worked on this before where we have our financial internal system that gives you the detail that you're looking for.

Comm. Kerr: I'll let somebody else talk a little bit.

Comm. Hodges: In your presentation you talked about all the things that are going to result from the cost drivers - collective bargaining, health benefits, pension, pupil transportation, substitutes, new schools, additional need for positions, etc. There was a slide, reality check of financial situations. We're upon the fiscal cliff, limited increase in state aid, resistance to increasing the local tax levy, which I took particular note of, unsustainable financial model, protection of assets necessary for program delivery, Paterson has some of the older schools in New Jersey, and desire for stability of operations. What I was looking desperately for was some mention of the educational outcomes of our children. I'm not holding you responsible for that, but just some mention of that in this rush to balance our budget. Again, our primary responsibility is to educate children.

Ms. Ayala: I think that's pretty much covered under protection of assets necessary for program delivery. Program delivery would be for instruction for all students.

Comm. Hodges: Let's look at the after-school programming. Let's start with that. We've cut the before and after school programming in the budget.

Ms. Ayala: I need to see that page.

Comm. Hodges: That gets cut. We have students who can't read. We don't have libraries. We don't have librarians. Support programs occur before and after school, but we're cutting those. Paterson used to have eight libraries in this city. It's down to three. We don't have librarians that are sponsored. Still, our preschool through third graders we can't get to read on grade level after four years of education. It's not because we can't teach them how to read. We can do that. We can't teach them how to read well because of lack of practice. Where do you go to practice? A library! We've cut librarians. The city has cut libraries. The ability to direct time outside of the library which occurs in the before and after school program we decreased the budget. It's not your fault. I'm just putting it out there for the Superintendent of Schools. What is extraordinary aid? There are three terms that I really want to get wrapped around my head.

Ms. Ayala: That's extra funding that we get for special education.

Comm. Hodges: Equalization aid.

Ms. Ayala: That's the funding that we get from the state.

Comm. Hodges: That's the overwhelming part of our budget.

Ms. Ayala: That's where I showed you that we were short.

Comm. Hodges: And the per-pupil growth aid.

Ms. Ayala: Where do you have that?

Comm. Hodges: That's very early on in the budget. I didn't put a number to that. I'll come back to that later. How do we arrive at changes in salaries for teachers in grades 1-5, 6-8, and 9-12? There's a decrease in those costs from page 2.

Ms. Ayala: That's all based on stipends and the substitutes.

Comm. Hodges: Stipends are given for what?

Ms. Ayala: If you go to page 3 where you have that total that was cut, that goes back to some stipends and substitutes that we talked about earlier.

Comm. Hodges: What are the stipends given for?

Ms. Ayala: There are so many stipends that I have to go look.

Dr. Evans: For example, curriculum writing. There's a phenomenal amount of curriculum writing going on right now. That curriculum writing is going on after school and during the summer, at times other than instructional daytime. We select our better teachers and then they write the curriculum off schedule. We pay them stipends to do that. That's an example.

Comm. Hodges: Which is the exact point I was hoping you would get to. Thank you. Our test grades have been plateauing and we have to rewrite the curriculum to put the Common Core in place. You're already cutting some 86 positions in your staff, the people that would normally assist in those areas. You're cutting those people out and this is our primary function – curriculum is our primary job. You're cutting the stipends to the teachers who are going to assist the people who are no longer here. That doesn't make any sense to me. We're stripping away the educational fabric of this district for the sake of balancing a budget. Our real function is to educate kids. That's our real function and we're cutting away our ability to do just that for the sake of a balanced budget. That's outrageous. Let me get to nursing. I don't know what the ratios should be, but let me put it to you in real terms. When I was a doctor in the emergency room, and I will never forget this, I had a 33-year-old male come to the emergency room that was a serious asthmatic. We cleared his asthma. The man went home. We told him if anything happens come straight to the emergency room. He insisted on going home. His asthma reoccurred. He rushed to a fire department, but they didn't have the equipment he needed to treat him. He rushed to a doctor's office. They didn't have the equipment to treat him. That 33-year-old man died. He was my patient. This city is in an asthma corridor. You don't have time for a nurse to get back and forth between buildings. If you have a child with serious asthma, you can train somebody to give epinephrine injections, but that can't be your nursing strategy. If it is, then you're going to be liable if someone does the wrong thing or they don't do it in a timely fashion. A little child is the one who is going to suffer the most. This current structure for nursing is unacceptable. I you say it is, I want to see the doctor that was consulted to put together this nursing strategy given the conditions in this town. You have an asthma corridor. You have a severe diabetes corridor. You have a kidney stone corridor in this area. This budget does not address any of that. I'm saying it publicly because I want it fixed. If you don't do anything to fix it, then you're liable because you know about it. I'm not going to let a child die helpless in front of us because we wanted to cut a budget that the state is supposed to fund us on. We spent \$1 million for that consultant to come in, my good friend Dr. Librera. Was it \$500,000? I don't remember what it was. Whatever it was, he was paid handsomely. I wouldn't give him that and he knows that. He was paid handsomely. We're now turning around and deviating from the plan that we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop. The ratios are not what we agreed to. We're deviating away from the plan that we paid. That's money that's thrown out the window. The real cost is the services to the students. That's the people who are the last ones to be considered here because we've got to cut the budget. I won't even get into the SACs because we've been doing that for years. Let me get to the attendance.

We cut our attendance officers. I know that the state is no longer officially taking money away from us because of attendance, but we still have a number of students whose attendance is in question. I'm not quite sure those students failed to graduate even though they missed up to 50 days of classroom time. They're not failing to get promoted. Our policy says they're supposed to. You can tell me about our wonderful credit recovery programs, but they don't equal 50 days of classroom instruction and homework. It's kind of hard to make that up. So the educational product that we're putting together is being severely diminished. When do we start our pre-engineering program for our students? We don't. We can't afford to do that. 3.5 miles down the road Glenrock has been doing it for five years already. We're competing with Glenrock's children. We're competing with them but we're not going to have the same tools. As I think I mentioned once before, what we have instead is culinary arts. Our kids will be cooking the meals for those engineers that they graduate. I don't know how many parents sent their kids to cook meals for somebody else's child, but I wouldn't send mine to do that. That's what's happening because of these cuts. Let's take a look at the high school graduation rates. We've achieved graduation rates of 76% or thereabouts. That's a wonderful number until you drill down and look very closely at what's happening. Of the 13 high school level academies, only five of those schools have 50% of their students passing the HSPA. Meaning, only five schools have half of the students pass HSPA in order to graduate. They had to go an alternative route. Only three of 13 had 60% of their students passing the HSPA. Only one of 13 had 75% of their students pass the HSPA. All of those things have to be fixed. You're going to need curriculum because by its very nature the Common Core says we have to teach kids how to master the material, not just learn it. That's going to cost more money. When you're laying off 83 people in the administration, people who can provide professional development and curriculum instruction, you're laying them off. They're support staff for the people in the school. Now you're turning around on the front end and you're cutting the stipends to the teachers who are going to supposedly write this curriculum. I don't see how we respond to those PARCC scores. By the way, even though they say they were baseline, they say our students are performing at one third the level of everybody else in the state. You have to devote time, effort, and money to fixing that because that's the only reason why we're here. We're not here to provide jobs for teachers. We're not here to keep the lights on. We're not here to make sure our budgets are balanced. We are here to educate kids and we are cutting the tools that we need to do just that. I want to commend Comm. Mimms on her remarks about being able to assess programs. That's what the compendium was supposed to do six years ago. That was the purpose, so that when we got to this point we would be able to look at programs and say, is this cost-effective? Is Program A more important than Program B? Is it more beneficial than Program B? Can we do without Program B and Program C? We can make wise decisions and, by the way, provide more effective instruction. This Board cannot tell you what programs are being run or what programs are being useful. What context do we have? We can't tell you that. This doesn't show us that. We don't know. This is my frustration. Our kids have to be our primary reason for being here, not what some Commissioner of Education decides. That's not what's happening. This document proves that. Our kids spend four years between preschool and third grade and they're tested in year three. We have not had 65% of our students able to read on grade level in third grade. Four and a half years of school. We're going to need brand new strategies to do that, to fix that problem. If you can't fix the problem of reading at an early level you're not going to do it when they get to eighth grade, let alone high school. You can't teach them how to read to learn if they can't learn to read. You can't ask them to get to the level of mastery. You're going to have to devote some funds to doing that beyond what we're doing right now. We already know that. We've already started that and you're cutting the money that you have to do it. If you haven't done it now with the existing funding, how in the world are you going to do it with \$45

million less? Tell me this is a thorough and efficient education that you're providing. I must go out there, look them in the face, and say you've received a thorough and efficient education. That's a lie. I can't even get them to graduate the right way. So this whole thing is a travesty. This is a joke. This is an absolute joke. I'm sorry. It is. While we're sitting here talking about cutting this and moving that what we really have to talk about is how do we enhance the educational foundations that we bring to these children and how we build that structure up. What kinds of resources do we need to put there over and above what we have now? So to ask me to come here and say do I need four less police officers, or less transportation, or the lights turned off in this building, or three or four fewer substitutes is a joke. It doesn't address the real need. I understand at some level we must have a balanced budget. I agree to that. But the bottom line is you've got to show me where what you're putting together will effectively increase where our kids are tomorrow from where they are today. You're not going to do that with \$45 million less. You just can't show it to me. As to the legal fees, let me just say, Dr. Evans, you have not been here. Dr. Atallo has left. Your Deputy Superintendent sitting right next to you can tell you we wrestled with those legal fees and they cost this district an astronomical amount of money. It was a major battle. You can't control when somebody needs legal information. You can't dictate that. If you don't give it to them and they act without it, you put this district in jeopardy. The outside people don't have any incentive to keep the numbers down. If you call them, the clock starts ticking. We ran into millions with it. We couldn't control it. Even though we didn't have any power we had to fight to get them to go back to the system where you had an in-house counsel to stabilize the bill. I'm going to stop there. I have more particular questions to address. I covered the librarians, which we don't have. I covered most of that. These are support services. One more thing is the contraction of the sport teams. You removed the nurses. You removed the SACs. You removed the guidance counselors. You're cutting the after-school and before school programs. You're taking all that away. You're moving all the substitute teachers. Then you're going to put those kids out in the street. You're putting them put on the street with no supports. If that's a plan for education, I'm sorry. These are real terms. These are real issues. This is looking at what you put here in the budget and I didn't get very far. The whole purpose is driving the education and the academic performance of our students. We are already subpar. What I need to know is what it's going to take financially to fix that problem. That's the budget that I need to have from you. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Comm. Irving: Let me take an opportunity to address a few things in the budget with regards to the athletic program in particular. I had a very good conversation with the coaches from both high school teams because I wanted to learn from them what the impact would be to the team sports in particular. They did indicate that while in years past the enrollment had been low on both football teams in particular that the coaches are working diligently to try to get them up. That led me to the conversation about basketball. Truth be told, basketball is probably the most competitive sport that we have. Then when you drill down and look at the individual sports they're absolutely low. We barely have enough folks for golf and tennis. As a matter of fact, we eliminated tennis from one of the schools. We barely have kids for track and field. I'm wondering is it possible for us to consider a consolidation of the individual sports and looking at the costs associated with that being that there aren't enough kids to field both programs to begin with and leave the team sports alone. The team sports seem to have the kids necessary. My hope would be if you're able to merge individual sports that you can bring back and add in because of the cost benefit associated with the merging of certain athletic programs other drivers such as swimming or more opportunities to offer kids that we're not offering now. What we're doing right now is essentially cutting the sports programs. At Eastside we cut three sports programs last year as a result of under-enrollment and not being able to field those sports. That's something that I want the

business office to consider and look as we're discussing it. As opposed to the difference in costs between a full merger as opposed to looking at basketball and football and individual sports and what the cost of that may be. The other thing I did identify when I was looking at the budget was I just want to be sure exactly what the reduction in transportation is. Exactly what will the costs savings be? I'll sit down with you all. We have finance this week.

Ms. Ayala: We have finance on Thursday.

Comm. Irving: I'll ask that specifically. Even though we're reducing the line item from what we spend this year to next year, where do we see the savings? I'm asking that because I know we're hiring additional staff and new software. I'm just trying to understand what the balance is between the two. If we can, I want to bring this part to a close because there is a document that Dr. Evans wants to share with the Board that he's asking for a presentation from Mr. Best on.

Comm. Rivera: I want to put in a request before tomorrow's meeting. I want to see the security contract that we currently have in place. I want to know how much we paid them last year. I also want to see what our cost is for off-duty police based on last year's numbers. I also want to see the in-house security. I also want to point out that we have to start somehow being proactive in this district because we have to learn from our mistakes. Last year the transportation cost was driven up tremendously because those bids went out late. Those things have to go out ASAP. The longer we wait, the higher the prices will be. We have taken a lot of actions to try to reduce the cost there. We are not going to see those initiatives come to fruition if we don't make sure that we do things in a timely manner. Also, I want to point out if we don't take action here or at least recommend if the administration is willing to hear us, I would not trust leaving the state. The state is not cutting. They already told this administration that they want to raise the tax levy \$10 million. I'm assuming this happened because the Superintendent works for the state, not for the Board. Right now we still have to cut \$5 million. If we leave it the way it is right now up to the state to do what they want to do, we know the Governor is not going to give us \$5 million. What's going to end up happening is the district is automatically going to increase the taxpayers of this city \$5 million in the tax levy. I was put here and I'm going to keep my efforts up. I'm going to look for places to cut without cutting instruction. The two places I'm going to look for now are transportation and security. We cannot just sit back and allow the state to impose a tax levy on this city without any of us here on this Board taking any action. We cannot. That is not the right thing to do. Thank you.

Comm. Mimms: Just to add to what Comm. Irving said about the athletic programs, with the additional information that he's requesting if we're going to look at that as a recommendation I would like to see over the last three years what those teams are, whatever they are. I want to see what costs were associated with having that. And I would like to see the enrollment, whether it's 2 people, 10 people, or 15 people. We have to make sure that when we measure it that it's a smart and attainable measurement and we're not just saying it off the top of our head. We have to have statistics that match that. While you're doing that, I'm going to look up statistics and how extracurricular activities help a child to progress. That's important. I'm not really concerned that three people are on the team or signed up. If three people signed up that helps with their academic progression. If we're going to look at other alternatives, as Comm. Irving said, I want to see those numbers and I'm going to bring back the stats to match. That's why I have an issue with cutting. If we cut now, when it comes time when we say we want to bring it back we're going to have an issue. I have an issue with cutting or consolidating or combining anything without having definitive facts or

numbers to validate it, especially when our test scores are low. I would like to see that and when we present it I'll make sure I have some statistics because I want to show how extracurricular activities play a part in the academics of our children.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Ms. Ayala. I'm going to ask Mr. Best to come to the microphone. As he does so, I want to share with you all a conversation that I had with the Commissioner's office last week. I invited Dr. Hodges to join Comm. Cleaves and myself on a conversation with the Commissioner. The budget was the conversation, but the specific was the recommended tax levy. A few things became very clear in the course of that conversation. The first was that Bob Davis was emphatic about the fact that there was no additional funding that would be coming to this district. He referenced the slide that the BA has based on the argument that because the city has increased the municipal level by almost 300% in essence shame on us as a school system for not meeting that and following that same demand internally. I had to remind the Commissioner and the County Superintendent very quickly that it's not this Board who didn't raise the tax levy over the last 15 years. They decided not to as a state-operated school system. So to hand the district local control in finance the first thing we want you to do is raise taxes. To me, it's not even a fruitful policy to engage in given the fact that this Board needs time to get a transition plan, but also to press the district to put together a comprehensive economic strategy to move forward. I will say personally there is and should be a conversation regarding our community's commitment to our children financially moving forward. But that's a conversation we should have and plan for between the municipal body, the county, and the Board of Education. To drop a \$5 million tax levy this year and say that's going to fix our problems doesn't help us. To me it's also shortsighted. As opposed to us sitting down with the council and saying long-term what's the state's commitment to this district for funding, but also, what's the city's commitment as well. I think that's a fair conversation to have on both ends. That leads me to the point for tomorrow night.

Comm. Hodges: There were two things. You did ask, why didn't previous superintendents raise the taxes, if that was so terribly important to the Commissioner, and he didn't want to discuss that. The reason Mr. Irving invited me was because I had a spirited conversation with the County Superintendent the weekend before in order to get the budget released. That's when he announced this whole issue around the taxes. I called the President and alerted him as to what the thinking was. In that conversation with the Commissioner and Mr. Davis who was also there we asked him if we have to raise taxes now, what happens next year? Are we going to have to raise the taxes \$48 million because it's flat funded? He didn't want to discuss that. We said if you had fully funded the formula appropriately we wouldn't be in this situation. He didn't want to discuss that. In fact, he said this is the money that the legislature gave us. We all know the legislature doesn't assign budgets. The administration does. But most importantly, and this is the point that I really want you to hear, the Commissioner said we've given you a thorough and efficient budget and how the Board balances that budget is up to you. What they're doing is putting it on this Board to cut the budget which they're calling thorough and efficient and which they know is not thorough and efficient. When you balance the budget they're going to say the Board of Education of Paterson made those cuts, not the Department of Education. Keep that in mind. The Commissioner is a lawyer. He does not use language frivolously.

Comm. Irving: That brings me to tomorrow night. We're meeting with the City Council. I know we've asked Dr. Evans to do a very similar presentation with the City Council to engage in a conversation. To be very frank with you, the Council members are only concerned about the tax levy. While I think some of them care about the quality of education, the overarching goal for them is to try to convince the Superintendent and

this Board to argue a reduction in the tax levy. I think that's still one that we have to continue to take a firm stance against. I made it clear to the Superintendent that I personally cannot and will not support this budget with an increase in taxes. In addition, I made it very clear to the Commissioner as well. My hope and intention tomorrow night is so that Dr. Evans, which is a gentleman who lives in this community and knows how blighted this community is, will go back to the Commissioner and say we've got to sit down together and come up with a plan for how effectively to do this. The posture that I am taking as the President of this Board is saying that we can't do it this year for sure and if the Commissioner wants to discuss and talk about increasing the local municipal levy, let's do that. But let's do that in a fashion that is logical, sequential, and progressive over a period of time. As Dr. Hodges illuminated, if it's \$5 million this year, do we just jump to \$10 million? That's not the way, given Paterson's financial situation, we can operate. Dr. Evans, you live in this town and you drive around and see the homes around your neighborhood, which is supposed to be the good part of town, boarded up and foreclosed. It's real. I told Bob Davis, "Bob, you drive into this town every single day and you see in that third and fifth wards how many homes are abandoned." This isn't as easy as just saying, "The city hasn't done their fair share. Impose \$5 million on them." I know the flip side is if we don't do the \$5 million we have to find \$5 million from somewhere else. I hope our conversation tomorrow night will help illuminate that and ensure that you have enough to chew upon when you go back to the Commissioner. The Commissioner instructed me that he, you, and myself need to follow up after the City Council for a conversation for how to move this forward. He doesn't live here and Bob Davis doesn't live here. Neither do they have to deal with the fact that there are people who honest to god can't afford their homes. There's nothing more real than that. People just can't afford to stay in this town. I think we have to be considerate of that even still knowing that the state has not done their fair share.

Comm. Hodges: The issue is not this year's budget. You have to understand that. What is the plan if you already have an audit which shows you a \$186 million deficit in 2018-2019? What are you going to cut next year and the year after that? The Commissioners has to be made to tell you what's going to be long-range approach because you can't savage this district. That's why you have to push back. If you agree to it now, you can't go back next year. He'll cut some more. What is your long-range approach? He has to at least tell you that, and he won't do it.

Comm. Mimms: One of the recommendations I previously mentioned in the beginning of the year is that we need to do a three to five-year financial plan for the district. We have a five-year plan for facilities, but I think it would really be proactive and would do due diligence for our district if we put together a plan. We're already stating that we forecast that next year it's going to be worse. For seven years we've been underfunded and every year with the issues and concerns in the district and all the cuts and layoffs from last year and all the different things that happened thus far without us having any trajectory to show what we're trending towards, what we need to fix, allocate, to fight for it gives us a hard stand when we're trying to present our case, not just in the district but to the state or to anyone that we're searching to get some response or to provide resources for the district. I just think that the recommendation of doing a three-year, five-year, or ten-year plan, we need to do a financial management strategy plan on what it will look like with healthcare costs, salaries, tax levy and all those different items so when it comes to making presentations we're not scrambling at the last minute with a cushion budget where we have some realities and some things that may be approximations or estimates. At least we have something in our hand that we can work towards. I think that we need to move towards that if we're going to be effective as a district, especially when it comes to financing and making sure that we do supply a thorough and efficient education to our children.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Mimms, I agree completely.

Comm. Kerr: I do agree with the general sentiments that are being made here tonight. This is about demand and supply. We look in this district and the demand on the system way outstrips the ability to supply all of the needs of this district. I think one piece that the Commissioner is missing is that Paterson is like a sanctuary city. Everybody comes to Paterson and it creates an extreme burden on the system. We've been getting transitional aid from the state. Why are we getting transitional aid from the state? Simply because they believe that we do not have the capacity to raise enough money to take care of our budget. That's the reason why they have given us the transitional aid. We have the same 24,000 homeowners paying the taxes. We do not have any new revenue streams coming into the city. If you insert another \$5 million in our budget it will further aggravate our present situation. You'll find people leaving our city. I would make sure that the state, whatever we do, they get the message that this is not something that we can subscribe to right now, until our fiscal situation improves, and I just don't see when this will be, unless there's a move to re-gentrify Paterson. They want to get us all out of here. It's not a practical thing to tax the few people who really pay property taxes in this city for another \$5 million. They need to fund the formula as is required. Give us the money and we will do whatever you want us to do, but we just cannot. It's totally impossible for us to deliver the kind of education that they want us to give to our kids with the limited amount of resources. My thing tomorrow night, I cannot support that \$5 million increase on our budget. I think the message must be sent back to the state that we are already receiving transitional aid from the state and there's a reason for that. They cannot be giving us transitional aid with one hand and taking it back with another hand. That does not work. I just want to make it clear that this is my position now. I can't support that \$5 million tax increase.

APPROVE RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE STATE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING G.M. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEW JERSEY ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

Comm. Irving: Mr. Best, you called me today and said there was a follow-up to the Board meeting. Do you remember a month back three of us had to recuse ourselves because there was the hearing for the parent? We by law have to issue a formal response to the parent within a particular window. Mr. Best, in lieu of presenting it at the next Board meeting, wanted to present to the Board this evening.

Mr. T.J. Best: Essentially, it's not law, but it's best practice that you respond within 45 days of the actual hearing. The hearing took place on February 29. At the time, I think there was a consensus to move forward or at least have a resolution prepared that you would uphold the Superintendent's and the Board's initial ruling. There is a resolution in front of you tonight to essentially affirm your original resolution of upholding the results of that bullying investigation, which was unfounded. We have to just mail out a letter to the parent letting her know of the Board resolution.

Comm. Irving: Do we have a copy of the resolution?

Mr. Best: I thought you did.

Comm. Irving: Just to be sure, because I couldn't be there, the Board did make a decision to uphold the HIB. This is just a formal letter to the parent saying that we are upholding the HIB.

Mr. Best: The original Board action that is in the regular monthly report that I present to the Board said that there wasn't bullying found. We sent a notification to the parent as we send to all the parents letting them know that there was no bullying. The parent then appealed that decision. We had a Board hearing and executive session and then the Board directed me to prepare a resolution, which you have before you today, upholding your original findings.

Comm. Irving: Okay.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and the State District Superintendent support N.J.S.A.18A:37-et. Seq. by prohibiting acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of our students grades pre-k through 12; and

WHEREAS, Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB) means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A.18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents; and

WHEREAS, the law requires a thorough and complete investigation to be conducted for each report of an alleged incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and

WHEREAS, the chief school administrator is required to report the results of each HIB investigation to the Board of Education for review and approval of any consequences imposed under the student code of conduct, intervention services provided, counseling ordered, training established or other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator; and

WHEREAS, the Board is required to issue a written decision affirming, rejecting, or modifying the chief school administrator's decisions and recommendations at the regularly scheduled Board meeting following its receipt of the report or following a hearing in executive session; and

WHEREAS, the parent of G.M. requested and was given a HIB hearing in executive session before the Board on February 29th regarding the chief school administrator's findings; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, after reviewing the chief school administrator's HIB report and conducting a HIB hearing with the parent of G.M., affirms the chief school administrator's decisions and recommendations regarding G.M. in accordance with the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

It was moved by Comm. Simmons, seconded by Comm. Mimms that the Resolution be adopted.

Comm. Hodges: I'm going to write a policy change. This Board should not be given information at this desk to vote on unless you take time so that you can thoroughly read what's in front of you. This is happening time and time again and it does a disservice. We're on the brink of getting local control. This is not what's supposed to happen. The administration, whose part of that job is to build the capacity to function, understands that. This can't continue to be done this way and this is not the first time. I'm not trying to pick on Mr. Best, but this is not a practice that we should accept. Tonight we can move forward. It's one page. But this continues. You can't have resolutions put in front

of the Board and ask us to vote on it before we have had a chance to read it, digest, and ask any questions.

On roll call all members voted as follows:

Comm. Hodges: No.

Comm. Kerr: Yes.

Comm. Mimms: Abstain.

Comm. Redmon: Yes.

Comm. Rivera: Yes.

Comm. Simmons: Abstain.

Comm. Irving: Abstain.

The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. Irving: Just to be clear of where we are and where we're headed, tomorrow night at the City Council at 7:00. I did speak with Councilman McCoy today. He and I are on the same page as far as running the meeting. We will do our best to make sure that we dovetail back and forth and each body gets heard. I will ask and underscore what Comm. Kerr is doing this week. If there are additional questions and comments on the budget, Board members are able to get the clarity so that we can accept whatever recommendations we need for next Tuesday.

Comm. Kerr: Will we be discussing the budget or just the levy?

Comm. Irving: I think we're going to do the full budget PowerPoint presentation, the modified version, but I assume the levy will come up for sure.

Comm. Kerr: I thought the conversation would be kind of limited to the levy, not the nuts and bolts of this.

Comm. Irving: Tell me what you would like.

Comm. Kerr: It's a joint meeting with them. Our contention is the levy.

Comm. Irving: That's correct.

Comm. Kerr: I'm going there to discuss the levy. Support us with this because we need to show a unified front in terms of our pushback on the state regarding the levy.

Comm. Irving: But I think that can't be done without a holistic look.

Comm. Kerr: You're going to present, but I don't think they're going to ask us about transportation and we're going to tell them about the PARCC and all that kind of stuff.

Comm. Irving: I agree with you. That's fair.

Comm. Hodges: Are we going to have the good offices of the County Superintendent of Schools who will present his detailed outline of how we haven't paid taxes, except for once? I'd love to have him there, Dr. Evans. Can we anticipate him being there to give us a little outline? He did a wonderful job.

Comm. Irving: It's funny. I will send an invitation to him tomorrow if you want.

Comm. Hodges: I'd love to see him come and present his thoughts which he put down on paper rather nicely. Dr. Evans, do you plan to perform that role for him?

Comm. Kerr: You know better than that.

Dr. Evans: I'll send you a copy of my presentation tomorrow. I'm still working on it.

Comm. Irving: Fantastic.

Comm. Hodges: That doesn't answer my question.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.