

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

February 25, 2014 – 6:48 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Present:

Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent
Ms. Eileen Shafer, Deputy Superintendent

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves, Vice President
*Comm. Wendy Guzman
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Errol Kerr

Comm. Manuel Martinez
*Comm. Alex Mendez
Comm. Kenneth Simmons
Comm. Corey Teague

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

Comm. Martinez read the Open Public Meetings Act:

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

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

**Special Meeting
February 25, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
Administrative Offices
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

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

Comm. Irving: I want to welcome everyone here this evening. I do want to preface folks who have come here for the public that the discussions before we get to the public comments are going to be a little while, probably about an hour or an hour and a half at minimum. If that's okay and if during the midst of that folks from the public want to speak we can certainly stop our conversation, pick up public comments and come back. If not, we're going to proceed and move forward.

*Comm. Guzman enters the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Comm. Irving: Let's begin with the Discussion of Board Goals and Priorities for the 2014-2015 School Year Budget. Let me just set the stage and then we can open the

conversation and the dialogue. At the last meeting, Dr. Hodges brought up the point that within the budget there should be specific initiatives that the Board has initiated and/or the Board should have its say when initiatives go in as opposed to the ones that may come out given the fiscal nature of where we are. With that said, we caused notice of this meeting to discuss any specific Board priorities for programs, services, and/or initiatives that we think should be in the budget. With that said, I'm going to ask each Board member who has them to share and give some information and if there are colleagues who want to give some feedback and/or ask questions to indeed do so. Once we have our combination of all the suggestions, I would like us to narrow it down to about three or four specific initiatives to make recommendations and to forward them to the Superintendent. So when we get to that process we will do so. I'm hoping that we can have this discussion or dialogue over the course of the next hour and then after that be able to narrow it down and make some decisions. From there I believe Mr. Kilpatrick is going to do a presentation on the 2014-2015 budget. Am I correct?

Mr. Richard Kilpatrick: Very small.

Comm. Irving: Okay. I didn't know you were. I wasn't expecting you to do it tonight.

Mr. Kilpatrick: We will reemphasize a lot of what we went over.

Comm. Irving: I don't think you need to do that.

Mr. Kilpatrick: Not everyone was here.

Comm. Irving: Point well taken.

Mr. Kilpatrick: It won't be very long.

Comm. Irving: Rich, how about we start with your presentation first then?

PRESENTATION OF THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Mr. Kilpatrick: I'm going to start here, but we're going to have to go over there. Basically, this is a snapshot of our year-end appropriation projections that we have. As you can see, in the bottom right corner we're projecting approximately a \$10 million operating surplus in the current year. That is only a projection. There are a lot of different factors that are going to go into play on how that number changes even in the budget process and some of the things we can't really talk about yet until we get more facts. I wanted to show that only because that's a number that Dr. Evans did an action last week and will be doing another action in the next day or two, freezing staff last week and freezing the current budgets now, allowing only the current things that normally operate through the end of the year like field trips, health and safety issues, and things that have been absolutely on the planning stages maybe in facilities, etc. But we're basically trying to boost that \$10 million up. That's what we will do with freezing and ceasing all purchasing moving forward. Can you go down further now? If you remember, a budgeted revenue stream for the last several years, fiscal year 2013-2014, you see we had to use \$42 million to come up with a balanced budget. Presuming that we have a flat revenue stream, which the revenue numbers are going to be delivered to us tomorrow or the day after, probably tomorrow, the Governor has announced increased overall state revenues. He said that last year too and it meant a little bit of a cut for us. I'm hoping that it will be a flat rate for us. Based upon enrollments, it could be a cut and that's what I'm a little worried about. But based upon this if we target a number of our non-salaries and salary we should be able to be

balancing our budget in a relatively painless fashion. The key though is how much surplus we can develop and use more for future years so that we're in a comfort zone in fiscal year 2016-2017 budgets. At the end, here is what we're using as our template for where our budget is planning to go. Based upon the expectations in salaries if we can keep salaries in the same neighborhood and we reduce our Fund 11 non-salary accounts, we won't have to be generating too much surplus in order to balance the budget. I will let you know that our charter school number at \$31.1 million is planning to go up, but we did receive notice that one of the two schools that was scheduled to open has decided to take a planning year, which is a good thing for us. Hopefully the other school isn't opening or hasn't decided yet and then the student account numbers for the other charter schools won't be as high either. So that number will hopefully maintain and not go up as drastically as it did from 2013 to 2014. That's the model that we're using. The goal is to try to create now as much surplus as we can for the further years that will help us pass through and not use them next year. Are there any questions?

*Comm. Mendez enters the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Comm. Kerr: Mr. Kilpatrick, is there any difference between what you're presenting tonight as against what you have presented before?

Mr. Kilpatrick: No.

Comm. Kerr: So none of the arguments that we have made regarding the budget were taken into consideration?

Mr. Kilpatrick: Well, the budget is not prepared yet. So, I don't think you can say we haven't taken them into consideration yet.

Comm. Kerr: Okay.

Comm. Irving: Any other questions? I have one.

Comm. Kerr: Please. I know that from what you have said we have not received the numbers from the state. So we are predicating our calculations based on some numbers that we are not quite sure about.

Mr. Kilpatrick: Correct.

Comm. Kerr: I know we had some discussion regarding the \$102 million as against the \$125 million that was originally projected for non-salaries. We are still looking at that model.

Mr. Kilpatrick: We are in the midst of coming up with the right balance for our needs that we have next year in comparison to what budget managers have presented for their needs. Part of the feedback that we're receiving tonight will be used in moving forward exactly aligning those priorities.

Comm. Kerr: So will we be accepting a number from the state less than what we got last year?

Mr. Kilpatrick: We can only move forward a budget in reference to revenue numbers that they apply to us.

Comm. Kerr: And we are not making any new recommendation to them saying I know this is what you're presenting, but these are our needs?

Mr. Kilpatrick: At this time there's not a mechanism to do that formally. But I don't see why we can't move forward in the budget that we present and communicate to the county office that this is our budget and/or we want more than that.

Comm. Kerr: That's what I want to see. I would like for us to present a budget, whether they accept it or not, that is reflective of the needs of Paterson. Let them give us less. But we should not be presenting a budget that we know is definitely from the outset not adequate enough to address the educational needs of our district. That's the position I believe we should be taking. Let them say, "I cannot fund you at that level."

Mr. Kilpatrick: I understand that.

Comm. Kerr: But we should not unilaterally cut our budget because we want to fit into their numbers.

Mr. Kilpatrick: I totally understand that. Statutorily I am required to prepare a budget that's balanced based upon the numbers that are fed to us from the state. So professionally if I do not do that personally I'm putting my professional designation at risk for that. I'm not saying that we can't pursue avenues to communicate that and to pursue that with the state. I'm just saying my first goal is to prepare that balanced budget because that's my responsibility.

Comm. Kerr: I have a different understanding of balance. I understand what you're saying, but as far as balancing goes as far as I'm concerned we have a thorough and efficient level of education in our district and if we're not reaching the T&E then we cannot balance the budget. If we do so, we're doing it at the expense of the kids in this district and that's what balance is to me, not the artificial number that you're getting from the state.

Mr. Kilpatrick: I understand that, but be careful because when you do that what you're then opening yourselves up to is the state coming in and looking at every expenditure you make to make that judgment about thorough & efficient education.

Comm. Kerr: But we are not wasting anything here, so let them come.

Dr. Evans: There's another dimension here and that involves me and direction I've received to reduce the budget, to make sure that expenses don't exceed revenues. That's what cliff planning in a major way is about, to make sure that happens. I understand the Board's position. I understand exactly what you're saying.

Comm. Irving: Just to clarify, not the Board's position, but Board members' position. The Board has not made a position.

Dr. Evans: Okay, but that information has already come down to me.

Comm. Hodges: The reason Mr. Kerr is having so much trouble is we understood what the Abbott decision said and what the school funding responsibilities were. When this Governor tried to cut that funding he was told by the Supreme Court that he could not do that. He's choosing to underfund the Supreme Court's requirement through the School Funding Formula. So we're now being told to join with him to work to our

detriment because that's what he wants to do, as opposed to what the Supreme Court has said. That's what Mr. Kerr's problem is and certainly what my problem is.

Dr. Evans: Again, I understand that completely. I really do. Just know that I have an obligation to submit a balanced budget.

Comm. Kerr: So what's the purpose? Why are we here talking about this if the numbers are set in stone and you're working within those borders and we can't make any adjustments? Why are we even wasting time talking about it? That's what I'm hearing from you, Dr. Evans. They gave us these numbers and no matter what they have to fit so let's go on. That's what I'm hearing.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Kerr, do you mind if I just interject for a second? I hear you, but I think the reason why we're here is in the midst of that decisions have to be made as far as what our priorities for this district are and what our priorities are for this Board. As they make necessary recommendations for the cuts and decisions that need to be made they need to factor in the Board's priorities as part of that in that conversation. I will say if we have this conversation and if none of the Board's priorities make it into the budget, then I'm pissed off and then I'd have a problem. But I think that given what we have the understanding I had with the Superintendent during the last conversation we had here was that the Board would bring forth its recommendations and the Superintendent would have to leverage those recommendations and needs with other current recommendations and needs. In my opinion, ours should trump anyone else's, but we have to also make sure that we're still maintaining the high level of student success we need. So I think that is indeed the case, but we still have to do our due diligence and say what we want in it. If it doesn't end up in it, that's an even greater conversation to take up with the Superintendent and potentially with the state.

Comm. Kerr: We have to also understand that certain parts of your budget are fixed. What is the percentage of our budget that is fixed and we can't do anything to it?

Mr. Kilpatrick: Somewhat fixed. There are tuition costs, utility costs. Utilities are not a fixed cost, but it's definitely something that you're not going to be able to change. You have to project out what you expect utility costs are and you're going to have them. You can't reduce utility costs because the buildings are going to need electricity. Different things like that, tuition costs and utility costs. Some of our staff costs are basically fixed costs because they are programs that you have to have.

Comm. Kerr: Our priorities might be hovering somewhere in about 10% of the budget, if that much. We have a serious problem unless we can push back on the lines that are artificially created for us. We can argue and we can present a whole lot of stuff tonight, but how those things will fit is the million dollar question.

Comm. Irving: I hear you, but I think – and I hope Dr. Hodges agrees with me – that's for the administration to figure out. Our job is to propose what we want to see in that budget and given the recommendations they have from this Board and the state, he and the BA have got to figure out a way how to make that work in light of everything that we have going on.

DISCUSSION OF BOARD GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET

Comm. Mendez: I think that we have to face the reality coming. The state is in control and they want to see a balanced budget. That's the number that they're giving us. Dr.

Evans is tied to that and he has to present that. That's the order that he has. From the Board's perspective what I really want to see is how we use the money wisely because I see that we're spending a lot of funds in different professional development and things that we have to go and review because I don't think we're getting the results. I know our test scores have been up, but the money that we're spending in all that professional development and implementations we have to look into that. We have to look deep into every single penny that we spend. We have to keep in mind that we're spending close to \$19,000 per student in the Paterson School District, if I'm not mistaken. Close to \$19,000 per student. Let's check other districts and how much other cities are spending. That's a reality that we have to face. And their numbers are way better than our numbers. That's something that they have over there and when they see that we're spending \$19,000 per student we have to review ourselves. I want to talk a little bit about the demographic that we have in the school district. This is going to help us and we're talking about using our money effectively and implementing things that really might work for the school district. If we look at demographics the Latino population in the school district is a little bit more than 40%, if I'm not mistaken.

Dr. Evans: The student population?

Comm. Mendez: The student population.

Dr. Evans: It's 62%.

Comm. Irving: More than that.

Comm. Mendez: I'm sorry, 62%. Dr. Evans, we have 62% in Paterson Public Schools and most of those families are very low-income families. In those families the father and mother both have to go to work to put food on the table. Most of those families are not English-speaking. What I really want to see here in this district is an effective after-school program that really helps our kids in terms of homework - an effective after-school program. Not babysitting, because we don't need people to take care of our kids after school. I think that's what we have over here. We have people babysitting kids. We don't need that. We need effective after-school programs that help our kids with math and homework. When those kids go home they don't have any help. Mom and dad don't speak English and those that speak English sometimes don't have the knowledge to help their kids with homework. That's the reality that we're facing. I see that and I know because I see that every single day. My advice to those parents is that they have to set up the learning environment in the house, but they don't have the ability to help them. So we have to focus on that. We have to check the after-school programs that we're implementing in the district now. We have to review them and what is not working we have to take out, but we have to invest in that. We have a lot of teachers looking for work. We have to put effective after-school programs in all the different elementary schools. You will see how we will go all the way up with our test scores because our kids will be ready the next day with the homework, the job, and they will understand the work that they have to do. But we're not doing that over here and with the money that we're spending we could do that.

Comm. Irving: I think Comm. Mendez has transitioned us into the conversation about Board priorities. That's one.

Comm. Kerr: I just want to make a point. You mentioned that we are spending about \$19,000 per student. One of the salient facts that we need to remember in all of this is that we have a very large special needs segment in our student population here. Because of the special needs of our kids it carries a very large price tag. So if our cost

per student even seems inflated it's inflated because you look at some of the buildings that we have, the environment that we have, and the special needs of the students we have. If we're going to say we have to balance it out oranges to oranges and apples to apples that's the reality that we face. We have to take that into consideration. The field is not level for everyone.

Comm. Irving: Thank you. Let's continue this conversation. Comm. Mendez spoke to the need for after-school programs. I'm just trying to make sure I document what you're saying, the need for stronger after-school programs with a concentration of math and language. Are there any other recommendations or suggestions from Board members?

Comm. Teague: Piggybacking off Comm. Kerr, it's just to make sure that none of the services to the special needs students are cut in any way. In many cases I think that some of the schools need to increase the services that they are providing to the students. I think a lot of them have the potential of doing a lot more than what they're doing now. My daughter is in a special needs class and the work that she does is almost regular student. It really doesn't even seem like special education anymore. I'm actually going to take her to the early childhood department soon to see if we can get her reevaluated because she has grown by being in that program. I think that if we had more teachers like the one she has who can push the students more and give them more rigorous curriculum and try to increase the work that they're doing. I think a lot of those students just need to be pushed a little more. So hopefully if we can make sure that there are no cuts at all to any of the special needs programs and maybe if they can increase some of the training or whatever needs to be done to make sure that the children in those particular classes can be pushed a little more. Maybe we might be able to see a turnaround where we won't have so many children in that particular category or in that classification.

Comm. Irving: Fair enough.

Comm. Simmons: I have two things. First, regarding the STAR assessment, I know that last year when we spoke about it we spoke about making sure that we implement the entire program with the interventions. I know that some schools were using it, but for me I wanted to make sure that all schools use it. I don't know if that's going to require more training for teachers. I'd like to see us be more proactive with that instead of reactive. So instead of summer school being the option, I would prefer that there is no summer school and we can avoid it. I'm sure that we'll have some students, but not as many. I think we had something like 2,000 or so students in summer school. I would definitely love to see that number drop dramatically and I think we can do that as long as we have the intervention pieces in place and we make sure that the teachers are using the intervention pieces. Secondly, it kind of piggybacks on what Comm. Mendez said with the after-school program. I know that we have to do more with family and community engagement, but something I think we used to have was a parent university or something like that that focuses on...

Comm. Irving: We still do.

Comm. Simmons: That piece that focuses on helping students with studying. I know even for me when my son comes home with math homework, although I know it, it's taught differently than the way I learned it, which sometimes causes a conflict. So I may say, "This is the way you need to do it," and although we may get the same answer, my son will tell me, "I can't do it that way." So I'd like to see the district become more proactive with helping parents to understand and helping them with that study piece and being able to help with the homework. Lastly, I know Dr. Hodges is going to love this,

last week we talked about technology in the district and teaching kids programming at an early age. One of the things that I've done with my own children is either in November or December there is a group called Code.org and in December there's like a challenge and there's an hour of code. Students would go online and it actually teaches them how to program. It teaches critical thinking. But in the end it actually teaches them and at the end of my son's hour of coding, it's a game, but he can actually write a program that would get the player from one end of the board to the next and maybe go through some obstacles, making decisions, maybe turning left or right. I bring it up here because I'm not sure that there would be a cost to the district. I know that the organization would come in and partner with the district. We can start in elementary but one of the requirements is that you have a high school in the program, which would be ideal for the technology program at Eastside. They would help with curriculum development that is in line with Common Core. They would also pay stipends for teachers to learn to teach code. So I think that's something we may want to look at.

Comm. Irving: What's the name of the program?

Comm. Simmons: Code.org.

Comm. Irving: Just to be sure I'm clear, the three priorities you mentioned were full implementation of the STAR assessment with the intervention component, adding in a parental component to the after-school program, and the ability to teach technology and programming with the potential of using Code.org as a vehicle to do so.

Comm. Martinez: I believe it was the last time we met, Comm. Simmons and I spoke about perhaps gathering a listing of all the different programs that are currently being offered in the district and conducting some type of audit to see which programs are really being efficient and whether we're getting a return on the investment. I don't think time is on our side to thoroughly do that, but if possible I'd still like to see a listing of those programs and the assessments that go along with them so we can gauge which programs we're really getting something back from. There are two other areas where I would like to see a shift if possibly. The first piggybacks off what Comm. Mendez was talking about with the after-school programs. Full Service Community Schools – from what I've seen, particularly at School 5, it has been tremendous in removing a lot of the obstacles that families and students deal with every day. By removing those obstacles they're better able to come to school and really be ready learners. By having a physician on staff there and a mental health clinician on staff as well and all of the various services they provide to families it makes the life of the families a lot easier so they can in turn prepare their children and send their children to school being a lot more prepared to actually get into the classroom and get to work. Again, School 5 is a great example of what Full Service Community Schools can do. Dr. Evans, I agree with you 100%. You always talk about ultimately after all is said and done the quality of instruction and the quality of leaders in the school is what really dictates what takes place in that school. Perhaps taking a deeper look into investing in recruiting and retaining these quality teachers and principals is something that we can perhaps look at. I know with the reform in the teacher evaluations I know that's a step in that direction. Ultimately, I agree when you have that quality teacher in front of those students and you have a quality principal in the building that's really what drives good instruction. Those are my two areas.

Dr. Evans: If I may make a brief comment about Full Service Community Schools, this Friday there will be a group from the DOE looking at our Full Service Community Schools model as a possible state model to adopt and implement statewide.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Martinez, I just want to make sure I'm clear. This isn't necessarily a program, but more so a request, one that I think needs to come in curriculum, for us to put together an audit of all the various programs that exist. The two initiatives you suggested were the expansion of the community schools model in the district and the recruitment and training of quality teachers and principals.

Comm. Cleaves: My thoughts have been conveyed through some of the Commissioners already. But today I was at an assembly at School 6 and as I was sitting there in the auditorium I was looking around and they have banners hanging up in the school. They had different clubs at one time that used to operate outside of the school. They had an astronaut club and a drama club. I think if we go back to some of those things, if we start to engage the kids in those programs again, the parents will then wonder why their child wants to be in this building so much. Maybe then we can bring the parents into the fold also because they're going to want to know why their child wants to go to school all the time for the astronaut program. I don't know how these programs worked in the past, but I saw those banners still hanging there. In this assembly they were very good today. They were not disruptive. But I think sometimes they need other avenues to express themselves. Bringing the math club and the chess club, as Dr. Hodges said, so they can have that critical thinking, we have to feed them what we want them to be. Also, what Comm. Mendez hit on, the after school programs for all the students, not just one specific group of students. All of the students need to have these after-school avenue programs. Also, Dr. Hodges had sent the Board members an e-mail and I happened to just watch it yesterday because I was with him yesterday. When we're hiring teachers and instructors to come in I saw this video he showed me of this one teacher that had his class so engaged because this man taught out of the box. He had that relationship between his students and you could see it in the video how every child was engaged and excited about going to his class. So when we're hiring, I think we need to look at not only can they just present the information to our students, but can they capture their attention and make them want to come to school and have them hungry for more. When they leave at the end of the day we want them hungry for the next day. So I think when we're hiring our teachers and our administrators in our buildings we need to get those people in there that are going to make our children want to be here.

Comm. Irving: Out of that list you really mentioned the co-curricular activities and the clubs as the initiative you'd like to support. Comm. Kerr, anything else from your end?

Comm. Kerr: Sure. I have here, and it was also expressed by a few of my colleagues, we are sadly missing arts and music in our schools. The arts and the music fell by the wayside for lack of resources to fund these areas. But through arts and music I think it gives the kids, just as you said Comm. Cleaves, the avenue for expression and self-development. We do not have it in our schools and therefore we have a hardness of culture. The kids grew up in somewhat of a concrete jungle and everything is hard. There's nothing soft. We need to bring it back in the school. We need to bring back the arts, music, and have kids be able to express themselves. So I would like to see a serious investment in the area of arts and music. Also, I would like for us to look at our guidance in this district. A lot of our children are lost in the whole system. We do not follow our kids. We do not know where they are. We do not know what prescription to apply because we do not follow them. So I believe we need to have a very strong guidance department with strong ties to four-year institutions. We start prepping kids from day one this is where you have to go and we're going to see to it that you get there. But we allow kids to just float through the system without any real direction. I would like to see us have a very strong guidance component to our organization. I also would like to see a stronger family outreach and engagement program. As I've always

said, we are responsible for the administration to instruct the child. That's our responsibility. But we need parents to carry that through when the kids get home. Sometimes these young people are having kids and they don't know how to manage these kids. So we have to help. It's not our responsibility, but sometimes we have to take that extra step in order to make sure that things happen on the other side. So I would like to see us investing some more in the family outreach and engagement component of our operation to address some of the problems that we have there. I would like us to move on the breakfast for children. I don't know if it's a direct cost to us, but there are a lot of kids who come to school in the morning without breakfast and they're just not learning because of the fact that their stomachs are not in a place for their brains to absorb any of the information that is being passed on to them. So I would like for us to see where we can go with the breakfast program in our schools. I know that you and the administrative have worked hard through professional development to increase the level of instruction that we offer, but I think there are still some areas there that we need to beef up. So I would like us to see a little bit more of an organized approach and so on as far as rigor is concerned in that area. Those are my recommendations for now. I trust that we can get some of those.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Kerr, you mentioned arts and music, following our students in the guidance department, outreach and family community engagement, and the Breakfast After the Bell program expanding.

Comm. Hodges: I pass in favor of Comm. Guzman.

Comm. Guzman: He has a long list, so he's letting me go first. I think some of our main concerns have already been addressed, but I'm going to have to follow up a little bit on them. As Comm. Kerr mentioned, our music and arts program is not where it should be and I think that's an incentive for our children. Our children love to participate in the school choir and those types of things. I remember always at times mentioning that we need to bring our kids to our meetings. We have regular meetings once every single month. We should have schools participating. One school every meeting should come and do a program that brings the kids so we can see the talent that they have, while at the same time it's going to bring the parents with them. That way, the parents can have an idea of what's going, what's happening, and what we're doing in the Board of Education. I have to commend Dr. Evans because yesterday at the forum there was a very good turnout. I was there and it was full. I must say that I was excited to see so many children there. Then I found out why they were so many children there. There was an incentive for the kids. If they brought their parents to the school they were going to have a pizza party. I'm saying it because I heard it from the parents, "My child dragged me." Your child didn't drag you. You came to learn information. The principal and the teachers told them if they bring their parents, depending on how many parents we get you'll have a pizza party. Guess what? They did their job. It worked. So if it worked for School 25 it can work for School 15, Roberto Clemente, School 10, or School 6. Why not? It's just the little things that kids like to hear and I think that's something that we need to do more often because it motivates them. If the kid is motivated, they're going to make sure the parent is there because they want their pizza party. I know when I was in school I wanted my pizza party. So I have to agree with them and I give them props for that. But there were a lot of kids there. I was also surprised to see them asking questions. I was sitting in the third row and there was a parent with a child behind me. The child wanted to ask a question regarding what they were doing about bullying and the parent was Spanish-speaking so I guess he wasn't too aware of what was going on with bullying. I'm just listening to their conversation and the child is raising his hand and jumping off his seat. Dr. Evans wasn't calling on him and wasn't looking at him and the parent was telling him not to ask that question. The

child told his father, "No. I want to ask that question. I'm going to ask it." So when he got up the father was ashamed because he didn't know what his kid was going to ask, but he asked a very good question. Once he saw that it was a good question his father actually tapped him and was proud of him because he didn't listen to him. He took the initiative himself and asked the question in spite of his father telling him it wasn't a good enough question. I'm thinking that's probably what it was, but in my mind I told him to stand up and have Dr. Evans see you, and he did. I think it was a very good community forum and we need to do it more with topics that the people are interested in and people want to hear. Going back to the schools, I think what Comm. Mendez mentioned regarding the after-school programs is very important. I have to say that I am from a family that is mainly Spanish-speaking and I have some of my relatives whose children come home with projects and they have no idea what they need to do. They have no idea what it is that they're asking for. So I'm here trying to help my daughter while I'm having them sending me messages and pictures of the page. I'm trying to help them on the steps they need to take. So I think our after-school programs are very important when it comes to homework and it's not happening and it's not being taken as seriously. The work is not being done because I think some of our kids are coming out of the after-school program and their homework isn't done. They see it as a time to just hang out after school with their friends and peers, have fun, and then go home and then maybe the parents can explain to them how to do their homework. We need to place more emphasis on our after-school programs. I just wanted to commend you, Dr. Evans, because it was a very good forum yesterday.

Dr. Evans: Thank you.

Comm. Hodges: Let me apologize to the Board in advance. I hope this Board gets to the point when they're closer to that little kid than they are to that kid's father that Comm. Guzman just mentioned. I really don't think that you realize the power that you have. I really don't. In order to force the state to do some of the things that they did not want to do we had to force the state to do it. We're not taking that position tonight and that's of grave concern to me. The issues that I have developed were predicated on the notion that we were going to demand what we thought we needed our kids to have and make the administration, wherever that may lie, tell us what we couldn't have. Quite frankly, it is the responsibility of the Board to demand what they think their children need and then have the district tell you why they can't give it to you immediately, but also to craft a plan to get it to you down the road. That's our responsibility. We're being robbed our funding and I will not be complicit in the process of cutting the funding that I know we deserve. Having said all of that, I sent everybody a copy of that e-mail that Comm. Cleaves was talking about. Everything I have to say is predicated on creating that kind of student learning environment in the school. I mentioned at the last meeting that if I had personnel the bus would be backed up for many people in this district. The reason I mean that is because we don't have the number of people that we need to have who are doing the things that teacher was displaying. More concerning is we don't have administrators who are going after those people or trying to create those kinds of environments, even though they're being paid. I'm sorry they're not here tonight because that's what would change this district if you believe that what goes on in the classroom is of the highest importance. So what I'm outlining here is a way of thinking about what should happen in the classroom and what kinds of opportunities should be available to you. Somebody mentioned after-school programs. One of the things I would like to see done is Kahn Academy, which is online and free. All I'm looking for is a catalog of support programs that are relevant so if a child doesn't have an understanding of what they're doing in the classroom they can simply go online and in 10 minutes the explanation that that gentleman provides is extraordinarily superior. In fact, there are school districts across this country that base their curriculum on what this

guy has done. It's all part of what they build into their course work. Go see Kahn Academy, this particular one. I'm looking for a plan with a timetable to reform the academies and have greater fidelity to their themes. I know that there is a plan being crafted, but there has to be a comprehensive approach to this. I don't care whether you bring in specialists. At some point you're going to have to hire someone or bring somebody to the table and say, "If you want a pre-engineering academy these are the things that should occur," and you must take some time to plan it well and devote some funding for that. When you hire people in terms of teachers and administrators you hire them with that intent in mind. We don't always do that. We throw together the program and say we'll repair it down the road. Down the road comes and goes and we don't get it repaired. Those academies were developed in 2004 and the promise that first day was we're going to fix them. That was in 2004. We're 10 years down the road and it hasn't happened yet. That's the concern that I have. Some concrete funding has to be set aside to make sure that's done well. The teaching of study skills starting in kindergarten and the first grade – Ms. Guzman just mentioned how coercive young students can be. I want to capitalize on that because when you tell a child this is supposed to happen at home at an early age they run home and tell mommy or daddy, "This is what Mr. So-and-so said is supposed to happen here," and they don't let it go. They listen intently and they follow directions incredibly well at a very early age. That's when you should be teaching them what a school environment is supposed to be and, more importantly, what a home environment is supposed to be when it's attached to school, but we're not taking advantage of that opportunity. Revamping of science labs with a true accounting of what our students are learning in them. There are classes that don't have science labs all year long. That's unacceptable. First of all, it's a requirement. I don't know how kids are getting a grade when that requirement is not being met. So what I'm looking for is a timetable for making sure that gets straightened out in a meaningful manner. I think that's something that shouldn't be part of any new funding. That should be done. Allowing more flexibility in the PSI curriculum for expansion or broadening the curriculum which comports with the schools' augmentational curriculum. After meeting with you, Dr. Evans, I had a long conversation with Mr. Festa about what they were going to do. Obviously, the curriculum that was supposed to be fixed by this year has not been fixed by this year. He has a whole different approach where the whole school can be digitalized where they're going to bring in Chrome books and they're going to be using online materials to teach their classes. But that conflicts with PSI, which is prescribed. So we need to allow some increased flexibility for that to occur because I don't want to see that vision hampered because of what PSI calls for when what he wants to offer goes so far beyond that. In fact, I'd like to encourage other people to push their curriculum in that manner. That's a concern. There are other places in the district where that might be an issue. We had a teacher come here in December who complained about the science program. That's another indication where PSI is prescriptive and that prescription so constrains the teacher that she had to come before you and say this is a problem. So we have to allow for greater flexibility in that area. Next is the development of a five to six-year program for the international baccalaureate program, which was one of your goals, Dr. Evans. I'd like to see that done. That should start now concurrent with whatever budget we have. There are still people who can put that together. Distance learning program to address computer programming, which would be in tune with what Comm. Simmons was talking about. But also there are distance learning programs that you could block into the schedule and offer as electives or as part of your math program. Just remove the calculators as training and instead put programming, which would do the same thing but at a superior level. It just requires a little imagination. What I'm decrying is the lack of that. I'm being blunt because we don't have it. These things should have been in place a long time ago and they haven't been. They haven't even been called for which is even more tragic. That's what frustrates me. The

implementation of Boolean algebra curriculum at the elementary level, which talks about logic gates – and, or, nor – so that you prepare the students to not only just work with computer languages, but it also gives you a way to attack problems in a logical manner. It frames your understanding of how you address a problem and how you check it. That kind of thing should have been in the curriculum a long time ago but it's not. A pre-engineering program - I mentioned before that Glen Rock, which is 3.5 miles away, decided that they wanted to redo their entire curriculum around an engineering format. They didn't want to do that because they wanted engineers. They wanted the students to learn the problem-solving approach of engineers. So when they attack any program or any problem they would analyze it, check it, make an educated guess, test it, fail, and then try it again. That's causing you to think. In addition to that, you are inventing new solutions, or even better, new questions to pursue. That's the power of that pre-engineering program and it goes throughout the entire curriculum k-12, even though all kids aren't going to go into engineering school. But the value of the discipline of engineering is extraordinarily powerful as they saw it. We're competing with them and I think that we need to compete at that level, even at the kindergarten stage. Provide students in a narrowly focused academy the ability to take online courses outside of the academy's theme. One of the drawbacks of having an academy is you can't take Latin, photography, or something else that might be in another academy because you don't have the staff there to do it. But if you had three academies in Eastside you could then field a Latin course or an ancient Indian history course and help a student become more, well-rounded as they approach college. We can't do that with our current setup with academies. But if you had a distance learning program or capability, which we all do and haven't used, you could then sign students up for programs. I just learned of one today which was sponsored by Stamford and MIT and it's all free. We're just not taking advantage of it. It's MOOC. Those types of programs for students who are doing extraordinarily well can expand their horizons independently taking college credit courses of really high-level colleges. The development of serious support systems that target Black males, which are the lowest performing students in the general education population - Black males - we need to develop a serious approach to addressing their needs. They are maintaining the achievement gap. Even though the overall district may improve, if that achievement gap continues you will still have a Focus School. So you can't escape that. You've got to put together some process that addresses the achievement gaps. Right behind them are Latino males. You've got to build some process that addresses the needs of these children and we don't have one in place. We've chased some of them out of the building that did have a process, but we haven't replaced them. So something along the lines of evaluating students in danger of failing in grades 2-4. Development of an individualized student plan which maps out a strategy to get students on track, mentoring/advisor system through an official group of mentors or volunteers tied to the students to help marshal whatever plan is developed. It means also enhancing your guidance department substantially because the power of this approach is getting kids into college who don't have the numbers, showing them that you can succeed, and showing that your district numbers aren't the only thing that a college should rely upon. You need to look at the drive and the motivation of that student. So if you create this program the guidance departments and their relationships to other colleges is extremely important. Develop a cohort of guidance support that will specifically address the needs of these students. Developing an extended day, additional day, and/or a summer program to supplement the current curriculum for these challenged students – and that program should include hands-on activities, elements of African American history, which is the Amistad. That should be included across the whole district. Research programs at an early age and vocational training. I'll speak more about vocational training later. Again, I want pre-engineering programs for eighth and ninth graders. November Learning approaches infused into the system. This is where rather than tell a kid to close his I-pad or his telephone you craft a way to use that

equipment in the classroom and take advantage of what the kids already are doing. These kids are in a digital age and we're still using chalk. The kids are playing around with I-pads and I-phones and then you sit them down and say, "Listen, I want you to follow me on the blackboard." Their level of attention is nowhere near what we're giving them. So rather than shut down that avenue to learning, tap into it and capitalize on it, but that means developing new and aggressive ways of teaching, and those things cost money. So you're going to have to go out and look at ways to teach or get professional development for teachers so that they're less apprehensive about using this material and they can find new ways in which to take advantage of what the kids already have. Modernize the approach using technology. Research projects in science and social studies. We don't do these kinds of things here. A lot of these places our kids are competing with use research all the time. In fact, this one kid developed a way to test for cancer cheaply and he was a high school student so if you open up these opportunities these kids will take advantage of it. Educational debate programs where you can talk about social studies. I'm going through my whole list because this is my expectation of what a school should look like. You can debate in social studies. You can debate in science. You can debate in English. You can debate in math. But it's a way of pairing students together to develop the information that they use to address conflicts, to look at what other people have done in order to solve problems. That kind of approach we don't use. What it does is it makes whatever you're discussing real to the individual. If you have to fight to defend your position you remember that. You remember how you lost and you remember what the arguments were. You remember those details. I want a series of community forums to inform parents. What I'm talking about is what Mr. Kerr was talking about, the parent university. You have to find some way to really help people understand that we're in the 21st century and we have to do things differently. There has to be an after-school program or some program that supports learning in the household because, like Wendy says, if you're a parent and you're bringing home Boolean algebra, who's seen it before? There has to be some way to support that system out of the classroom. The reason why you want to support it out of the classroom is because that gives you an extended classroom day and it doesn't cost you any money. That's what you need to develop, ways to get students to learn or to want to learn after school on their one time and support that effort, which extends your day without costing you a dime. We're not trying to put those structures. We're not even looking for them, which is what is so concerning. Development of substantive student government programs in the high schools. This place is an embarrassment when it comes to teaching our kids civics. You need to only look at what Newark has done with their kids leading the charge against this One November program. Those students are articulate, they plan, they know what the laws are, they are pursuing them in an aggressive and active manner, and they have an organization that does that. We don't have strong student government organizations in place here. They're frankly underwhelming. Part of that is to teach you your responsibility as an adult, your commitment and your involvement and how you solve problems on a governmental level as an adult. That's why you have a student government. So we're missing that piece which is an important piece that other people have. Development of a strong financial literacy program that includes a student-backed bank, bank accounts for every student 18 years old and under, a financial literacy curriculum k-12, stocks and bonds literacy k-12, insurance literacy curriculum, the building of a stock exchange room, internships, shadowing opportunities, summer jobs, a visit to banking training, and scholarships. Those are all things that the banks have already agreed to do that this district refused to follow through on. The entire package we didn't follow through on. Extracurricular activities - we have a GPA requirement for all extracurricular activities which is a sliding scale in terms of what you have to do in order to maintain a grade. The idea behind it was give these kids a number of programs to attend whatever they wanted to do. Help them want to stay in school after school, whether it's science

clubs, language clubs, computer clubs, pre-engineering activities, chess clubs, poetry clubs, debating clubs, student government organizations, youth and government, student School Board members, public speaking clubs, key clubs, or whatever. That ties the kids to the school and also when they're entering these programs that they want to enter they have to maintain a certain GPA in order to stay there and to participate. So now you're enhancing their school environment and putting that additional pressure on their GPA. Athletic programs - there are discussions about getting lacrosse, swimming, and field hockey. Those things should be pursued and quite frankly some money should be devoted to expanding that. We used to have in this city tremendous marching bands and then we RIF'd some of our band leaders and they're now going to other places and doing the same things for them, not for our kids. I'm almost finished.

Comm. Cleaves: The audience is laughing.

Comm. Hodges: That's their problem because I don't find it funny, quite frankly, because these things aren't here. If a student decides that they don't want to go to college, those kids should be in a career review program that says, "What do you want to be?" Then you encourage the kid to go research the field that they want to enter, the requirements for the job, potential salaries, discussions with people who are currently engaged in the field, potential job market, and earning power over time. Now that kid has a realistic view of what they're entering if they don't want to go to college. Harding High School did that. I'm stealing it from them. Those kids that didn't want to go to college went through that course. Enhanced business programs and introducing students to entrepreneurship in an aggressive manner - this community doesn't do that very well. Create student-run businesses within the district. The next-to-last thing is vocational training to help supplement the needs that PCTI is not doing. Our kids who are not going to college and are vocationally-oriented can't get into PC Tech, or whatever they call themselves. They can't get into Tech. So they need somewhere to go and they also need training and they're not getting that. There's a big gap that has to be addressed and we have to begin to expand our needs to take care of that. Theme-based professional development for teachers - I'll use the example of PANTHER again. They're going to have to be trained how to address, according to Mr. Festa, blended learning and project teaching. That's going to require money over and above what he has in his budget to train those teachers to teach in a different manner using this new equipment. He needs that funding and there are other places that are going to need that specific funding to train teachers to do what they're not currently oriented to doing. There are buildings that need to be retrofitted to address the theme and HARP is a clear example. You can't have a biology program where you can't do labs. It's an insult. Those things have to be taken into account. I'll stop right there. The reason I went through all of that is to underscore the ludicrousness of the approach that we're taking of designing cuts in our budget when all these things are on the table. To just pick three to me is shortsighted because there's way too much here. Every one of these needs are realistic, every one of them, and most of them have a price tag. So we're not looking at the programs that are already on the table. We're not going to see it before this budget is made. We're going to be given a select few that somebody is going to choose for us and that to me is a problem. This is a brand new approach to education, what I'm really talking about. You need people who are going to be aggressive and quite serious about implementing these things, and there's a huge price tag. This is what I want to see in the district.

Comm. Mendez: Let me just make a positive comment on something that I heard from the community and some of the parents about Eastside High School. The perception of Eastside High School is changing, but we have to continue with the safety plan that we have. The perception is changing about what happens at Eastside High School

because of the safety. We don't have drunk people sleeping on the building property. Now I think we're ready to continue with the learning process and the ability to teach at Eastside High School. We're not there yet with Kennedy High School, but I think we have to promote that a little bit more in the district. We need to make our kids go to Eastside High School and let them know that it is totally different and there are a lot of good things happening inside the building. I hear that from the community that now the issue that we have is with the city side. That's not our responsibility, but we have to continue fighting for that.

Comm. Kerr: Dr. Evans, as Comm. Mendez mentioned security, I need to ask you about the cameras that were mentioned as part of our security system maybe a year or so ago. Are we still looking at that to be part of what we're doing right now? Is it factored in our budget?

Ms. Shafer: As per your request next week you'll have a presentation on security and have an opportunity to ask any questions. But we have put in some cameras in other schools this year. I'll have him bring that information as well. That was all part of the long-range plan.

Comm. Kerr: The long-range plan I think was to have cameras in all of the schools.

Ms. Shafer: Right.

Comm. Kerr: So I need to know where we are and what the projected date to complete that process is.

Comm. Irving: I want to share with the Board my two suggestions and recommendations. The first one speaks to what Dr. Hodges mentioned before about a specific program to address the lowest performing subgroup in the district and that subgroup happens to be African American and Latino boys. I think we started that conversation, but I firmly believe if we're really going to make any progress there has to be some independent energy associated and directed towards it. I just don't think we can ask staff members who have other responsibilities at this point in time to do that. So an investment has to be made for designing a program or plan that will be implemented over the course of a two or three-year program. I think making that investment provided you find the right person and staffing to create a program design that's implemented with some level of fidelity and support can really help us and pay dividends to us in the future. The other piece is - and it's interesting no one else or maybe only one other person brought up the facilities piece - finally getting the district to enter into the ECID energy savings program that the State of New Jersey offers. We're talking about our budget and reducing costs, but we have not had a conversation about how to save money by reallocating and reassessing our facilities. I can tell you that in facilities Comm. Mendez, myself, and Comm. Cleaves have had that conversation. We are in the process of hiring an energy manager for the district at this point in time. Hopefully once that person is on board we'll be able to begin that process. But I think that energy program is worth investing in because it will audit every single building that we have in this district and give us a good projection for what's being expended as far as poor practice when it comes to energy usage and then make recommendations on how we might mitigate that and save money in the long run while being able to fix our schools and add in new windows, boilers, and lighting. So I have those two coupled with everything that everyone else said. The only other piece I'd probably just chime in on would be the after-school program component. I think that a design of a very rigorous academic after-school program that focuses on literacy and math would be really dynamic, even if we did it in a regional model where we took two

or three schools in each ward that would be the after school centers for the district, kind of pooling resources. So if it's in the second ward maybe it's just at School 5 and Napier, up the hill and down the hill. In the fourth ward maybe it's School 18 and School 6. But I think that there are some really great opportunities that we could really tackle if we indeed want to cover those components.

Comm. Kerr: Comm. Simmons mentioned the after-school program at the expense of summer programs, right?

Comm. Simmons: That was the intervention piece for the STAR assessment.

Comm. Kerr: So we do the after-school piece in conjunction with the summer program that we have presently. Is that the plan? I thought I heard somebody mention that the summer program doesn't really do anything much.

Comm. Simmons: No. When I spoke of the summer program, I was actually talking about trying to get kids out of summer school, reducing that number but putting more money and resources into the intervention piece with STAR so that we don't have as many kids going to summer school.

Comm. Kerr: Well, one would offset the other in some way. That's what I thought I heard.

Comm. Hodges: I wrote all this for a reason.

Comm. Irving: I'm sure you did.

Comm. Hodges: I do not think the Board should pick amongst our suggestions. If the State Superintendent feels that he's unable to pay for it, then the State Superintendent should pick the ones that he thinks he is able to pay for and then let him tell us which ones we can't have. I don't think the Board should take that position because if the Board is taking that position then the Board is tacitly accepting the budget. I think the Board should say that these are the things that we want and you're the master of the budget and you can tell us what we can and cannot have.

Comm. Irving: I disagree. I certainly hear your standpoint, but I disagree. I think that this process was generated and garnered to help form and create a system so that we can help steer and direct the priorities we have. My concern is that if the Superintendent picks initiatives that I and the members don't support, I'm just not going to be as enthused and committed to that, especially if I have the opportunity to help make that decision. Dr. Hodges brings up a good point. What do you guys think?

Comm. Teague: How much control do we have over this process with the budget? These things that we're mentioning, will they actually be considered?

Comm. Irving: I can only turn that to the man who ultimately makes the decisions.

Dr. Evans: Yes, they will.

Comm. Teague: Oh, I see.

Comm. Irving: I think over the course of at least my four years the Board's input and role on the budget has gotten increasingly more collaborative. I think probably last year was the most collaborative that I've ever been engaged in that process. I'm not

speaking for us. I'm just saying personally that I see no reason why based on my conversations with Dr. Evans the recommendations of the Board would not be taken seriously. The whole conversation though is in light of the realities of where we are fiscally. So if the Board wants to add certain programs, it also means that we have to remove other expenditures to be able to make room for that as well.

Dr. Evans: If I may offer a commentary, having been in a system that completely redesigned itself, having been in that system from the beginning of that redesign to the completion of that redesign and the creation of one of the premier districts in the nation, the Hillsboro County system, it took 12 years to develop that system into what it is. That system has all the attributes that Dr. Hodges just outlined - all of them and a lot more. The reference that Rome wasn't built in a day is applicable to this conversation. I don't think anything that Dr. Hodges has asked for is unrealistic. It's unrealistic if you expect it to happen in one, two, or three years. It's very unrealistic. But it's not unrealistic to expect it over time and the prioritization for me becomes what first. To expect it over a reasonable amount of time, it can happen. It really can. I don't see anything unrealistic that he's outlined. I don't see anything unrealistic with what any of you have forwarded as goals for the district. But the challenge is how we do that in our current contexts and our current contexts unfortunately involve our fiscal state of being. I think we can do it within the boundaries of our current budget, but again over time. That's how Hillsboro did it. That's how any high-performing district in this nation got to where it was. It didn't get there in one year. It took time. We are in the midst of a major system redesign for our district. Paterson today is not the district that it was four or five years ago. Those of you who were here four or five years ago I think will attest to that, but we've only scratched the surface. There is a lot more work to be done. The challenges that I hear embedded in what you all are suggesting are challenges that I welcome actually and would love the opportunity to bring to fruition, but it's going to take time. It really is going to take time.

Comm. Hodges: I don't have a timetable on any of these. In fact, some of these things ask for a timetable. So you can accept them all without rejection and simply leave the timetable up to the Superintendent of Schools, which gets you all your programs. But the question is the timetable that's available. I think I've told you the reasons why I'm not interested in limiting the programs. I'm not going to tell people that you shouldn't have after-school programs to address the STAR. I don't want to be told that we can't have a pre-engineering program or a computer program. I'm going to leave here very disgruntled, which I usually am anyway, but more so, and that's not going to be very good news for some people. If the Superintendent who's stuck with this burden now of this responsibility collectively of the Board and he has to craft a program or an approach to getting all these things, then he has reasonable ammunition to speak to his additional financial needs. The Board is stating these things should be in place now and he can realistically say he can't do that now, but under a different set of circumstances financially he can do it in the future. That's why I don't want the Board to pick three. By the way, that's our goal. Our job is not to be reasonable. Our job is to tell the Superintendent we want this stuff and it's his job to say I can do it now or I can do it later and this is what it's going to cost me to do it. That's his job. It's not my job to do that. You're either the baby in the family or the only child. Give me, give me, give me! And particularly now because we're being asked to cut our own educational throats. That's why this is all-important. It's how you do this. When those test grades begin to drop they're going to come ask you what you did. I imagine you're all going to vote for the budget which is going to be a cut in your budget. You then can't say we needed these programs because the answer is going to be you cut the budget. Not the state, you did as a Board. We did it. That's the dilemma that we're in. So what I'm saying

here is it's a reasonable position to say to Dr. Evans, who just told you this is not an unreasonable list, you tell us what you can and cannot do in a reasonable timetable.

Comm. Martinez: While the expectations and the things that you outlined carry weight and there are a lot of good things to it, the approach you're taking is more of a gotcha approach so we can say later on, "Gotcha. Look it's not on us. It's on you." In my opinion that's not the way to go. We don't want to play this game of gotcha and we're going to set it up so that when the failure happens we can pin it on you as opposed to pinning it on us. We don't want to do that.

Comm. Hodges: Mr. Martinez, it is being done to you, which you don't seem to understand.

Comm. Martinez: I do understand, but in my opinion it makes no sense. If what's being done to us is unjust, we're going to inflict the same injustice on them.

Comm. Hodges: No.

Comm. Martinez: You're doing it to me so I'm going to do it to you. Gotcha! It seems to me that that's the approach we're trying to take. It doesn't make sense.

Comm. Hodges: What I'm simply saying is this is what I understand an educational system is supposed to have. That's what I'm saying.

Comm. Martinez: And I think everyone aggress with that.

Comm. Hodges: I'm being told that we can't afford this because there's going to be a cut in our budget. That's what we're being told, which by the way happens to be illegal according to the Supreme Court. So all I'm saying is I am not going to go against what the Supreme Court says. I'm going to go with what I was charged to do as a Board member, demand what I think our district needs. That's all I'm doing. I'm not playing gotcha. I'm just telling you what the reality of the situation is. When it does fail, trust me, we're going to get blamed for it. So all I'm going to say is this is what I want and what tomorrow will help move this district forward. I know I can't get it all, but at least I'm not saying I want the top three.

Comm. Irving: I'm not comfortable with that 100%, but I think there might be a way to satisfy in the midline. Just tell me what you think. I think we should take this list and let the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent comb through it and ponder on it and then report back to the Board exactly what you said around what initiatives can the administration support in the next fiscal year. I think that will get us to where we want to go on everybody then. I want to know before we construct this budget based on the Board's recommendations what the Superintendent can pick up and is willing to do. From what I heard, I thought we were just saying let him decide and move forward and not have those decisions be checked. I'm just not comfortable with that. Personally I would like for the Superintendent to look over what we have recommended, come back to us and say based on the conversation we had and the recommendations you gave here's what we can do effective next year given where we are.

Comm. Kerr: Yes, I think that's what he's saying. We have this list and these are the things that we would like to see. Can they fit into your budget numbers?

Comm. Irving: Correct. Or what can?

Comm. Hodges: Or when?

Dr. Evans: Actually, there's another context for them and that's the strategic planning that's underway. Remember, we're developing another five-year strategic plan and we'll have that completed by June 30. That's great information to inform that work.

Comm. Irving: Granted, but I'm still not going to let this budget conversation leave without something of what the Board has mentioned being reflected. I hear you, but I'm not willing to let anybody get away with that.

Comm. Kerr: I think it's necessary for the Superintendent to come back to us and at least in this budget identify some of the areas that are being serviced in this budget that we have mentioned so we are not short shifted in the process.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Evans, we have another budget conversation in two weeks. Would that be enough time for you to come back to the Board with those recommendations?

Dr. Evans: Absolutely.

Comm. Irving: Fantastic.

Comm. Martinez: As well as a list of the programs.

Comm. Hodges: And their evaluations, because that's what's missing.

Comm. Irving: Let's talk about that real quick because I think it's absolutely necessary we have that information as a body, as a district, and as a Superintendent to make any true decisions on programs. My question is what's the feasibility of trying to get a real assessment of that in the course of two weeks?

Dr. Evans: I have a draft on my desk now that I'm reviewing. It's already prepared.

Comm. Irving: Listen, I'm thinking it's a lot of work. My bad!

Dr. Evans: But again, I need to read it through to make sure it says what I asked for it to say, a true assessment of which programs are impacting on our achievement bottom line. I have a draft on my desk now to review. So two weeks is reasonable.

Comm. Irving: I feel bad. We have a lot of programs and we're asking this guy to pull a rabbit out of a hat, but you already have the rabbit sitting on your desk. I'm cool with you. I'm really happy to hear that. I know we had mentioned it a while ago and I'm really happy to hear that work began.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening. I do have a point-by-point response to Dr. Hodges' list. I thank you for this opportunity. Almost all the things that I would have suggested or recommended as priorities were mentioned today. The one that wasn't is attendance. We do have a serious attendance issue in this district. We have chronic absenteeism throughout the district and I'd like you to please consider adding that to

your list of priorities when you do get to prioritizing at some point. Unfortunately, I think we do have to prioritize because we have to live within our means. What we want to teach the children in the financial management workshops is that we have to live within our means. However, what is our means is the question. There is a law in New Jersey called the School Funding Reform Act. We fought against it when it was being considered because we thought that the formulas were bad and the method was bad. But it did pass the legislation and it is the law and there are weights attached to each child for regular education and special needs. There are weights attached because we're an urban center. We have security and buildings and other issues that folks don't have in the other places where they're spending less money per child on their students. This state funded it once and when it went to court again after 2008 they funded it one year and did not fund it the next fully. It went to court again because the state wanted to say this formula now supersedes Abbott. The court sent it to their remand court and we went to court every day to hear what was happening to inform this community. When Paterson showed up in court the judge commented about how many Paterson parents turned out. Paterson parents went to support Paterson's case for full funding of the School Funding Reform Act. I don't want you to turn your back on that. We have been fighting that every year and we're going to continue to fight it. So when you submit a balanced budget I ask that it be balanced based on what the law says we're entitled to, not on what we think the Governor is going to give us. Let him come back and tell us we can't fund that because we're poor or whatever other reason he might present to us. But please ask for what we're entitled to under the law because our kids are entitled to it and they really need it. We're making progress, but we're still not where we're supposed to be. They really do need all the resources that we can garner for them. So I do encourage you. You are our elected officials for this community. You are our education policy leaders for this community and I ask you to please work with the district. I know Dr. Evans' hands may be tied in what he can ask for, but you are the representatives of the people as our Commissioners and I do ask you to do what you can to help us in this fight to get full funding of the School Funding Reform Act. Then let's have the conversation about living within our means. But we wouldn't turn our back on a payroll bonus that we're entitled to or just a regular paycheck that we're entitled to and then talk to our families about living in our means. We want to get everything that's coming to us and then do that. The second thing I want to say is that while we're here today and earlier today actually the Newark Superintendent sent out a memo to parents that the Superintendent would no longer be participating in School Board meetings and that she did not think that was an appropriate venue for useful community dialogue. So I want to thank you for this discussion and I want to thank you, Dr. Evans, Ms. Shafer, Mr. Kilpatrick, the rest of the staff and Commissioners, for being here. Yes, we can disagree and maybe there was disagreement here even amongst yourselves, but you do it respectfully and you do it as the people who are either elected or appointed to serve the children of Paterson. I am grateful for that and I ask you to please continue to have this healthy discourse so that you can set an example for the rest of the state-controlled districts in the State of New Jersey. The last point is directly to Dr. Hodges. We were not laughing at the content. I do agree that everything you listed is important to the children of Paterson. But personally I was amused by your exhaustion at getting to the end of your list. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Ms. Grant. We appreciate your time and service.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Evans: Tomorrow morning I will be dictating a memo to my secretary, Maria, and asking Cheryl to respond in kind to that memorandum that in effect will change the start time for Board workshops effective immediately from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. I think that's probably more user-friendly for most Board members. I know we all have obligations and are challenged sometimes to get here by 6:00. I think that's a more reasonable time for the Board. So that should be going out from my office tomorrow and then Cheryl will be reflecting that in a change that she will need to send out for all subsequent Board workshops.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.