

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

February 11, 2014 – 6:08 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. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Errol Kerr

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

Absent:

Comm. Wendy Guzman
Comm. Corey Teague

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
February 11, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
Administrative Offices
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

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

**PRESENTATION OF A WEBINAR ON "ROBERT'S RULES
MADE SIMPLE" BY SUSAN LEAHY**

*Comm. Martinez enters the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

*Comm. Mendez enters the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

The Board members asked the following questions and received answers as they interacted with Ms. Leahy through the Webinar:

1. Comm. Irving: When we lay on the table, are you saying there are other pressing matters that we have to attend to and we just want to table this to get to the other information we need to get to for the night?
2. Comm. Cleaves: Do you lay the motion on the table during discussion, or do you lay it as the motion is... When do you lay it on the table?
3. Comm. Mendez: When do you table the motion? What is a lay on the table?
4. Comm. Irving: We use the terminology 'call the question.' When the previous question has been called, is that a point of order? What if someone calls the question and there is a second right away?
5. Comm. Mendez: If you have any comment on any item that was already passed, are you allowed to make any comment on a special item after we finished the agenda?
6. Comm. Kerr: What if you have a private motion that you would like to bring to the floor? When do you get that opportunity to bring it to the floor?
7. Comm. Irving: If you're in the middle of the meeting and a pressing conversation has led to the Board wanting to take some type of formal action, when would be the best time to bring that up? We have an 'Other Business' section. Could anyone who wanted to put a motion on the floor that had not otherwise been on the agenda do it at that time?
8. Comm. Martinez: Would we then have to postpone to a definite time or move that to another meeting?
9. Comm. Irving: If we finish all the formal action of the Board and someone wanted to mention an item that may require some action, it wasn't on the agenda but it is something pressing. What would we do?

Ms. Leahy also provided the Board of Education with 20 copies of Robert's Rules Made Simple, 20 copies of Confident Public Speaking and the entire Robert's Rules Made Simple Training Solution.

BUDGET ROLLOUT FOR THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

Dr. Evans: We are still very early in the process. As Mr. Kilpatrick will share with you, he is in the process at this point in time of collecting budget requests from the various divisions. I think you all have a copy of the overall budget process that requires generating requests from the various divisions. So the information you're going to hear tonight is absent some of the specifics because we simply don't have them at this point. As we move forward obviously that information will come together and you will get those specifics and have ample opportunity to discuss. But I think there's enough information here that is accurately reflective of what we're doing that I think we can have a meaningful discussion tonight of where we are and give the Board an opportunity to share with us any priorities or concerns that we need to be aware of as we move to put the budget in final form. Mr. Kilpatrick will take it from here.

Mr. Richard Kilpatrick: I just want to emphasize that what we're trying to do tonight is really to set up and get an understanding to the Board of the priorities that we're focusing on for this year's budget cycle. My goal for doing this is really providing you the opportunity to see how we're progressing in reference to that and understanding that when I look at the budget every dollar that I see on every line I think in reference to these things. If I can't make some sort of connection between the dollars being spent into one of these things I raise my hand. That raising my hand is asking the person who submitted that budget, or the principal, or whoever can answer that question how does it

fit in these things. You don't have the actual budget worksheets that we have, but there are columns that can provide the opportunity for someone to indicate where in these priorities and transformation initiatives the budget does fit. So we're going to go through and really talk. None of this should really be new to anybody because we talk about this. This is what we do. These district priorities are used to support our fiscal decisions for inclusion into our fiscal year 15 budget. The Bright Futures district priorities side is cut off on the top. But the four main objectives or goals are: (1) Effective academic programs; (2) Safe, caring, and orderly schools; (3) Efficient response of operations; and (4) Family and community engagement are part of Bright Futures and the strategic planning process that's going on may update this a little bit, but this is the core of what we are. I can't see it changing that much. We may add one or delineate these things differently for our district, but I think moving forward in 15 even though we don't have the strategic plan in place for moving forward we're going to see these things. These things help us and guide us in the budget process. It's very difficult to read, but all these individual goals that are in here really focus and tie into the transformation initiatives that will be shown later. I don't want to read all of them. I think we've seen them before. Some of the important ones are to increase academic rigor, and we're continuously trying to do that, parent education, community partnerships, and increasing capacity. Those are all very important things that we're trying to do and obviously safe, caring and orderly schools. Transformation objectives to accelerate improvements in student outcomes, the district is focusing on these seven items – building healthy school cultures and climates, building capacity among staff, teachers, principals, vice principals, district administrators, and supervisors, supplementing teacher and administrator evaluation systems. We're implementing that already. We have to supplement it and move it forward, continue it and have the process develop. Implementing the Common Core State Standards is a very important one because that's what the children are learning in the classroom. Strengthening the district's assessment systems, how we're measuring the students' performance, implementing high-impact academic interventions for low-performing students. How are we using these assessments to improve student performance and identifying where there may be problems? Evaluating critical processes and procedures - this is more on the administrative side. Transformation initiatives that we have done and are pursuing - we've done a high school renewal of Full Service Community Schools, Principles of Learning, Common Core State Standards, a robust interim assessment system, the Paterson Effective Schools model, the leadership management and assessment support that we provide, and performance-based administrator and teacher evaluation systems. If something in the budget isn't matching one of these items, I'm raising my hand and asking what is it, what are you doing, and why doesn't it match something like this. This is that great picture of the objectives that are geared all towards student achievement. Process redesign is really evaluating and improving administrative systems, high-impact interventions, and Common Core. All of that is geared towards one of the main focuses we have, which is developing student achievement. This is that pic chart that talks to our transformation initiatives, which is basically something you've seen in the two prior year's annual reports and things that we're moving forward with this year. Two items are really added to this one. The program evaluations - we want to look at our operations and programs and evaluate all of them. Our family and community engagement - we want to do better in this area. It's very important for us to help our student achievement - getting our family involved more with their students. Robust interim assessment systems - basically our primary use of that is Renaissance Learning. The STAR assessments go to all k-12 students. They illustrate relative proficiency for the students and we use that information to gear teaching to the students in the classroom. It's for math and reading interventions. They are charted quarterly for their progress and inform the teachers how the students are doing. Implementing the core - this is basically the progression for implementing the core and obviously this is

not my expertise, but it's not only just for math or English. It's for science and social studies. It's all the curriculums, nine or ten, that are being implemented throughout the district that are in conjunction with the Common Core State Standards. For example, let me tell you about professional development. If someone is doing a professional development program, I'm asking them why. Why are they doing it? Is it related to the Common Core? Is it related to teaching the teacher and evaluation system on how to use it? Is it related to maybe a teacher or administrator who doesn't get the greatest score and they're trying to develop and improve their teaching skill set? Those are the types of questions that we would be asking. If it's an administrator, is it something that's going to help them do their job better and be more effective in how they do their job? Principles of Learning, organizing for effort, clear expectations, things that are done at the school level, making clear expectations, being fair and credible with their evaluations, recognizing accomplishments, creating academic rigor and a thinking curriculum, accountable talks, socializing intelligence, and self-management of learning, getting everyone to understand who's responsible for the learning. Everyone has a helping hand. Principals as instructional leaders – they are responsible for lesson planning and instructional strategies, embedded professional development, coaching, modeling, and leadership development, which we know we're trying to get our principals to be really good at this and we're trying to do this for our principals. I think it's a big task. It's a lot of work, but if we don't do it then the children are going to suffer. Ten dimensions of school effectiveness to build healthy school cultures - obviously we've seen this before. Principals as leaders, clearly stating the mission and vision, giving high expectations, assessing and monitoring, instructional delivery, safe, caring, and orderly environments, parent and community involvement, professional development, school culture, ethnics, and learning. If something is being done in the school there's probably some relationship to this if it's not in the classroom-based learning. So I ask the question, why are we buying these funny label stickers? The teacher or the principal comes back and says there is an incentive program that we have for our students and we want them to feel good about when they're getting good grades and we'll give them an incentive. Okay. That's the type of dialogue that might happen if someone writes something in a requisition and I ask the question. Or someone writes something in the budget and it's not clear and I get a little more clarity. Instructional and leadership capacity-building, pre-k to grade three literacy initiative, district school re-staffing and restructuring, ELL and Sped restructuring and implementing that throughout the district. We have leadership management and assessment consultants that help us with those items. We use Seton Hall, University of Pittsburgh, which is IFL, the Department of Education, Renaissance Learning, Montclair, and independent consultants. Something I forgot to put up here that Ms. Shafer asked me to put up here was the grant that we got from William Paterson for \$3.5 million that will help and guide us moving for three years. There will be another provider of services for us that we don't have to pay for. We provide the teachers. Administrator evaluation system targets all administrators at the district and the school. There are new instruments and processes that we have implemented. Performance criteria are based on leadership, instructional programs, staff development, effective management, and professional responsibilities. We consider student's performance, state tests, the high school graduation rate, interim assessments, SGO's, and pre and post assessments. It's nothing new. We've heard this before. If the accountability office is putting in their budget and they're doing something that's not related to this, I'm going to ask the question how does this relate to the principal and teacher evaluations. It might be professional development for helping them provide this. It might be professional development for a staff member that needs to be brought to speed on better management skills that they need to improve on. It might be supplies. We need a boatload of paper because we're going to be printing out a bunch of instructions on how to do the evaluations. That's the type of questions we get asked and the answers would

be provided. The teacher evaluation system targets all the teachers. It aligns to instructional system standards, curriculum assessment, and professional development. There's design performance criteria that lists all the different things that are expected and it considers student performance with state tests, high school graduations, interim assessments, SGO's, pre and post. The high-impact interventions, this is not all them obviously. We want to end social promotion and we have an attendance initiative with a plan that's been documented and put into place and it is going through some evaluation. We have interim assessments for summer school, registration and grade promotion, graduation enhancement through credit recovery AP courses, transcript and review process, and parental workshops so they understand the process. Next steps for high schools that are being put forward are expanding the breadth of thematic curriculum, adding advisory committees, which is in relationship also to exploring new and further developing existing relationships with the committee, business, and university partners, strengthening guidance services, continuing capacity-building for staff, increasing parental involvement, and completing the restructuring of special programs that the high schools might have. At the elementary level reconfiguring elementary schools, moving to a k-5 and 6-8 type model, increasing magnet schools for academic and career focus, expanding School Choice, acquiring facilities because we know we have the demand for the space, expanding literacy initiatives for pre-k through 3, completing the restructuring of special programs, increasing parent involvement, more high-impact interventions for lower performing students through extending day and year, intensive reading programs, Paterson Reads program, the coaching teachers and principals, and ending social promotion. Some of the efficient operations or what we can accomplish through efficient operations is establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability. There are efficiencies in that. There are dollar savings, realizing cost savings and staff reductions through retirements and attrition, and evaluating all district initiatives and programs. That last item is very important because it is an item that keeps coming up. How do we know something is doing well? This is a process which we're going to be partaking in as we move forward. These are the priorities. If something doesn't match or fit into this it should bubble up in our process to say, why are we doing it? So this is an opportunity for the Board to maybe gain a better understanding of what our priorities are or maybe supply some of their priorities, comments, or recommendations.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Mr. Kilpatrick, for the oral review. I'm just going to tell you personally, thank you for going through this quick. A lot of this stuff we have heard time and time again. So I'd much rather get into a conversation about priorities that the Board has as we begin this budget season. With that said, our window for this is only about five weeks beginning today. I thought a lot about our weekend retreat, which was a really fantastic opportunity to have a great conversation about the budget and the teacher evaluation system. But I firmly believe, especially at this point in time, and I'm talking about the cliff in particular, the only way to get in front of this cliff aside from what you're looking for, Mr. Kilpatrick, is to really do some type of overhaul of central office staff and phase that over the course of the next two to three years. We have talked about reducing central office staff by 25%, but if we wait and do that over next year or the year after we're going to talk about a huge cut. I think that now is the opportunity to get out in front and begin to eat into that cliff and that structural deficit as we move on during the course of the years. If not, we're going to find ourselves in 2016-2017 having to let go of a lot of people in that timeframe. To me it's not the responsible thing to do. We find ways either through natural attrition, folks retiring, and maybe redundancy of positions. But we need to really pony up some big money now because if we don't all we're doing is foregoing the inevitable. I looked at the audit report that we had and then

looked at some of the information that, believe it or not, the county has from the QSAC visit and give or take a few positions I think there needs to be some type of conversation with regard to reduction in staff for this year moving into next year.

Comm. Hodges: I'm going to ask Mr. Kilpatrick to sit down with me hopefully later this week or perhaps early next week so that I can get a better understanding of the discussion. I need some clarity because I still have some concerns. However, the overriding goal has to be increasing student performance, not cutting personnel. If you can increase academic performance by getting better personnel, then that's understandable to me, but cutting personnel as your goal without having a sense of what that's going to do, the real reason why we're here, which is to improve the academic performance of those students, to me is problematic, particularly when you consider what this money was sent here for and how hard we fought to get it here, which is a problem I'm still having. I could be missing something so I want a further understanding. It is the goal of this current gubernatorial administration to shift the dollars from urban centers to centers where he gets most of his support. That's been his goal and I don't want to assist that when I know that the loss of those dollars is going to hamper the education of these students. That's what I'm trying to get past. So, if we can accomplish what you're trying to say with what's on the table here without the loss of improvements in academics, then that's worth a great long discussion. However, if the slope is going to narrow, particularly since we have the Common Core, you are already going to depress that slope because of the depth of the understandings that are going to be asked of these students. That's what I'm worried about. You're bringing a brand new academic system which calls for a whole lot of training on the parts of teachers and they must now take that training and transform it into academic improvement. Then you're going to cut staff on top of that when you already know the nature of the program is going to reduce what appears to be your level of educational improvement. That worries me.

Comm. Irving: I think the question you ask is correct because I think the Board needs to be provided information that I got from the State Commissioner's office. If we do not head this off now we will be bankrupt in about three to four years. Literally we will be bankrupt. There won't be a district to teach kids because we would have put ourselves in the hole, but I think that information needs to be shared with us about the severity of what that is. I know we've discussed it at the last audit finding conversation, but we have not revisited what that figure really is, what it looks like, how far off that is, and the necessary measures that need to be taken. My concern is I'd rather for us to stay away from directly affecting the lives of our young people. I hear you completely, but I just don't know where else besides personnel.

Comm. Hodges: The reason I'm taking that position is because when Mr. Christie came in and tried to cut the budget the Supreme Court said he couldn't do that. I don't want to do anything that runs contrary to what the Supreme Court said because the Governor says he wants to do it. The Supreme Court had a position. He did cut the budget and was forced to put it back. That's where I'm coming from. That was his initial goal and it continues to be his goal. I don't want to help him do that when it's going to hurt the academic performance, and by the way, it runs contrary to what the Supreme Court says is supposed to happen here. That's why I want a better understanding of what this all means. If, in fact, this results from what he's doing to reduce our budget, then I'm going to fight that tooth and nail.

Comm. Kerr: Let me say I wouldn't be that fast to recommend a 25% cut of the staff here.

Comm. Irving: We voted on it a year and a half or two years ago.

Comm. Kerr: Listen to what I'm saying. I would not be that quick. I think there are a lot of other areas that we should focus on. For one, we are not and we have not made any representation to the Department of Education regarding the amount of money that is being subtracted or taken out of our budget to fund charters. We have not talked to them regarding the fact that we are penalized by the weights he has put there. We know that there's no longer any consideration regarding the Abbott districts, but Abbott is a real condition. Our district is placed behind the more affluent districts of the state. We have to catch up and I don't think we are at that point where we can say we don't need the support any longer. The other thing is last Saturday in our discussions the BA showed a budget line that is an average of \$102 million. Last year we budgeted for \$125 million. It's this year we budgeted for \$125 million. The argument is this budget that is being put together he's going to bring it in line to the actual expenditure of the historical expenditures. So we budget for \$125 million, but he's going to adjust it down to \$102 million or thereabout. Is that correct?

Mr. Kilpatrick: I would say it differently, but yes.

Comm. Kerr: In effect what we would be doing is creating a soft landing for the State Department in terms of our funding. We are saying to them, "We never used the money anyway so you can give us less in terms of the allocation that you usually give us." That's a problem. How can we do that when we're looking to cut 25% of our staff here? It doesn't add up. We need that money because there are areas of our operation that we are not really addressing. We keep moving money around, but the areas in which sometimes really need the money those areas are not getting the money. Then we say we never spend it so we don't have any use for it. I think in our approach we have to look at everything. We have to look at every line and make sure that we are not shortchanging ourselves in the process by telling the State Department we can function and survive with less money than they have been giving us in the past.

Comm. Martinez: I don't think it's a question of whether or not we can survive without the money. We need the resources. We want the resources. But I think we have to be more strategic about how we're spending it. To the point that you were making, we have money that's not being allocated towards certain areas. We need to look at where we're spending that money and spend it a lot more efficiently and effectively. One of the other things we talked about over the weekend at the retreat was the amount of programs. We said there were close to 100 different programs that we offer through the district and those programs have costs that go with them. Do we have to conduct an audit for these programs? Are we getting a return on our investment for all of these programs we're putting out there? What are the measures that we're getting back to say we spent 'x' amount of dollars here and we've seen this return on the investment we've put there? I don't think that we're throwing the money just into the wind at these programs, but when we get down to it it's time to take out the scalpel and start shearing these little things away now as opposed to getting out the hatchet and cutting it all off later on. We have to be very strategic in looking at that. Those programs are something that I think we have to start with. Are we getting a return on those investments? Is it worth spending that money on those programs?

Comm. Irving: I'm sorry to cut you off. Let me retract what I said because Manny says it in a much better way. I say reduction, but I really do mean redundancy or ineffectiveness of positions. So what I'm talking about is do we need to have a director, a supervisor, a coordinator, and three secretaries in order to do a function that isn't performing well even in the function which we have. I think it's in the same breath of the

programs that we have. Are the programs which we finance, support and utilize tried and true? Are they being vetted and tested and really producing a yield when it comes to student achievement? If they are, then that's fantastic. What's our timeline for them to continue and also to be phased out at some point in time? But if they're not functioning well, why are we paying for it? Mr. Kilpatrick and I talked about it last week. A \$5,000 program today, another \$5,000 next month, and another \$5,000 next month, you add that up over the course of 10 or 12 months and we're talking about almost \$60,000 right there. In curriculum we get about three of those at least a month. So we have to be a little more discerning moving forward for what we fund and most importantly for the return that it gives us.

Comm. Kerr: I agree with you. I argued for that. But the point is you cannot precede that by tagging the program and saying you're going to cut it by 25% and you really don't know who is functioning and who is not. We have to do the audit first. Once we have the audit then we can move to that.

Comm. Martinez: The challenge that we face is that we have five weeks. How thorough of an investigation or an audit can we do in five weeks to determine where those cuts need to be made? That's the challenge that we face right now.

Comm. Hodges: The premise is that you have to make cuts. As it was explained at the meeting, the reason we're making cuts is because we weren't using the money. I'm submitting to you that there are a number of programs that should be in place here that aren't which cost money. Lord knows that's why I wanted the compendium in the first place, to be able to judge what is effective, what's not, how many do we have, and for whom. I really want that efficiency and that determination of what's effective in place. The first State Superintendent in this district was Laval Wilson who came here and provided the Paradigm Program, which was simply language arts and math. That was rejected and was found to be wholly inefficient. This community has realized that it needs more than just language arts and math. It needs a well-rounded individual to go through their system and learn. We don't have a well-rounded student in this district or enough of them because we're not providing a well-rounded education for them. Not by comparison to what's going on outside here and who, by the way, our kids compete with. So what I'm saying to you is those programs that exist outside here that our kids don't get, they should be put in place. The first one I'm going to talk about is computer languages. It should be here. If you taught elementary logic Boolean algebra should be taught in elementary schools. It's not. You can go on and on and on, but these things need to be in place and they're not here. None of your academies are where they're supposed to be. They are not functioning in terms of their themes. That's going to require people who have that expertise to come and say you need to do this, that, and the other. All of that costs money. None of that is in place right now because nobody is asking for that. I shouldn't say nobody is asking for it. That dollar is not reflected in what's being put on the budget now. They have to be there. So if you begin to layer those costs on and say that we want a better or more comprehensive educational program for our kids, in addition to that we also want our kids to participate in more after-school activities like soccer, lacrosse, swimming. Now we can tie their after-school activities to their academics and lock them as a leverage to make them work a little harder in school. They all cost money. None of those things are on the table and their costs aren't in your budget. So if those things were in place they would begin to eat at this unused portion that I'm being told is there for these reasons. When I'm looking out at all these academic programs or what we provide for our students academically, I'm seeing a severe deficit given my exposure to other places. That's why I'm saying you want me to cut and offer less than we're already offering? The reason is – I'm being told – because we're not proposing enough. So why would I cut money because people

aren't using the imagination that they should be using to bring these things to the table so we can have a well-rounded, better challenged, and more rigorous educational environment for our kids? I can't see that. If there are other reasons for the cuts, which is why I want to sit down and talk to him, then I can understand that. But if you're just saying to me we're not using the money, the problem to me is that there is a lack of imagination and a lack of a push. If that's the issue, then change that because once you cut it, it's not coming back.

Comm. Kerr: Mr. Kilpatrick, is the budget that we are putting together and we'll be presenting to the Department of Education less than the 2012-2013 budget?

Mr. Kilpatrick: It depends on the amount of revenues that are provided by the state and the tax levy that we approve.

Comm. Kerr: No. The budget that we submit they can say this is what we are going to fund.

Comm. Hodges: That's right.

Comm. Kerr: That doesn't mean it has any relationship to what we present as a budget that we need to address our needs here.

Comm. Hodges: Nor should it.

Mr. Kilpatrick: My responsibility as a Business Administrator is to provide a balanced budget to the state by a certain time. It's codified.

Comm. Kerr: What does a balanced budget mean?

Mr. Kilpatrick: It means we have to balance the revenue streams that we earn or have or estimate with the expenditures that we plan to appropriate.

Comm. Kerr: What do we estimate then from the State Department for the district?

Mr. Kilpatrick: Right now we are estimating that we would have flat revenue streams, both on our tax levy and our state appropriation.

Comm. Kerr: So it's the same as...

Mr. Kilpatrick: As what we had last year.

Comm. Hodges: But the costs have gone up.

Mr. Kilpatrick: Absolutely.

Comm. Hodges: There's a cut then.

Comm. Kerr: There's a cut and we have never addressed these issues with the State Department of Education, that we are being pressured with the charters in a way that we are penalized with the student attendance. We have never made those representations to them telling them that these are some of the things that are causing unnecessary harm to the district, have we?

Mr. Kilpatrick: Have I personally?

Comm. Kerr: No. Have we?

Mr. Kilpatrick: Has the Board? Not that I'm aware of.

Dr. Evans: No, we have not.

Comm. Kerr: We have not. So why have we not made that presentation?

Mr. Kilpatrick: I don't think that's a question for me.

Comm. Kerr: I'm just asking you. I'm not the leader here. I think these are some of the issues. We have not done an audit, but we are willing at the same time to say we're going to knock out 25% of our administrative staff.

Dr. Evans: Mr. Kerr, I did that two Commissioners ago, appeal for more money, and I was told we had to live within what we were given.

Comm. Irving: I'll be honest with you. I think that posture isn't going to change much, at least while this Governor is here. My concern is exactly what Errol just mentioned. We have five weeks to put together a comprehensive budget from an allocation that is just pure crap. What I'm trying to leverage is the fact that I recognize we're not going to get our fair share and I recognize that this administration is not going to give it to us either. The other thing looming on the horizon is a pretty steep deficit that we're going to have to deal with if not this year then next year and the year after. So there has to be some action by this Board to mitigate that in some capacity while making sure we maintain the integrity of the education in our district. I just don't think we can ignore that. We cannot ignore that and be fiscally responsible in recognizing what can be done to head that path off under this current budget cycle.

Comm. Kerr: We are saying they are not going to do this and that, but we have a responsibility to ask and push, not just to sit back and say this is what they're going to do. We are adopting a very passive approach to this thing and I don't believe it's working for us. Let them start taking money for charters then. They need to do something. They must recognize our situation here. You're telling us to get rid of 25% of administrative staff here and we will not have a problem with that? I don't think so. I really don't think so.

Comm. Hodges: I know we used to vote down our budgets because they were actually, quite frankly, illegal. They ran contrary to what the Supreme Court says. If you submit that budget this time it will also run contrary to what the Supreme Court says and told Mr. Christie in his first year when he cut the budget that he's supposed to provide. Dr. Evans is not going to take Mr. Christie to court, which is unfortunate, but that's what should occur. When we did take them to court in the past we have won. Corzine cut our budget, we took them to court, and we won because he did not have the right to do it and neither does Christie. Dr. Evans is not going to do that. It's clear. However, I have a single vote. I'm not going to vote to do Christie's job for him. I'm not going to do that. Not when I know that we have substantial needs. I anticipate already a narrowing of that slope because of the Common Core. I can't see that. In addition to that, when I know that even if we were to maintain current levels we're still going to come in below what we need to provide for our students. I have not seen any evidence to the contrary. So for me to participate in cutting a budget when I know that's not what our students need and, by the way, is contrary to what the Supreme Court says we're supposed to have, I'm not even going to get into the charter school nonsense or his changing the

formula arbitrarily off the books and the attendance thing. How do I accept that? Yes, we do have to be fiscally responsible and I realize that. But I think that what has to happen is I'm prepared to sit down and find programs that I'm going to demand that Dr. Evans institute and let him and the state tell me that we can't have them. When that slope narrows and he comes to complain about how poorly your students have done, I'm going to pull out that list that he forced us to cut and say, "You're absolutely right and here's the reason why." But if I agree to submit a budget that does not do that, that does not ask what I understand we need, then I am assisting him and being complicit in what he's doing to undermine the education of our kids and I can't do that.

Comm. Irving: I think you should provide that. To me, the suggestions and recommendations of the Board need to be leveraged against what we have presently that may or may not be working.

Comm. Hodges: As long as we don't have the control, then the problem shifts to the State Superintendent of Schools who says then, "I can't submit what you're requesting because I'm told I can't give you that funding." But as a Board member, I'm not going to agree to give him a budget which is less than what we need and say I'm going along with what you're saying. No, I can't do that because the next four years I'll be in the same position of undermining our educational program and what he has accomplished here. He used those people. Not all of them are effective. I understand that and we need new and different people, but you know about the high school which has to be changed. You know it better than I do and so does Mr. Simmons over there. So to demand less is unconscionable. We have to have more programs here. When we first started out they did not want to use the GPA program. They didn't want to do it. Now it's showing some real dividends.

Comm. Irving: With athletics.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely, but it's not just athletics. It's with all extracurricular after-school activities. So what you do there is you have more programs. You have a French club, a computer club, a science club, a youth and government program, and bring in more students and then use that to leverage their activities. You move into the elementary schools and you bring programs there, not the least of which is going to be chess and a few other things like computing languages so that you capture their attention. I had Spanish in fourth grade. Unfortunately, I was busy drawing Spider Man so I didn't pass that very well, but I had Spanish in fourth grade. We should have that in elementary schools, particularly in this community, Spanish, French, Chinese, or whatever. The fact that it's not there is a shame on us. So to tell me that I should sit there and say rather than provide needed services to these kids I should just quit and cut their budgets because Christie wants to, no. What do we do with the Common Core when those test scores come back finally, that first set? What do we do with that? We have to establish programs to address that. And quite frankly, looking at this task force on student achievement, there are going to be a lot of things we need to do around parental involvement that we are not doing now and they all cost money. There are a lot more things because you're beginning to look at culture. Just this Sunday they were looking at why immigrant groups that come here are extremely successful and that success dies off in the third generation. Why? Because they come with a different set of drives and a different set of attitudes which they lose over time. But you need to capture that initial approach to education and we need to spend some time trying to infuse that into our communities where that education is failing. Young Black males and Latino males are high on that list. You're going to need an expensive program to address that alone on a high level. So if you cut your budget, how do you do that? And what do you say is your fix for that? There's no closing of that gap, none. That's why

I'm sitting here saying, you want me to cut that money? How and do the same things? How do I do it? The discussion needs to be we need this. I need a plan for this. What is it going to cost? If he tells me, "I can't afford it," which is his responsibility to tell me, then fine. Let him tell me he can't afford it, but I want these programs in place. I can give you a list starting tonight and let him tell me he can't afford it, that he won't submit that budget. I'll be there in the press tomorrow saying our kids need this, but we're being told we can't afford it. It's not your fault. We're being told we can't afford it. I'm not going to agree to that because the Supreme Court says you can. The Supreme Court says you submit a budget for what you need, not for what Christie wants.

Comm. Mendez: I hear you, Comm. Hodges. Talking about the program we definitely have to look at the program that we have and maybe replace it for the other program that really works. That's the same direction that I'm going to. There are a lot of programs that we need. I was thinking the other day that there are so many parents that need help with the homework after school and so many after-school programs that we have to have to help our kids with their homework. We definitely have to do that. I have a question. Let me just see how I ask this question because I think this is an executive session question. Stop me if I'm wrong. On the 2015 budget submission, is there any reflection about the teacher negotiations?

Comm. Irving: I'm sure there will be, but we can't talk about it now. At the retreat it was mentioned that it certainly has an effect, but that's not something that we can discuss openly. But if you want to discuss it we can have an executive session at the next Board meeting. We can certainly have that conversation about where negotiations are in general.

Comm. Mendez: More specifically, I would like to know if the new budget will reflect any changes on that. That has to be in executive session, I'm assuming.

Comm. Irving: Yes, or maybe you can just meet with the BA and have that sidebar. After the meeting he can at least explain to you some of the parameters that don't violate that executive session piece but at least takes into account the many scenarios based on where we are and what may happen in negotiations. How it impacts the budget impacts how we settle this process. Being that the process isn't settled yet there are a lot of different variables that could...

Comm. Mendez: I definitely will because I think that's a very important piece. We've been suffering because of that for the past four years. I think in this new budget cycle there has to be a change on that. It cannot be one more year. That's my feeling. Going back to talking about the program, I truly believe that we have to replace a lot of programs that don't work. We're spending thousands and millions of dollars and we don't see the outcomes and results. We have to be honest. We have to do that. Also, talking about the staff, I think that we cannot be having a supervisor of a supervisor of a supervisor. We have to look into that. There are different areas, but going back to the program there are a lot of programs that we don't have in the district that other cities have. Our kids are very disadvantaged in terms of those programs.

Comm. Irving: A dream would be, and if we get this right, the first thing would be what Errol said, to do an audit financially of what we have and then from a compliance standpoint what's working and what's not. If we take the programs that are not working, what money does that leave us with to get to your point? To me that seems like a much more fruitful conversation to have. We just don't have figures, but we have an assessment tool and model that could be used to figure out what programs we presently use and have been using and are working or not working that allow us the opportunity to

maybe pilot or introduce different programs that we can actually add into the budget for. But that is incumbent upon honestly having some type of audit of programs and most importantly there being some communication about how effective these programs have been.

Comm. Martinez: Do we have any type of comprehensive list of those programs, the costs associated with them, and some type of metric that we can determine are we getting a return on this program? Does something like that currently exist? Is there something that we can throw together that we can dig into that a little bit? I think that's a fair starting point. We need to look at that first.

Comm. Hodges: We've asked that the Business Administrator do just that, that when it comes to a program he gives us an evaluation of the program. The problem is in five weeks I don't think you're going to get that comprehensive review. So this is going to be a two-year process, at the very least.

Dr. Evans: We may be closer than you think. Every major program has an evaluation component and data is collected, and most of it is achievement data. So the same data that we share with you reflecting increases in HSPA or New Jersey ASK is the same data that is used to assess the effectiveness of every major academic program. Or if we even get into some of the more specialized programs, like Read 180 or Math 180, there is evaluation information. It's simply a matter of assembling it and in some cases we've already done that. We haven't done it comprehensively district-wide, but it would not take a great deal of effort to put that together.

Comm. Irving: I just think that's the most responsible way to go. I'm just talking about this sphere of programs. To me the most responsible thing to do would be to go back. My concern is there are a lot of folks in this building and also principals who have programs that are like their pet projects or pet programs. Just because it's your pet program or project doesn't mean it's good or still necessary. I don't want to pick on certain departments, but I know we had some reading specialist program. I'm looking at Suzie because I think it was around the time that you came into your position so you might remember it because I think you're the only one left from that crew. We had some program where we were training teachers to get their masters.

Comm. Hodges: They were reading coaches.

Comm. Irving: They went through the program and then the next year we found out that none of them were placed in a reading specialist position or role. He flipped and I flipped because of the cost versus the investment of having people provide those services. Those types of scenarios concern me because if we don't have a venue or avenue for them, as great a resource as they are, it may not be feasible at this point in time to make that investment in a program such as that.

Dr. Evans: I would offer caution with something like that because that was not a function of the program. That was a staffing problem. The people who were supposed to make those changes didn't do it and they're not in those positions anymore. Those people are now in other positions for the most part. Be careful in terms of sorting through what's called confounding variables in research terminology that have an impact that you didn't expect because somebody didn't do their job.

Comm. Irving: Sure.

Comm. Hodges: Curriculum is supposed to drive the budget. Curriculum imperatives are supposed to drive the budget and what the Board is supposed to do is to ask for what it thinks its students need. The Superintendent's job is to create a plan for what we've asked for and tell us we can do this and we can't do that. That's the job. We should be demanding high heaven and he is supposed to say, "You can't get high heaven today. You can get close." But for us to say, "We're going to help you cut the budget?" No. You want to bring as much as you can to the table in terms of educational product, as many different products and as much as you can. His job is to say, "Slow down there a little bit because we have this and that to worry about." It is not our job to help cut their budget, particularly in this district where the law says if we need it we're supposed to get it. That's the other part of that. That's what I'm having the most trouble with and why I'm so terribly worried. I do not want to set that precedent that we're saying, "You're right. Take the money back." They want to be able to say it's not the money. That was the premise of the entire Abbott decision and the basis for which the Supreme Court says there is a large component that's based on money. So what I'm saying to you is we should be talking about, "Dr. Evans, the slope is like this. It's going down. What do you need to keep it up or go a little further, and by the way, expand what we offer to our kids, what's it going to cost, what kind of programs do we need to do that, what other things can we have to enhance what we're already doing in terms of our district, and then figure out how we pay for it." That's what should happen.

Comm. Irving: Fair enough. Is there anything else on priorities and recommendations as we begin to wind up for the budget season? I guess the next step, Mr. Kilpatrick, is that you will, based on some of this conversation and your conversation with the finance committee and Dr. Evans and once you have the state appropriation, the actual firm number, help put together the proposed budget for this year. Just walk us through what we can expect over the next few weeks. I think it will be very important for us to know that moving forward.

Comm. Hodges: We're going to have to have a conversation as a Board as to what's available and what's possible here.

Comm. Irving: I don't know if we want to do it maybe in an executive session, but I do think that we as a Board need to pick three or four concrete serious recommendations to pass over to the Superintendent and say, "Listen, here are three or four of the Board's priorities and what we want to see done." My take on it is to make it happen. So if you find other programs that are ineffective and that don't work push them out.

Comm. Hodges: Yes, that's right.

Comm. Irving: Let me talk to Cheryl. If we can get together next week and just have that conversation amongst each other I think it would be more than worthwhile. Then we can collectively bring it to the table. This is where the governing piece for us comes into play. You'll advocate for what you want and vice-versa.

Comm. Martinez: So prior to that meeting we'd have to have the list and the costs attached to those programs.

Comm. Irving: What Dr. Hodges is speaking of are recommendations from the Board on special programs that we feel...

Comm. Martinez: That could eventually be switched... Okay.

Comm. Hodges: It's like you're a kid. You want everything and he has to tell you what you can and can't have.

Comm. Martinez: He's Santa Claus and we'll put together the wish list to see what he can deliver.

Comm. Hodges: That's right.

Comm. Irving: But it should be the Superintendent's and his administrator's responsibility to fold those priorities into the budget. You've said this time and time again, but I just think it's true. That does have a cost to it financially. So we implement one and as Dr. Evans always says we have to pull from somewhere else. I defer and say that if that happens we do that with an eye for what may not be working or effective.

Comm. Mendez: We're talking about the deadline of two weeks.

Comm. Irving: Mr. Kilpatrick is going to share that with us.

Comm. Hodges: Remember, the original premise was this was a packet of money that had been asked for and went unused.

Comm. Irving: So you're saying let's make sure we use it.

Comm. Hodges: That's exactly right.

Comm. Irving: I'm sitting here and I hear you because that is a problem. If we have a budget that should be spent every year the fact that we have a surplus is dangerous on several fronts.

Dr. Evans: I wouldn't use the word surplus, though. It gets back to us living beyond our means and relying on carryover money to survive. That's dangerous. We should not develop our budget based on carryover money. But that's what we've been doing and that's what we've been living off of. That carryover is getting smaller and smaller and eventually it's going to go away. I prefer to look at it as an exercise in establishing priorities. We have priorities as a district and that list needs to be reexamined. That chart that Mr. Kilpatrick shared with you all has the seven objectives and initiatives aligned with them. There are other things obviously that we need to talk about like parent and community engagement. I think we all agree that's an area where we need to do some serious work in and do a much better job than we have in engaging our parents and our community. No question about it. So as we look at that chart for 14-15 that needs to go on there. That needs to be a priority. Some of the things Dr. Hodges has mentioned are actually things that need to go on here. When they get on that chart it's like we're going to find the money to do it.

Comm. Irving: So let's do this. Let's get together next week and have that conversation amongst ourselves. If each of us has recommendations let's bring them to the table and be prepared to defend them. Then I'd like for us to leave that conversation with the Board's priorities for the Superintendent. One of the reasons why I always voted the budget down when I first got on the Board is because the truth of the matter is we really didn't have much influence on helping to shape it. Over the course of the last two years or so I think we've had more input and influence. Once you do that we have to take some ownership as well of this process. So let's own this process because if we don't say this is what we want to see, especially at this point and juncture, there's no point. I

yield to say that's a terrific suggestion. Cheryl, I know we have a Board meeting on Wednesday. We could have this conversation tomorrow.

Comm. Mendez: That's where I'm going.

Comm. Irving: Maybe we'll do it next week - maybe the Tuesday before the actual Board meeting itself.

Comm. Mendez: Mr. President, I think that if the agenda is not too heavy for tomorrow maybe we can take a little bit of time.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Hodges won't be here and I won't actually be here tomorrow either.

Comm. Mendez: We only have two weeks. It's going to have to be before the regular meeting, right?

Comm. Irving: We have about five weeks for the budget to be developed and adopted.

Mr. Kilpatrick: Can we talk about that real quick? The final adoption that we have polled the Board will be a special meeting on March 27th. The final authorization has to be done by the 31st. We set up the date of the 27th for our meeting. We have to submit a preliminary budget by March 5th.

Comm. Irving: So let's have this conversation next week.

Mr. Kilpatrick: Maybe next week part of the discussion is the whole discussion about presenting what we want to present in reference to the Commissioner. We have to present the budget. It really should be balanced and we can talk about how to do that differently than it has been done in the past.

Comm. Irving: I don't know about you guys, but I'm committed outside of our regular meetings leading up to the adoption of the budget. We've got to meet, not just in the finance committee, but as a whole. This time of the year should be cumbersome because we're dealing with the most important piece of what we do, which is our money. If it may take two or three meetings during the week, you guys are able to make it, but maybe for the other folks who have been slacking a little bit maybe we can encourage them and make sure that this is the time that we really need their vote and opinion. Our money is it. This is how we're going to serve our kids, not just today, but in the future. Are there any other key dates, Mr. Kilpatrick, you want to tell us about?

Mr. Kilpatrick: No, that's it. That's the two big ones.

Comm. Irving: Thank you.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

No speakers.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. Hodges: I went to Trenton today to the SDA. We met with Mr. McKenna, who replaced Mr. Mark Larkin. Mark Larkin is in the comptroller's office. His assistant is still there, but Mr. McKenna is the new CEO. Some things that you need to be aware of, I was assured even before I got into the auditorium that our projects are moving forward, their timetables remain fixed. School 16 is being looked at. Do they have an architect? Everything is on course. However, for those two projects they're moving ahead with Hazel/Marshall. What was said to me is he was giving me the rigmarole about needing public comments more than anything else. We need to get out in front of that and talk about what we want to do at Don Bosco. It was mentioned to me that they want to tear down one building, build that, and then tear down the other one. He said there's a process and we have to get public comment. I assured him the public would be heavily in favor of that because of that location. School 5 is overcrowded. School 27 is overcrowded.

Comm. Irving: So what do we need to do?

Comm. Hodges: Have a public discussion about what we plan to do with that school and have the community made aware so that when they come say this is the next step that step will already be done. There will be no need for any further public discussion. We can roll out our plans and then put them on the hot seat to push that.

Comm. Irving: So can we ask the Superintendent and/or the Chief of Staff to help facilitate a public hearing or public meeting to discuss the potential of a new facility being built in the Second Ward of the city?

Dr. Evans: We need to get him here and our Facilities Director, myself, Ms. Shafer, and several other people need to be in the room, including the facilities chair, so we all have a common understanding of what the expectations are. Historically they've said one thing to you and then they come to us and say something totally different. So that's why I want everybody in the room at the same time while he's speaking so we all know what to do and then we move forward. That needs to happen very soon, within the next few days.

Comm. Irving: Cheryl is going to schedule the meeting. I just acknowledged the whole thing to her.

Comm. Hodges: He said he'd come within the next six weeks. He also had no problem meeting with parents when he walked around. Linda Reid asked...

Comm. Irving: It seems like a night and day...

Comm. Hodges: I don't think Mark said we couldn't have parents around. We need to find out for sure what we want to do with Don Bosco and have that planned. This is what we want to do and then the other discussion was not with him but it concerned this building. That's all I'm going to say.

Comm. Mendez: Dr. Evans, I would like to know if this is possible. I think that we're going to have another storm tomorrow. Last week it was chaos in the city because of

the way DPW and the city conducted themselves. They never plowed the snow. Then they didn't take the school areas as a priority. Personally I saw different incidents happening outside of School 15. By Oak Street two buses with kids were stuck in the snow on the opposite side. It was really dangerous. I was there. I think that we should send a memo to the city, the Mayor, and DPW just to please let them know that they have to take school areas as a priority to plow the snow and keep the area clean because that's where we have the highest traffic in the morning. There are hundreds of parents dropping their children off and at the end of the day they pick them up. School areas have to be a priority.

Dr. Evans: I've actually already discussed it with him. He and I actually talked during the snow and have had several conversations after the snow. We've talked on the phone. I've done just that. I've expressed concern and he agrees schools are our top priority, along with hospitals and other critical public service entities in the city. I've done that orally. I don't have a problem putting something like that in writing either. But just so that you know, it's been done.

Comm. Mendez: Also, in terms of the school buildings, I received a couple of phone calls. For example, at School 25 there has always been a discussion about whether the playground in the back on Trenton Avenue belongs to the school or to the city. It looks like the school staff didn't clean that area. It was a mess. I think that we should also send a memo to all the principals because there's going to have to be staff early in the morning making sure that everything is going to be clean by the time we receive the kids with their parents. We have to be proactive. New York City did a great job. It was incredible. They were from 3:00 a.m. cleaning. In the morning they have a regular schedule during the storm. I think that we have to do a little better job on that, especially the city. I appreciate that you got in contact with the Mayor and the DPW.

Comm. Hodges: I received a text from Councilman Sayegh. He says his constituents were concerned about the steps leading up to School 15. They weren't being cleared. By now it's probably full of ice so it's probably very dangerous.

Dr. Evans: We'll take care of it.

Comm. Cleaves: I got that call, too. I'm not exactly sure what steps. While we're talking about schools and safety, at School 26 and School 1 there has to be something done about the traffic. In the mornings and the afternoons no one should be allowed in that cul-de-sac but the school buses.

Dr. Evans: Mr. Johnson should be hearing this.

Comm. Cleaves: At School 26 and School 1 that cul-de-sac in the morning and in the afternoon parents' cars should not be allowed to go in there, only school buses because it is a nightmare. I've been there. We should all have to park on the street and walk the kids into the building. With that traffic there and the kids are walking in between the cars, somebody is going to get seriously hurt really bad. Then you got school buses that can't get in to drop the kids off because the parents are sitting there watching the child walk from the car into the building, into the class, hanging up their coats, and they're still sitting there. So that cul-de-sac at School 26 and School 1, we have to get a handle on that or one of our children is going to be seriously hurt.

Comm. Simmons: To your point, that has always been a problem. I think part of the issue is that part of that area is residential. Secondly, it's the parents that just don't want to cooperate with parking on 11th Avenue and walking kids to the building. They

don't want to cooperate. That's part of your issue. I've tried to communicate with the parents, but it's something that they just don't want to do. They would rather just drive through. In the absence of police presence, I'm not sure how you're going to...

Comm. Cleaves: There's a security guard on 11th Avenue and East 32nd. Last week I'm riding by there after all of the snow...

Comm. Simmons: A security guard or a crossing guard?

Comm. Cleaves: The crossing guard.

Comm. Simmons: There are two. There's one on 33rd and one on 32nd.

Comm. Cleaves: And there's a police officer on 31st, as soon as you come out of School 1. But I'm looking for the crossing guard because they're directing the traffic and she's sitting in her car drinking water. I blew a head gasket.

Comm. Simmons: But that's public safety.

Comm. Cleaves: But they're watching our children, supposedly crossing them across the street, and you have all of this traffic. It's at 3:10, the bulk of the traffic, and she's sitting in her car drinking water. I was floored.

Comm. Irving: Anything else?

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.