

MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING

February 6, 2013 – 6:15 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Present:

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

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves
Comm. Wendy Guzman
*Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Errol Kerr
Comm. Alex Mendez

Absent:

Comm. Manuel Martinez
Comm. Kenneth Simmons, Vice President

Comm. Corey Teague

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

Comm. Guzman 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:

**Workshop Meeting
February 6, 2013 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.

DISCUSSION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Comm. Irving: We can pick up where we left off on this conversation and continue it and then we'll go into Presentations and Communications. Let me just say this. Ms. Pollak, I understand that someone additional can help with legal information and providing information for principals, teachers, and folks who have rudimentary questions

about legal concerns. Is that what a paralegal is for? Can a paralegal provide that information as well?

Ms. Pollak: No.

Comm. Irving: What does a paralegal do?

Ms. Pollak: One of the paralegal functions is the legal department took over the OPRA function, the custodian of records, and that becomes a large function.

Comm. Irving: As many times as we get OPRA in this district, I'm sure.

Ms. Pollak: And we were very lucky we found a really terrific paralegal candidate. So my expectation is that he will grow into a larger role than maybe some paralegals might. But it's research, handling a lot of low-level requests that come in, subpoenas, document requests, collection issues, and policies. We will see as he develops what will happen. No, I would not ask a paralegal by and large to answer legal issues with a principal. But let me just tell you this. When I'm in a meeting or out of my office and principals call in with emergent matters there really isn't anybody to answer the question. I actually have some confidence that our paralegal can cover for me. That is one of the problems when you are by yourself.

Comm. Irving: But from what I understand the paralegal is a lawyer, though. He's not a slouch.

Ms. Pollak: I consider us very fortunate. That's true.

Comm. Irving: Are there any other questions? Just from the labor relations side as well, Mr. Rojas, it's in tune with the same question I asked Ms. Moloney. Again, the numbers here don't give me a clear picture for where we've come versus where we are. So if we can just share that it would be very helpful.

Mr. Luis Rojas: I came to the department about three years ago and when I took over the department grievances were about 175. They've gone down dramatically over the years. Today I just responded to my last updated grievance and we're at 23. They've dramatically decreased. It's a monthly arbitration. All the grievances are heard every month so there are no differences or charges there. As far as unfair labor practices, those have been dramatically decreased as well. I think we have two open UOPs right now. When I first took over the department three years ago we were in the low double digits, somewhere around 12 or so. I can give you exact numbers if you want, but they've dramatically decreased over the years.

Dr. Evans: If I may add to Luis' comments, and he didn't include this, and I don't know if he did it intentionally, but he's under-representing what he does. He spends a great deal of time preventing grievances. We get letters complaining about this and that or we're going to file a grievance from all the unions and he is actively engaged with those individuals and preventing a grievance from even surfacing. So I would say to you that he is as valuable if not more in working through problems that will lead to a grievance as compared to resolving the grievances. So there's a lot more that he does that's not captured in either what he said or is represented here.

Comm. Kerr: I thank you for that comment regarding Luis. What I want to say about that is simply this. This is how the operation should be, everybody doing work. I really don't believe that we are getting that kind of response from our people who are

entrusted with these critical positions in our district. It's all about something else other than performing at the highest level and that's my concern really. Hearing you say that I'm very pleased and thank you for that comment.

Comm. Irving: Here's the concern I have. We've identified that clearly on some level there's a need, but we've also identified there's a staff member who's not here yet who can fill that need. Before we leap and jump to bringing someone it does not sound to me like we need, if the legal department has now shifted, four and a half. We go from one person to four and a half people and I just don't know if at this point in time if any of the information presented justifies adding an additional person because we've not benchmarked or gauged what the true capacity is. Ms. Pollak has been here in her role for six months, but we still are missing the other support system for her in order to understand exactly what that person can do or can handle. That's why I was so alarmed by it at the meeting, Dr. Evans. It just seems like this happened so quickly. Ms. Pollak, I don't want to downplay the fact that there's certainly support that needs to happen within the legal department, but that's why we hired someone to do this job. Just because the person isn't here or is sick we just don't go and hire somebody else and say when that person comes back we'll work it out and figure it out. I feel like we've got to know for sure that the need is truly there, but you can't address that need unless you have benchmarked or gauged the capacity of the folks who are currently in the job.

Comm. Kerr: We heard from Ms. Moloney tonight that the demand level has decreased significantly. We also heard from Mr. Rojas that in his area there's also a decrease. For me to feel fully justified in my judgment that we really need to add an additional person in the department I need to be looking at facts and matching them up with what we have and that is not presented. It's kind of difficult. If I'm hearing one thing there and I'm not presented with something to counterbalance whatever I'm told there then I find it very difficult to make that judgment. I really would like to be given the list of how many cases we have done and the present demand on our legal department right now. Until we get that it's going to be difficult for me to justify that. I believe if we are adding somebody we must make a determination that those jobs that we contract to outside firms and individuals we are going to attack those. We will see a drastic reduction. If that cannot be presented in terms of numbers I still have my questions.

Comm. Irving: Here's my general concern with what Comm. Kerr said. Dr. Evans, this was presented by you at the last Board meeting as a cost-saving measure. There is nothing tonight that indicates that will indeed be so. There's no guarantee that by bringing on someone that these costs are actually going to go down. Especially with all the legal happenings in Trenton right now they could actually increase. This was initially presented by you to this Board at the Board meeting that we'd be saving so much. It's just not the case. So I don't want to be taken or perceived as naive enough to believe that these numbers are here. I don't know the intent for presenting the rough estimates. I don't know if at face value the thought was this is what we were going to save from. That's why I asked the question what is in-house and what is out-house, what is contracted and my arrows kept going in the outer component. There's nothing here that indicates that we are indeed going to save money at the end of the day, especially because we still have someone who is an employee of the district who is being paid to do this work even though they're gone. Until we know the capacity of what that person can do it doesn't seem fiscally responsible to bring somebody else in.

Dr. Evans: It is equally irresponsible to not be responsive to many of the issues that we deal with on a daily basis. Being responsive in a timely manner, as opposed to not being that responsive and paying for it on the other end because we didn't respond. That has happened. We are a \$560 million operation. People sue us all the time. They

threaten, but then in many cases they do. Principals call regularly and ask legal questions. All kinds of things happen within the divisions that require legal advice, legal review, and legal guidance. I don't make a major decision without consulting with Lisa in terms of the legalities, good, bad, or indifferent, as it relates to what we do. One or even two attorneys cannot satisfy that need in a district of 5,000 employees and one that is as highly vulnerable as we are. It is a daily problem. I see it. I live it every single day. Ideally we should have probably four or five attorneys. We really should. I know that's really getting too unrealistic in terms of our budget and our expectations. So I chose to work within what the budget is telling us that we're spending now and taking that as our guide knowing that we're going to spend for outside representation in some of these areas because we cannot have enough attorneys to represent all of these areas adequately, particularly areas such as contracts that represent about \$22,000. It would be unreasonable to seek someone with that as their only area of expertise to be an in-house counsel. But there are some big buckets here and there are things that are not written here that you don't see that represent the cost. As a result, I respectfully disagree with your assumptions and suggestions in this area. It's killing us and if you want to see us pay more money, then the first thing that we need to do is not react and not hire any additional attorneys. Then you will see more lawsuits. Laurie Moloney mentioned that assuming the position of holding the line when people threaten to sue us. She's heard that from me over and over again. We're not going to stand by and let people just file all of these frivolous suits and then we decide to settle. That's not my position and I hold everyone to that level of standard and expectation. If you threaten to sue us you'd better be ready to bring it on because we're going to fight. And if we settle it's because we've determined that this is one where we did something wrong or there was a reason associated with it. Otherwise, we're going to court. That requires money, time, and legal expertise. It is a huge issue that requires a lot more support than we're providing right now.

Comm. Irving: I absolutely agree with you, Dr. Evans. I understand that, but I think the district owes it to itself to look at the capacity. You say that, but no one is litigating anything. I understand what you're saying, but no one is litigating anything. That's just the hardcore fact. None of the lawyers we have in-house at this point in time are litigating anything. Yet, we're absolutely overwhelmed. I'm bringing this up because you've just said that we're absolutely overwhelmed and taken to the tee. If that's the case, wouldn't it make sense to wait for the person whose job it is to help ease that burden to come back and see exactly where we are? We're adding an additional expenditure to personnel for a position that I'm not confident has really been vetted to a degree of necessity. That's the point I'm just trying to understand. We get this deputy counsel and that person can now do more legal work. But who's to say that person doesn't counteract the skills and attributes that the current person who's supposed to be representing us has as well? I just feel very uncomfortable not knowing that information. I'm not saying personally no to having a deputy counsel. But what I am saying is that sometimes you have to take a step back and truly assess what the present need is. Coming from here and even coming from here the need does not seem to be. If it is, it's not reflected here. By the conversation you and I had on the phone today you were privy to information that clearly we don't have. So again, you're making these comments with the information, data, evidence, and knowledge that you, as the Superintendent, are given. This Board can only go by the information that you supply to us. I've been given today a spreadsheet with three different sections and numbers and a one and a half page summary. It's not the information that can at least make me feel comfortable and say we're dealing with A, B, C, and D and here's the reason why we need to bring someone else new on.

Comm. Mendez: I also believe something that will help is that once that person that is out sick comes back we can analyze who's in charge of what in the department. That's the only way that we're going to see who's accountable for what category and what area. Something that I would like to see is general litigation and general counseling being taken care of in-house and not by someone from the outside. General litigation you can spend a lot of money and its unpredictable the amount of money you can spend on that. If we need to bring somebody it has to be somebody that covers at least two of those categories or maybe three. But at least that particular category caught my attention. We have to go outside. I'm not quite sure if I'm right on this, but do we really need to have a lawyer taking care of labor issues? Why can't we have that in-house? That caught my attention constantly. I know that we have a person from outside that takes care of labor and I know that's very costly for the district.

Dr. Evans: That person is also our lead negotiator with the unions, a very critical role. So there's more to that one than meets the eye. You're talking about bringing someone in cold in the middle of some very interesting union negotiations.

Comm. Mendez: Looking forward into the future I think we have to look for those options. In order for us to save money we have to bring people sharp enough to take care of those topics because that's where the big problems are based on.

Comm. Irving: Not to be critical and no offense to Ms. Moloney and Ms. Pollak, I don't know if any of the lawyers we have currently on staff have a background in labor relations. I agree with you, but I don't know if anybody here has the expertise to engage in ongoing negotiations the way Mr. Murray has to while he's hire to do so. Maybe the answer is the expertise doesn't exist presently.

Comm. Kerr: I just believe that Dr. Evans is obligated in this sense to present to this Board adequate information clearly outlining and defining the role of such a person and the level of work that generates this position to be created. I think we need to have that information clearly on the table and that will help us to make a decision one way or the other.

Comm. Irving: I just want to echo Comm. Kerr. My suggestion and recommendation is that we keep a holding pattern until the Board gets provided with the information. I just truly do not feel comfortable with where we're moving to without at least the Board knowing where we are and what the true pressing need is and the justification for it. I just firmly believe it hasn't been met.

Dr. Evans: I will bring you back information but know that I am equally uncomfortable with where we are, very uncomfortable.

Comm. Kerr: Dr. Evans, I understand. But it's only reasonable for you to outline it to us so we can share the information that you have and find out where the discomfort is. Right now we're not told so we're on a different track.

Comm. Irving: I would like to revisit this conversation at the Board meeting and see if we can at least come to some type of resolution by the Board. I'm sure you will do what you feel is best, but I just want to be very clear and firm if I don't feel comfortable with this I will make it very clear as a Board member to you, the County Superintendent, and even to the Commissioner of my concern about this and for this. For me this is all happening so rapidly and so fast and I believe this conversation should have come to the Board a heck of a lot sooner. Again, it's that whole communication piece. I think if it had it would not have changed the discussion, but it certainly might have changed the

way I perceive how this was supposed to be presented to the Board. Are there any final comments on this?

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Discussion on Internal Audit Report Findings on Early Childhood Provider Paterson YMCA Preschool for the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year

Ms. Nancy Aguado-Holtje: Good evening. My name is Nancy Aguado-Holtje and I'm the Director of Early Childhood. I'm here to speak about the audit. The Paterson Internal Audit conducted an audit of the Paterson YMCA Preschool, a provider participating in the New Jersey Department of Education Preschool Education Program for compliance with the terms of the contract for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The provider is a non-profit childcare center providing services to the children of Paterson, New Jersey. The center is located at 128 Ward Street in Paterson and was budgeted to serve a total of 90 children. The 2011-2012 approved budget totaled \$1,167,623. As a result of the audit four deficiencies were noted which I will identify and provide our corrective action and method of implementation. The first finding was the New Jersey DOE preschool program and the corrective action is the district will recover \$156,397.96 from the provider. The method of implementation is to reduce the tuition payments to the provider. Finding number two – the auditors noted minor accounting errors and the corrective action is the district will direct the provider to implement fiscal controls that will eliminate accounting errors. The method of implementation is to continue to review the general ledger and the expenditure report to ensure that accounting controls are in place. Finding number three – expenditure for shared costs charged to the preschool program did not correlate to the actual costs. The corrective action is the district will ensure monthly expenses are posted in accordance to actual costs incurred. The Department of Early Childhood will verify that monthly billings are supported by invoices with clear allocation and description of the shared costs. The district will verify prior years' costs. The method of implementation is review all shared monthly costs to actual billing invoices. The final finding was the deficiencies noted in the review of required staff credentials. The corrective action is the district will continue to do site visits and documentation reviews to ensure all required documentation is on file. The method of implementation is to continue the site visits and documentation reviews.

Comm. Cleaves: Can you read the first infraction again?

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: They underspent their budget and we're going to take back what they underspent, which was \$156,397.96.

Comm. Cleaves: The provider underspent it.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: Yes.

Comm. Irving: As a follow-up to that question, is that because they had a line item that they didn't pay for? Was there an expense that time ran out for and they didn't have time to purchase? That seems like a big ticket item.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: It's not just one. It's various items throughout the budget that they didn't spend and then it has to be taken back.

Comm. Irving: Interesting - to the tune of \$156,000? What did they plan on spending? Were they planning on buying a curriculum? I'm serious because some cost that amount.

Ms. Susana Peron: At the end of the report you have the budget versus actual. So you'll see what they budgeted, the amount they budgeted and the amount that they didn't spend. \$84,000 of that \$156,000 is educational costs. Out of the educational costs we're speaking of money coming back for teacher salaries. Perhaps a teacher went on leave. A huge amount of money is coming back for benefits.

Comm. Irving: Because if the teachers are not employed clearly you don't have to pay the benefits.

Ms. Peron: Yes, or they may have changed their program midstream. You budget before the actual year.

Comm. Irving: So maybe they have a spouse and they opt in to their spouse's policy or something else.

Ms. Peron: Or they went with a completely different company with different prices. They budgeted to spend a certain amount of money in classroom materials and supplies and some of that is coming back because they did not spend. So what you see is a lot of money coming back in the direct educational costs due to the benefits and some of the return of salaries.

Comm. Irving: That was my only question. I didn't know what that meant, that verbiage. I just figured \$156,000 is always good to take back. That's a pretty big ticket item. Most times if you're recouping \$30,000 or \$40,000 you can justify exactly maybe they didn't go on a field trip or they ran out of time for so and so.

Ms. Peron: That too.

Comm. Irving: Are there any other questions? I have a question on the last audit finding. What staffing credentials are we talking about here? Are we talking about someone not having the appropriate paperwork to justify their credentials? Or someone not having the actual coursework to justify their credentials?

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: It could be background checks. One was a temporary employee. They had the beginning of the paperwork but they never finished it according to the auditors. They had started it and then the person left.

Ms. Peron: The other one was a TB test.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: One was a TB test for a temporary employee.

Ms. Peron: It was mostly the criminal history background.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: The CHRI background was not on file for a temporary clerical.

Comm. Irving: They had done them, but they were just not on file or we could not verify that.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: They could not verify it.

Comm. Irving: Do we allow the people to still stay in the facility?

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: The audit report says the CHRI background was not on file for a temporary clerical person. The auditors noted the CHRI application was filled out on June 13, 2011 but there was no evidence it was submitted and the copy on file was not stamped with any results.

Comm. Irving: So that person shouldn't be working.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: They're not there anymore. They're temporary. The same goes for the criminal history. The temporary employee is no longer there.

Ms. Peron: For the preschool providers there are two background checks. There's a criminal record and then there's a criminal history. It doesn't say, but I believe both of those were for temporary employees. They began the paperwork and by the time the employee left the process wasn't finished. It has to remain on file and it has to be finished, but the person left and they didn't follow it through.

Ms. Aguado-Holtje: But they're no longer at the center.

Comm. Irving: Are there any other questions? In the interest of time and for the folks in the community who have been here from the beginning of our meeting, I want to move public portion up before we talk about the strategies for student achievement in pre-k to 3. Let's do public portion now if that's okay with the rest of my colleagues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Comm. Irving: I just want to remind the speakers who come up that we have three minutes per person. I think I may make an addendum because I know there is one community member who's going to make a little longer presentation. Even when the bell rings, I'll just extend that at that time.

Ms. Maria Gianados: (Comm. Guzman translated from Spanish) I would also like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here expressing my issues that I have today. As a mother of a family, I'm here expressing my concerns regarding an issue that I have with my child at School 8 who is a first grade student. As of the second week of September her child does not have an actual teacher inside the classroom. Secondly, I would like to express that they have been with a substitute since the beginning of the school year and it's actually a bilingual classroom and the substitute that's in the classroom only speaks English. Also, she would like to note that her child is a special education student and she feels that at this time it has been affecting him because the substitute has basically just been giving him forms or sheets which she finds as a method of entertainment and not learning. She feels that he's not getting the education that he should be getting. He's also getting resource in the school and they're using that teacher to do other things so he's not getting what he actually needs in the class. She feels that if the children really are a priority here in the district more attention needs to be placed to this matter because she has brought the information forward to the Board of Education and the only response that she has gotten since that time is that right now they don't have someone to fulfill that duty or a qualified individual for that position at her child's school. She also doesn't understand why on the reports

that they give them – progress reports or report cards – it still shows the name of the teacher that was there at the beginning of the school year, but she hasn't been there since the second week in September. She says that she has been here with other parents. There have been a total of six parents who have expressed themselves to the Board of Education. Unfortunately, they couldn't make it out today for one reason or another, but she is here representing them also and she really wants a solution to this problem. She wants some answers to what's going on because the school year is almost finishing and she feels that nothing has been done and her child is failing because he's really not learning anything in the classroom. She says that those parents that she's referring to are also from the same classroom, but she also knows children from second grade who are being affected because that same teacher that was teaching them science and math was teaching them from second grade. They're being affected also because they're not receiving those classes.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Evans, can we try to connect her with someone?

Dr. Evans: Actually, both Ms. Peron and Mr. Johnson. If I may comment, this is a critical shortage area. We are short how many teachers, Ms. Peron? 15 in the ELL area and we're recruiting all over the place and still can't find teachers. That's not unique to Paterson, by the way.

Comm. Guzman: (Translated Dr. Evans' comments into Spanish)

Dr. Evans: It is a very serious problem as she's communicating it and we're taking it seriously. We're doing everything we can to find teachers and I wanted to make the point that that's not unique to our district. It's a national issue. It's probably emerged as competing with special education as being at the top of the list of critical shortage areas.

Comm. Guzman: (Translated Dr. Evans' comments into Spanish)

Dr. Evans: Our strategy at this point while we continue to seek teachers is to find ways of getting help for the youngsters. I know Ms. Peron is working on that with both Mr. Johnson and Ms. Santa because it's a problem that crosses over schools. To get someone in who can teach them and that they can learn from.

Comm. Irving: Can Mr. Johnson and Ms. Peron have a quick sidebar with this parent?

Comm. Guzman: (Translated Dr. Evans' and Comm. Irving's comments into Spanish)

Comm. Mendez: I would like to follow up her case and make sure if she has any questions or any problems since we can communicate effectively. I want to give her my number.

Mr. Jose Rodriguez: (Comm. Guzman translated from Spanish) Good afternoon. I am here on behalf of my son David Rodriguez who is also at School 8. He says he's a little uncomfortable because when he speaks to his child's teacher he tells him that his child is doing fine in the classroom but when he gets the progress reports and report card it doesn't reflect the same thing that the teacher is telling him. You guys play a very important role in our child's education and our children are the future. Since they're the future I think that we need to make something happen so that they can actually be a good product. Just like the person that spoke before him, she has been here several times and they keep promising that the issues are going to be resolved. Where he works if he's supposed to do a job and doesn't get it done he gets fired. So he feels that certain things need to be implemented and get done. He says that since he doesn't

have an education he would like his child to at least have the opportunity to be an educated person.

Comm. Mendez: Has he ever been in contact with the principal of the school? Does the principal know the situation and the problem?

Mr. Rodriguez: (Comm. Guzman translated from Spanish) Every time he tries to speak with the principal the principal is either busy or has no time. He feels that the principal is just brushing him off telling him it just can't be resolved right now. He feels they're just treating him like a pinball because from there they tell him to come here and from here they tell him to go there. So he feels like it's just going back and forth and nothing is getting done.

Dr. Evans: Mr. Johnson is waiting in the back to talk with him.

Comm. Guzman: (Translated Dr. Evans' comments into Spanish)

Comm. Mendez: Mr. President, I invited Juan Jimenez. He's a former Board member in the school district in Paterson and he's going to have a five-minute presentation. Since February is Black History Month and the Dominican Republic Heritage Month we have a presentation.

Mr. Juan Jimenez: Thank you and good evening, Commissioners. It's an honor to be here in front of you all, faces that I know and love and faces that I don't know but are doing a good job. I want to thank you for having me here with you. What brings me here today is back when I was a Commissioner on your side along with Commissioner Alonzo Moody we cosponsored on the agenda a resolution of declaring African American Heritage Month as well as Dominican Heritage Month. It was celebrated in 1999 and 2000, but after I was no longer on the Board that didn't continue. But in celebration of those two heritages we want to bring to you and the public as well as the public in the schools a small documentary talking about the relationship of the African American and the Dominican community. I have somebody that's going to be following me who is going to talk about this small documentary talking about that relationship. In the Dominican community back in the 1800's a large group of African American either freed slaves or slaves that were escaping went to this part of the Dominican Republic, and that community still exists today. Their descendants are living there in the Dominican Republic. I think that for the time that we're celebrating this will help build within our city, students, and staff on the relationship that we have and that we should have. I think that our kids and our adults also need to know that there's more that we have in common than we don't. I know that there are some situations that may arise, either in fights or racism, but I think that the school district needs to avail itself of these opportunities to bring communities together. I think this documentary would help us move forward in that sense. I have with me the creator of that documentary that we want to let the Board of Education see and if it's possible show in the schools about this relationship that we have between the African American and the Dominican community. So I'd just like the opportunity to avail the Board of Education and the public to be able to see this documentary that I think is going to be culture-building within our community. I just want the opportunity to show this documentary whenever possible.

Comm. Irving: Do you want to introduce the film's creator or producer?

Mr. Jimenez: This is Nestor Montilla.

Mr. Nestor Montilla: Thank you so much for the opportunity. The documentary is entitled "African American Settlement in Samana, Dominican Republic." Nowadays that's a province to the Northeast of the Dominican Republic. If you imagine a map of the Caribbean you would realize that it's a peninsula and over 80% of the people who live in that particular portion of the Dominican Republic are of African American descent. That's as a result of a wonderful untold story that dates back to 1824 or 1825, even before the Dominican Republic was founded. The United States had this idea to send all blacks and slaves back to Africa. That was when Liberia was founded. But it was too expensive to ship them through the ocean back to Africa and it created a lot of commotion. So they identified venues and one of those venues was La Hispaniola, which today is an island where we have the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well. The documentary concentrates on that particular portion of the island, even though based on my research of the 30,000 African American free or slaves they settled in Hispaniola. Many of them died. However, the ones of the 6,000 that settled in Samana they were able to keep together and that's why we have such a huge population of Dominicans who are descendants of those immigrants. So we're talking about 1824 or 1825. The documentary is 28 minutes. It's totally in English. It's based on oral history interviews that I conducted with some of the descendants and you can hear them, including their accents. So you can tell that they still have the traces of their ancestors. They still have the church and they practice most of the traditions that they inherited from the immigrants. So I would like to bring that to you. I don't know if it's going to be possible in the next meeting that we could show it to you. It's 28 minutes so that you can appreciate it and with the purpose of showing it to the public. At this point over 10,000 people have seen it throughout the United States. I work at the City University in New York. I worked in public relations for many years and I have produced many other documentaries related to the different groups that have settled in Hispaniola as well, not only African American, but also Jewish. The Dominican Republic was the only country that opened its doors to 100,000 Jews fleeing persecution in Europe. Also we have a huge Arab population in Santo Domingo. So it's a very diverse country as you can tell. This particular story will be of benefit to not only Patersonians, but students as well.

Comm. Irving: I thank you for your comments and presentation. What I will do is I will chat with Dr. Evans and then with you, Comm. Mendez, and try to figure out the most appropriate venue. Personally I'm interested. I'm a history person. I absolutely love history and my academic background is teaching history at the collegiate level as well. So I'm certainly interested in it. I think it's just a matter of trying to find the right time and venue to do some type of viewing or watching. We'll work it out with you, Comm. Mendez.

Comm. Mendez: I want to give a welcome to Mr. Mantilla and former Commissioner Juan Jimenez. Thank you for being here presenting this great project to us. I think this is a great opportunity for our students at Eastside High School and Kennedy High School especially to bring this to those students especially now. In the month of February I think it would be great. Also, I know that at the next regular meeting we're going to have the celebration of the African American Heritage Month. I don't know about the time, but it will be great if we could at least condense the documentary and present some part of it. I think that would be great. We're going to have a lot of students at the next regular meeting and we haven't had the opportunity to have this information with us. I think that it would be great and something new on that celebration next week.

Ms. Maria Teresa Feliciano: Good evening and thank you. I was following up on the documentary. We had presented it last Saturday in Paterson at the Maria Teresa Civic

Association and we had a small group of people. What a documentary does is that it is thought-provoking and discussions, as you can imagine, about the groups that are part of the ethnic and racial composition of Dominicans. The documentary goes a long way and knowledge about yourself and others usually fosters respect and understanding. Precisely in Black History Month which happens to be the same as Dominican Heritage Month in February it would be appropriate. We will be presenting it again on Saturday at 5:00 at 17 Van Houten Street if anybody would like to go see it and preview. But it would be perfect for high school students, especially as Comm. Mendez said. It would be very beneficial.

*Comm. Hodges enters the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Ms. Irene Sterling: Good evening. I wanted to let you know that PEF was fortunate to be able to help PSE&G and the Museum of Mathematics, newly opened in Manhattan, bring a very special exhibit to four schools in Paterson this week. If you haven't had a chance to see it, I urge you to go over tomorrow at School 27 and Friday at AHA. It's absolutely spectacular. Watching the kids grapple with the six inventions that are there is really an eye-opener, especially for somebody like me who is math averse or math phobic. Oh, yeah, I know what Fibonacci numbers are. The kids do and it's very exciting to see them. So I urge you to do that. Then looking at today's package I have a question around what I believe to be RAC personnel. It looks to me in your personnel actions that there are people here who are listed as culture and climate teacher mentors. I believe these to be RAC positions and I was kind of surprised to see them on our hiring. So I'm interested in finding out how this is going to be handled. Some of the folks, not on this list, but whom I know are in the schools, are retired Paterson Public School people. I don't recognize this set of names, but I'm wondering how their employment functions within this situation. I'd be glad to hear how the RAC personnel interacts with our expenditures.

Dr. Evans: I can respond to that. One of the requirements for any school in the State of New Jersey that is a Priority School and a Focus School is to have certain personnel to provide additional support in some very specific areas at the district's expense. Those are district positions, not RAC positions. But they are required as part of the waiver that the Department of Education acquired from the US Department of Education. In Priority Schools there are actually four such positions. There is a math specialist. When it says mentor teacher, that's the new reference for coach. In Priority Schools there is to be a math mentor teacher and an English language arts mentor teacher, both in some...(end of tape) (Beginning of new tape)...a culture leader and in our case that is six Priority Schools. Then as it relates to the Focus Schools we're to provide support in the area where there is an achievement gap. Then at the high schools it's up to us to decide how we want to provide support to help improve graduation rates. In our case it's in the high schools and for the most part it was determined that a culture leader would be the person that would be there, but these are district-selected. In fact, principals and our district staff together identified those people and placed those people. But it is an artifact of RAC requirement and those are paid by the district through federal funds.

Ms. Sterling: So are they on a tenure track? What's the supervisory relationship? Are these folks responsible to the principal?

Dr. Evans: Yes.

Ms. Sterling: Or responsible to an external...

Dr. Evans: No, to the principal.

Comm. Kerr: How do they report? The reporting part is very important too, Dr. Evans. Do they report at all to the county?

Dr. Evans: The county office? No, they don't.

Comm. Kerr: They report only to the...

Dr. Evans: They report to the principal and then through the principal to Mr. Johnson actually. We're talking about his schools. They're all in his schools.

Ms. Sterling: So the principal would be reviewing their performance and evaluating them going forward?

Dr. Evans: Correct.

Ms. Sterling: Are these folks on a tenure track then?

Dr. Evans: I would assume so. Yes, they are.

Ms. Sterling: Good. Thank you very much.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Ms. Sterling. And thank you for your mailing about the school elections. I got it in my mailbox today. I appreciate it.

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, 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.

Comm. Irving: Here's what I would like to do. Because the agenda for this month is egregiously short, if we can let's hold the strategies to improve student achievement for the last piece to be discussed for tonight and just get through the Superintendent's report, items for a vote, and go through the action items that are in curriculum, fiscal, and personnel. Is that okay? Then we'll come back to you, Dr. Evans, for the discussion for pre-k to 3.

REPORT OF STATE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Evans: I have no additional items on which to report.

RESOLUTIONS FOR A VOTE AT THE WORKSHOP MEETING:

Resolution No. 1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the list of bills dated January 30, 2013, in the grand sum of \$4,944,187.69 starting with vendor number 339990 and ending with vendor number 3799256 to be approved for payment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each claim or demand has been fully itemized verified, has been duly audited as required by law in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:19-2.

Grand Sum: \$4,944,187.69

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Guzman that Resolution No. 1 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who voted no. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS, the Friends of Hinchliffe and the City of Paterson in collaboration with Board of Education of Paterson Public Schools has decided to pursue the Historic Preservation of Hinchliffe Stadium; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Trust is providing a grant of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) towards the Proposed Project as a match to funds to be provided for the initial scope as defined in the Watson & Henry Report; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Trust requires an approval of the Board of Education of Paterson Public Schools to execute the grant agreement; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Trust requires the Board of Education of Paterson Public Schools to authorize a person to execute the grant agreement on behalf of Paterson Board of Education; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education of Paterson Public Schools approves the acceptance of the Grant from The New Jersey Historic Trust; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education of Paterson Public Schools hereby authorizes the State District Superintendent of Schools to execute the agreement accepting such Grant, and any other document in connection therewith.

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Guzman that Resolution No. 2 be adopted.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Mendez, do you just want to give a little background on what this is and why we're being asked to vote for it now?

Comm. Mendez: Sure. This resolution is based on the conversation and the document that the team for Hinchliffe Stadium has been putting together to submit it to the New Jersey Historic Trust. Based on the document that they have they're requesting this resolution to be approved by the Board to give the Superintendent the okay to sign for the release of the \$500,000 grant to proceed with the stabilization for Hinchliffe Stadium. The deadline that we have to have everything in place is by February 15. That's the reason why we're receiving this resolution today and we need to vote on it today. This is the only part that's holding that document for them to send it back to the New Jersey Historic Trust.

Comm. Hodges: I'm happy that many of the Board members had an opportunity to read this, but I did not. As I stated yesterday at the meeting, I had a great deal of concern about people bringing resolutions before this Board without the Board having a chance to read it. I'm being told some of our members had a chance to look this over while it was at the table, but this is bad practice. This is not when you're supposed to be getting a resolution that you're supposed to be voting on and I have personally voted against resolutions for that very reason. The responsibility of this Board is to protect the interests of the district and most importantly the interests of the students. If you're given resolutions that you don't read and you vote on them, then you can't say that you're

effectively protecting the interests of the students. I could be out of base, but I don't think I am. So this should not be tolerated and even though I'm in support of this, this is the second one we've had in recent weeks that we've done this and this reflects badly on how we do business. It's a major concern to me. The fact is that we've had situations in the past where we've been given lots of information and told it's important to get this done because if you don't there's going to be this huge cliff that you're going to fall off. We've consequently gone ahead and just voted on things and then the fine print comes back to bite us later on and we've already voted for it. Ms. Shafer is sitting here and she knows what I'm talking about. It has happened many times. This is why this is such a sore subject with me. If everybody has had a chance to read this then by all means it's prudent for you to vote your conscience. I haven't read this, so I can't.

Comm. Kerr: I know this is about a grant, but my concern really is if we should approve this resolution in what way will we be obligated? Is there anything that we should know that we don't know? I know it's a grant, but are we obligated in any way regarding performance or anything that we need to do?

Dr. Evans: Can I call on Mr. Sapara-Grant to respond to that and other questions you may have?

Comm. Irving: Mr. Sapara-Grant, if you could also just explain what the money will be used for I think that may also provide some clarity.

Mr. Chris Sapara-Grant: Good evening Commissioners, Dr. Evans, and everybody. Why do we have a resolution coming out this late? The granter of the monies, the New Jersey Historic Trust, require that certain documentation be filled out and when we talked about the February 15 deadline in addition to everything else they require that the Board of Education of Paterson authorize somebody to sign on behalf of the district. When there was the initial application Dr. Evans signed and as the State District Superintendent I believe he's authorized to sign on behalf of Paterson Public Schools. That was communicated to the New Jersey Historic Trust. They however wanted to see a resolution indicating that Dr. Evans is authorized to sign. We went back and forth and instead of haggling over it and missing the deadline it was decided the resolution needs to come forth. Prior to this meeting at the last meeting it was agreed that there was going to be a resolution allowing the progress of the preservation. It wasn't going to come at this time. It was going to come through the regular process. But because of the time constraints it was decided to bring it in to have the Board authorize the Superintendent to execute any documents that are required in the process of providing the \$500,000 from the New Jersey Historic Trust as part of the initial project that has been discussed so many times in front of this Board.

Comm. Irving: That's the problem that I have. I don't know if I'm willing to commit to signing over all rights to at least have the opportunity to be notified and decide upon it. This resolution is in essence saying that the Superintendent, which he's done already, moving forward will have the right to sign off and deal with any issues pertaining to at least this matter of the stability project. I want to make sure that whatever updates and everything else still comes back to the Board via the facilities committee. I just don't know if by voting on this we sign over that amount of responsibility or angst. I just need clarity on that.

Comm. Mendez: Since two other Commissioners came late and haven't had time to go over the resolution, why don't we take a quick recess and give them time to go over it and come back? I definitely agree in the sense that I don't like this practice. I need to have my time to go over the document and read it, but also we need to be responsible.

This is a grant and the deadline is on the 15th. I think that if we haven't had time to take a look at the resolution, why don't we take a recess and go over it and come back and vote?

Comm. Irving: What do you want, five or ten minutes?

Comm. Mendez: Five minutes.

Comm. Hodges: That's what I was raising my hand to say. I don't want the measure to fail, but just simply to discuss the fact that we need to curtail such practices. But if you are up against a future deadline it's not inappropriate to give the Board some time to read the measure.

Comm. Irving: It makes sense. We've done it before at the Board meeting. Let's take five and if it needs to take longer we'll take longer, but at this point in time we'll take a recess for five minutes.

The Board took recess at 7:30 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Comm. Irving: Are there any questions with regard to this action, Item No. 2, the acceptance of the grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust? Everyone feels comfortable to vote at this point in time?

On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Items Requiring a Vote

Curriculum and Instruction

Comm. Irving: The curriculum committee met on Monday. We began at 6:36 p.m. and ended at 8:19 p.m. Staff members present are listed here before you. Board members present were myself, Comm. Cleaves and Comm. Martinez. The questions that were asked are all listed here. As I indicated that night and as I'm indicating tonight there are really only five or six actions that required any pithy discussion. Item A-3 has been pulled because of the questions that we asked. Unless anyone has any questions on the out-of-district placements or the field trips the items for discussion this evening are A-1, A-2, A-4, and A-5. We'll entertain questions on those in a second. I do want to say we had an amazing conversation and a precursor to our talk about the strategies for pre-k to 3. We took about an hour and fifteen minutes out of the curriculum committee to make some current recommendations as a committee and some suggestions and we really as a group broke it down. We talked about some of the Early Childhood recommendations we have and then some other recommendations we have for second and first grade. I'm leaving out first grade because I think when Ms. Peron comes up to share some of the suggestions we gave it will shed some light. But when I say it was a really good time, honestly Comm. Kerr, I wish you were there because it was the type of conversation you would really feed off of. I didn't want to come to tonight's meeting and just start from nothing. So I felt as though it would be advantageous for the Board to at least have the curriculum committee's perspective with regard to recommendations. So we have recommendations for discussion this evening that will address Early Childhood and literacy and math in grades 2 and 3. At the conclusion of all the other reports I'm

interested in the respective staff members who are here to introduce that. It was really time well spent and Ms. Peron and Ms. Riviello really did an awesome job in providing the Board with the magic question, which is what holes do we have. Dr. Evans, you presented last week and we talked about what we're doing well and I think everybody acknowledges that, but what else do we have? What else do we need to reinforce and support, especially given the data that we saw last week? So with that said, I keep talking about it because I'm really excited for us to share and have these conversations together. I really feel like as a committee we really got to a very good place as far as tangible, real, and constructive suggestions and recommendations that involve staffing, personnel, and professional development. So I'm real excited to have this conversation later on. Tonight we present to you in total A-1 to A-16 knowing that A-3 has been pulled. Do we have any questions on any of the actions minus the questions that you have that we asked in the curriculum committee? If anyone has any questions that come up feel free to e-mail them either to me or Ms. Riviello, but there really wasn't much to have to hammer home.

Legal

Comm. Irving: There are no submissions for legal.

Fiscal

Comm. Kerr: The fiscal committee met last Thursday the 31st. Board members present at that meeting were Comm. Teague and myself. Excused from that meeting were Comm. Mendez and Comm. Martinez. From staff we had our new BA Mr. Richard Kilpatrick and also our Interim BA at the time, Ms. Daisy Ayala. I'm not sure of her position right now. Our meeting started at approximately 7:15 p.m. and we had our introduction to the new BA. We welcome him on board and he in turn outlined for us his association with the district. He has been in this district before working in different capacities. Our discussion for the night centered around the fiscal position of the district. He said he will be giving himself some time to delve into the numbers and then at a later date we will have some discussion as to what we need to do in terms of the pending fiscal problems that we have ahead of us. After that we looked at our bills list which was very measly. The bills list for the month was like the one we looked at last Thursday. Our meeting concluded at approximately 8:30 p.m. Tonight we are presenting to the Board Resolutions C-1 through C-13. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: I want to welcome our new Business Administrator and I've been voting against the resolutions because I'm waiting for the compendium that we've been promised. So I've been voting down the resolutions for years now and I've been told that the reason I'm waiting is for your arrival. So I'm very happy that you're here so that I can anticipate the development of the compendium so that I can then critically look at the resolutions that are in front of me. In addition to that, there was this issue of banking which was also awaiting your arrival. So I am triply pleased that you're here and I look forward to your efforts, particularly in these two areas. Congratulations and we'll be seeing you real soon.

Facilities

Comm. Mendez: The facilities committee met yesterday, February 5. Presiding was myself and members present were Comm. Cleaves and Comm. Hodges. Absent was Comm. Teague. Staff present was Mr. Sapara-Grant. We discussed different topics. We already spoke about Hinchliffe Stadium. We spent extended time talking about the resolution that we have already voted on. Moving forward with School 28 and School 4

we started with the ornamental fence at those schools. We don't have a deadline yet of when the project is going to be done. At Eastside High School, as we can see if we pass by, we finished with the guardhouse on Park Avenue and now we're working on the one on Market Street. We don't have any deadline yet with the Eastside High School project. We had a discussion about International High School. The company is going to present a safety plan before they start working on the smoke evacuation system. We're going to see that safety plan. We had that discussion and we're going to go over that once they present it to Mr. Sapara-Grant and the district before they start working with the project. At Kennedy High School we're done with the fence but we're still waiting for the gates. They're building those gates and we have the guardhouse as the next project at Kennedy High School. We're moving forward with School 24. I will leave it at that. The report will be in full for the next regular meeting.

Comm. Hodges: After the facilities meeting, I hurried over to the City Council meeting and was able to reach the business administrator and Mr. Coke and we had a conference about the insurance. You didn't mention the insurance situation.

Comm. Mendez: No, we didn't go over the insurance situation. On the shared services agreement it's specified very clearly under Item No. 10 that the city has to provide insurance for Hinchliffe Stadium for the construction or any other renovation that we're going to do. That's the responsibility now on their hands. They're looking to see how they can insure that property since they don't own the property. They're putting those documents together and that was the conversation that we had back and forth. Comm. Hodges went to the City Council and I know that they're working diligently on that because that's their side. They have to meet the deadline. By the 15th they have to have that problem resolved. It's my understanding that we have insurance on Hinchliffe Stadium in case something happens with somebody inside there, but not for this project. It's the city's responsibility to provide insurance for this construction.

Comm. Irving: If the issue is because we're the owners, can we work on an agreement with the city that we cover the policy and they reimburse the district?

Comm. Hodges: The problem is the timetable. When I spoke to Mr. Coke and the BA, Mr. Coke said that what they were going to consider doing was routinely they would put the insurance on the back of the contractor. The reason why I went over there was because if you don't have the insurance you don't have the grant. So I needed to make absolutely sure that this was done by the 15th. I also happened to speak to the finance chair, who is not in the country right now, to find out what would happen if they had to bring this before the council. Any additional appropriation that has to be passed has to go through the council, which will require a special meeting to be done. If you have to attach a rider or whatever it is you have to create a budget line that will handle that or some way to pay for it, and you need to do it in a timely fashion. So I'm bringing this up because I got two different answers and I'm very concerned about that. So somebody has to follow up to find out which one of those answers is going to be in fact the case and make sure that that's done before the 15th. You might have some sort of 30-day window around when that insurance has to be locked down, which gives you some leeway. But I'm not sure about that and I don't want to sit back and leave it in somebody's hands.

Comm. Irving: And then the grant not go through.

Comm. Hodges: That's exactly right. So someone needs to jump on this and find out what the insurance is. That would be you, Mr. Mendez. Find out what the plan for the

insurance is, what the approach is going to be, and get it locked down as soon as you can before the 15th.

Comm. Irving: Comm. Mendez, I guess this is a question between you and Ms. Pollak and the city. Do we have the ability? If the hurdle is the fact that we own the facility, do we have the ability to pay for the insurance and have the city to reimburse us in order to cover it?

Ms. Pollak: This is the first I'm hearing that, but I was on the phone this afternoon just before our meeting with an attorney from the city who was talking about insurance. Mr. Mendez, I'll work with you and Mr. Sapara-Grant. I didn't know that these were issues. He talked about it as if it was just going to happen.

Comm. Hodges: That's fine, but nothing just happens.

Ms. Pollak: That's right.

Comm. Irving: Can you just keep us abreast? By Monday or Tuesday of next week send the Board and Dr. Evans an e-mail just letting us know where we are with that because the 15th is next Friday.

Ms. Pollak: Sure.

Comm. Hodges: The way that the shared agreement is written the city is responsible for the insurance.

Ms. Pollak: Yes, I know.

Comm. Hodges: ...which is a problem.

Comm. Irving: That's if everyone at this table and City Hall acknowledges that there is an active and functioning shared services agreement.

Ms. Pollak: They do. The discussion was not about that. I got the distinct impression that there might have been some issue about when they were placing the insurance. There was nothing said about there being a problem in placing the insurance, but that may be a different discussion. You and I will talk.

Comm. Mendez: Also, on the shared services agreement if we can look at it, it specifies very well that we're providing insurance for Bauerle Field and the city is responsible to provide insurance for Hinchliffe Stadium. They are working on it but we haven't had any results. The meeting was yesterday, but I believe that by Monday they should have some answer. That's a very important part. Without that we can't move forward and they can't move forward.

Ms. Pollak: There didn't seem to be in my discussion any pushback as to the fact that it was their responsibility to get it, but we didn't get specifics. I didn't know there was this issue of authorizing funds and so forth.

Policy

Comm. Guzman: There are no policy submissions but the policy committee did meet on Thursdays, January 31. Comm. Simmons sends out a memorandum, which we just want to reflect for the record, to Dr. Evans regarding some items that were discussed

regarding dress and grooming policies. We just want to make sure that Dr. Evans looks into it and we really need his attention on these matters.

Comm. Hodges: Dr. Evans – and you know why I'm asking – I'm trying to find out just when we can look for the penmanship. I will tell you I actually had a meeting with a teacher this evening before I came here regarding, not just penmanship, but note-taking and study skills. She was saying to me that this has not been part of their professional development, which they are in our curriculum. The students when they come in as early as second grade their reading pattern is such that once they look at something they don't like to go back. They're not accustomed to going over what they've already read. That's been her experience. So it would seem to me that helping students understand how to take notes from the material that you're studying and teaching them how to study would be of significant assistance in helping to improve how they are learning or more importantly reverse the trend of them not learning if it's clear that they have some sort of reluctance on their own to review. Obviously you can't master material that quickly. One of the problems even in the early grades is if the teachers are writing things on the Board in cursive your kids can't read it and the teachers may not recognize that they can't read it. The kids will sit there and copy everything that they've written there. They can do that, but in terms of actually transcribing or understanding what they've copied off the Board if it's written in cursive, they can't. So that brings me back of course to the penmanship and what kind of a date I can expect to see that by.

Dr. Evans: When does the policy committee meet again?

Comm. Irving: Next month.

Dr. Evans: It will be ready sooner than that. I took the liberty of asking Ms. Williams to do some research for me and she did find Strauss Esmay policies that get at the issues that you've raised. She recently provided me with some very powerful samples that I'm using to modify. I told you I would look at, rewrite and modify, but still address the issues that you've raised. That's what I'm doing right now - going through those policies and tweaking some changes I had already made to make them even better. They would be done by now but for the past week I've been preoccupied in some other ways I didn't anticipated. It's hard to write when you're in pain. It's hard for me at least. Nonetheless, I have been working on it and Cheryl has been a tremendous help in getting me the samples that she got for me through Strauss Esmay. So, it really is going to take me some concentrated time, a few hours in my office or if my wife allows me at home on the weekend, to finish it and get it. That could be as early as next week. But what I want to do is go ahead and get the draft, get it to you and to the policy committee to review simultaneously or together and have it up for review by the entire committee once you all have looked at it at the committee level.

Comm. Hodges: ...which brings me, of course, to the chess.

Dr. Evans: That's there with it. Believe me, there are lots of policies out there that Strauss Esmay has that addresses many of the issues that you've talked about. I gave Cheryl a list and she gave me back some policies.

Comm. Hodges: The last thing is the note-taking and the study skills, which I'm a little puzzled by. It's just one teacher out of 2,500 people, but I'm curious as to how we are training and preparing teachers to teach study skills and note-taking skills, particularly if we don't routinely teach our kids how to do outlines.

Dr. Evans: That's a good question. The what we're doing I would have to rely on folk like Ms. Riviello or Ms. Peron to answer specifics in terms of training because it's their people. There are supervisors who do the training along with the contractors that come in for various purposes. So they can answer how we do the training for the teachers better than I can.

Comm. Hodges: Certainly as part of our future discussions, not this one because we're doing pre-k through 3, you would start teaching a kid how to do an outline in second grade. That's not an unreasonable timeframe. I'll simply ask Ms. Peron when she comes, but I will be looking for that discussion certainly the next time we do this.

Items Requiring Acknowledgement of Review and Comments

Personnel

Comm. Cleaves: The personnel committee met on February 4. Board members in attendance were Comm. Cleaves and Comm. Martinez. Staff present was Ms. Jamie Murphy. We present F-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. Kerr: Dr. Evans, I've been going through the student suspension report for November and December. It was part of the packet. I wish Captain Smith was here because I need to get some clear understanding. I remember in the last presentation they did on school security it was mentioned that for the entire year we had a hundred and something problem with violence. So I made sure that getting these two reports I go through them. Let's start with November. On the first page you have one physical assault.

Dr. Evans: Do we need Captain Smith here?

Comm. Irving: We need Captain Smith. I know you guys are conferencing in the back. There's a question with regard to the suspension report the Board received and some questions for you.

Captain James Smith: Good evening.

Comm. Kerr: I've been going through the November and December school suspension report and I'm seeing some stuff here. I remember the last time we went through the EVVRS we only had a hundred and something incidents for the year. Going through this I'm just wondering what really counts as an incident to be on that report, as opposed to what's given in this report.

Capt. Smith: Did they give you an explanation? I don't get the suspension report. Did they give you an explanation of what it is?

Comm. Kerr: At School 2 a physical assault.

Capt. Smith: Right. That would be an EVVRS.

Comm. Kerr: Okay. At Napier Academy School 4, a physical assault on another student and assaulting a student. That's two different incidents. I'm just quickly going through this. Fighting – that's School 5.

Capt. Smith: The only difference is fighting may not be if it's a pushing match or something. Physical assault would be on an EVVRS. Those types of reports we do get and we do enter into the system. But if it's like a fight that there is just a pushing match and it even says that because it gives you examples.

Comm. Kerr: But this doesn't say. How do I determine if it's a situation that would warrant being recorded on your report as an incident?

Capt. Smith: Is that School 4? Did the principal send that out?

Comm. Kerr: Just go through the incident report. It's a bunch of them here in November and December.

Capt. Smith: Who authored it? I'm curious.

Comm. Kerr: I don't know who did it. It just came in the packet. It's part of the report that we receive as Board members.

Ms. Shafer: It comes from the assistant superintendents monthly and it's by school.

Capt. Smith: The only thing I can do is to meet with the assistant superintendents and I'll make sure that they cross-reference it to make sure that it's also captured on the EVVRS if it hasn't been. That's what I can do.

Comm. Kerr: Going through this for two months we have more than 60 already.

Capt. Smith: 60 suspensions, but not all suspensions require an EVVRS.

Comm. Kerr: Incidents, not just suspensions. The problem I have is if you suspend a kid it has to be a severe situation why you suspended them. If you look at the total suspension days here there are 466 out-of-school suspensions. How many days make up a year?

Capt. Smith: That's 466 district-wide over 32 schools?

Comm. Kerr: Yes, district-wide. So it's a very weighty thing here and this is just for one month. For the other months you have 693.5. We just need to know how we...

Capt. Smith: I'll get a copy from the deputy and we'll cross-reference it against the principals to make sure that we capture all EVVRS reports that should be on there if there is one missing.

Comm. Kerr: Also, I need to make sure that we're not frivolously suspending the child.

Capt. Smith: That doesn't fall within me.

Comm. Kerr: The offense or the incidents should match with the suspension.

Capt. Smith: They're suspended for a variety of reasons and not all of them are violence.

Comm. Kerr: You just suspend a kid because a kid turns over a desk?

Capt. Smith: I have to know what the circumstances are.

Comm. Hodges: That's vandalism, sir.

Capt. Smith: We've had a few where they turned over desks and we took care of it.

Comm. Kerr: I just need to have an idea of how this thing is done.

Capt. Smith: No problem.

Dr. Evans: I think at this point perhaps a more comprehensive report that gets behind a lot of that information is what Comm. Kerr is asking for, an explanation. What does it really mean, what are we doing with kids before it gets to that point whenever possible, or is it something spontaneous that truly warrants a suspension? These are my words interpreting what I think you're asking for. We need to get a more comprehensive report for Mr. Kerr.

Comm. Kerr: There are no in-school suspensions. They're all out-of-school suspensions. There has to be a level of severity to the act why you're suspending out of school. When you suspend them out of school there's no education taking place.

Capt. Smith: The only thing I would say to that is that they have a code of conduct that they follow and if it's multiple incidents, if the kid had turned over the desk 67 times then it may not warrant in-school suspension. It may warrant an out-of-school suspension. If it's multiple incidents they look at the graduation rate of it and they go against what the code of conduct is. That's why we have a disciplinary officer now. But in answer to your question, we'll check it out and we'll cross-reference it.

Comm. Kerr: It's just too much for one month. It just doesn't make sense to me. I'll wait until I get that information.

Capt. Smith: Thank you very much.

Comm. Cleaves: Is there a suspension policy across the board for everyone to use? Say at School 5 if I turned over a desk I get an hour detention but at School 2 if they turn over a desk they get a one-day out-of-school suspension.

Capt. Smith: What I will say is this. The Superintendent when he came in rewrote the code of conduct where it would be applied equally for every school within the district here. The principal or vice principal or lead teacher, depending on what school it is, they apply that incident to what is set up in the code of conduct. That I know is uniform throughout the whole district.

Dr. Evans: I will add to Capt. Smith's response. There are sections and requirements that for certain offenses are not negotiable. If it's a drug offense what happens is not negotiable. They are suspended and in most cases that involve drugs the police are called. That's an example of one that's not, but there are others. You talk about turning over a desk, as an example, principals have some latitude. It offers a response, but depending on the circumstances the principal has some latitude on how they implement that. But when they get to the non-negotiables they don't have latitude and it's clear as to what those non-negotiables are.

Comm. Hodges: The concern that I have from just this conversation is we have a hundred and something incidents for the year and Mr. Kerr has demonstrated 41 in one month and 60 for the other just in a two-month period.

Dr. Evans: That's a valid concern.

Comm. Hodges: That's not the question that I had. I would prefer to wait until they're through because my question is in other business.

Comm. Irving: Anything on this topic of suspensions?

Comm. Mendez: I think I made a comment about this topic a couple of months before and it was about the out-of-school suspensions. I always say that the easy way to get rid of the problem is just sending the kids home. You don't have the kids in the building, but that's causing a problem. I always connect those out-of-school suspensions with the high dropout rate that we have. So we have to be careful. I think we have to review all those out-of-school suspensions. But most importantly, on the daily issue that we're facing I received a couple of phone calls in the past two weeks and there was one case that caught my attention. I don't want to mention the name of the student, but I will give you the information later. The student was involved in different behavior incidents at the school and they just notified the mother when they suspended the kid. In different cases I don't think that we're getting the parents involved enough and we're not informing the parents about the situation in time. It's been different cases that the parents just don't know what happens with their kids where there have been different incidents inside the school and they've been suspended for a week. That's when they know and that's when they receive a call from the school. I think that this is the wrong way to approach this thing. The parents have to be first on the line. There have been a lot of cases and I have one in front of me right here. Kids are being bullied and the parents are the last people to be brought to the table. We have to change that. I don't know how, Dr. Evans. It's something that has been happening constantly and every call that I've received complaining about the process the parents are the last persons to know. The last call that I received was a student that had over 17 absences in the school and we didn't call that parent until over 20 absences. I couldn't believe that. They just received the information when it was too late. I know that after 20 absences the kids have to stay. There's nothing we can do to move the kid to the next grade level, but that's something that we have to work on. We have to work on that and we have to bring parents to the line. They have to be the first ones getting the right information. So many parents don't have the opportunity to get in contact with the teachers because of the process. But we have to find a way to be a little more flexible in those cases.

Dr. Evans: You've called in with a number of those and I would ask that you continue to do that. Mrs. Jones gets the information typically and connects with the appropriate assistant superintendent and there is action taken in each one of the cases. So continue to let us know. I agree with what you're saying. We have to be more proactive.

Capt. Smith: Comm. Mendez, just let me add one comment to that. After so many absences or cuts, because five cuts will equal an absence, the parent is automatically notified by our system. We have a system that automatically sends out a letter and there is a contact sent to that person. There is also opportunity for credit recovery after the school to make up some of those days so they can fall below that 20 number. So if you have specific incidents, as Dr. Evans said, we can do it on an individual case basis and see what it is. I just want to let you know that there are some programs in effect that do address that.

Comm. Guzman: I know I'm going to sound repetitive and this is not the first time, but some of the things that I see here just leave me completely astonished. I'm reading some of them and when I go through them I just can't believe it. Maybe that's just me. Some of them to me make absolutely no sense. For example, what do they refer to when they say 'refusal of cell phone'?

Comm. Irving: In all fairness, this actually needs to be asked to the assistant superintendent and not really to Capt. Smith.

Comm. Guzman: Okay.

Comm. Irving: The one who did the report.

Capt. Smith: I would imagine, and they can verify it, refusal to give up the cell phone. According to our rules you're not allowed to have the cell phone on you during the course of the school day. You can keep it in your locker as long as the cell phone is off and then at the end of the school day if you need to call your parent. But not having to get that I don't know off the top of my head.

Comm. Guzman: I'm looking at some of them and, for example, for this refusal of cell phone you have a child missing two days of coursework because they don't want to give up their cell phone. To me that absolutely makes no kind of sense. I think we can find another type of method or something else could be done. I know these are children and sometimes it's hard. They're rebellious and they want to have their phone on them. They want to have their electronic devices, but to me sometimes it just doesn't. We have another child that got three days because of a violation of uniform and the use of cell phone in the halls during school hours. We know that we're not even enforcing all our uniform policies in all our schools, but yet we're taking away three days. Some of them to me I think we can find another way and I've always been for in-school suspension or after-school suspension, as opposed to getting them out of the school. We're basically just sending them out to the street and giving them free time and free days. We know the parents are mostly likely working. That would be my guess. Most parents are working so these children are either at home by themselves or just entertaining themselves with other things that they're not supposed to be doing because we basically gave them a free pass out of school for 3, 5, or 10 days for whatever reason. Of course, I know there are situations that really are needed because some of them leave me with my mouth open. But there are others that to me I feel we could have found another way or another measure. To close my comment regarding the Saturday suspensions, I think this is taking place at Eastside High School. There are Saturday suspensions. The problem with these Saturday suspensions is that some of the parents are not aware that their child has Saturday suspension. I received a phone call from a parent who knew absolutely nothing that their child had a Saturday suspension but found out when her child went back to school on that Monday that they were telling that child that she was getting out-of-school suspension for three days because she didn't go to the Saturday suspension. But the parent was never notified of it. I think that's the situation that we have. I had another parent who called me over the phone saying that her child had Saturday suspension but they gave absolutely no information on what time they had to be there or how long it was going to be for. So she was completely confused. It was a Saturday morning at 7:00 when she called me and my only answer to her was just go to the school, try to knock on the doors, and see who you find that can give you any information. Once again, as Comm. Mendez mentioned, it's a matter of communication and I think our communication is poor. I think it could be better and it's not at the standard that it should be at this time.

Comm. Irving: I just want you to be aware that we also have at least an hour and a half discussion ahead of us as well. I know we jumped on the gravy train.

Comm. Mendez: No parent wants their child at home alone when they're working because the parents have to work. Some of those parents have two jobs. Why don't we call those parents on the first issue? I guarantee you that they will set the tone because they don't want their daughter alone at home because regardless of whether she's been suspended or not they have to go to work. That child is going to stay home for two or three days and god knows what could happen or what those kids could do at home by themselves because parents have to go to work. Communication is key and something that I mentioned before is we have to find a way to update the list of phone numbers that we have. But we cannot wait for a back-to-school night or report card night or something to inform the parents about a behavior problem with the kid. It's going to be too late at that time and we're going to have to suspend the kids for two or three days and that's not good. That's hurting us.

Comm. Kerr: Dr. Evans, when a child is suspended, what's the path we use to get to the parent? Do we make sure that we get that information to the parent before we execute the suspension?

Dr. Evans: Parents are called when the suspension is given.

Comm. Kerr: I know a call, but do we establish a connection between the district and the parent?

Dr. Evans: That I can't guarantee. A call is made and if nobody answers the phone a voice mail message is left. I know kids are savvy enough to get home before the parents and erase the voice mail and those kinds of things do happen. Or when the call is made it's the incorrect number because the number we have on file has changed. There's a new number that we weren't notified of. There are all kinds of problems associated with that. But the call does go out and then attempts are made to get the information to parents in other ways. There is a problem there. There is no question that there is a problem there in communicating with the parents, but we do require that they get information to that home regarding that suspension. That was one of the comments I was going to make, that is one of the requirements and there are some breakdowns in that level of communication. One of the things that we've done at the beginning of the year was to put together an attendance committee to help us to improve our attendance rates. That group is still growing legs, so to speak, in terms of fulfilling its responsibilities. But one of the charges was...(end of tape) (Beginning of new tape)...requires communication. Parents need to know. That's coming. That's in development now in terms of specific strategies. We know this is a problem area. We've had some internal discussions around the fact that this is a serious problem, not only because we have kids at home – and we don't like kids to be home – but we can't let them continue to disrupt our classes either. So we have to find alternatives. It would be just as irresponsible for us to let a youngster continue to disrupt a class to where teaching did not occur. That's unfair to the teacher and to the other students there. So we are committed to finding other ways of doing this that gets help for the kids, removes them from that situation if we need to remove them from that situation, but at the same time help them to continue to get an education.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Hodges, did you have an item you wanted to bring up?

Comm. Hodges: Yes. At the Urban Boards Committee meeting I had occasion to have a discussion with the President of the Newark School Board. There's a proposal on the

table to have a joint meeting with the Newark Board of Education, the Paterson Board of Education, and the Jersey City Board of Education. I thought I would open that to you to see what the Board's feeling is. I'm just putting it on the table for discussion. It's a joint meeting of the takeover districts essentially. I'm not quite sure if we can consider Camden to be one anymore. The idea obviously is to discuss best practices in terms of operations as so-called advisory boards. We may in the course of that discuss concerns, but it would be best practices. Newark currently is interested in hosting that because they're right across the river from Jersey City in essence. The problem is whether or not their Superintendent will allow it.

Comm. Irving: That's their problem.

Comm. Hodges: It's all of ours.

Comm. Irving: But if they can't, I certainly think we should.

Comm. Hodges: That's exactly where I'm going. I just wanted to get that consensus from the Board as that would be an interesting thing. It would be a discussion that we've never had. You'd be forced to call a special meeting in all three districts because they're all going to be there discussing Board business. So it would be that kind of thing and I suspect that the press would be very interested in it.

Comm. Irving: How do you want to proceed? Do you want to follow up with her? Do you want me to follow up?

Comm. Hodges: I'll follow up with her and let her know. I'm very interested in finding out what she's capable of getting done over there.

Comm. Irving: Their relationship is very contentious.

Comm. Hodges: I know.

Comm. Irving: They make us all look like sweethearts, Dr. Evans.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely.

Comm. Irving: There is no love lost there.

Comm. Hodges: That Superintendent has a whole different approach. So I'm going to call her tomorrow. She's certain that she can get Jersey City. The question is the venue. That's the issue. They've had a Board meeting shut down in the past by the Superintendent of Schools. There's some question as to what actually happened there, but they were denied use of the building ultimately.

Comm. Irving: I remember that. So you'll keep us abreast.

Comm. Hodges: Yes, and I'll probably be in contact with you.

Comm. Irving: Please. If she can't host it, I would love for us to do it.

Comm. Hodges: I'm not quite sure Dr. Evans would, but yes.

Comm. Irving: I can't speak for Dr. Evans.

Comm. Hodges: The district has a policy of allowing us the use of the buildings for community events and this certainly is one. I don't anticipate any departure from that because of this particular issue, but these things are subject to change.

Comm. Irving: There are other venues.

Comm. Hodges: Yes.

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Strategies to Improve Student Achievement in Grades PreK-3

Comm. Irving: Can I just set the stage, if you don't mind? Then I'll allow you to begin the conversation and then we can have this conversation. We said at last week's special meeting that we wanted to kind of compartmentalize and break down the data we read in sections looking at K-3, 4-8, and then at the high school levels. In our conversation in curriculum we discussed that even within the K-3 model you're really talking about two separate pieces, the Early Childhood piece and then the 1, 2, and 3 grade level piece. There was a lot of conversation about the fact that especially when it comes to pre-k, kindergarten and first grade they all really do bleed into each other. Academically for children that switch really begins to turn on late into kindergarten and in the first grade. So why aren't we doing a lot more work with our Early Childhood development centers in partnership with our kindergarten teachers and our first grade teachers? So much of the foundation that our young people will learn will ultimately really bear fruit in the first and second grades. I'm stealing your thunder at this point in time. I want to give Ms. Peron and Dr. Kazmark the opportunity to share with you all some suggestions collectively that we have and you have. Then I'd love it for us to just entertain the suggestions they have and bring our own, but ultimately maybe narrow down some concrete items to recommend to the Superintendent and back to their respective offices.

Comm. Hodges: Before they start, I'm very regimented. I sort of need to know what problems I'm trying to fix. So I'm hoping your discussion will at least discuss in part these are some of the issues we're facing and these are the strategies we're posing. That's what I'm hoping, which we didn't have last time.

Comm. Irving: In the curriculum committee the conversation was around what are we missing, what holes we have. We know what's working, but what areas can we be stronger, can we strengthen our programs that we're missing out? At least the recommendations that we had in the curriculum committee, that conversation was centered around that concept.

Comm. Hodges: Excellent.

Ms. Peron: Good evening, everyone. Finally, I'm up to the podium. I just want to say this planning began with our Bright Futures Strategic Plan. We in that plan looked at strengthening the P-3 continuum. We looked at it through various different aspects. We want to align the curriculum, not only for pre-k through k, but also pre-k through 3, and we want to align instruction and assessment, provide quality staff, and build capacity for the staff that we have now. We want to take a look at student center learning and environments. We do that very well in preschool and we need to continue that through the continuum. We want to look at appropriate grouping practices, consistent schedules, and strong parent involvement because all of that is included. Before we get to pre-k and if we really talk about a true Early Childhood continuum we

can't neglect and leave out our children from birth to 2. Early Childhood begins at birth and it ends more or less at the stage of 8. A child is 8 at the grade 3 level. In all of this in Early Childhood we have partnered with community collaborations such as Paterson Reads. We're working with the PEF and the Paterson Alliance to bring together and to work on three main prongs. That's improving summer learning, improving early learning, and increasing attendance. We have a lot of projects that we've been working on with the PEF and the Paterson Alliance on the different aspects of these three prongs. Our children are here in our city and it begins with them at birth. Who takes care of them at home? Who are the daycare providers? So we have a lot of plans and good activities coming out of Paterson Reads and one of them will be this spring. I'm sure you will all be invited and you will know about it. We are going to host a spring conference and the theme of it is 'Building the Pipeline – Birth through Grade 3' in order to increase our reading achievement and the love of learning. That's why for me Early Childhood is so special because our job is to build that foundation, not only academically, but socially and emotionally. We have to educate our children to love learning and to be lifelong learners. That begins at home and then it's carried out through your school career. We all are life learners. I just wanted to add that piece. I know that's not where we began on Monday, but I can't leave that out because it's an important piece.

Comm. Hodges: Summer learning and what were the other two?

Ms. Peron: Improving summer learning, increasing early learning, and increasing attendance. In Monday's conversation Comm. Irving, Comm. Cleaves, and Comm. Martinez had three burning questions. What do we have now? What do we need to do? Where are we going? So this is a true collaboration. This is a true coming together of different areas and divisions to enhance, refine, and improve our programs for first and foremost our pre-k through 3 continuum. Some of the recommendations that came out of that meeting from the Commissioners were why don't you take a look at what an accurate cohort is. So are you going to talk about aligning curriculum and setting schedules, developing professional development for pre-k through k, pre-k 1 and 2, or is it pre-k 2 and 3? Could you give us a good definition of how you are going to put together those cohorts? I think we did. We decided on pre-k through k, 1 and 2, and then 3 and 4. Of course, out of the second recommendation was our teachers are not connected and that's something that we need to work on. We need to develop our transition activities between grade levels. We need to develop our transition activities and our articulation from grade level to grade level. So in essence our grade level articulations have to be not only horizontal, but they have to be vertical. Our pre-k teachers need to know where our kids are going in kindergarten. Our kindergarten teachers need to understand where they begin in preschool. Our preschool teachers need to see how they end up in third grade. All of that needs to happen and I think through developing consistent scheduling we can achieve that. Our last one was we need to talk about teaching and learning in the early grades and we need to set clear expectations. We need to articulate those expectations and then we need to walk those expectations. So you will hear some of the activities and some of the plans that we have through Dr. Kazmark and I. Some of the details of these overarching prongs come through when we speak to you about what we plan to do for teachers, administrators, and for parents. It's all inclusive. In preschool we have the creative curriculum. We have a performance-based assessment system that we adopted in 2003. We have implemented that curriculum I want to say with an 85% implementation rate and we implemented with fidelity. When I say with fidelity, I mean we don't throw and we don't choose different programs. You would know that anyway. I would have to bring that to you for Board approval. So we have a system now for reading in preschool which we adopted last year and it was called the system. It's a research-based approach that the

teachers use. It's on a daily routine. We have a collection of genre that teachers use to tell stories, to read stories, and to provide stories for children. We have enhanced our libraries out of last year's recommendation from Comm. Hodges who said do you have books in the preschool that are above level, do you have books that are at level, do you have picture books. So we went back and we took a look at what we had and we did just that. We took a look at the genre. We took a look at the types of books and the leveled reading and we incorporated that into the classrooms. We are not there yet. We have a lot of plans for professional development. The professional development will begin in the preschool for the fall on multisensory reading approaches. Professional development will be carried through from pre-k through second grade. Through that professional development we are offering it first for 50 to 60 kindergarten teachers. We currently have a posting out. We're planning on doing the professional development on Saturdays for teachers. Then we're going to start a cohort model training of the trainer. I just want to give you a brief detail of what that professional development entails. In preschool the teachers will be learning about the foundations of reading, how to teach reading. When you attend college as a teacher you take two classes on how to teach reading. If you don't go for your reading specialists courses you really don't get anything else. So when you think you know how to teach reading and you get into a classroom it's a much different story. Teaching reading is rocket science. It is not simple. It is a complex process. So out of these professional development series teachers will first learn basic phonics and then there are levels of foundations of phonics. Then they will have preparing early readers, which is a phonological awareness workshop. We also have what we call, and it will be incorporated into this professional development, our writing workshops, study skills, handwriting, and comprehension. Then they can take workshops because teachers need to learn and they need to have a set of resources and tools to have in the classroom so all of this is going to be handled through this professional development. Will it take two weeks? Will it take a month? It will take time. To develop and build capacity takes time. The beauty of this is that it's a two-pronged approach. Not only are they going to sit and take a lesson and learn and have resources to go to, but these coaches will come into their classroom and they will provide embedded training, which is the most powerful training that we can offer to teachers. They watch them as they practice. They watch them teach. Then they go through their lessons and they critique it and offer their recommendations and suggestions. So to me this is really powerful. You can always go, sit down, and listen to a lecture. If you are an auditory learner you're okay because you're going to learn. That's your style of learning. So you listen and you learn. You take it in. But if I am a kinesthetic learner and I need to learn by doing I need to practice that. I need to actually do it and have someone teach me and show me that's not the way to do it. Perhaps you need to try this. So that is the beauty of multisensory strategies. We really address all the learners we have and we have varied learners. We are a diverse community so we have to now meet the needs of those learners. We may have learned and I may have learned by sitting, listening, raising my hand, writing it down, and taking notes and all of that. But in today's world our kids are a different type of learner. They are a different type of kid. The technology is incredible. Students at the age of three are manipulating I-Pads and going to and from apps at no speed. Let me just talk about me. It took me a little while to learn how to manipulate an I-Pad, but for them it's second nature. So it's a different group of kids today that we are addressing and learning needs to be student-centered. It doesn't only need to be in Early Childhood. It needs to stem all the way up to high school because if we're not tapping into the interests of these kids we're not going to get them. We're not going to keep them in the classroom. All of that we've discussed. We bored each other to death. At times we had to leave each other. But I'm really excited because the things that we're doing in Early Childhood will stem through and will follow through to kindergarten. We are also training the kindergarten teachers on best practice in Early

Childhood. We have some help to do that. We have some facilitators from the state to come in and provide that type of training to look at assessment, teaching practices, the environment, and appropriate practices. We use the word 'play' in Early Childhood and people don't understand what play is. Play is the vehicle of learning for a child at that age. They imitate, they role play, they express their language, and they use vocabulary that they hear. It is serious work to structure play in an Early Childhood classroom. It's not an easy task. So out of what we do in Early Childhood will stem into kindergarten. Dr. Kazmark is going to get into the details of the resources that we're looking at, at the strategies that we are going to employ, and then some more of the professional development that we have talked about. The best thing tonight here and in all the planning of the strategic plan is that we're together and we have finally realized that if we don't come to the table together and collaborate across content areas and create an inter-disciplinary curriculum we're missing the mark.

Comm. Irving: Let me just interject. I appreciate it, but I don't know if we're going in the direction that I thought we were going to go in.

Ms. Peron: We are. Give us a chance.

Comm. Irving: Okay.

Dr. Lauren Kazmark: In terms of k-3 literacy instruction right now one of the biggest things we need to start understanding is that the level of rigor that's going to be expected of students in kindergarten through grade 3 is far higher than when we went to school and even higher than our kids who are currently in these grades now are going to be expected to do. The new Common Core Standards for the country have been rolled out in k-12 literacy. So we're in the process currently of aligning ourselves and our curriculum to the model curriculum for the State of New Jersey. The beginning work is pacing out the model curriculum for the State of New Jersey across all grade levels, k-12. That's one of our biggest projects because what we're finding right now is that teachers are receiving professional development as well as trying to follow curricula with the resources in their rooms that support it. The resources in literacy that currently exist are all good. They're based on a balanced literacy philosophy, but it's a balanced literacy philosophy of 10 years ago. It's not a balanced literacy philosophy of 2013. So one of our biggest tasks right now is taking a look at what resources we currently have, what's worth keeping, and what needs to be changed out. One of the biggest things we're seeing is the need for increased classroom libraries that are heavily driven by informational text because the Common Core Standards are almost entirely non-fiction and the new PARK assessments coming out in 2014-2015 are going to be heavily text-based. Students and teachers are going to need resources that are going to be able to support those kinds of standards and that level of rigor. In terms of what we're looking to do curriculum-wise is one of the things lacking is something we mentioned in the beginning. In our district currently there is an overarching philosophy, for lack of a better word, of where literacy instruction is. Right now a lot of our schools are thinking in terms of programs. We use this or we do this instead of what Paterson literacy education stands for. What we've done is a lot of research in models that will support the work of the Institute for Learning as well as the Common Core Standards. Where we're moving to is what's called a Workshop Model. It's heavily driven and, as Susie said, it's student-centered, heavily dependent on student engagement, and aligns with our teacher evaluation work in terms of objectives and DOLs, but also gives students the opportunity to receive the direct instruction from the teacher in what's called a mini lesson. It's not an hour-long lecture, but in a short 15-minute piece where we're going to target a skill and then ask students to go back and work on it where the teacher becomes more of a facilitator and begins to conference with the students to move their

learning forward. What we've done is take a look at reading instruction in the lower grades and test scores in grades 3-5. What you find typically in Paterson and also across the state is that in the younger grades writing instruction is weaker than reading instruction and then that flips as you get into middle school. So the workshop model exists in both reading and writing and where we plan to start is with a writing workshop model that will give the teachers an idea of the experience of working within this type of instruction and then in that effort help improve our writing scores and make the transition into the reading workshop model more smooth. It's in that conferencing piece kids are getting the opportunity to edit and go back and work on a piece for more than the 45-minute prompt will allow them.

Ms. Peron: Something that has not happened in our classrooms is our kids don't go back. They're asked to write a piece and the teacher may give it back to them one time and ask them to edit. What they're looking at is spelling errors and grammar, but they truly don't know how to edit a piece. Dr. Hodges mentioned that before. This actually will teach them the steps. You take your piece back. You edit. You think about it again. Then you revise it. It's like a 3-step process.

Dr. Kazmark: Through all different aspects of writing, both fiction and narrative writing all the way to non-fiction. The piece in conjunction with that is what Susie went into details with, which is the decoding and the phonics piece. Without that foundation it's going to be very hard for our kids. That's where our kids have difficulty. They're never going to be able to do the comprehension piece that is required of them as they get older if they don't have that solid foundation in reading. So the multisensory strategies that Susie is talking about would begin in k-1 within the phonics and the phonological awareness piece and then moving into 2 and 3 become more of a word study component where it would be vocabulary-driven and where students are working with vocabulary, words, and applying some of what they've learned in the k-1 system. It's a smooth transition so that all of the PD that they're beginning to get and all of the work that they're doing all aligns under one particular philosophy and doesn't become we do this or that program. We do a workshop model.

Comm. Kerr: One quick question, Dr. Kazmark...

Comm. Irving: Comm. Kerr, let's let them finish. I hope we're getting to the point that we're even involved with more questions and feedback. I apologize. I just want to make sure that they finish.

Comm. Hodges: The only problem is that the questions are topical.

Comm. Irving: From what I understand we're supposed to be going somewhere. So I want to stay with this.

Dr. Kazmark: The final piece for this initial rollout would be relating to intervention because we can't forget about the students that we haven't yet reached. Again, we're talking models and philosophies right now. We're not talking about specific program. That's something that's going to come as we bring it for Board approval and we have looked into some different products that are out there. None of what we're talking about is part of a traditional textbook adoption. Teachers are pulling from different sources and making what's going to work for the kids that are in their classroom. There are no large scale textbook adoptions where teachers just turn to Day 5, Unit 3 and just do that lesson for everyone. It's going to be very student-centered and student-driven. The intervention model that we're looking at is the Response Intervention. It's used across the country. There are many intervention products, some that we already have in the

district that are aligned to this model and where that starts is with PD with our administrators. There are very specific rules that go along with implementing a model like that and administrators need to be supportive of this kind of a model before you can put any kind of program into place. What I mean by that is there are some scheduling pieces that associate with that and the quality teachers that can help implement that. That's the PD we're going for in terms of administration right now. We're trying to discuss what these models look like and what they mean for your schedules, buildings, and classes. So that's where we're going in the short term. But as Susie said, these are not quick fix Band-Aid things that go into a building with wide scale PD for 500 teachers for one day. It's ongoing, it's very strategic, and it's systematic. It's going to have to be rolled out in increments, which is why that initial piece that I talked about, the k-12 common model curriculum and the pacing that's going to go along with that, is going to be very important because teachers are going to need something concrete to fall back on as this other stuff gets phased in.

Ms. Peron: In the long-run I think that in looking at staffing we can't neglect the fact that we actually paid for reading specialists for training. So we're taking a look at a cohort of those reading specialists. It began in preschool with 16 teachers who will now this summer graduate with a Masters in reading and we also have them throughout the k-12 arena. So in the future we look to set up that cohort of reading specialists to be our guides and to be a mentor teacher to the classroom teachers that are in existence now. Another thing is we want to take a look at policies and consider in the next few years policies that include mandatory attendance in the early grades. Everyone will tell you, you don't have to go to kindergarten. You don't have to go to preschool. We also want to look at class size and the ratios because we all know that a smaller learning environment is a better learning environment and teachers within that smaller learning environment still have to differentiate instruction to reach the children. So those are later steps that we need to take and later actions that we need to dwell on too, but we have to look at our policies and we have to consider those important pieces in instruction and in teaching and learning beginning in the early grades. The recommendations, I talked about individualizing and taking a look at professional development. I think that through collaboration and unifying the divisions that we don't have priorities and initiatives that compete against each other. As Comm. Irving said, teachers nowadays feel like on Tuesday I'm doing this and then on Friday I'm doing that and I'm not sure what to do on Thursday and what to bring together. So I think it's incumbent upon us to come together and decide what is the initiative, how we're going to take a look at professional development, and what we're going to give our teachers on a consistent basis and not just all over the place. We do have to put together that compendium of all the things that are out there because there are many programs out there. We want to stay away from programs. We want to bring it back to best resources and best practices. We do have good things out there, but we're taking a look at what we have, what we need, what is going to fill the holes, and then where we're going to go. So if we're looking at those three things seriously we have to take a look at all the things that we have right now in the district from pre-k to 12 and really come together as a team and set our priorities. I think that we're at that place today. When we talk about professional development in literacy and math, I think that we're moving toward that. I'm not just speaking to you. I'm speaking on behalf of why we're here, kids first and our children. So the recommendations about grade level articulation and getting those teachers together, the movement of what we're doing is we're adding preschool to our Priority Schools. That sets the stage so that preschool is there. Preschool will be at School 28 and it will have its preschool, kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers all in one building and they can begin to have those grade level expectations and meetings. We're adding preschool to School 6 to strengthen that continuum. We look toward doing that more and more in our schools as we move away

from our provider settings and adding and bringing our children into the setting of schools. I think that was our second recommendation to consider and we talked about it. The third one was have some clear expectations. Let them know what we believe in and what we expect and not only just say it but through your supervisors and coaches let the teachers understand, let the teachers assistants understand and let the parents understand what our expectations are. I hope that I covered those recommendations. Those were the ones that I captured from Monday and that we brought to light. This is not a simple thing to do and not a simple thing to present to you. We thought should we bring all the resources that we're looking at and that we put together? We have a whole table full and we have to because when we begin to bring those resources to you for Board approval you will have to research them and see them. But should we have done that tonight? I'm not sure. Maybe that's a different meeting.

Comm. Irving: Thank you. I think you've certainly given us a great deal of information to chew on. What I've had to do was kind of read in between some of the comments. I love to hear all the great stuff that's going on, but what other areas do we need to fully focus on and improve? If I'm hearing you correctly I heard mention of how we use a reading specialist once they're certified and go through this program. The interventions for young people in 1-3, the whole clear message of professional development, the heavy text-based that's going to become the Common Core - to me those are all tangible questions. That was the conversation that we wanted to have as far as the pieces that need to be strengthened. What are they? We want to either present ideas or elicit from the Board our recommendations for a direction that you want to move into. I know folks are writing their own notes and I want to give the Board an opportunity to make some comments and some suggestions. I really would love for us to go into the suggestion route as opposed to just questioning the folks who are here. We can do that any day at any time. I'd really like to see if we can get some feedback for Ms. Peron and Dr. Kazmark for some of the areas of growth that they've presented. I certainly have some I want to share, but I'll start with whoever wants to go first.

Comm. Kerr: I want to thank you, Ms. Peron and your team, Dr. Kazmark, for a great job. I think the information that you presented tonight is very good. I just want to take you back to something that you said. I just need a little bit of help. You said the assessment shows that Paterson is weaker in writing.

Dr. Kazmark: Students typically in grades 3, 4, and 5 do better in reading than writing on the state assessments.

Comm. Kerr: Ms. Peron said something to the effect that the teachers are trained to give the kids whatever they write to edit. In your PD is the teacher trained, not only to correct grammar, but to help the child correctly put together in clear terms a thought or walking a child through the thought process?

Dr. Kazmark: One of the nice things about the workshop model and why it's been so successful in districts across the country is because it will take a piece of writing, say a narrative or a non-fiction piece of writing, and it will break down the steps to make that a successful piece of writing. It will also give children the model from what they call anchor text. So if I'm learning to write a how to book about how to paint a chair I'm going to look at other books that were written by published authors on how to do something. I'm going to pick out the elements of that kind of writing and incorporate it step by step, mini lesson by mini lesson, day by day into my book so that by the end of the units, which are typically four to six weeks long, I have this one finished product that I've really worked on, edited, and gotten through all the steps that you're describing in terms of ideas, grammar, pieces, and putting it all together. Then what makes a nice

transition to the state test is at that point you're not teaching kids how to write a persuasive essay. You're only teaching them how to do it in 45 minutes. They've already done it. Right now our teachers have pieces of good writing instruction, but there are not cohesive units that allow them to kind of develop that over the course of the year. So this kind of model will allow them to work within units and when you get to this March time or April time prior to NJASK you're saying to students now you're going to take a test and you're going to have 45 minutes to write as opposed to six weeks and this is how you do that. So you're teaching what Dr. Hodges mentioned before, study skills test-taking strategies as opposed to actually teaching them how to write for the test. That's really the nice thing about the model. It gives the teacher the idea of how to systematically break it down to the students and it provides that kind of anchor model of what good writing looks like.

Comm. Kerr: Ms. Peron, you mentioned the multisensory way of learning. How does that piece fit into your model? If a child in a classroom learns this way and the other one learns that way, how do you address that situation in the classroom in your PD development?

Ms. Peron: There are specific strategies that teachers would learn to address all of the different multisensory learners. There's auditory. There's kinesthetic. There is visual. There is tactile. They have to touch it. Kinesthetic is that they have to do it. The teachers would actually learn how to present material in content through these different multisensory strategies.

Comm. Kerr: Is there a differentiation in the classroom setting to accommodate the various types of learning that goes on in that classroom?

Ms. Peron: Most definitely. Through materials, instruction, and practices that the teacher would set up for each of her students she or he would definitely have different methods of introducing a certain concept or skill to that child. The visual learner would probably benefit from seeing it on an interactive whiteboard, not necessarily watching a movie, but a clip to show a specific concept or something that they would want to teach. Those different things they would practice and they would learn in their teaching.

Comm. Kerr: You know what to do, but given the classroom situation are all those things applied?

Dr. Kazmark: The workshop model is going to lend itself to those kinds of learners because it's not going to be a traditional classroom model. It's going to have short bouts of direct instruction where you're doing something for the whole class and setting the stage for the lesson. It then is going to give the kids the opportunity to go and work on their own writing and let the teacher conference so that they can start to utilize all those different modalities and strategies that Ms. Peron was talking about to effectively write. So I think that the setup of the classroom within this kind of a model for both reading or writing or even when you're getting into any kind of phonics instruction with word study is going to just allow that. There's going to be so much independent time for students to be able to try and practice the teacher is going to have to take that facilitator role and differentiate for the different kinds of learners she has in her room. That's what we're trying to achieve.

Ms. Peron: So if a child was learning to read the word 'cat' they could see it. You could show them the three letters that you've put together to spell the word. They can sound out each letter and they would use their body to actually physically symbolize the letters c, a, t, and then put it together. So that child would practice by doing it and by feeling it.

Some of them would write it. Some of them would see it. It's all those different strategies to learn how to read, rather than just sit there.

Comm. Kerr: Will all of those modalities be presented in a typical classroom setting so that you don't leave any particular learner out if his particular way of learning was not presented? That's my question. If some people learn by touch, some by hearing, and some by doing, in a classroom setting will all those modalities be presented so that you don't isolate anyone and push them into a corner?

Ms. Peron: I think the answer is yes through professional development. We have to learn how to teach all our children and all our children are so different.

Comm. Kerr: It goes back to the professional development. If teachers and instructors are not developed that way then they will not demonstrate that awareness in the classroom.

Ms. Peron: This PD is grounded and focused in multisensory strategies and that's what we're missing in the classroom.

Dr. Evans: I've observed classrooms where this took place in another school district. Teachers are taught to do that and it's the conferencing piece where gaps are closed. They may use one modality to deliver it to the entire class, but when the students begin working individually or in small groups – they will do both typically – then if a kid didn't get it using the modality that the teacher delivered in direct instruction to the whole group, then when they work with them at the conferencing level they then use another modality when they're working one-on-one with the student. But the answer to your question is yes.

Dr. Kazmark: Ms. Peron's example was with 'cat,' but she could be working with 'cat' and I could be in the same age, class, and grade working with 'caught.' That model and that conferencing piece would allow you to step it up or bring it down to the needs of the student. That's really what we're trying to accomplish.

Ms. Peron: But not hold everybody to the same level and that's really the most important piece.

Comm. Irving: I really don't have any questions. I have suggestions, recommendations, and comments. The first one I have is to reinforce what we discussed the other evening, which is making sure we have a clear articulation of expectations of our teachers when it comes to the PD piece. Case in point, I have heard from teachers firsthand that there are aspects of the IFL that contradict aspects of Mike Miles and Focal Point. There are teachers who are sometimes confused by which method overlaps which or how they fold together. I think that moving forward if we're talking about them having their DOLs on the board, but there is another aspect of the other PD they received. We've invested over the last two to three years a great deal in both programs, the Focal Point piece first and the IFL piece that came thereafter. They're running together, but they're also running side by side. I don't know if we ever as a district have taken the best of them both and put them upon each other to at least share with teachers how they can support each other. I'm sure they in some way do, but that may not be inherently clear for the educator and for the person who's frustrated and thinks that a lot of the work that we have to do on both ends is just extra work on top of what I have to do instead of them understanding here's how the IFL fits into what you do and here's how the Focal Point information you've given fits into what you do. That is a very important piece at least for me because we've invested so much money in

both of them. I think the return on our investment has to be more than just a principal walking into a room and seeing the DOL and the objective on the board and them saying you've done due diligence. The DOL is Mike Miles and Focal Point?

Ms. Peron: Yes.

Comm. Irving: So you've done quite well with regard to this aspect and that's good enough. It's either our teachers don't know or understand the capacity for how to leverage both models and how they need to be supported and work with each other. I believe that somewhere in professional development that has to be made clear because I don't believe it has.

Dr. Evans: That's an issue. We're working on it right now. Actually, we've had a meeting with both the IFL and the Focal Point folk on that very issue. They are two programs that support each other and helping principals and teachers to see that really is the challenge. Let's be clear on what they are intended to do. The work of the Institute for Learning is to strengthen capacity among our teachers and help our teachers to be stronger teachers and deliver rigorous curriculum and a rigorous academic program - something that is sorely missing right now in too many of our classrooms.

Comm. Hodges: How do they go about doing that?

Dr. Evans: Through professional development they teach them what it is that they're supposed to deliver, the practices that they're supposed to use in the classroom. There are 10 Principles of Learning that guide that teaching, but it's through professional development. Then they go into the classroom where they are, observe them, give them feedback on what they're seeing them deliver, good, bad or indifferent. That feedback includes here's what you're doing right, but here are some things you can do better, here are some things you're doing totally wrong. They give them feedback in the classroom.

Comm. Hodges: How do you define rigor? How is rigor defined? That's the issue.

Dr. Evans: Challenging curriculum, higher level skills, and higher level tasks.

Dr. Kazmark: Text complexity and students being able to question and defend their position. The IFL works in units similar to what I described with writing. I think right now they're doing child labor. So their units are broken down into strategies and skills and then students are expected through the mini lesson to have the opportunity to see what they're doing, see what the skill is in strategy, go back and practice, talk to their partner, challenge themselves, challenge the class, and then produce some kind of evidence in a product that shows the level of rigor. IFL has a rubric for everything. So every piece that they're responsible for doing is then measured against a rubric so you come out with some kind of measurable outcome for what is being taught in that class. Like I was saying before, the Common Curriculum and the aligned piece between what we're doing with the model curriculum and the Common Core Standards and what philosophy we're going to operate under are really important because that's when teachers are going to start to see connections. So if they're working in units in writing and units with reading in IFL and the model, the classroom, and the environment is the same then the connections will start to happen. Right now what we along with the state are struggling with is that the resources and the curriculum haven't aligned yet for anybody because it's brand new. So everybody across the state is trying to decide on resources that are going to support Common Core and a model that's going to support that work as well.

So the IFL, Common Core, and workshop is all in an effort to try to cohesively align the curriculum and support the standards in that level of rigor that we're expecting of our teachers.

Dr. Evans: Let me finish my thought. That's what the IFL does. It's designed to help our teachers be stronger teachers, more effective teachers, and teachers that generate much better results from the students. The work of Focal Point and evaluation work is evaluating what teachers are doing. It's not providing a script on how you introduce the rigor and all of the pieces associated with the Principles of Learning. It's how do you go in and here is a structure for evaluating what the teachers are doing. The challenge for us is making sure that what they're evaluating is what the IFL is teaching them. That's where the breakdown is. The reality is that they aren't far apart. It's a different language. They're using a different language. For example, the IFL doesn't use DOLs but they know what they are. But if we're going to use DOLs they should be IFL aligned DOLs, Demonstrations of Learning. That's what that is, objectives in DOLs and other attributes of the learning. What we're doing now is working to align the instruments that are used for walk-throughs for IFL and walk-through for the work of the teacher evaluation model so that they say the same things. If you have a DOL it's a rigorous DOL as defined by the Institute for Learning.

Comm. Irving: Who is presently working on doing that? When is that going to reach conclusion?

Dr. Evans: The conversation has begun.

Comm. Irving: So it's just in the conversation stage at this point in time.

Dr. Evans: No. Actually there's activity underway. I've been involved in one meeting because I got this going. I got involved in a meeting to get it going with Shirley Miles from Focal Point with Patti Magruder. These are the lead people in these initiatives. Patti Magruder is with the IFL work and the first conversation was to establish where the problem is. Then from my vantage point it's what needs to happen to fix it, which means they need to get together on DOL versus Principles of Learning and how you make the demonstration of learning for a particular activity reflect a principle of learning aligned with the IFL. It was a very healthy and energetic discussion in that first meeting. They have since had follow-up conversations. We'll be back here to continue that conversation. Meanwhile I have asked that we pull together a group of principals who are actually doing it quite well. They're not necessarily the ones that are complaining, but they figured it out already. We've asked them to come to the table with us already and show us what you're doing and help us to bring about this alignment so we can make it happen district-wide. That will occur this month as well.

Comm. Irving: So what's the timeline for completing that? I came here to talk some suggestions, some dates, and get some firm action for how we move forward. Everybody else can choose to decide how we're going to go, but I want to make sure before I leave here there are three things that I want to recommend that I get some firm resolutions on. What is the firm timeline for making this happen?

Dr. Evans: I'll have to get back with you because I'll have to get with the people involved to find out their meeting schedule and when they expect to complete it. I'd say in the next one to two months, but I need to confer with them.

Comm. Irving: You're talking about two separate agencies that have two separate products that may even be considered competitors – I don't know how their market

works – who we're asking to come together. I don't know how advantageous they are in doing that.

Dr. Evans: They're not competing at all. They both have strong products that are very effective in their own right. It's taking some of the aspects of those strong works and bringing them together in a classroom. If I'm the teacher and I'm delivering it and I'm a principal going in to only observe what you're delivering that's a tool that I use that focuses me on those things.

Comm. Irving: Got it! Can I get an update? I'll hear really good things about Focal Point and then I may hear not so good things about IFL stuff and the exactly inverse. What are we missing? How are we missing this? I'm happy to hear that's happening, but I want to make sure that this also gets seen through to an end as well. The next recommendation that I wanted to share with everyone is something that we discussed at the curriculum committee. We talk about Early Childhood in this district as if it's just preschool or pre-k. I've given much thought and put my academic hat back on and went into some articles looking at Early Childhood departments and how they're comprised. I'm convinced that we really need to take an aggressive look at other districts and expanding the scope of what Early Childhood means for us, looking at pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade as the Early Childhood aspect of this district. I say that because I believe that those grades flow into each other more than any other grades in the academic continuum because of how they're structured and built on top of each other. Pre-k and kindergarten are really talking about the foundation for development and getting kids developmentally ready to continue to recognize numbers and letters so that when they come to the first grade a first grade teacher in this district should know because they're now part of the consortium and the department that has helped prepare the young children from kindergarten and pre-k. To that end, what do you do with kids who don't go to pre-k but go straight to kindergarten? So that kindergarten teacher needs to know if this kid didn't go to pre-k, what is the foundation that they missed that they might have to spend some time working with them on because we're all part of the same department and we're on the same page and there is some continuity. I truly believe if we're going to really start to hammer at these numbers and statistics we need to do a lot of work on the front end really strengthening and empowering our young people to give them the best chance they can so that when they get to the third grade and testing begins they're not going from here and if they happen to dip it's a shorter curve for them to have to go if they're not going to dip at all. But I am convinced more than ever, Ms. Peron and Dr. Evans, that we really need to look at some benchmarking and at other districts and seeing for the districts that do have a broader scope for what Early Childhood looks like and is that this district begins to explore that. I told Ms. Peron the other day that would mean a heck of a lot of work for you, but to me it makes sense. If we're talking about getting preschoolers to learn how to read to me it makes much more sense to put together a program where the development is connected. So they get whatever foundations they need because in the curriculum we know they're going to get it in the pre-k, kindergarten, and they definitely are going to finish it in 1 before we move on to 2 and 3 grades and they really start learning the true foundations of literacy, understanding words, putting words together, and knowing that numbers can be used to create simple math such as adding. That is a very serious recommendation I have and I know it deviates from what we do, but we have to do some bold stuff and we have to be willing to try some different stuff. I'm just saying at this point in time it's worth investigating and coming back and having a very firm discussion about where we take Early Childhood because it's not just about preschool. It can't be. The data we saw says as much. If we can do an even stronger job of prepping our young people pre-k, kindergarten, first, second and third grades, they're going to be even more

prepared and when we're talking about rigor in the second and third grades as per the Common Core that's all predicated on a firm and consistent foundation.

Comm. Hodges: I'm trying to understand what you mean by tying the pre-k to kindergarten and first grade. What are you trying to accomplish from that?

Comm. Irving: To create a level of continuity amongst those grade levels so they would operate almost as a single cohort system. It's my suggestion. You can have your feedback on it.

Comm. Hodges: I'm not following. What I'm afraid of now is that they already link three and four-year-olds together pretty much, I'm supposing, as opposed to looking at it as a discreet age group with treating four and three-year-olds as you would treat a fourth and fifth grader. I'm not quite sure that happens, which is my concern. In part it doesn't happen because not every parent takes their child and puts them in. So what I'm afraid is happening is that three and four-year-olds are all in that soup and that's a problem for me. I can't swear that's going on, but I'm not certain that it's not, which is why you hear all the questions that I have and some tonight. So my concern is when you now expand that continuum, as you're saying, to first grade, I'm really concerned because what I'm afraid is happening with three and four-year-olds will then also happen in kindergarten and first grade.

Comm. Irving: Which is? I'm missing that part.

Comm. Hodges: To me if you go through 180 days of pre-k you should be able to read. If you then go through another 180 days you should definitely be able to read. I'm hearing no. That's to me. So what I'm afraid of is the fact that if you then don't expect that to happen, which is what people over there don't, if a kid misses the third grade, the three-year-old portion of it, then it's definitely not going to happen because they're not getting as much instruction or the same kind of instruction or the same amount as two years of that. So if you then approach it as one big cohort as you're saying, then how do you see the progress or the push?

Comm. Irving: To that end, I think that's the opportunity to institute benchmarks for rigor that play off each other. The issue now is that our Early Childhood development centers don't necessarily work in conjunction with our kindergarten department, which don't necessarily communicate with our first grade.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely. I agree.

Comm. Irving: I'm saying I think that has to be the focus. What you're saying is a problem that I think needs to be the focus when you help to create a bracket around what Early Childhood is. In this area they will learn this specific information and these specific skills because they tie into this next grade, this next grade ties into this next grade, but it's all done in a way where the curriculum is understood by all the teachers across the board. What I'm doing in pre-k is going to be supported by the next teacher who is in kindergarten and that's going to be supported by the next teacher that's in first grade. At each grade level they should be raising the level of rigor and expectation for these young people.

Comm. Hodges: Why wouldn't you think that's already happening?

Comm. Irving: Because the data is showing by the time the kids get to second and third grade they're still not there.

Ms. Peron: It is somewhat disconnected. I began the presentation by saying that we do have to strengthen our transitioning activities. We've done that in the past in the Department of Early Childhood, which oversees preschool, 3 and 4. We have connected school age to a certain point. Master teachers go into kindergarten classes and they just attend grade level meetings. We had some cross visitations so we had preschool teachers go to kindergarten and kindergarten teachers go to preschools to take a look at what goes on in the day with a focused tool and all of that, but it's not enough. It really isn't enough. The expectations are so different and they're not clear. We really do need to strengthen the continuum. We really do.

Comm. Irving: There's certain PD that could be shared from both age groups and I think there should be.

Comm. Hodges: I agree with that. You had a third suggestion?

Comm. Mendez: I think we're going in the same direction. Adding preschool with regular school is a great idea. But one of the things that I'm concerned about is the disconnection of the teachers that you mentioned before. Teachers are not connected. When we received the data at the last meeting I was very impressed with how the students went from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and then into 4th grade they went down. How do we make sure that our teachers know the foundation that our students need to have in order to go to the next level? That's where I want to be focused because I believe that if the students at the 1st grade level have the foundation that they need to have to go to the 2nd level they're going to be successful and they're going to be okay if that teacher is in connection with what's going to happen in 3rd grade. They will know the foundation that the students need to have and we will move forward. That's where I'm going. I would like to know what strategy we're going to have and what kind of effective plan to look into that and analyze that data. Numbers to me are everything. Once you have those numbers and you see the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade they go drastically down you know that the problem is right there and you know that there's no connection between 3rd and 4th grade when it comes to the foundation. That's the way I see it.

Dr. Kazmark: Sometimes the level of independence that's required of the student from grade to grade increases on top of what we're discussing about the articulation and the foundation, which is all very important. Also, you can have the foundation and be successful in 1st grade and go to 2nd grade and the scores may still drop because now you're being required to utilize those skills independently. I think that's another reason why we need the articulation between the teachers. It may not just be that you need to know all the vowel combinations in 3rd grade and now in 4th grade you don't know them and you don't do well. It may be that in 4th grade you're required to go back to your seat and produce something on your own where in 3rd grade you're doing it with a group or in a partner situation or with teacher support. I think that the articulation is going to help develop that as well because it is about content, curriculum, and being able to read and having that foundation. But it's also about being able to transfer those skills independently, which is what we want the students to do. That's where the new standards are really centered. They want kids to be able to not just do it, but tell you why they're doing it and defend it. That's the part the teacher is not going to be able to do for them.

Ms. Peron: That's a part that we failed to mention when we talked about the IFL and where they go with accountable talk and how those students engage in accountable talk. They're articulating their thinking and then they're backing up their thinking with evidence that they have to find in texts and from each other, that they have to argue to a

point, that they have to learn how to critically think about a problem and not solve it one way but in many ways. That piece of accountable talk is amazing and the way that teachers are trained so that they are facilitators of that talk in the classroom has been one of the works of IFL. I think that with the Common Core and where our learning is going the IFL has really mastered that in presenting that through professional development for teachers.

Dr. Kazmark: The PD has to be grounded. With the curriculum and the resources and what's happening the foundations exist. They may not exist to the level that some of us like, but they're there. Students will be able to take that and apply it to independent situations and that's why we see dips like that from 1st to 2nd or from 3rd to 4th or from 6th to 7th. It's not necessarily the level of work. There is that piece, but you're stepping it up. You have to be able to now do it on your own and the new assessments are very much driven that way. You're not just telling me what the main idea is. You have to go back in the text and underline where the support is to why you chose sentence B as your main idea. So the articulation among the students in the grades, yes there is a discussion about whether we want them reading at level whatever at the end of preschool or we don't. But the beyond that it's more about the expectation for the next grade level in terms of what is the student able to do on their own and what do I expect of a 4th grade teacher versus what you give as a support in the 3rd grade and how does that lower our scores and hurt our kids in their ability to be successful.

Ms. Peron: And we talked about professionally developing and bringing this to administrators because we're going to have to work with administrators to develop consistent schedules to do the vertical articulation among and within the different grades. So that's really another piece of this that it's not only what we present but the things that we need to change, and that's something that we need to change.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Evans, all I'm asking is that we take the time to look into this idea and possibility and then revisit it maybe later on towards the end of the school year. I think it's worth exploring.

Dr. Evans: There's another key entity that has to be considered in this and I will take all this into consideration. Where a particular unit is aligned at the district office matters less than what happens in the school building. The vertical articulation they just talked about happens when principals make it happen. It doesn't matter where the programs are aligned. In the building if the principal doesn't make sure that it happens, it won't happen. That's the bottom line. We've got to consider that group as well.

Comm. Kerr: I like the answer that Dr. Kazmark gave concerning the falloff. I assume from what you've said there is a recognition that this is a problem.

Dr. Kazmark: Yes.

Comm. Kerr: Is there anything in your PD to help address that condition about the independence? They're doing well and then they just fall off the cliff.

Dr. Kazmark: Well, I think in the curriculum as it has existed in the past with the standards as they previously existed you had a level of a lot of support given in those younger grades as part of what was expected and then a very sharp increase around that 4th grade where all of a sudden now you don't have the support and you may need it. The standards as they exist now are really requiring that from kindergarten. They're requiring kids to be independent thinkers, to explain their answers, to have that kind of level of expectation for them as k and pre-k. So the classroom as we're describing it

and the transformation of the classroom as we're describing it is going to lend itself to teachers all having that same philosophy and that same PD that's going to encourage that kind of thinking in the classroom. Then there are additional conversations that happen at the school level between the teachers that the principal facilitates as to what really changes grade to grade will improve. The standards as they exist now in literacy in the new standards there are not as many and there is not as much that's expected and it spirals through the year. So you may be getting the same skill in k-3, 6, and 8 but at a different level of rigor and expectation. Those are the conversations that have to happen between teachers. The classroom environments are going to support that kind of learning, but the teachers are going to have to have conversations and the curriculum can address that to some degree and what we put in our pacing and what kind of appendixes we do. But those kinds of conversations are what need to happen at the school level. The PD that we do on our level is going to encourage that and then the scheduling piece that Susie mentioned when you're meeting with administrators and almost enforcing that those conversations happen and the follow-up that goes through with the supervisors when they're in those schools and meeting with administrators is going to ensure that those conversations happen. So the PD model is not just one thing. I can't just say to them, "Make sure you talk about curriculum."

Comm. Kerr: No, but it's not about instruction. I believe from what you've said the instruction is okay. The real breakdown is the support. That's where the weakness is and I'm not getting from you that there is a full appreciation that the breakdown is right here and we need to do better in helping these students pass this bridge. They are not getting over on the other side. They are falling off the bridge. We knowing that, how can we facilitate them? That's why I'm asking and I'm not getting an answer.

Dr. Kazmark: I'm not sure I understand.

Ms. Joanne Riviello: You asked a while ago about what the professional development looks like and I think both Lauren and Susie know that. They haven't communicated to you so you understand it. Teachers in order to teach that multisensory approach you either know it or oftentimes especially as you get older through the grades you teach to what your learning style is. So in the professional development teachers are going to actually practice the teaching to those learning styles. You might be a kinesthetic learner, but you're going to be practicing how to teach to auditory learners. The professional development is going to be as hands-on for the teacher as we are going to expect it to be for them to their students. I know they know that, but I don't think they communicated that to you when you asked the question. The other piece Susie started to hit on in terms of IFL and what they do for us, as our students are working in group activities Susie talked about the accountable talk. That's talk amongst themselves in terms of what's going on. Since the teacher is the facilitator, what the teacher is doing as they're walking through the room from group to group, they're trained through IFL on how to ask guiding questions. I hear what's going on in this group. I'm not going to run in and tell Susie and Lauren what to do. I'm hearing what they're doing and what they're thinking is and I'm going to ask them something that will now guide that thought to get them to where they need to be in that particular activity. I know it sounds like we all as educators know how to do that, but oftentimes – and I think a lot of that is promoted by assessments – we're so busy to get the kids to get the right answer that we're not asking questions to force them to think it out on their own. That's what IFL has spent a great deal of time teaching our teachers how to do. I think it's a real important part of teaching a more rigorous curriculum. The third thing, and Susie definitely touched upon it and Dr. Hodges brings us back full circle to the cursive writing question is, our schedules are going to have to be realigned to what literacy is looking for in terms of those types of classrooms. When Dr. Evans finishes with that policy, it's going to be on

cursive writing. I think the great thing is there are a lot of people on our teams that have been good schedulers and once those pieces are put into place of the time allotment to that curriculum in literacy and what a successful math class is going to look like, is then build the schedule out for the principal and teach them how to do it. For some of our newer principals it's hard because you need your specialists to determine how you get your vertical articulation in. You have to really work to schedule your teachers in their content area around your specialist. I think the good news is many of us have expertise in that area and as they build out what that classroom is going to look like there are other people that can now take it and look at some of this staffing, such as School 6 versus School 15. Those are very different buildings. Or NRC for that matter, which is a whole larger building, and then help the principal to staff that out what it's going to look like. Myself, as a principal having done it and some of the other people here as principals having done it, you believe to get that articulation in. It's work. It's not a quick fix building a schedule. But we have the ability to assist them in that area and through that facilitation it will only help make the delivery of the content and the instruction a whole lot easier and it will guarantee the articulation between grade levels and contents.

Comm. Kerr: The problem that I see is that I'm just going to draw an analogy here. Good kids grow up. They get their independence as adults and they just destroy themselves. They can't handle the independence and the maturity of making decisions on their own. Bring that back and see if we can apply it to our kids falling off at the 4th grade. That number drops precipitously at the 4th grade. It's very bad. They're not handling it, not because the instruction is not good and not because they don't have the brains to absorb, not that they don't understand it, but they just can't handle the independence. They like to be instructed and they like to be shepherded through the difficulty of the process. How can we let them understand? Do we have that piece in our system that says, "You're a 4th grader now and this is what independence is. This is how you do it. This is growing up. This is what you have to do. You can do it. You have the ability. You have the know-how. You have the tools. Just do it. Do it this way." Gently guide them over. That's what I'm talking about.

Ms. Riviello: I think good teachers do that. They know that. They may not have articulated it. You just described differentiation. Ultimately some kids are ready to do it and they're more independent and they're going to do it with the teacher as a guide. Then there are some that are going to still require more.

Comm. Kerr: How do we address those that are not doing it? I'm not concerned about those that are doing it.

Ms. Riviello: In my opinion we need to better train them. As I've said, I've seen kids that are the most challenged in a very interactive exciting classroom where the teacher is a master of their content and they thrive in spite of the things that are their difficulties when they walk into that room.

Comm. Irving: I want to transition. Dr. Hodges has been waiting patiently, which never happens.

Comm. Hodges: I haven't been patient at all. This is going to be the only time you ever hear me say this and I'll probably deny it subsequently. I'm fully aware that not all three and four-year-olds are able to read primarily because they don't have the vocabulary that supports the reading. I'm aware of that. However, the point I'm trying to make is if you don't expect them to and if you establish the mindset that not all three and four-year-olds can read, then you're not trying to get them there because you don't expect them to. That's the point I'm trying to make. We have suffered mightily from this lack of

expectation. Like I said, and I should never have said it now that I think about it, only because the vocabulary is the major stumbling block. Now, having established that, I know you've covered some of this in the past, I was hoping to hear some strategies for addressing that since that is a concrete problem that our kids suffer from, given this environment. Maybe tonight isn't the night that you wanted to do that, but that's one of the things that I need to hear about.

Ms. Peron: I just want to say that certain people have that expectation and then so many others don't.

Comm. Hodges: We're paying them not to have the expectation.

Ms. Peron: We have to be mindful of that and when we interview and bring people into this district we have to be clear with what our expectations are and what we want their criteria, their qualifications, and what they bring to the table we're the ones that have to be clear on that. It starts there. It begins there. Then, as I said before, this is all the talk. The most important piece is the walk - the follow-through, the monitoring, and the implementation of it.

Comm. Hodges: I would suggest to you that if they don't see it... The last plan had it on page 16, as I recall.

Ms. Peron: All the plans have it.

Comm. Hodges: On page 16.

Ms. Peron: You want it on page 1.

Comm. Hodges: I want it on page 1.

Ms. Peron: You want it on the cover.

Comm. Hodges: If it's on page 1, then they recognize this is important to you. No one reads page 16. They just sign off. Nobody reads page 16. They read page 1. It sort of tells people they are serious about that. All I'm trying to say is that expectation should ring loud and clear and they should be saying I can do it if you give me x, y, and z. That's what I want to hear. I want to hear what we're not giving you.

Ms. Peron: I think we covered that when we first began our conversation. Our overarching philosophy and our mission is really what we've never had for literacy. We've never had that.

Dr. Kazmark: We've never specified as part of a concrete grade level expectation that we expect students in kindergarten to be reading at level C by the end of the year. That's an expectation of reading when you're working in leveled readers and talking about classroom libraries. Kindergarten educators as a whole have that as a benchmark at the end of the year. We've made those statements, we've encouraged it, we've put it in plans, we've put graphs together showing how many are below expectation or above, but moving forward making that an expectation and then as Susie said holding teachers accountable to that expectation through monitoring is going to be what helps us get there as well.

Comm. Hodges: I've been screaming about expectations since I got on the Board. That's why I'm so frustrated, but I'll take that for the time being. The point I'm making is

unless it's clearly delineated that this is what you want and then you tell the centers to tell us what they need to help them get there. You can come tell us what additional resources have to be put in place to help them get to that point. That's what I'm looking for. I recognize that vocabulary is a major problem as is phonics because we went on this tangent with world language and whatever that mess was. I misheard you say that phonics was going to be a major part of kindergarten.

Ms. Peron: No, in preschool. It's a sequence of training. I read all of them.

Dr. Kazmark: It's different levels of phonics training.

Ms. Peron: There are different levels and what I'm saying is we're not talking today about 4-6 and all of that. There are different levels and it's not just at the k level.

Comm. Hodges: So it's reinforcement later on.

Ms. Peron: Yes, and before, at preschool.

Dr. Kazmark: Phonics First Basic, Phonics First Foundations Level I, Level II and so forth.

Comm. Hodges: Okay, I won't belabor the point then because that's a concern. Will this multisensory approach – and I sort of have the answer to that – use up needed time in other areas?

Ms. Peron: No. It's a strategy. It will not.

Comm. Hodges: Okay. I heard last workshop there was a concern about adding penmanship and how it would steal time from everything else that we needed to do. There was a question about that. You also said that there's an increased focus on writing. I just thought the penmanship would be an excellent complement to that. Since you have to do it anyway and there's an increased focus those two fit hand-in-hand.

Dr. Kazmark: Embedded in the writing.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely. In addition to that, it enables the students to write faster if they write in cursive, as opposed to writing with script. Are the strategies for the three and four-year-olds age specific? Is this more of a focus for three-year-olds versus more of a focus for four-year-olds? Or is it just enhancements? The fact is that not every child goes through two years of preschool and that's a big problem if you're trying to get them all to a certain point by kindergarten. So I'm just trying to wonder how you accomplish that with any reasonable amount of predictability. So when they get to kindergarten what are you facing? You're facing one child that has no preschool, another child who's had a year, and another child that has had two years. And now you suddenly have to take them to a certain point. That's a major concern to me because now they have a variety of skills. Some kids have no English language skills at all. So how do you do that and how is that going to be handled?

Ms. Peron: I think that we touched a little bit upon it and that's what I got out of Comm. Irving's comments and recommendations. We do need to look at strategic grouping. I began my comments with that. We need a transitional kindergarten for students that come in at that level. Even in first grade some children don't come to kindergarten and they don't have to. It's not a mandate. So in that transitional piece that grade has to have accelerated curriculum, a different scope and sequence, and an expert teacher in

knowing how to deliver that instruction to those children with either no vocabulary, interrupted education, or no language. We do that through different strategies. Here again we go back to multisensory does not take out any time. It's just a different approach. So we really need to take a look at those and we've been talking about that. We've been having conversations about that because as you know we did a study on how many of our kids do attend preschool, who long do they stay there, what's the perseverance, do they jump around and go to different centers. It is a noted challenge and a noted problem that half of our kids in this city don't attend preschool, or at least don't attend our preschool. So that is something to really take into account and that's a huge hole and a huge gap that we need to address because we're not addressing it right now.

Comm. Hodges: That's the issue that I'm looking for from you in terms of strategies. At the very least in my mind – and I'm not an educator – you've got to have a child be able to read by first grade in order to be able to do some of the other things that we're hoping to do in terms of beginning to teach them how to study on their own, teaching them how to be a student. So what that means is here's a set of things I need you to do at home and having a child faithfully do that. They will because they're five or six-years-old. They'll do whatever you want basically. But you have to be able to teach them that. I don't think they're getting that in other places. So you have to build it into the curriculum that you teach them how to be the student that you want them to be. But if they can't read in that kindergarten through first year, then that's a real problem. I'm hoping to come back to you with outlines teaching kids how to do outlines. But if you can't digest the paragraph at that point then you're not going to be able to do an outline because you can't reach in and pull out key points for you. Or even having the teacher identify those key points it doesn't help the child. You do have to begin to train them to look for those things, to go find the key point in the program that I want you to understand so that now you can at least focus your attention here. You don't have to memorize everything, but you do have to go look for the kernels. Somebody has to teach that.

Ms. Peron: We talk about a lot of academic and content. Sometimes we're remiss to speak about social and emotional learning and teaching. There have been many studies. The Perry Project Preschool Study was conducted and people thought if you go to preschool you're more likely to go to college. It's not that you went to preschool. It's that you learned the social skills, you learned how to self-regulate, you learned how to pay attention, you learned how to work independently and make choices for what you're interested in, and you learned those important skills that you need to have. Before you get into any type of teaching, reading or math you need to learn this is my turn, I need to wait, and I need to focus on what I'm listening to. Those are the types of social emotional skills that we can't leave out in Early Childhood. It's very important and we have to bring those and sustain those in k, 1, 2, and 3. A lot of times because of time we leave it out, but it can't be neglected.

Comm. Hodges: These are some of the issues that really have to be codified. There has to be a sense that these components must be included in the overall teaching process. How are we integrating computers? I'm not using the word 'technology' because they're not. But how are we integrating computers, particularly at the preschool age? As we are increasingly aware, these kids are using these things.

Comm. Irving: Better than most of us.

Comm. Hodges: Yes, which belies the fact that they can't read. I don't want to get into that, but they are using them. So how are we using these tools to enhance their educational opportunities and to certainly enhance their reading?

Ms. Peron: In the preschool program it's a part of the curriculum that we have computers in the classroom and that computers are used as a part of instruction and self-choice. They're regulated to 15 minutes at the computer. It's a center and it's a learning station. In our in-district preschools all of our classrooms have interactive whiteboards. So through the use of technology they model lessons and they incorporate lessons with the students. We also have I-Pads. We're going to begin with three I-Pads. My goal is to have a one-on-one initiative with I-Pads so that they begin to learn it at three and four and the teachers can't tell me that when they get to kindergarten they don't know how to manipulate an I-Pad because hopefully the I-Pads will be in that classroom. We just put the work order in. We're just ordering more I-Pads and there are computers in every preschool classroom in provider settings and in district settings. We have E-Readers, which are part of the curriculum. A set of books that the teachers utilize for read-aloud can also be found on the computer so they can listen to it, they can see the story, and they manipulate the pages at their pace. So it is very much a part of curriculum at the three and four-year-old levels.

Comm. Hodges: I'm a little concerned. These things are fragile. I'm interested to see how that happens.

Ms. Peron: They have a really good carrying case. It's like rubber. It almost bounces if they drop it.

Comm. Hodges: Really? I need one of those. I'm excited about the part of your discussion where you're talking about students being asked to learn some material and then defend their understanding of it. That to me is long overdue and I think that the earlier you inject that into the curriculum the better off our students will be, given our problems with analysis and the fact that you want kids to question everything, which is how I started and hence the way I am. I'm happy to see that that happens and I look forward to hearing more about the strategies to address that kindergarten issue with those kids coming in with different skill levels. Dr. Evans, we had talked about having kids reach kindergarten with 75% proficiency, but that's not the total universe of students coming into the system at kindergarten. The problem still remains for the rest of them and what do you do by the end of the year to get them to at least that 75% level. Thank you very much.

Comm. Irving: Are there any other questions or comments? Thank you, Dr. Kazmark and Ms. Peron. Thank you all.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.