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EDUCATION REFORM IN PENNSYLVANIA

HEARING

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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EDUCATION REFORM IN PENNSYLVANIA

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2002

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Philadelphia, PA.

The subcommittee met at 9:45 a.m., in room 653, City Hall, Philadelphia, PA, Hon. Arlen Specter presiding.

Present: Senator Specter.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education will now proceed. Today, we will be inquiring into the historic arrangements which have been made between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the city of Philadelphia in an innovative approach to the Philadelphia School System, which has 264 schools. Some 42 of those schools will now be taken over by other entities in an effort to improve the educational process.

At the outset I compliment Pennsylvania's Governor, Mark Schweiker, and Philadelphia's mayor, John Street, for their initiative in undertaking this very, very challenging and controversial matter. The Philadelphia schools have more than 200,000 students. The State of Pennsylvania has some 3,247 public schools and 501 school districts, and a significant number of these are in a category which needs some assistance.

The Federal Government's contribution to education in America is in excess of $51 billion, and increased last year by some $6 billion, and we were able to get a special allocation from the Appropriations Committee last year of $20 million, which was directed at the State. As is the practice in the State of Pennsylvania, they then made that allocation directly to the City of Philadelphia.

My opening statement is going to be abbreviated, because we have a very distinguished panel to start with, and an extensive number of witnesses. I appreciate the presence here today of two Members of Congress, and in order of seniority I would turn next to the distinguished Congressman Chaka Fattah.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHAKA FATTAH, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. FATTAH. Let me thank the senior Senator from the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for convening this very important hearing, and I want to expressly thank him for his leadership and

the additional resources that were made available to our schools in last year's appropriations process.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee, and it was only through his leadership that those dollars were made available, and his continuing concern, and this hearing is another example of that, so I will shorten my opening statement also so we can get to the panelists, and I want to thank Senator Specter and his staff for arranging such a superb list of witnesses so we can delve into these issues about what is going to happen to our schools here in Philadelphia, so thank you, Senator.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Congressman Fattah.

We will now turn to the distinguished Congressman Bob Brady. I just leaned over to confirm that in fact Chaka was senior, and with Bob's customary humility he said, I do not mind being junior to anyone. I just want to get the job done.

Congressman Brady.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT BRADY, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Senator, and again thank you for conducting these hearings to get another good insight, and hopefully we can help our children, but I would just be remiss if I did not thank my Governor and my mayor for coming together.

I had a very small part in hopefully bringing them together to try to get where we can get to keep our kids in school and to keep them adequately funded and to get a quality education, so again I thank them for working together, and hopefully to know they will continue to work together to try to get a tremendous task done, and again, Senator, thank you and my colleague, Chaka Fattah on the Appropriation Committee. You all know his background and his record on education, so we have all the tools we need to try to get what we need to get done to make sure our children do get a quality education.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK S. SCHWEIKER, GOVERNOR, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to the Governor of Pennsylvania, Hon. Mark S. Schweiker, sworn in as Pennsylvania's 44th Governor in October of last year, first elected to public office in 1979 as Middletown Township Supervisor, later served as Bucks County Commissioner, a graduate from Bloomsburg University with a master's degree from Rider University in New Jersey. Thank you for joining us, Governor Schweiker, and we look forward to your testimony.

Governor SCHWEIKER. Thank you, Senator Specter, and thank you, Representatives Brady and Fattah for the opportunity to visit and talk about what we all realize are important endeavors.

Thanks for the opportunity also to discuss how we are improving education throughout Pennsylvania, and I would say the only State to offer grants directly to parents to help them help their children get individualized support to improve their reading and math skills, known as Classroom Plus, and the only State to offer tax credits to corporations that commit to funding scholarship programs to students, and at the same time we will talk about the ef-

forts in Philadelphia schools as we weigh in on what we call the Education Empowerment Act.

Senator, let me also extend my thanks to you for securing the $20 million that has already been mentioned that will be used throughout our Commonwealth and is sourced in the fund for the improvement of education. I assure you that money will be a tremendous help as we continue the effort to rejuvenate Pennsylvania's poorest performing school districts. Thanks again.

Pennsylvania's historic Education Empowerment Act provides new management tools and extra money to turn around school districts where half or more of the children in grades 5, 8, and 11 are failing basic math and reading and our State's assessment test, commonly known as the PSSA. Twelve school districts are now on the State's empowerment list. Four of these districts, Clairton, Sto-Rox, Lancaster, and Steelton, already have seen significant 2-year academic gains thanks to hard work by teachers, administrators, and students.

In Sto-Rox, 51.1 percent of its students scored below basic in reading and math between 1998 and 1999, a short time ago. Two years later, that number has dropped more than 12 points to 38.9 percent. Lancaster and Steelton scores have improved by nearly 10 points, and Clairton has seen its scores improve by 8 points. These districts are tangible proof, or offer tangible proof that the empowerment act is working.

My new budget proposes $1.8 million to extend these powerful empowerment reforms to individual schools where children are struggling academically. This investment will build on the concept of empowerment districts, providing help building by building. I am also calling for an additional $75 million to help in our ambitious and much-needed State-city partnership to turn around the Philadelphia School District.

As you know, we are facing in Pennsylvania a revenue shortfall of $1.2 billion. We have our work cut out for us back in Harrisburg as we negotiate next year's budget, but the $75 million for Philadelphia schools remains a top priority, and make no mistake, I will fight hard to see that it is included.

At one time, Philadelphia's public schools were considered examples of what can be achieved through public education. The list of students who have gone on to become integral members of our society was and remains impressive, but somewhere along the way the system broke down. Administrators struggled to maintain the budget, teachers were not given the resources needed for their classrooms, students, unbelievably so, had to go to classes without textbooks. This is just a sample of the problems that are crippling the Philadelphia School District for more than a generation.

My administration and the administration of Mayor Street are determined to not waste another minute in turning around this school district, and we are well aware of the challenge that lies before us. This is nothing less than the most aggressive and significant education renewal project in urban American history.

With that in mind, Mayor Street and I worked together to form a stable Government to oversee this turnaround. In only its first few months, the School Reform Commission, or SRC as it is known, has moved expeditiously in putting together a bold turn-around

plan that at long last will set this district on a course for success, and I want to take this occasion to acknowledge and thank the five men and women who comprise the SRC. An easy job it is not, but a more important job you will not find.

Of course, this is an incredible challenge, but I sit here and remain confident that we will succeed. The people of Philadelphia want to see their schools as attractive centers of learning, places where their children can flourish in a safe environment with the technology and resources they deserve. To help in this turn-around, the SRC is working with some of the country's greatest experts in education to help run the district's lowest-performing schools. These schools can become partnership schools, overseen by local community groups and parents.

We know this for sure. The SRC's bold efforts are doomed to fail if we do not have the support of parents and the backing of neighborhood groups. The SRC will also cut needless central office costs and put those savings directly into the classroom by next September, where they are needed the most. To do that, the SRC is eliminating 325 positions over the course of the summer that have been deemed unnecessary. The savings will amount to about $20 million. These are just the two early steps. The SRC has assured Mayor Street and I that the next ones will come quickly.

For all of this to work, we need our teachers, Philadelphia's teachers. I know this has been a difficult time for them, with much uncertainty, but they should know this. The new resources, professional development, and safer schools that they have been craving are on the way. We want them to be a part of this renaissance.

Now, I know that Mayor Street believes that the SRC is moving perhaps too fast. I know that he is concerned that we are being too aggressive. As I sit here today, less than 5 months since the mayor and I entered into this new partnership, I will tell you and acknowledge, and respectfully so, as the gentleman, the mayor of Philadelphia is seated to my right, I will acknowledge we do have different viewpoints on this, but in my estimation the time has passed where we can merely tinker with the idea of reform.

PREPARED STATEMENT

The schools have been broken for far too long. Let us move ahead. Let us all work together to give these Pennsylvania children a new and accountable school system that answers not only to the adults, but to them, Pennsylvania's children, Philadelphia's children. It is about time.

Thank you so much, Senator Specter and Congressmen Fattah and Brady.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Governor Schweiker.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARK SCHWEIKER

Good morning, Sen. Specter, Rep. Brady and Rep. Fattah. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss how we are improving education in Pennsylvania and in Philadelphia's schools through our Education Empowerment Act.

I'd also like to extend my thanks to you Sen. Specter securing $20 million for our Commonwealth from the Fund for the Improvement of Education. That money will be a tremendous help as we continue to rejuvenate Pennsylvania's poorest performing school districts.

Pennsylvania's historic Education Empowerment Act provides new management tools and extra money to turn around school districts where half or more of the children in grades 5, 8 and 11 are failing basic math and reading in our state's assessment test, commonly known as the PSSA.

Twelve school districts are now on the state's Empowerment List. Four of these districts—Clairton, Sto-Rox, Lancaster and Steelton—already have seen significant two-year academic gains, thanks to hard work by teachers, administrators and students.

In Sto-Rox, 51.1 percent of its students scored below basic in reading and math between 1998–99. Two years later, that number has dropped more than 12 points to 38.9 percent. Lancaster and Steelton's scores have improved by nearly 10 points and Clairton has seen its scores improve by eight points.

These districts are tangible proof that the Empowerment Act is working.

My new budget proposes $1.8 million to extend these powerful Empowerment reforms to individual schools where children are struggling academically. This investment will build on the success of Empowerment Districts, providing help building by building.

I am also calling for an additional $75 million to help in our ambitious and much-needed state-city partnership to turn around the Philadelphia School District. As you know, we are facing a revenue shortfall of $1.2 billion in Pennsylvania. We have our work cut out for us back in Harrisburg as we negotiate next year's budget. But the $75 million for Philadelphia schools remains a top priority, and I will fight hard to see that it is included.

At one time, Philadelphia's public schools were considered examples of what can be achieved through public education. The list of students who had gone on to become integral members of our society was and is impressive.

But somewhere along the way the system broke down. Administrators struggled to maintain their budgets. Teachers werent given the resources needed for their classrooms. Students, unbelievably, had to go to classes without textbooks.

This is just a sampling of the problems that have crippled the Philadelphia School District for more than a generation.

My administration and the Administration of Mayor Street are determined to not waste another minute in turning this school district around. And we are well aware of the challenge that lies before us: This is nothing less than the most aggressive and significant education renewal project in urban American history.

With that in mind, Mayor Street and I worked together to form a stable government to oversee this turnaround. In only its first few months, the School Reform Commission, or SRC, has moved expeditiously in putting together a bold turnaround plan that, at long last, will set this district on a course for success. And I want to thank the five men and women who comprise the SRC. An easy job it is not. But a more important job you will not find.

Of course, this is an incredible challenge, but I'm confident we will succeed. The people of Philadelphia want to see their schools as attractive centers of learning. Places where their children can flourish in a safe environment with the technology and resources they deserve.

To help in this turnaround, the SRC is working with some of the country's greatest experts in education to help run the districts lowest-performing schools. These schools can become "partnership schools," overseen by local community groups and parents. We know this for sure: The SRCs bold efforts are doomed to fail if we do not have the support of parents and the backing of neighborhood groups.

The SRC will also cut needless central office costs and put those savings directly into the classrooms by next September where they are needed the most. To do that, the SRC is eliminating 325 positions over the course of the summer that have been deemed unnecessary. The savings will amount to $20 million.

Those are just the first two steps. The SRC has assured Mayor Street and I that the next ones will come quickly.

For all of this to work, we need our teachers—Philadelphia's teachers. I know this has been a difficult time for them, with much uncertainty. But they should know this: The new resources, professional development and safer schools theyve craving are on the way. We want them to be a part of this renaissance.

I know that Mayor Street believes the SRC is moving too fast. I know that he's concerned that were being too aggressive. As I sit here today—less than five months since the Mayor and I entered into this new partnership—I'll tell you that we do have different viewpoints on this. But the time has passed where we can tinker with the idea of reform. These schools have been broken for too long. Lets all work together to give these Pennsylvania children a new and accountable school system that answers not to the adults—but to them. Its about time.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. STREET, MAYOR, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Senator SPECTER. Next we have Hon. John F. Street, elected to Philadelphia City Council in 1979. I might say that I have watched his council career with some greater interest than usual, because he served with my wife Joan for some 16 years and served in council until 1999, when he was elected mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

Mayor Street earned his bachelor's degree at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, and his law degree from Temple University. Actually, I had the opportunity to tour some of Philadelphia's streets with him on the drug problem a week ago yesterday, and we welcome you here, Mr. Mayor, and look forward to your testimony.

Mr. STREET. Thank you very much. Good morning, Senator Specter, Congressman Fattah, Congressman Brady. It is my pleasure to be here today, along with my partner, Governor Schweiker, in our efforts to improve the quality of education in Pennsylvania schools, especially in Philadelphia. I thank you for being here and providing us with the opportunity to share our views on improving the quality of education in Philadelphia, the Commonwealth, and the Nation.

I especially appreciate all you do in advocating our city's interest, and most especially appreciate your recent efforts to secure $20 million in new Federal funding for all Pennsylvania empowerment school districts. No single issue is more important to this city, this Commonwealth, or this country than improving the quality of public education available to our children.

Our Nation cannot afford the achievement gaps that now exist between groups defined by income, race, and geography. I commend President Bush and the members of the U.S. Congress for enacting this commitment to closing the gaps as our new national policy in the No Child Left Behind Act. True homeland security will be achieved only when all children are equal beneficiaries of the best public education America can provide.

Today, we are too far from that ideal, with conditions in the Philadelphia School District that are common to too many school districts around the Nation, a high poverty student population, aged buildings, shortages of qualified teachers, and a chronic funding shortfall, but we have never used any of these obstacles as an excuse to do anything less than our very best to provide Philadelphia's young people with a more vigorous education and better results.

In the mid-nineties, our public schools began a vigorous reform effort. The children achieving program incorporated many of the values and features of the No Child Left Behind Act, such as high academic standards, an emphasis on early literacy and teacher training, regular assessments and an accountability system centered on measuring schools against their own progress. This program was not exactly perfect, but it did produce results, especially on the Pennsylvania assessment, where Philadelphia students' gains have been significantly outpacing State averages.

The Commonwealth even recognized that progress recently by awarding 95 Philadelphia schools performance awards for achievement and attendance increases. I would like to say that Philadel-

phia schools are not anywhere near as bad as our worst adversaries suggest, but Senator, they are not anywhere near as good as they need to be, and Governor Schweiker and I are determined to increase or improve the quality of education in our schools.

When I became mayor, nearly 2½ years ago, we knew the district had built a better academic record. We also knew it was not enough. Moreover, the financial problems had reached crisis proportions that threatened to derail even the gains already achieved. In this context, we took every step possible to encourage and support continued improvement for our schoolchildren. These steps included installing excellent leadership at the district, negotiating a strong teacher contract, cutting $50 million in annual costs, and significantly expanding public school options by sponsoring a total of 39 charter schools.

As the city government, we also took on more direct responsibilities for expanding services to children and families, especially after-school programs which have positive benefits for public school students. Most recently, we increased local funding for the school district by $45 million annually to fulfill the partnership agreement I reached with Governor Schweiker.

A significant early step we took was passing the Education Empowerment Act proposed by then Governor Ridge. Philadelphia assembled a highly qualified and committed team of academic business and community leaders to prepare an improvement plan. The plan has been submitted for the record of this hearing. The plan calls for key actions such as reducing class size, developing a uniform curriculum, enhancing student discipline and school safety, including the use of technology and expanding accountability measures for low-performing schools.

The Commonwealth Department of Education approved Philadelphia's empowerment plan in January of 2001. The district worked aggressively to implement its provisions, and has achieved many of the plan's milestones, including a drop in the student scoring in the bottom quartile on the PSSA from 59.4 percent to 53.9 percent as of last spring. This still represents too many students struggling, but it is clearly a move in the right direction.

Despite good intentions, however, our experience with empowerment is essentially one of unfulfilled expectations and unfinished business. Applicability of the empowerment process for Philadelphia was suspended both practically and legally when the school district's financial crisis prompted us to form a State-city governing partnership for the district in December of last year. Nevertheless, even during this transition period, the district's core educational program contains many elements of the empowerment plan, as the new School Reform Commission, in attempting to chart its course for the district, has already picked up on many of these themes.

This experience is relevant to the enormous challenge to be faced by the State and the city in meeting the ambitious goals and requirements of the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I believe we have a head start, since many of the act's features, the concepts are familiar. Also, Congress appears to have included some of the elements that will help school districts to be successful, such as more time and money. Whether it will be enough remains to be seen. We hope that when all the regulations and details of

No Child Left Behind are worked out, the final provisions will be realistic and flexible, particularly with regard to the measurement of annual yearly progress for schools.

We also hope the entire process takes into account some of the important lessons we have learned from serious and sustained efforts to improve public schools. We have learned school reform must offer solutions that match real problems in the classrooms. It should build on what works, and be substantive, focused, and well-placed. Reform should build trust and confidence through fair and accurate assessments for all types of students, consistent measurement and accountability for all types of public schools, and independent public reporting.

PREPARED STATEMENT

Realizing the new national vision of No Child Left Behind will take tremendous effort and cooperation by Federal, State, and local Government. In my view, it is impossible to run a local school district effectively without the active collaboration of local government. State and Federal policies should encourage these relationships, and recognize the frontline challenges we face, as well as provide the incentives, tools, and support that will help school districts do their very best to educate every child successfully.

Thank you very much.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mayor Street.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. STREET

Good morning Senator Specter and Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health And Human Services and Education. I welcome this opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges in our efforts to improve public education in Philadelphia. I especially appreciate that you are taking the time to learn about our experiences and those of other Pennsylvania Empowerment school districts as the federal government embarks on its own campaign, through the "No Child Left Behind Act," to raise student achievement nationwide. Only by federal, state and local governments working together will be able to realize our common goal of providing every child with a first-class public education.

Before I begin my remarks, I would first like to thank Senator Specter for his leadership in securing $20 million in new federal funding for Education Empowerment school districts in Pennsylvania. We are fortunate to be represented by such strong advocates as Sen. Specter and the members of our Congressional delegation. I understand that Philadelphia is slated to receive about $14 million from this appropriation, which will enable the School District to put in place some new and needed learning tools for our children.

There is no single issue more important to this City, this Commonwealth or this country, than improving the quality of public education. Every child must have the opportunity for the education needed to succeed in the 21st century, an education that includes advanced literacy, mathematics and science skills, fluency in a foreign language and knowledge of world history and cultures, critical thinking and technology skills. Our nation cannot afford to sustain the achievement gaps that now exist between rich and poor children, between African-American and Hispanic and white youngsters, between urban and rural students and their suburban counterparts across this land.

I commend President Bush and Members of the U.S. Congress for their determination to forge ahead and enact this commitment to closing the gaps as our new national policy. After the tragic events of September 11, it might have been easy to let this slip. But if we learned anything from that horror, it must be that all lives are precious and only a top quality education for all children will keep this nation strong and free. Military operations overseas and enhanced security measures at home are essential national priorities to combat terrorism and keep the peace. But true homeland security will be achieved only when all children, regardless of race

or economic status, are equal beneficiaries of the best public education America can provide.

Today, we are too far from that ideal. The Philadelphia School District has conditions that are common to too many big city school districts: a high-poverty student population, often with very complicated family lives, aged buildings, shortages of qualified teachers, and a chronic funding shortfall which triggered the state takeover of our School District. But we have never used any of these obstacles as an excuse to use anything less than our best efforts to provide Philadelphia's young people with a more rigorous education and to work to obtain better results.

Indeed, under the leadership of former Superintendent David Hornbeck, a vigorous school reform effort mirrored many of the values and features of the No Child Left Behind Act. High academic standards, an emphasis on early literacy, teacher training, expanded public school options, regular assessments, a pioneering accountability system centered on measuring schools against their own progress and public reporting of schools' performance were all components of the Children Achieving program.

All parts of this program may not have been executed as well as we might have liked. But it got results. A recent study ranks Philadelphia's high school graduation rate at the top of the biggest city school districts. Over five years, standardized test scores have shown an overall increase, particularly in the early grades, with significant gains recorded in students who perform at basic and above (e.g. 58 percent for grade 4 in 2001). This positive movement occurred along with a substantial increase in the numbers of students participating in testing.

On the Pennsylvania assessment, Philadelphia students' gains have been even more impressive, significantly outpacing state averages. The Commonwealth recognized this progress recently when it awarded 95 Philadelphia schools a total of $4.7 million in performance funding for achievement and attendance improvements; that means we earned 23 percent of the awards with just 12 percent of the State's students.

When I became Mayor nearly two-and-a-half years ago, the academic progress underway at the School District was admirable, but we knew it was not enough. Moreover, the financial problems had reached crisis proportions and threatened to derail even the gains already achieved. In that context, City government consistently and persistently took every possible step to encourage and support continued improvement and progress for our schoolchildren.

We appointed excellent leadership at both the Board and executive levels and developed a solid working relationship between my Administration and the School District.

We negotiated a strong contract with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers that offers more competitive salaries in exchange for significant education reforms including a longer school day and year.

We streamlined the organization, returned teachers to the classroom and cut costs by $50 million, while maintaining our commitment to essential educational initiatives like reduced class size and summer school.

We broadened public school options by increasing to 39 the number of operating charter schools, making Philadelphia a national leader in this arena.

We pursued methods of collaborating to deliver public services more cost-effectively and greatly expanded the availability of City-sponsored services for children and families, including behavioral health, truancy centers and recreation sites. Most notably, we are making a major investment in after-school programs, which have direct, positive benefits for public school students. And two weeks ago, the City launched Operation Safe Streets, aimed at wiping out the open-air drug trade in our neighborhoods. This initiative will have a profound effect on the well-being of our young people and create a more wholesome and welcoming environment in and around our schools.

We increased the City's annual financial support for public schools by $45 million as part of the State-City partnership agreement I reached with Governor Schweiker to govern and support Philadelphia's public schools. While we do not agree on every issue, we continue to believe that this partnership offers the best prospects at this time for creating a better future for public education in our City.

Shortly after taking office I went to Harrisburg to meet with then-Governor Tom Ridge. Education was at the top of my agenda and enactment of the Pennsylvania Education Empowerment Act was at the top of his. Many Philadelphians were critical of this proposal because it appeared to require dramatic school improvement in too short a time period with insufficient resources to get the job done. While I shared those concerns, I decided to support the Act for three important reasons. First, I believe in accountability for public school performance. Second, the Act held out the promise of some State assistance and support to improve schools. Last, I

believed it was in the best interests of this City to build a strong relationship with the Governor and his Administration on education and other issues. So I asked the Philadelphia legislative delegation to back the Empowerment Act, and with their support the General Assembly passed the law.

Philadelphia took its responsibilities under the Act very seriously. Led by the Rev. Dr. William J. Shaw, our Empowerment Team included highly qualified and committed academic, business and community leaders. In a very short time period, our Empowerment Team identified best practices from around the country; engaged the community in their planning; and prepared a detailed School District Improvement Plan (submitted as part of the record for this hearing) that identified nine specific goals along with strategies for their achievement. Some of those goals include: reducing class size in the early years; developing and mandating a uniform curriculum based on state and local standards; maximizing instructional time for reading, math and science; enhancing school safety; better utilizing communications and instructional technology; and expanding accountability measures and interventions for low-performing schools.

Philadelphia's Empowerment Plan was approved by the Commonwealth Department of Education in January of 2001. The School District worked aggressively to implement its provisions and has achieved many of the plan's milestones. Philadelphia was first assigned to the Empowerment list because 59.4 percent of students scored in the bottom quartile on the PSSA (Pennsylvania assessment) given in 1999. By 2001, the figure dropped to 53.9 percent. This still represents far too many students struggling, but it is also clearly a move in the right direction and on track with the requirements of the Empowerment Act. Our experience with the Act, however, is essentially one of unfulfilled promise and unfinished business, as some of the key resources needed to get the job done—sufficient expertise, money and time—have not been available to us.

To begin with, the Empowerment process incorporated the good concept of providing school districts with access to a range of state and national experts for guidance and consultation during the planning and implementation processes. In practice, while the Commonwealth did appoint an Academic Advisory Team for Philadelphia, the availability of these experts proved to be extremely limited and sporadic. If this aspect of the process is better executed going forward, and it is an idea worth replicating on a national level, it could be a significant source of help and support for school districts struggling to succeed.

The Empowerment Act provides grants to eligible districts to support implementation of their improvement plans. For Philadelphia, the amount, while helpful, was far less than the full estimated cost of the plan, and the funding stayed flat in the second year of implementation. Moreover, as currently structured, there is actually a financial disincentive to school districts to achieve their ambitious performance goals since removal from the Empowerment list would result in a loss of the annual grant. A far better approach would be to provide incentive funding that escalates with a district's performance.

Timing is everything, and the applicability of the Empowerment process for Philadelphia was suspended both practically and legally when the School District's financial crisis prompted us to enter into the negotiations with Governor Ridge and Governor Schweiker that resulted in the State-City governing partnership for the District begun in December of last year. The Governor proposed a new school improvement plan for discussion and Pennsylvania's Distressed School Districts Law actually exempts Philadelphia from the accountability provisions of the Empowerment Act. Nevertheless, even during this period of transition, the School District's core educational program contains many of the elements of the Empowerment Plan. And the new School Reform Commission, in attempting to chart its course for the District, also has picked up on many of its themes.

Meeting the ambitious goals and requirements of the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act will be an enormous—and essential—challenge for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the School District of Philadelphia. I do believe that we have a head start here since so many of the Act's features and concepts are familiar. We also will be helped by the fact that the Congress appears to have included in the Act some of the ingredients that will enable school districts to be successful—namely, more time and more money. Whether it will be enough remains to be seen. Both time and money will be needed to put an end to the inequities in public education and give children a fair chance to perform. It also will take considerable resources to provide the breadth of quality public school options envisioned in the Act.

I understand that there are many details yet to be worked out in the implementation of "No Child Left Behind." We hope that the final provisions are realistic and flexible, particularly with regard to the measurement of "annual yearly progress" for

schools. We also hope that the entire process takes into account some of the important lessons we have learned from serious and sustained efforts to improve public schools.

We have learned that sensible school reform must offer solutions that address actual problems. Reform should build on what works and replace what doesn't. We also have learned that reform requires some risks, but the reform should be focused and well-paced. We should not get caught up in structure and process and forget the very real needs and perspectives of the children and adults who are the "objects" of the reform and whose behaviors reformers are seeking to change.

It is also imperative that reform builds trust and confidence. Fair and accurate student assessments for all types of students (i.e. including English language learners and children with disabilities), consistent measurement and accountability for all types of public schools and independent public reporting are essential elements of any true school reform.

I will close with my starting point: realizing the new national vision of "No Child Left Behind" will take tremendous effort and cooperation by federal, state and local government. In my view, it is impossible to run a local school district effectively without the active collaboration of local government. State and federal policies should be encouraging these relationships and understanding the "front line" challenges we face, as well as providing the incentives, tools and supports that will help school districts do their best to educate every child successfully.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES B. ZOGBY, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, Charles Zogby, who served as Governor Ridge's policy advisor prior to his appointment in June of last year. He has a bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University, and a law degree from George Mason University. Thank you for joining us, Mr. Secretary, and we look forward to your testimony.

Mr. ZOGBY. Thank you, Senator, thank you, Congressman Fattah and Congressman Brady. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about public education reform in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's efforts to improve education during the past 7 years have been nothing less than extraordinary, at times historic.

Today we meet in the city that exemplifies the magnitude of our accomplishments. Thanks to an unprecedented partnership between Governor Schweiker and Mayor Street, the Philadelphia School District is on the brink of groundbreaking reforms that will offer our children real hope for a quality education and a brighter future.

The President's sweeping new, No Child Left Behind Act promises some of the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We applaud the President and you, Senator Specter, and the leadership of the Congress for enacting this bold reform plan and for your dedication to our children. We embrace the President's new law, because it embodies the fundamental principles of education reform, accountability, higher education standards, measuring and rewarding results, and a commitment to ensure that all of our children learn, regardless of where they live or go to school.

If we are optimistic about the President's new reforms and their success, it is only because many of these same ideas are already working and making a difference in Pennsylvania. We believe accountability drives higher performance. Pennsylvania's reforms work because they hold schools, parents, and students accountable for performance and give them the support they need to succeed.

Two years ago, Pennsylvania created the Education Empowerment Act to give failing school districts new management tools to

improve their schools and extra money to put those ideas into place. We added a strong dose of accountability, real consequences if schools do not improve.

The results speak for themselves. Nine of the 12 empowerment districts on our empowerment list have shown academic improvement. Four have made dramatic gains in test scores. Two of these districts which, Senator, will be on your next panel, Steelton Highspire and Lancaster, are close to coming off the list altogether. Four other districts, Philadelphia, Chester-Upland, Harrisburg, and Duquesne, are in the midst of dramatic and unprecedented reform initiatives.

No doubt the empowerment act shows early success, but thousands of Pennsylvania children remain trapped in schools that are failing, although their school districts are not. It is time to empower these schools and to improve and to hold them accountable if they do not. That is why Governor Schweiker has proposed this year to extend the powerful reforms of the Education Empowerment Act to individually failing schools.

Last year, Pennsylvania launched a ground-breaking initiative to empower parents to help their children achieve. We know our children's success in school depends upon a good foundation in reading and math. If our students do not master these skills early, it could jeopardize the rest of their education. Pennsylvania's new Classroom Plus tutoring grant program helps third through sixth graders who need it no matter where they go to school. Classroom Plus offers $500 directly to parents of children who are struggling in reading and math to get them the extra help they need and to get them back on track.

Every child needs and deserves a great teacher. Pennsylvania raised the bar of achievement for teachers by requiring higher GPA's, more coursework in their subject areas, and ongoing professional training. We also give our teachers the tools they need to succeed.

Pennsylvania's new professional development assistance program, our teacher assessment program, assesses our teachers' collective strengths and weaknesses so that school district can better target professional development where the needs are greatest. We also made it easier for teachers to access State-offered professional development courses. They are online, and they are free of charge.

PREPARED STATEMENT

President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act promises wonderful new opportunities to improve public education in America. In Pennsylvania, we believe the President's reforms, coupled with our own efforts, will bring a quality education to all of our children.

Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES B. ZOGBY

Senator Specter, Congressman Brady, Congressman Fattah: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to talk with you about public education in Pennsylvania.

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partnership between the Governor and Mayor Street, the Philadelphia School District is on the brink of groundbreaking reforms that will offer our children real hope for a quality education and a brighter future.

The President's sweeping new No Child Left Behind Act promises some of the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We applaud the President and the Congress for your leadership in enacting this bold plan and for your dedication to our children. We embrace the President's new law because it embodies our fundamental principles of education reform: accountability, high academic standards, measuring and rewarding results, and a commitment to ensure all our children learn—regardless of where they live or go to school. We are optimistic that the President's new reforms will succeed because we see the same ideas already working in Pennsylvania.

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Two years ago, Pennsylvania created the Education Empowerment Act to give failing school districts new management tools to improve their schools and extra money to put those ideas in place. We added a strong dose of accountability—real consequences if the schools dont improve. The results speak for themselves. Nine of the 12 districts on our Empowerment List show academic improvement. Four have made dramatic gains in state test scores. Two of these districts—Steelton-Highspire and Lancaster—are close to coming off the list altogether. Four other school districts—Philadelphia, Chester, Harrisburg, and Duquesne—are in the midst of unprecedented reform initiatives.

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Pennsylvania's state assessment is the linchpin of our accountability system. We welcome the President's emphasis on measuring what our children know and can do. That's the best way to find out if everything else we do in education is working—and where our children may need extra help. Pennsylvania's assessments measure our children's knowledge of our rigorous academic standards in reading, math, and writing.

Every child needs and deserves a great teacher. Pennsylvania raised the bar of achievement for teachers by requiring higher GPAs, more coursework in their subject areas and ongoing professional training. We also give our teachers the tools to succeed. Pennsylvania's new Professional Development Assistance Program assesses our teachers' collective strengths and weaknesses, so school districts can target professional development where needs are greatest. We made it easier for teachers to access state-offered—courses they're online and free of charge.

President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act promises exciting new opportunities to improve public education across America. In Pennsylvania, we believe the President's reforms, coupled with our own efforts, will ensure a quality education for all our children.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Secretary Zogby. We now turn to Ms. Debra Kahn, Secretary of Education for the City of Philadelphia, appointed by the mayor in January of 2000, right at the start of his term. She received her bachelor's degree in Government from Franklin and Marshall, a master's degree from Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutger's University. Thank you for joining us, Ms. Kahn, and we look forward to your testimony.

Ms. KAHN. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. I do not have prepared remarks. I am just here to answer any questions that might come up.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Kahn.

This is an historic meeting. I have been in the Senate now for almost 22 years, and been in Government going back a bit beyond that, but I have never participated in a meeting where all three levels of Government interact, as we are here, with the mayor, the Governor, and Members of the United States House of Representatives and the Senate all participating, and I think it is an excellent indication of the kind of cooperation that is possible when people seek to get together.

Of the five of us here, three are from one political party, two from the other, and the politics do not make a bit of difference as the five of us are really working hard to tackle an enormous problem, regarding education. There is no matter of greater priority to the country than education, and nowhere is it of greater importance than in the big city schools which face enormous challenges for reasons that we all know.

Last year, of the $51 billion appropriated by the Federal Government, almost $1.7 billion came to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and of that sum, almost $1.4 billion was for title I for elementary and secondary schools.

Governor Schweiker, I turn to you for the first issue, and that is, there are 12 schools currently on the empowerment list, 11 beside the City of Philadelphia. Now, the empowerment list is a euphemism for school districts which the Commonwealth has decided need some help. What is your evaluation as to what is occurring in the 11 other school districts?

Governor SCHWEIKER. Well, a quick response to a complex question is, plenty has been done, and more will be pursued. First, let me also say this, Senator. I am proud of the partnership that this gathering exemplifies, too. It ain't been easy, as the mayor and I would say, but I know that our hearts and minds are of one outlook, that at least in Philadelphia 215,000 kids are at stake, and across the State.

A large number of children whose parents want the best for them are greatly interested in what we discuss and the things to which we will give rise as a result of this exchange today, so I am grateful for the opportunity to comment and respond to your question.

The empowerment schools in 12 locales in Pennsylvania mean an awful lot, mean different things to different people. As you have rightly recognized, they are struggling, and in my administration, and certainly my predecessor felt the same way, that it was no longer proper just to sit and observe this demise or the downturn that State government had to help, and with the assistance of those in the State legislature, and certainly with those impressive sums that you mentioned a moment ago for remedial education and special circumstances, we have been about the business of channeling important help for the 12 school systems.

No less than $450,000 has made its way into each of those school systems, in effect in a number of school districts much more than that, and the idea is to get to those children who are struggling their share of the $25 million that we have appropriated for empowerment, the empowerment cause, and as I mentioned just a short time ago, there is success to likely be in the position of coming off of that empowerment list because of making progress.

My observation, my assessment is it is due to any number of dynamics. When we discuss education and achievement improvements it just does not lend itself to 120-second canned answers. It is always much more complex than that, but broadly speaking, Senator, I think it is a consequence of people coming together and working together whether they are administrators, importantly teachers, and parents, and the students, and because of the assistance that is being provided and aligning the curriculum with instructional efforts, more regular testing, that it shows us the way to make more vital and encouraging those classrooms, and over time that translates into learning, and better achievement rates, and so I think in sum it has been successful.

Is our job completed? No. It is going to take sometime.

Senator SPECTER. Governor Schweiker, on the $20 million special appropriation that went to the State for these empowerment districts, we are going to be, obviously, taking a look beyond today's hearing to see where the money has gone and how effective it has been, and our staffs will be working together because we are now approaching a new appropriation cycle, and Senator Santorum joins my interest, as do Congressman Fattah and Congressman Brady and the entire Pennsylvania delegation in taking a look to see what additional help the Federal Government can do for these empowerment schools who need extra assistance.

This process in Philadelphia, I do not want to call it an experiment, because it is not. It is something that is very carefully thought through, but we are going to be looking at what you are doing here, frankly, with a view to helping you some more if we can. What you are doing specifically, and what is happening with the other 11 empowerment districts, will be very important to us in evaluating what further assistance we can be.

Mr. Mayor, let me compliment you on this handsome courtroom in your city hall. I have been here on many, many occasions, first as an Assistant District Attorney and later District Attorney. The DA's office used to be right around the corner at 666 until somehow that keystone was given up. People in the audience do not know that there is a sheriff's cell block which is right around the corner going upstairs, where we had "60 Minutes" do the first filming with Mike Wallace in 1968. Their first show was done right around the corner, one floor up, and this courtroom goes back to about 1875, when this building was constructed, but it has a very fresh, ornate, and good look, and as mayor we thank you for it.

Mr. Mayor, there are some 264 schools in the Philadelphia district and 42 are involved in the current program, and that leaves 222 more schools. Is there any special program which is being undertaken to address the issues in those 222 schools?

Mr. STREET. Thank you very much, Senator. I would have a brief comment, and then I would like to have Secretary Kahn also respond to this question.

We have spent an appropriate amount of time improving the quality of education and changing the dynamics in the public school system in this city. Governor Schweiker and I agreed early on that, unlike other empowerment districts, we wanted to do something more in the City of Philadelphia. We agreed, I should say to the dismay of many, that we wanted to privatize some of the

management of schools in our city, and we also agreed that we wanted to establish partnership schools.

And although an inordinate amount of, I think, attention has been spent on those aspects of our reform plan and, as the Governor has already indicated, there is some degree of concern in this administration that we not go too far too fast, we are working together and are committed to doing the very best we can to improve the quality of the management and the overall supervision of all of the schools that are the lowest-performing schools, and we agree that over a period of time we will work out those details.

We also are concerned about the education that is being delivered in all the other schools, and the commission has been working hard to determine the new programs and the kind of overall supervision that will be available in those schools, and Secretary Kahn will have a comment on that particular part of our program.

Ms. KAHN. Thank you, Senator. I would say there is not one absolutely set approach to the other schools, but I think there really are common elements that need to be present, and we have seen this when we have seen schools make progress. In some of those cases it is first of all having adequate support for teachers in the classroom, particularly when we have a younger teacher work for us. It is very important they continue to have updated materials and ongoing support and assistance in their classroom to improve their instruction.

One thing that students need always is extra time and attention, and they can get that in a variety of ways. We have particularly tried to reduce our class sizes in the youngest grades, K through 2 and 3, and that has been shown in the way that we have done it to have some real success, extended days, after-school tutoring, certain approaches that really help kids in some cases make up when they have fallen behind, or keep the pace, or get ahead, building partnerships with communities outside, taking advantage of really the rich array of resources that exist in the city, whether they are cultural institutions, business organizations, bringing those resources to bear on the schools.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Kahn, are there some changes being made in the other 222 schools which are not the subject of this program?

Ms. KAHN. Some of those things like continuing to reduce class size, strengthening partnerships. One thing that was just featured in the newspaper last week, one of our teachers in one of our troubled high schools had written a handbook on how to write, for example, which is now being spread across to 20 other schools. It is making dramatic gains for our students in writing on the PSSA.

The other thing we have had success with is the Johns Hopkins model, actually called Talent Development, in both our high schools and some of our middle schools, which combines a lot of these features and has really been showing real gains in our schools.

Senator SPECTER. Just one final comment. When we look to Federal funding, obviously the Pennsylvania delegation wants to do as much as we can for our State, but when we have a national model it gives us a critical reason why there ought to be some extra attention. Pennsylvania serving as a model for what might be done Nation-wide, and the historic program in effect here will give us that

ammunition for extra funding, provided, of course, it is working throughly and working well.

Governor SCHWEIKER. Senator, if I may interject, it is most appropriate when we gather in the City of Philadelphia we talk about the Philadelphia endeavors, yet as Secretary Zogby briefly described, we have a number of elements already in place as far as our reform efforts throughout Pennsylvania that I think are very, very much akin conceptually to what the President has proffered and what you are exploring today, whether it is in the area of accountability and testing, to higher standards for teachers during their years of matriculation, to the tutoring that was just mentioned by Secretary Kahn both in district or in the evening.

So I think there are others where that affinity can be demonstrated, but I hope, as you weigh in and understand what the President hopes to enact, that Pennsylvania is a powerful example already of what can be achieved when we ally and help these things occur.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Governor. I want to turn now to Congressman Chaka Fattah, four-term member of the House of Representatives, lifelong Philadelphian, attended the Community College of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, and the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a master's degree in public administration. I acknowledge Congressman Fattah's leadership on his legislative initiative dealing with the issue of comparability, and with his quest to improve the availability of educational services to all the students on a more equal basis.

Congressman Fattah.

Mr. FATTAH. Thank you, Senator. Let me thank the Senator again and mention also one of the programs we have operating in a third of our schools in Philadelphia is the Gear-Up program, and even though I get all of the credit, it would not have been possible without Senator Specter making sure that the dollars could be appropriated, and as we conclude this year's work, we will have appropriated over $1 million to Gear-Up and a million and a half kids Nation-wide, tens of thousands of kids right here in Philadelphia and other places in our Commonwealth, so I want to thank the Senator.

I want to get to some of the tougher issues, however, in this effort, and I want to start by just trying to understand what our goal is. Could someone, the Governor or someone on the panel tell us what a successfully reformed school is going to look like in Philadelphia when this process is over? What is our goal? Is it that 51 percent of the children score at or above the State level? Is it two-thirds of the children, 85 percent of the children, or 100 percent? Where will we know whether or not the efforts through private management, nonprofit management, or the School Reform Commission zone internally driven reforms have been successful?

Governor SCHWEIKER. Well, Congressman, if I may—and I do appreciate the remarkable attention you provide to the Philadelphia schools and what we are attempting to install here. In fact, for each of you the heavy lifting that you do in Washington takes us a long way, and we appreciate it.

Having said that, as the Governor and someone who has lived in this area a long, long time, ideally our aspirations are that every child leave with good skills and can hold down a decent job out there in Pennsylvania's work places and economy. Sadly, and this is perhaps where I would first respond, when you look at a first-grade classroom, you have got to remind yourself that 50 percent of the kids will not reach their senior year in this school system, and so my answer would be that all kids reach their senior year and graduate, and that is of great concern to me.

How do we get there, of course, applicationwise and approachwise, it causes some of the disputes that have been already indirectly acknowledged here today, but it is to see to it that kids learn at impressive rates, and right now, depending on the school that you reference, 50 to 75 percent of the kids are sadly lacking in reading and math, and they are never going to be able to aspire to those jobs, so a much higher number of children who can read.

Just as an aside, something I have never forgotten is, just randomly taking library books off a library shelf in a Philadelphia school—a number of schools, I might add. I have been in many of them. Randomly choose those books, and you look at the copyright dates, 1968, 1978, 1988, and 1998, and you and I know they do not represent adequate resources, so the point I am making is, together we have got to provide the resources, much of it financial, to see to it that teachers can do their best, and parents feel encouraged about what the classroom can afford their child, and ultimately more kids achieving at impressive rates.

Mr. FATTAH. Well, my point is that, given the increases in Philadelphia schools' performance on the PSSA's over the last 5 years, in many cases outpacing the State-wide average, so that you had low-performing schools, they were improving, you have along with the mayor set up this partnership. Is it that that level of improvement continue, or is it that it accelerates? I am trying to understand where the bar is being set, and maybe the Secretary of Education——

Governor SCHWEIKER. We seek no less than all children being able to read and do math and master computers and use them in their every-day work, and 100 percent—I mean, the idea of No Child Left Behind is that no child should be overlooked, and sadly in some cases systematically it is happening here.

Mr. FATTAH. Let me ask you this. You and the Secretary, Mr. Zogby, have indicated your support for the Federal legislation that I supported, along with Senator Specter, No Child Left Behind. It has certain requirements for what the Federal Government has identified as somewhere between 5,000 and 7,000 failing schools across the country, which means a great many of them are outside of the City of Philadelphia. They are all over the place.

One of those requirements is that, as the President indicated in his State of the Union, is that every child have a fully qualified teacher in their classroom. In the State's 501 school districts, it is unfortunate to note that the State has allowed in one of those districts 50 percent of what the State says is not fully qualified, not certified teachers to teach. That is in Philadelphia.

Will you give a commitment, can you give a commitment that the State will not seek any wavers to this Federal requirement, that

you will insist that in classrooms in Philadelphia that students have access to a qualified math teacher and a qualified instructor in those four subjects as the law lays out, or will you be one of the States that would seek waivers to this Federal mandate?

Governor SCHWEIKER. Well, ideally they would have all of the qualifications that are necessary to do the job. I can assure you we will have the most dedicated teachers. I do not think we can answer that at this point.

Mr. FATTAH. Let me ask you about my most favorite subject, Edison, and maybe Secretary Zogby can take a crack at this. What due diligence did the State do in determining that 50,000 children in Philadelphia and their future life chances would be turned over to Edison Schools, Incorporated?

Mr. ZOGBY. Well, Congressman, I guess I am not quite sure how to answer that, in the sense that we did a fair amount of due diligence when we engaged Edison to work with the State in developing an analysis of the Philadelphia School District. We had worked with Edison prior to its work in Philadelphia, knew of Edison through its work around the country, and I think felt fairly comfortable about not only the quality and the caliber of people that the company was able to bring to the work.

Mr. FATTAH. Did the Commonwealth do a review of each of the schools that Edison manages, either in the Commonwealth or Nation-wide, and discern from that information that they could raise student achievement?

Mr. ZOGBY. I had been to several schools Edison runs across the country, including——

Mr. FATTAH. Let me rephrase the question so I can get to it. Did you review the actual academic performance in any of the schools Edison runs, either in the Commonwealth or Nation-wide?

Mr. ZOGBY. Yes, we did look at individual school performance. I cannot sit here and tell you we looked at every school that Edison runs. I think if you look, for instance, at some of the reports on Edison a number of their schools do quite well and out-perform your traditional public school. If you look at the fact that Edison and a number of other for-profit companies that are in this business often work in some of the most troubled school districts in the Nation, and then in addition to that, take on some of the most difficult and academically troubled schools, and compare that with the performance that they achieve against averages in districts where they perform three to five times better than the traditional public school, I think based on that due diligence we felt comfortable with what the company had to offer.

Mr. FATTAH. So the Commonwealth found that to be true, that they improved three to five times?

Mr. ZOGBY. We found Edison schools did have significant success in a number of schools. They are not perfect.

Mr. FATTAH. I am not talking about Edison's propaganda. I am saying, did the State do a review?

Mr. ZOGBY. I am not talking about Edison's propaganda, either, Congressman. What I am talking about, how the schools were able to achieve in a number of the schools the Commonwealth did look at.

Mr. FATTAH. Let me ask you one other question. The large urban districts, as Senator Specter indicated, are at the heart of some of our difficulties in public education. Could you indicate whether or not Philadelphia as a large urban district, compared to New York, Chicago, Atlanta, any of the big school districts, the top 10, 20, where Philadelphia would rank in comparison to these districts in terms of the issues the Governor has raised?

Mr. ZOGBY. I cannot give you a ranking against other large urban school districts. What is clear is that in Pennsylvania, in our State's largest school district, it is a school district facing both significant academic and financial challenges that really cannot be compared to any other school district in our country.

Mr. FATTAH. So if I said to you, among the large urban districts Philadelphia by far has demonstrated the most progress in the last 5 years in our country, what would your response to that be, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. ZOGBY. I would find that difficult to believe.

Mr. FATTAH. Have you done a review of the situation in New York City and Chicago and Atlanta, any of these other large districts? Has there been any comparison between the reforms that had been in place, that had been improved by the Commonwealth as part of the empowerment act on January 2001 that have been raising improvement scores in our city?

That plan has now been pushed aside for a new plan, which is this partnership which I support, but I am trying to understand the context under which we are proceeding, so what I found absent in the Edison review was any comparison of Philadelphia to any other large districts. Are you aware of information that would be contrary to what I have suggested, that this city and its school district was out-performing other large city urban districts in the country at the time of the partnership being set in place?

Mr. ZOGBY. In the report conducted for the Commonwealth by Edison schools, the suggestion in the report is actually that Philadelphia School District is one of the poorer performers, as large urban school districts go.

Mr. FATTAH. Did the report compare it to any other large urban school districts?

Mr. ZOGBY. It did, but I cannot recall those districts off-hand.

Mr. FATTAH. It compared it specifically only to three, which are Broward County, Las Vegas, and one other that I cannot recall at the moment.

None of them, all of them collectively, okay, do not raise to the size of Philadelphia, nor collectively their total impoverished student population. That is, those at the free reduced lunch level collectively were around 30 percent, so this is a district in which 80 percent of our children are at the free reduced lunch level, and it never compared Philadelphia to any of its, actually, peers in the country.

When you reviewed the report, did your staff raise any of these concerns?

Mr. ZOGBY. We looked at the report very extensively, and I suppose, Congressman, as opposed to what is happening in other school districts around the country I think what the Governor and the mayor have set out here in Philadelphia is a new approach to

delivering public education with some very bold and innovative reforms, understanding there is also going to be a new era of accountability here in Philadelphia, which all schools will be held accountable for delivering better results for children.

Mr. FATTAH. Are you preparing at this point to seek waivers to the Federal requirements under the No Child Left Behind?

Mr. ZOGBY. Not at this point, Congressman, no.

Mr. FATTAH. I know we have to move on, and I will be glad to yield in 1 second.

Governor SCHWEIKER. Congressman, can I add something? As we discussed the Philadelphia relative to other school systems, I would sit here and say that there are impressive pockets of achievement and excellence throughout the city, putting aside for a moment the empirical data that I think drives your questions and remarks, and that is a good thing, and we want to give rise to that across the city. That is why we are here, and I would just back this up a little bit to help us understand why this endeavor is underway, really two drivers, two dynamics. One was financial, and one was academic.

Keep in mind, last summer, when the district's budget was put in place, talking about expending $2 billion and only having about $1.8 they were going to collect, I mean, that is the definition of insolvency, and because of that I think the mayor drove West to Harrisburg and realized that dire financial times were around the corner. That is what precipitated the review, not only the academic dimensions, which rightfully should dominate our discussion here today, but I just thought it important to mention that.

Mr. FATTAH. I am going to yield the time, and hopefully I will get another opportunity, because I would like to explore the financial dynamics, given that the chairman of the SRC has indicated that 50 percent of the deficit in Philadelphia was driven by the charter schools, which we all support charter schools, but the way that the State funds them, and we now know that Representative Parsell has introduced legislation to change the way charters are funded, but at least 50 percent of the multimillion deficit in our city was driven by that reality, but I yield at this time and I thank the Senator.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Congressman Fattah.

Secretary Zogby, I think the questions which Congressman Fattah has raised would be very useful to have research done and the specific answers. It has been a lively exchange and I think a useful exchange, and nobody expects you to have the comparisons of all the cities at your fingertips, and we respect what you have done, but as we move ahead between now and the time of the next Federal appropriations process I think it would be useful if we had that information.

PREPARED STATEMENT

I want to thank Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller for submitting testimony, and I want to acknowledge her presence in the audience today along with Councilwoman Janey Blackwell, Councilman Frank Rizzo, and also Judge Jane Fitzgerald.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, PA

I want to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education for this opportunity to submit testimony on Pennsylvania's Education Empowerment Act, legislation that seeks to improve those schools where students have not achieved proficiency in basic skills.

It cannot be argued that we, in Philadelphia, are now faced with a critical challenge to reform our school system under new, innovative and, quite frankly, untried circumstances. We all recognize the components of a good school system: adequate funding, small classes, qualified and certified teachers, professional development, standards, assessments, accountability, and community partnerships and family involvement.

The enactment of the Education Empowerment Act begins the process of making these components a reality. However, we must not lose sight of the process. We in Philadelphia, under the mandate of the Empowerment Act, created a School District Improvement Plan that placed great emphasis on the alignment of city standards with those of the state, on the assessment of these standards, and on the need for a city-wide curriculum that reflected the benchmarks of the standards. We listened at City Council Budget Hearings to testimony that identified curriculum issues with great clarity.

However, we now find ourselves in Philadelphia with an uncertain number of EMOs, who will each choose one of five management models, not yet matched to specific schools. Each of these independent providers will, in most cases, arrive with their own curriculum, and, at times, their own teachers, and will implement their own vision of reform.

The enactment of the Education Empowerment Act was only the beginning of our arduous journey to guarantee a quality public education for every child in Philadelphia. Before we speak in terms of Pennsylvania as a prototype to accomplish the goals of the recently passed Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we must be vigilant in our implementation of the Act.

The expression of legislative ideals and intent is only the beginning of implementing and living the reality of true school reform. We are embarking on a process.

The truth of our success will be the day to day experience of the children of Philadelphia who live on the front lines, every day, in every public school classroom across our city.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT BRADY

Senator SPECTER. Now I want to turn to Congressman Robert Brady, who has represented Pennsylvania's First Congressional District since 1998 and served as Deputy Mayor for Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode. He came into politics in 1967, when he was a member of the 34th Ward Democrat Executive Committee, and I am sure at that time was a decisive factor in the 1967 mayoral election. I forget who the candidates were.

Congressman Brady is chairman of the Philadelphia Democratic Party, a position he has held for 16 years. Congressman Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Senator. I am sure you will continue thanking me for the job I did for you in 1967, lest you would not be here, but I just appreciate again being here at these hearings, and I want to take the political side of this, because that is probably what I do best, is that I have never been more impressed with the hearing that we have.

You have mentioned people in the audience that are Democrats and Republicans. You are flanked, sir, by two members of the opposite party. We have you dead in the middle, in our sights here, and I just appreciate what you do and what you are going to do, and again I cannot think my Governor and my mayor enough for keep talking. We need to keep talking.

I met with Mr. Nevels. I know he has 215,000 children's stakes at heart, their well-being at heart. I know Sandra McCarthur

Glenn is there, and I know that she has these 215,000 children's stake at heart, along with our mayor and Governor and you and me, and without question my colleague, Chaka Fattah, and if we can just keep this rolling, as you said, we have our legislative body and we have our city here and we have our Federal Government here, and now with our judiciary here, we need to be on the same page, and just have to keep right in our sights the well-being of our children in the City of Philadelphia.

We mentioned about our Pennsylvania delegation, but I am a partisan fellow, and along with the three Members up here, we are both from the City of Philadelphia, and we appreciate your efforts in securing money, and are looking forward to helping you secure more money for our school districts, providing it is done properly and spent properly, and I do appreciate it.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Congressman Brady. We do have two more panels and many, many more witnesses. We have extended this panel for obvious reasons. When you bring in the Governor and you bring in the mayor we do not pay close attention to the red lights, and I turned off the lights at one point because Congressman Fattah was on some very, very important questions. We will supplement the information in a factual matter, and I believe other witnesses on the next two panels will be able to contribute as well.

This subcommittee is deeply grateful to you, Governor Schweiker, and to you, Mayor Street, for appearing here today and being willing to advance testimony and respond to questions. This hearing is a testimonial to the importance of the subject and to the determination of the State and the city and the Federal Government to find better answers, so thank you all very much.

We would now turn to panel two. If the witnesses would come forward. We have Dr. James Nevels, Ms. Vicki Phillips, Dr. Kenneth Kitch, Mr. Benno Schmidt, Dr. Abdur-Rahim Islam, and Ms. Rosalind Jones-Johnson. Our first witness today in the second panel will be Dr. James E. Nevels, chairman of the Philadelphia School Reform Commission, and chairman and CEO of the Swarthmore Group. Mr. Nevels also served as a member of the Control Board of the Chester-Upland School District in Delaware County, received his bachelor's degree from Bucknell University and both his law and master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

We have six witnesses on panel two, and four witnesses on panel three, so you will excuse us if we ask you to observe the lights, although we did not insist on that for the Governor and the mayor, I know you will understand.

Mr. Nevels, thank you for your visit to me in Washington recently, and thank you for your public-spirited work, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JAMES E. NEVELS, CHAIR, SCHOOL REFORM COMMISSION, PHILADELPHIA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. NEVELS. Thank you very much, Senator, and I thank Congressman Brady and Congressman Fattah for their accessibility during a recent visit to Washington, and I thank the three of you,

along with the entire delegation, in terms of your support of the 214,000 children in the City of Philadelphia.

My name is James Nevels, and I am the chairman of the five-member School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

The School Reform Commission was authorized by Act 46, which the State legislature enacted last year. Act 46 has become in effect an Education Empowerment Act tailored specifically to Philadelphia. While the year 2000 Education Empowerment Act is important legislation, I would like, with your leave, to focus my testimony on what we are doing in Philadelphia pursuant to that legislation.

When Governor Mark Schweiker and Mayor John Street of Philadelphia reached an agreement last year, an historic agreement to establish the School Reform Commission which Act 46 authorized, they initiated an educational reform process that we hope will serve as a model for academically and financially distressed school districts across our country. My goal today is to provide an overview of the Philadelphia reform process with the hope that you, your colleagues, and your staff can find ways in which the ESEA can benefit our efforts.

To say that the public school system in Philadelphia is distressed is an understatement. It would be more accurate, if not an overstatement, to say that the system is a State in cardiac arrest. As you know all too well, most students in this school district are not reading at grade level. More than half our youngsters scored in the bottom quartile in math and reading on the Pennsylvania system of schools assessment test. Forty percent of our students are dropping out before graduation.

As you know, the academic troubles are matched by the financial troubles. The district's annual budget is $1.7 billion, but it is carrying an additional $1 billion in debt. We are dealing with poor financial and operational controls, and little comparison of actual to budgeted expenditures. These are, of course, only some of the many problems the School Reform Commission must address.

Since the commission was formed in January of this year we undertook certain fiscal measures to provide immediate relief to the financial situation. The commission has ordered a $300 million bond issue to deal with the current year's operating deficit. Additionally, we have committed to achieving $25 million in near-term savings by eliminating redundancies and operational inefficiencies at the district's headquarters.

PREPARED STATEMENT

As for the longer term, our efforts are guided by four principles that I devised based on my experience with school reform in Chester-Upland District. Those principles are, educate children first, treat teachers as educators, engage families—that is, aunts, uncles, grandparents—as parents, and great education emerges from sound financial practices.

I see that the light is on, and I will abbreviate my comments in an effort to keep us on time, but I welcome the opportunity to address questions later on.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Nevels.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES E. NEVELS

Good Morning, Senator Specter, I would like to join Principal Michael Rosenberg in welcoming you to Grover Washington Middle School.

My name is James E. Nevels and I am the Chairman of the five member School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

The School Reform Commission was authorized by Act 46, which the state legislature enacted late last year. Act 46 has become—in effect—an Education Empowerment Act tailored specifically to Philadelphia. While the year 2000 Education Empowerment Act is important legislation, I would like—with your leave—to focus my testimony on what we are doing in Philadelphia pursuant to Act 46.

When Governor Mark Schweiker and Mayor John Street of Philadelphia reached an agreement last year to establish the School Reform Commission, which Act 46 authorized, they initiated an educational reform process that we hope will serve as a model for distressed school systems across our country.

My goal today is to provide an overview of the Philadelphia reform process, with the hope that you, your colleagues, and staff can find ways in which the ESEA can benefit our efforts.

To say that the public school system in Philadelphia is "distressed" is an understatement. It would be more accurate—and not hyperbolic—to say that the system is in a state of "cardiac arrest."

As you know all too well, most students in this district are not reading at grade level.

More than half of our youngsters scored in the bottom quartile in math and reading on the Pennsylvania System of Schools Assessment Test.

Forty percent of our students are dropping out before graduation.

As you know, the academic troubles are matched by the financial troubles.

The district's annual budget is $1.7 billion but it is carrying an additional billion dollars in debt.

We are dealing with poor financial and operational controls and little comparison of actual to budgeted expenditures.

These are—of course—only some of the many problems the School Reform Commission must address.

Since the Commission was formed in January of this year, we undertook certain fiscal measures to provide immediate relief to the financial situation.

The Commission had ordered a $300 million bond issue to deal with the current year's operating deficit.

Additionally, we have committed to achieving $25 million in near-term savings by eliminating redundancies and operational inefficiencies at the district's headquarters.

As for the longer term, our efforts our guided by four principles that I devised based on my experience with school reform in the Chester Upland School District. These principals are:

—Educate Children First,
—Treat Teachers as Educators,
—Engage Families (i.e., aunts, uncles, grandparents) as Parents, and
—Great Education Emerges From Sound Financial Practices.

These principles manifest in the various measures and initiatives the Commission has undertaken since January. There are four general categories in this broad overview of these measures and initiatives:

First, we have established task forces that are chaired by Commission members; the task forces are focusing on:

—Teacher certification and class size,
—Cleaning up and fixing up our schools,
—School violence and disruption, and
—School-business partnerships.

Second, we have retained the advice of consultants in making necessary reforms. We have selected Edison Schools to be the lead District Advisor. In this capacity, Edison will identify big-issue reform measures ranging from best management practices to new teacher training and retention.

Other consultants we have retained have been assigned the critical areas of staff development, curriculum review, high school renewal, school safety, procurement, and food services.

Third, we are transforming seventy low performing schools using five educational models:

—Reconstitution (restructuring school staff),
—Charter schools (independently run publicly funded schools),
—Privatization (outside management and staffing of schools),
—Provider-management (retaining staff but with outside management), and
—Independent schools (freeing schools from the district's centralized controls).

Fourth and finally, our reform initiative is not a top-down decree-driven process. In order to maximize the involvement of parents, students, and local community leaders in the reform process, we have created Local Area Educational Reform Councils as well as a district-wide Advisory Council.

These councils—composed of representatives of the community, various stakeholders, and the student body—will advise and counsel the SRC and the school district staff at every level of its operation.

In my time allotted here today, I have given you an overview of the direction of the Commission's school reform efforts.

As a supporter of education, you are know doubt quite familiar with those aspects of the ESEA that fit squarely within the goals we are seeking to achieve.

Some—though certainly not all—areas of the ESEA that are directly pertinent to the Commissions efforts include:

—Professional Development
—Class Size Reduction
—Safe and Drug Free Schools, and
—Charter Schools

It would be the Commission's sincere pleasure and desire to work with you and your staff in further exploring the links between the ESEA and our efforts in Philadelphia.

Thank you for your time.

STATEMENT OF VICKI PHILLIPS, SUPERINTENDENT, LANCASTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to Ms. Vicki Phillips, Superintendent of the Lancaster School District, who serves on the Advisory Panel for Harvard University's Urban Superintendents program, she received both her bachelor's and master's degree from Western Kentucky University.

Ms. Phillips, the floor is yours.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Good morning. The School District of Lancaster is one of the districts on the empowerment list, but since the summer of June 1999, prior to the empowerment, we have been pursuing an aggressive reform agenda, and I am not going to stick to my prepared remarks, although I would like you to have it in front of you because I want to refer to a couple of pieces of data, and I want to go strictly to Congressman Fattah's question about results.

When I came to the district we had literally 2 out of every 10 students at the exit of elementary, middle, and high school performing to high academic standards. We laid out an aggressive reform agenda, and a goal of having 9 out of every 10 students pursuing and meeting higher academic standards by the year 2004. We have pursued that agenda aggressively, not with experiments or boutique projects but with strategies that we know absolutely work and have proven to work in other places with the student population that we have.

We are at about 65 percent poverty. Our students range from 40 percent, our schools from 40 percent poverty to 90-some. We have a very multicultural population—43 percent of our student body is Latino, 23 percent that is African American, 3 to 4 percent Asian—so we have all of the urban challenges.

We have been going about that aggressive reform agenda by investing in and well-executing, as I said, things that we know work. Early childhood education, giving our students an early and successful start, and making sure that our 5-year-olds come out of kin-

dergarten reading and writing and doing mathematics to a higher standard.

We have been pursuing strong curriculum strategies and materials, giving our teachers extraordinary amounts of professional development and training, extending the learning time for our students and, most importantly, we have been holding ourselves accountable by setting year-to-year performance targets, having our schools publicly present their school improvement plans, reporting to our community year on year, and setting up pay for performance times and models for our school leaders.

I would like you to turn, actually, in the pages of my testimony to page 7, and take a look at some of the data and the changes that occurred in the school district in the last 3 years. On page 7, what you see is an example of an elementary school that serves six homeless shelters, has 89 percent of their students in poverty, and has incredible levels of mobility.

What you will see is that school having gone from 54 percent of their students in the bottom-performing category on the State assessment in 1998 to 29 percent, and having gone from 2 percent in the very top advanced category to 18 percent. If you look at their scores in mathematics you will see that same score having gone from 79 percent to 25 percent in the bottom over the last few years, and having gone from 1.4 percent of their students advance to 20.8.

On the pages following that you will see other elementary schools with equally high levels of poverty having made the same kind of extraordinary gain, and you will see on page 10 a school that by all accounts was a high-end school doing fairly well when I came to the district, but typically following the traditional Bell curve that actually has less than 6 percent of their students in the bottom now.

You will also find us to a district, because of our investment in early childhood education, that has gone from literally 2 out of every 10 students entering our kindergarten unprepared to learn, to 8 and 9 out of every 10 students meeting higher academic standards in kindergarten, first and second grade. We now produce more than 60 percent of our fifth graders going forward meeting standards, meaning proficient and advanced, not below basic or basic.

Our middle schools have started to move large numbers of students out of the bottom, and our high school is well-positioned in the next few years to make the same sorts of gain. We believe we are a public education system that can work K to 12, and we are not afraid of competition, choice, or accountability. What we want is to produce and to be sure that public education stays strong in this Commonwealth and across this country by both continuing to raise the demand and making sure that the investment to secure the success are there.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Phillips, for that very succinct statement. It looks very impressive.

STATEMENT OF DR. KENNETH R. KITCH, SUPERINTENDENT, STEELTON-HIGHSPIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to Dr. Kenneth Kitch, Superintendent of the Steelton-Highspire School District for the past 8

years, Ph.D. from Penn State University. Welcome, Dr. Kitch, and we look forward to your testimony.

Dr. KITCH. Thank you, Senator Specter, Congressman Fattah.

The Steelton-Highspire School District is located directly south of our capital of Pennsylvania. We are a small district in an economically challenged area, with a total population of 1,378 students in grades K–5 through 12. A total of 41 percent of our students qualified for either free or reduced federally subsidized meals program in the 2001–2002 school year, where we have a morning breakfast program as well as a lunch program, which means their families are below the poverty level. The average family income for our entire district is $28,100.

Our student population is fairly diverse in ethnicity and culture. There are federally subsidized housing projects and low income areas that tend to be transient in our district. Many of our residents are retired and no longer make a significant contribution to the financial structure of the district.

Historically, the bulk of our tax base has been the single industrial company, Bethlehem Steel. Unfortunately, reality is what it is in this day and age, and the steel industry and the decline across the Nation is very true in our district as well. Bethlehem Steel has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and extensive property reassessment, which directly affects our resources for income for our district.

Another evidence of our economic constraints is the age of our two buildings. On our elementary school urban campus the kindergarten through second grade are located in a three-story building erected in 1882, almost like this building, as you noted, was 1875. The newer addition to the building dates back to 1899 for students in grades 3 through 6. Our secondary building, which houses students in grades 3 through 12, was completed in 1957.

Our Governor Schweiker, legislatures, and Secretary of Education Zogby have been very generous and provided over $1 million in much-needed funds to implement our empowerment plan to upgrade our people, technology, and purchase new textbooks. The good news is that our students over the past 2 years have raised their PSSA test scores in grades 5, 8, and 11 to a point that we shall be eligible to come off the list at the end of this school year, June 30, 2002, and we were eligible to come off last year, but because of the additional $550,000 it was a no-brainer, we asked to stay on.

Of course, we still need to achieve the following in our empowerment team plan, which includes improvement of student academic performance to meet or exceed student State standards, increase opportunity for parental and community involvement, and enhance training for teachers, administrators, faculty and staff.

PREPARED STATEMENT

In conclusion, due to the financially challenged situation of the Steelton-Highspire School District, we would humbly ask to remain on the empowerment list for an additional academic school year, and any additional funds from the Federal or State governments would be greatly appreciated for long-ranging and systematic im-

pact on positive student achievement in the Steelton-Highspire School District for the years to come.

Thank you very much, Senator, and Congressman Fattah for your time.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Dr. Kitch.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH KITCH

Good morning Senator Specter, Congressman Brady, and Congressman Fattah. My name is Dr. Kenneth Kitch. It has been my pleasure to serve as the Superintendent of the Steelton-Highspire School District for over the past eight years.

The Steelton-Highspire School District is located directly south of the capital city of Pennsylvania. We are a small school district in an economically challenged area with a total student population of 1,378 in grades K–5 through 12.

A total of 41 percent of our students qualified for either free or reduced federally subsidized meal programs in the 2001–2002 school year, which means their families are below the poverty level. The average family income for the entire district is $28,100. Our student population is fairly diverse in ethnicity and culture, There are federally subsidized housing projects and low income areas that tend to be transient, Many of our residents are retired and no longer make a significant contribution to the financial structure of the district.

Historically, the bulk of our tax base has been the single industrial, Bethlehem Steel. The unfortunate reality is that the steel industry's decline across this nation is very true here as well and the Bethlehem Steel plant has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and extensive property reassessment.

Another evidence of our economic constraints is the age of the two buildings on our elementary school urban campus. The kindergarten through second grades are located in a three story building erected in 1882. The newer addition to the building with student classrooms located for grades three through six, dates back to A.D. 1899. Our secondary building which houses grades seven through twelve was completed in 1957.

Our Governor Schweiker, legislators, and Secretary of Education Zogby. have been very generous and provided over a million dollars of much needed funds to implement our Empowerment Plan to upgrade our pupils technology and purchase new textbooks. The good news is that our students over the past two years have raised their PSSA test scores in grades five, eight, and eleven to the point that we shall be eligible for coming off of the Empowerment List by June 30, 2002. Of course, we still need to achieve the following in our Empowerment Team Plan which includes the improvement of student academic performance to meet or exceed state standards, increase opportunities for parental and community involvement. and enhance training for teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff.

In conclusion, due to the financially challenged situation of the Steelton-Highspire School District, we would humbly ask to remain on the Empowerment List for an additional academic school year. Any additional funds forthcoming from the federal or state governments would be greatly appreciated for long-ranging and systematic impact on positive student achievement in the Steelton-Highspire School District for years to come.

STATEMENT OF ROSALIND JONES-JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ISSUES, PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND

Senator SPECTER. Our next witness is Dr. Rosalind Jones-Johnson, director of educational issues for the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers Health and Welfare Fund. Today she is also representing the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers. She is the elected teacher's representative to Philadelphia's Empowerment Team, received both her bachelor's and master's from Cheney, and is pursuing a Ph.D. at Temple University. We welcome you here, and look forward to your testimony, Ms. Jones-Johnson.

Ms. JONES-JOHNSON. Good morning, Senator, and thank you for affording teachers the opportunity to provide testimony. Good morning, Congressman Chaka Fattah.

When there is an attempt to measure the accomplishment of certain standards determined appropriate by the State, those standards must be clear, and clearly communicated to teachers, parents, and students. The School District of Philadelphia became an empowerment district before Pennsylvania assumed the responsibility for publishing State standards for the school district of Philadelphia. State standards were not distributed to each school until September 2001, more than 1 year after the effective date of the empowerment act of July 2000.

Who should be held accountable? The School District of Philadelphia had a plethora of standards and curricula during the 1998–1999 school year. The State we feel had a responsibility to see to it that the School District of Philadelphia provided grade-by-grade curriculum aligned with the State standards.

The State never distributed or enforced distribution of State standards. The State accepted the local administrator's claim that there was required city-wide curriculum. This falsehood has led to blaming teachers and children. There is a need to recognize the State and central administration's responsibility for developing a city-wide curriculum linked to State standards.

The School District of Philadelphia was also mandated to develop local standards by Judge Doris Smith, so during the time that we were identified as not improving student achievement, we were trying to work using local standards and State standards. In addition, the Superintendent asked each school to adopt a comprehensive school reform model.

At the empowerment meeting, a State representative said she reviewed the curriculum, and it was aligned to State standards. There was no curriculum. Each small learning community in Philadelphia had its responsibility for developing its own curriculum, and there were more than 900 small learning communities. The State's accountability movement is wrong-headed at best, and real reform for schools must include a revolution in the way we measure children, and in the very meaning of what schooling must be.

There are numerous problems and concerns with the empowerment act. First, scores to identify the district should be based on test scores after an active adoption, not before. The State went back more than 2 years before the act was developed to identify failing schools. Identification should not be based on past data.

There was and is no Spanish version of the PSSA available for Spanish-speaking children, or children who speak other languages. Sometimes a language problem is being identified as a math or a reading problem. There is a question as to why non-English-speaking children cannot be tested in their language. There is a constant flow of newly arrived immigrants to various parts of the State, especially Philadelphia.

I have provided further testimony on the empowerment act, and will be ready to provide answers to your questions. Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Jones-Johnson.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROSALIND JONES-JOHNSON

The fact that the Philadelphia School District has been placed, first under the Pennsylvania's Education Empowerment Act, and second, under the takeover legislation, puts us in a unique position to speak to these Acts.

When there is an attempt to measure the accomplishments of certain standards determined appropriate by the state, those standards must be clear, and clearly communicated to the teachers, parents and students. The School District of Philadelphia became an Empowerment District before Pennsylvania assumed responsibility for publishing state standards for the School District of Philadelphia. State standards were not distributed to each school until September 2002, more than two years after the effective date of the Empowerment Act, July 2000.

Who should be held accountable? The School District of Philadelphia had a plethora of standards and curricula during the 1998–99 school year. The state, we feel, had a responsibility to see to it that the School District of Philadelphia provided grade by grade curriculum aligned with the state standards. There was no distribution of state standards. The state never distributed or enforced distribution of state standards. The state accepted the local administration's claim that there was a required citywide curriculum. This falsehood has led to blaming teachers and children. There is a need to recognize the state and central administration's responsibility for developing a citywide curriculum—linked to state standards. The empowerment scores were based on student test scores during a period when the district was just beginning the process of developing curricula linked to state and local standards.

The School District of Philadelphia was mandated to develop local standards by Judge Doris Smith. The School District of Philadelphia developed, adopted, and distributed local standards before state standards were developed. In addition, each school in the district was mandated by the district to adopt a Comprehensive School Reform Model. Comprehensive reform models were recommended by the federal government. Schools were encouraged to experiment with "New American School." Neither the Comprehensive School Reform models nor the local standards were aligned to state standards. Since many schools were adopting school reform models, there was no citywide curriculum aligned to state or local standards. Curriculum Frameworks were later developed. They were recommended not mandatory.

At the Empowerment meetings a state representative said she reviewed the curriculum and it was aligned to state standards. There was no curriculum. Each Small Learning Community had the responsibility to develop its own curriculum linked to city standards.

The state's accountability movement is wrongheaded at best, and real reform for schools must include a revolution in the way we measure children and in the very meaning of what schooling should be.

There are numerous problems and concerns with the Empowerment Act. First, scores to identify districts should be based on test scores after an Act is adopted. The state went back two years after the Act was adopted to identify failing schools. Identification should not be based on past data.

There was and is no Spanish version of the PSSA available for Spanish speaking children or children who speak other languages. Sometimes a language problem is being identified as a math or reading problem. There is a question as to why non-English speaking children cannot be tested in their language. There is constant flow of newly arrived immigrants to various parts of the state (especially Philadelphia). A value added assessment system of children may yield different results.

The chief administrative officer who was responsible for the fragmented and disjointed system had been replaced and the district was in the process of developing grade by grade curriculum in 2000 when the district was identified as an Empowerment district. When the state takeover occurred, the district was in the process of developing curricular aligned with state standards. The district was training a team of Reading teachers who specialized in raising reading achievement in our most "at risk" students. The School District of Philadelphia's Empowerment Team had identified target reductions for each school when the state takeover occurred. The School Reform Commission never considered the hard work that was already in place as a result of the Empowerment Plan.

Test scores are highly correlated with socioeconomic class. Why is one's father's occupation a better predictor of SAT scores than virtually any other factor? Test scores correlate exceedingly well with the income and education of one's parents. Pennsylvania needs to explore a value added assessment system. Test data would yield different results.

The state selection of schools, non-selection, confounded teachers, parents and the public. Interpretation of improvement was based on a percent of increases requiring the raising of numbers of children above the "below basic" quartile.

Now we find that the takeover legislation has "taken over." The tests have changed. They now include performance-based scores.

The fragmentation of the district into Independent Schools, Charter Schools, and Reconstituted Schools poses a serious problem for districts with extremely mobile

student populations. The reporting systems, curriculum, length of the school year and schedule of the school day are all different.

School Improvement Grants were grossly inadequate for the recommended reforms (e.g. instructional materials, reduction of class size, expanded full-day kindergarten etc.).

The following is just a sample of the scoring problems that may well challenge the "reliability" and "validity" of the tests and their scoring.

—The number of students that fall in the "pass" category (or meet the "proficient" classification was actually reduced by the Secretary of Education when he increased the "cut point" by a quarter standard error.") This resulted in tens of thousands of students falling into lower performance levels.

—There are serious questions as to whether or not urban center teachers were properly represented on the teacher committees used to determine questions to be used in determining cut off points.

—PDE claimed that teachers classified a total of 12,536 students' academic achievement for math and reading combined. Actually, the borderline groups' failure "cut score" for 11th grade reading was established on the evaluations of two students statewide made by an underreported number of teachers.

—There are serious questions concerning the determination of cut off points.

Finally, the school reforms recommended show no evidence of positive effects on student achievements. There was little or no careful analysis of the support each reform provided for specific schools. There is no data available on the cost of the approaches. There is a failure to engage educators, parents and community members in decisions about the reforms. There was no attempt made to find an approach that matched the goal of the school. Approaches may vary considerably in their philosophy, components and ways of working with schools. No procedures were used to pinpoint exactly what kind of effects on students they can expect if they implement the reform. A sampling of schools using the various approaches have had little or no success. Staff support is critical to success. The decision to adopt a reform approach should involve the entire staff and be supported by a large majority.

STATEMENT OF BENNO C. SCHMIDT, JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EDISON SCHOOLS

Senator SPECTER. Our next witness is Mr. Benno C. Schmidt, chairman of the board of Edison Schools. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, was dean of Columbia's Law School and president of Yale University from 1986 to 1992. Both his bachelor and law degrees come from Yale. Welcome, Mr. Schmidt. The floor is yours.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Senator Specter, and I want to thank you for holding this hearing on what is the most important urban public education reform effort anywhere in the country, and I think in the history of the last 50 years, and I want to thank Congressman Fattah also for being here. I am eager to try to answer any of his questions.

Edison is the largest private manager of public schools in the United States. We have 136 partnership schools. We always work in partnerships with local school districts or charter school boards, or in some cases with States who are asking us to help them restructure challenging schools.

I think the discussion this morning has made pretty clear that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia in particular are really at the epicenter of a great reform movement that is taking place all across the United States. It is a movement to higher standards, to stricter accountability, and to a strong focus on the problem of equality of educational opportunity and, in particular, equality of educational opportunity for children who are going to school in our great urban public education systems.

Senator, we believe that Edison's educational program, there are many fine educational programs and many fine school reform ef-

forts underway in the United States. I think no one would want to say that they have the answer, or a patent on the best possible program, but I do believe that the basic educational program that you would find in Edison schools lines up very, very well with the basic policies of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Ours is a program based on high standards explicitly laid out in over 20 different areas of the curriculum. We have tried to do careful research to provide a curriculum that has actually proven its ability to bring children to the achievement of very high standards. We know that successful schools depend above all on successful and energetic teachers, and ours is a program that tries to support our teachers with very careful professional development and training, with assessments that can help them understand exactly what challenges they face with their individual students.

It is a program that is fully accountable and grounded in continuing assessment, and the effort of continuing improvement, and it is a program that makes an effort to integrate the kind of technology in the schools that young people will find when they enter the world of work as adults.

We would be honored to be a partner in the Commonwealth and the City of Philadelphia's efforts to bring renewal, to bring new innovative programs, to broaden the choices available for students and teachers in Philadelphia, and we hope to be part of this great enterprise that is taking place here in Philadelphia. This has extraordinary significance, Mr. Chairman, not only for the children of Philadelphia but I think the entire country is watching Philadelphia as hopefully a model of constructive change for the improvement of urban public education.

Thank you very much.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BENNO SCHMIDT

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Benno Schmidt, and I am the Chairman of Edison Schools. Thank you very much for your kind invitation to testify on Pennsylvania's Education Empowerment Act, and the challenges we face as we strive to improve student achievement in Pennsylvania. I also look forward to sharing with you my thoughts on how Edison schools and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are uniquely situated to accomplish the goals of the "No Child Left Behind" Act signed by President Bush earlier this year.

Let me begin by highlighting the work we do at Edison Schools. Edison is the nation's largest private operator of public schools serving students from kindergarten through 12th grade. All of the schools that Edison serves are public schools. We contract with local school districts and public charter school boards to assume educational and operational responsibility for individual schools in return for per-pupil funding that is generally comparable to funding for other public schools in that area. Our schools are called partnership schools because collaboration with public school authorities, families and local communities is fundamental to our success. Indeed local control is one of the four basic principles of the "No Child Left Behind" Act.

Over the course of three years of intensive research at a cost of $40 million, Edison's team of leading educators, scholars and financial experts developed an innovative, research-backed curriculum and school design. We opened our first four schools in August 1995, and have grown rapidly in every subsequent year. Today we serve approximately 75,000 students in 136 schools in 22 states. We operate a total of 12 schools in Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, Phoenixville, Chester and York. We are in discussions with the School Reform Commission to operate at least 20 additional schools in Philadelphia, along with serving as the lead consultant to the district's central office.

With the adoption of the "Education Empowerment Act" in the year 2000, Pennsylvania became a national leader in the effort to confront the chronic under-

performance that characterizes too many of our nation's public schools. That Act designates any school with more than 50 percent of its children scoring at the "below basic" level on the Pennsylvania System of Student Assessment (PSSA) as an "Empowerment School". The local board of education must then work with educators, parents, and community leaders to craft a plan that will result in significant improvement in student performance. Local boards are given considerable flexibility in crafting these Improvement Plans. Among other things, they can:

—Transform schools into Independent Schools with their own governance boards;
—Reconstitute faculties; or
—Employ private Education Management Organizations to transform school operations.

If student performance in an Empowerment School does not improve to minimum levels within three years, the Commonwealth can then assume responsibility for the governance of the district, through the appointment of a state board of control.

Pennsylvania's Empowerment legislation provided both the incentives and the flexibility that has led to dramatic reform in Chester—where Edison manages nine of the district's ten public schools—and in Philadelphia—where the School Reform Commission has placed 42 of the city's lowest performing schools under the care of outside managers—including Edison.

As we implement our reform plans in each of these Pennsylvania school districts, we hope to have Edison schools serve as prototypes for the implementation of the new Federal education law known as "No Child Left Behind." We too are intensely dedicated to the success of every child, and our approach has a tremendous amount in common with this new Federal law. Briefly, let me share with you some examples of how our model is uniquely situated to comply with the "No Child Left Behind" Act:

—*Scientifically-Based Research and Teaching Methods that are Proven to Work*.—We use instruction methods derived from systematic, scientifically-based research. For example, our elementary schools implement "Success for All," a K–5 reading program developed at Johns Hopkins University and refined through experimental studies. In addition, our schools generally use mathematics programs developed though years of research by the University of Chicago Mathematics Project. Students in our elementary schools receive 60 minutes of math and 90 minutes of reading instruction every day.

—*High Academic Standards*.—Our curriculum is rich in content and is guided by detailed and demanding student academic standards that specify what students should know and be able to do at the end of each school year in twenty fields of study.

—*Regular Assessments of Student Performance*.—We routinely monitor our students' progress against states' academic standards and assessments, and we believe our students are well prepared for the state and local tests for which we are held accountable. Edison features a unique report card, known as a Quarterly Learning Contract. In contrast to the typical report card that grades performance relative to each teacher's subjective classroom standards, the QLC is a narrative progress report that tracks achievement against academic standards and sets specific goals for students. Each quarter, every Edison student, his teacher-adviser and the student's family meet to discuss and complete a Quarterly Learning Contract. More recently, we have introduced a benchmark assessment system that provides detailed monthly measurements of student progress in the basic skills. And because the system is technology based, teachers walk away from each assessment with an analysis of student performance that can form the basis for tomorrow's lesson plan, and principals have a up-to-date picture of what is going on in their schools. Meaningful assessment that provides for stronger accountability is critical to our mission, and one of the four basic principles of the "No Child Left Behind" Act.

—*Charter Schools*.—As the nation's largest private operator of public charter schools, Edison is "on the front lines" of the charter school movement throughout the United States.

—*Professional Development for Teachers*.—Edison emphasizes professional growth for teachers through a commitment to training, career advancement, and a school management structure that allows teachers to participate in the leadership of their schools. Typically, we provide educators with four weeks of sustained training before a school first opens under Edison management and additional support and training during the year. In addition, teachers have two 45-minutes periods every day for professional purposes: one for team planning and professional development, and one for individual planning. And our school calendars provide for several days of ongoing training each year.

—*Emphasis on Core Values*.—Our education program is built around a defined set of core values: wisdom, justice, courage, compassion, hope, respect, responsibility, and integrity. These values help us promote strong character in our students and a positive learning environment in our schools. These values are integrated into instruction and school life at every grade level. Additionally, Edison invests heavily in creating a safe, clean and orderly school setting conducive to learning.

—*Integration of Technology into the Learning Environment*.—Edison schools are technologically rich environments aimed at preparing students for the workplaces of the future. We provide each of our teachers with a laptop computer and each school with a generous supply of computers and other instructional technology. We provide every family with a student in third grade and beyond a computer and a modem for use at home, following the first year of their schools' operation. To encourage communication and enable the sharing of best practices, teachers, students, and parents are electronically connected via The Common, Edison's national Internet-based information system.

—*Immediate and Comprehensive School Reform*.—For the schools we opened in the fall of 2000, we made an average initial investment of approximately $2,500 per student to purchase computers and other technology, implement our curriculum, and train new teachers. In contrast to the small steps that school reform usually takes, our vigorous approach provides schools with an opportunity for schools immediate and comprehensive change.

Mr. Chairman, these are but a few of examples of why we believe Edison Schools is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the implementation of the new Federal education law. We are very proud of the work we do to educate children, and we truly believe our efforts in Philadelphia, Chester, Phoenixville and York will prove to be a resounding success if we are provided the ability to fully implement our extensive plans for reform.

Thank you for your invitation to testify, and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Schmidt.

Mr. Nevels, you headed up the effort in Chester-Upland. What were the results there, and how would you compare the scope of that undertaking with your current undertaking in the City of Philadelphia?

Mr. NEVELS. Senator, I am prone to make a quantitative comparison. Chester-Upland School District is 35 times smaller than the School District of Philadelphia, with as equally complex issues, of course, but Philadelphia is on a far larger scale.

In direct response to your question about how the results were in Chester-Upland, I was there for approximately 4 years on an empowerment board with a structure, a legislative structure very different from Act 46. What we saw there was, we saw improvement in scores over that 4-year period. We also saw a situation in which financial stability was there, when upon my departure my colleagues Chuck Bennoni and Dr. Person worked very, very hard to make sure that those improvements were in place, and there are processes that I believe still remain to enhance that improvement.

Senator SPECTER. Well, Mr. Nevels, there is not time enough this morning to go into great detail as to your current undertaking, but I appreciated your coming to Washington, and we are available to you as you work through the process. My staff and I will be working with you, so as issues arise where you think we might be helpful. We would also appreciate being apprised as to how it is going. We want to stay current with the system.

Mr. NEVELS. Thank you, Senator. I look forward to that as well, as well as ongoing conversations with your colleagues in both delegations.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Phillips, your testimony was very impressive. How do you account for the spectacular results in Lancaster?

Ms. PHILLIPS. I think like the State we believe standards assessments and accountability are strong cornerstones of school improvement, but we also believe you have to make a serious and sustained investment in those things that work, like I said earlier, early childhood education, intensive training and support for teachers, good, proven curriculum. Those things in our estimation are not sort of rocket science. They are just what we know works, and if they are well-implemented and well-invested-in you get gains in performance, you get serious gains in performance.

Senator SPECTER. Dr. Kitch, congratulations on getting Steelton off the list. I used to live in Steelton for a short time, when I was assigned to Olmstead Air Force Base. Have you ever heard of that?

Dr. KITCH. Yes, Senator. My father used to work there.

Senator SPECTER. You say your grandfather used to work there?

Dr. KITCH. My father.

Senator SPECTER. Congressman Fattah was interested in the ancient history of my living in Steelton. He wants to know if it was after Kansas or before Kansas. I was born in Kansas. One of the lawyers I work with saw my resume. I was born in Wichita, and he said to me, where was your mother on her way to at the time.

Just one question for you, Dr. Kitch. You were eligible to get off, and you stayed on and got $450,000 extra. How did you manage that?

Dr. KITCH. Well, as we looked at our dire constraints financially in our district, as I submitted to you in our testimony how poor our families are——

Senator SPECTER. You are not being responsive. How did the State let you get away with that extra $450,000.

Dr. KITCH. Well, it is one where we have a very good Governor who is also a Roller fan. We won a State title in 2000, and one in 1998. We are running a single A school with 70 seniors graduating a year, and since he is a Roller fan and gets preferential treatment, as you or Congressman Fattah would if you would ever like to see our games, they looked at us not only academically as a challenged district, but we knew if we had the money to get new computers, to get the textbooks, to do the staff development for everyone, we showed them that we could do those things.

And, indeed, we were the first one—and I told former Governor Tom Ridge who came to our school the second day of school that we would like to be the first district and maybe Vicki's district the second to get off the empowerment list, but to stay on is somewhat of a stigma, but at the same time if you look at that type of money, our Bethlehem Steel at that time did not pay $330,000 in taxes. This year we expect the same thing.

Senator SPECTER. Are they going to let you stay on longer and let you get more money, even though you do not belong on the list, and you have a right to remain silent on that.

Ms. Jones-Johnson, what do you think of the achievements of Lancaster? I quite agree with you. You need standards, and you need procedures, but what is your evaluation as to what has happened, say, with both Lancaster and Steelton, to the extent you have had an opportunity to observe those?

Ms. JONES-JOHNSON. It is difficult to comment specifically on those school districts, but as you are aware, it is easy to raise test scores and still not improve student achievement.

Sometimes you can change the curriculum so that you are teaching more to the tests, and we have to move beyond that, and frequently what you will find is that schools will improve their test scores for a couple of years and then they will settle right back down into the same level they were previously, as you are aware if you track the records of some of the schools in Philadelphia that have improved test scores. Test scores will go up one year, and then test scores will go down.

But I did not have an opportunity to say—what I would like to say is that the funding we received from the empowerment act was inadequate. You are sitting in Philadelphia, which is the hot spot for lead poisoning in the country, and there was an in-depth study done of Philadelphia's children in 1995 and 1996. In one of the schools that was identified as an empowerment school, 66 percent of the first graders had elevated blood lead levels. There is nothing you can do in terms of teaching to the test to change that. If you do not do anything else, if you did something about the extremely high blood lead levels of the children in Philadelphia, I guarantee you, test scores would go up.

Senator SPECTER. Well, you put your finger on a critical factor, and it is certainly multifaceted on the problems faced by the city here.

Mr. Schmidt, what would you point to as the greatest achievement of Edison, and what would you point to, if you care to answer, as the least successful effort of Edison?

Mr. SCHMIDT. Well, Senator, my own belief is that while test scores are certainly not by any means the full measure of a successful school, I think at least intelligently designed tests, and I think the PSSA now is, can often give you very important information about schools, and my own opinion—and this is the policy reflected in the No Child Left Behind Act as well, I believe, sir—is if you had to say a single most important measure of a school's success, it is whether it is moving children up the ladder of achievement. It is not where a school is at any point in time.

A school that has taken—in the 20 schools that there has been some discussion that Edison might have an involvement with in Philadelphia, about 80 percent of the children in those schools are below basic level, for example, in math, about 70 percent below basic level in reading. Now, in that sort of a school, I believe that if you can move the children up the ladder, up to basic, to proficient, and so on, at a rate of 5 or 6 percent gains a year, I believe that is a highly successful school.

Therefore, I would judge the kind of results that you heard about in the two districts that you just heard about as spectacularly successful, but the annual progress is the key measure.

Senator SPECTER. Come to my questions. What is Edison's greatest success, and what is the other end of the spectrum?

Mr. SCHMIDT. I think the work we do is hard, and I do not think miracles happen very often. I am very proud of the fact that if you look across all of our schools, the young people in our schools have been moving up the achievement ladder, on average, every year—

now, this is on average—at about 6 percent a year on criterion-referenced tests, and a little under 5 percent a year on norm-referenced tests.

I think that kind of average gain, if it is sustained—and I want to repeat, that is an average annual gain of all of the schools that have taken tests from year to year. That kind of gain will change the lives of children in those schools.

I would say our greatest failure is that we have not been by any means perfectly consistent in achieving those gains by our measure about, a little over 80 percent of our schools are doing better since we took them over, about 10 percent are not. About 5 percent, or a few more than that, have been flat.

So what we are trying to do, Senator, is focus on two things, raising that average level of achievement—we would like to try to get it beyond the 4.7 percent on the norm reference and the 5.7 percent criterion. We would like to move it up to 7, 8, 9 percent annual gains, and we would like to be able to be more consistent so that we would have over 90 percent of our schools performing very well in that way, rather than where we are now, a little over 80.

Those would be my answers.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Schmidt.

Congressman Fattah.

Mr. FATTAH. Thank you, Senator. Let me compliment the panel, and let me say that I am fully supportive of the School Reform Commission and its work with one exception, which is Edison, and I want to focus a couple of my questions to the chairman.

You say that the only fair judgment of a school is whether the students are progressing year-to-year, not where the children are at a static moment, is that correct? Didn't you just say that?

Mr. SCHMIDT. I said it is the most important. I said that there are a lot of measures of a good school. The one that is the most important, in my view, is that annual student progress.

Mr. FATTAH. So Mr. Chairman, when the Commonwealth gave your company $2.7 million to study the Philadelphia School District, why is it that you rejected that logic and Edison submitted a report looking only at where the Philadelphia schools were in terms of overall performance, rejected the laying out for the Governor the annual progress that was being made, which you say is the most important, legitimate, authentic way to judge whether a school is being properly reformed and improved?

Mr. SCHMIDT. Well, by our measure the Philadelphia School System has been improving its performance over the last 4 years at about 1.1 percent a year on criterion-referenced tests,

Mr. FATTAH. I am talking about the PSSA's.

Mr. SCHMIDT. On the PSSA it is about 1.7, and the 20 schools that there has been discussion with the School Reform Commission, the average annual improvement on the PSSA's in those 30 schools is .34 percent.

Mr. FATTAH. Let me try to rephrase my question. I am talking about the actual report you were paid to do, $2.7 million to review the entire Philadelphia School District. The judgment of Edison has submitted to the Commonwealth that this was the worst urban school district in the country, that what the problem was is that the vast majority of the kids here were not scoring at grade level,

and you rejected what you have now implied is a more appropriate way to analyze our schools, which is whether or not these schools are making progress.

Let me give you an example. Elementary schools in our State were outpacing, in terms of improvement, annually those throughout the State. They were lapping, then there was a 13-point improvement, versus a 2-percent State average improvement, so my point to you is why the report that you submitted on Philadelphia made a judgment on one set of facts in terms of looking at schools, versus what you now suggested to this committee is the more appropriate way to review whether schools are making progress.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Congressman, I think reasonable people can differ about what counts as adequate progress, but in my opinion, a district where the levels of achievement and graduation rates and other indicators indicate that there is quite a lot of room for improvement——

Mr. FATTAH. I am not trying to make this difficult, but if you could tell me——

Mr. SCHMIDT. But a district improving by only 1 percentage point a year or so on the PSSA test is not a district that is improving fast enough. That is a district that will take 50 years to move a child——

Mr. FATTAH. I want to make sure I am communicating. I will just put it in the record. Maybe you can submit it to the Senator. What I am saying is that what you said in response to the Senator's point was that the fairest way to judge a school was whether the students were improving year to year.

Mr. SCHMIDT. That is my view.

Mr. FATTAH. What I am suggesting to you is, the Edison report on the Philadelphia School District took a different judgment path, which was to say where these schools are at at this moment, and all I am saying is, those two things are in contradiction, and reasonable people can disagree. If you are representing Edison, my point is that you seem to be disagreeing with yourself in terms of this analysis, but I want to move to another question, and you can just submit it, and that will be fine.

Senator SPECTER. Let him respond.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Congressman, the published achievement records by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania indicate that the Philadelphia School System over the last 4 years has improved at an annual average rate of 1.1 percent on criterion-referenced tests. That is obviously better than a negative rate, and that is improvement.

The question is, is that enough improvement to serve the children in the Philadelphia School System and in particular in the most troubled schools, where the improvement is not 1 percent a year but .3 of 1 percent, and I would argue that that improvement is not sufficient.

Mr. FATTAH. Let me move to a different question, then. Wichita, Kansas. The Senator is familiar with this as a place you have been for 5 or 6 years running schools, and now the school board has decided to no longer have your services because there was a significant decrease in the improvement of the children there.

And I know that you are not perfect, and you stated that, but looking at Wichita, looking at Macon, Georgia, where you have run

two schools there for 5 years, looking at the Miami-Dade County report, the evaluation of the school district—they hired you. You have been running the schools. They even have extended your contract, so these are not Edison critics. Their evaluation found that at no time—this is a verbatim quote from the report—at no time did the children in the Edison schools show superior academic progress to other schools in Miami-Dade.

In Dallas, where you have been hired to run seven schools, an analysis and evaluation by the Dallas Independent School District found—verbatim, this is the quotation—that out of 49 indices, or 42 of them, the Edison students scored more poorly than other similarly situated students. In Austin there was just a review.

So my concern is about not your for-profit status or your stock value or any of this. My concern is on this question of student achievement, and I think we have a difference in terms of our view of this, and maybe let me try it like this. In all of the 23 or 24 States you are operating in, how many schools do you now run today that 51 percent, 50 plus 1 percent of the children score at a proficient level on the State assessment tool?

Mr. SCHMIDT. I will have to give you that data. The data I have in my head has to do with what you were just saying, namely, what is the rate of annual progress, and I have all of that data actually right here. I can get you the other data very easily. I just have to get back to my computer.

Mr. FATTAH. Do you think there are a large number of your schools in which that is the case?

Mr. SCHMIDT. Here is the problem, Congressman, and I think you probably know this, we are generally invited in as is the discussion in Philadelphia, to come into schools that are very much at the lower and in many cases the lowest end of the achievement ladder in that school district, so our typical school when we come in is in the bottom quartile.

Now, as we move that up the ladder at the rates that I described, which is about 5 to 6 percent a year, you will understand that if you take a child at the 20th percent and you can move that child up the ladder 5 percent a year, it is going to take you 6 years before that child hits the 50th percent.

Mr. FATTAH. In the schools you have run for 6 years, or 5 years, or 4 years——

Mr. SCHMIDT. I can get you that data, too.

Mr. FATTAH [continuing]. At which the majority of the students score at or above the State assessment tests in those States.

Then the other point I would make to you is, some of the schools you run fit the category you describe. Many of the schools you run are charter schools that have just started, just been created. The only education that the children have ever benefitted by is that Edison curriculum, Edison teachers, and like, for instance, Granville, Trenton, New Jersey, where as I would understand it you now will no longer be operating the Granville Charter School there, you have been running it for 6 years, and the State assessment——

Mr. SCHMIDT. 3, I think.

Mr. FATTAH. It is 6, but that is okay. The State assessment, which was done by KPMG, which is one of the consultants that

have been hired by the School Reform Commission, did an analysis that showed that the school test scores were deplorable.

So my point to you is, I am concerned about whether or not you can improve these students in terms of their achievement. If you can, I would be your biggest fan. I am not convinced of it. I cannot find anywhere on the public record any independent analysis. That is, if you look at Western Michigan's report, if you look at the Arizona State report, if you look at the school districts where you operate now and their evaluations, if you look at the State assessments, nowhere can I find that Edison is improving these students' ability, except when I look at the Edison documents.

So now, if you can tell the committee, or send to the committee, or share with the committee independent reviews and analysis that show this, we would be happy, I would be happy to review them.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Well, Congressman, perhaps you would like to take a look at Baltimore. In Baltimore we have been running three schools for 2 years, and they have improved in those 2 years by 32, an average improvement, and those were the three worst schools in Baltimore, and they have improved by an average of 32 percent points on the Maryland criterion reference.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Schmidt, if you want to amplify Baltimore, go ahead, but we are going to have to move ahead to the next panel, and I would say this, Mr. Schmidt, we would like you to give the specifics on the districts which Congressman Fattah has raised. You said that you would, and we would appreciate that. We do not have the time to go into an analysis of each one of these school districts, and Edison has been very active. It is important to know this for the record as we set the stage for evaluating what Edison is doing here.

Mr. SCHMIDT. I completely agree, Senator, and I appreciate what Congressman Fattah said, that if we can show him a record of strong student progress in our schools, that he would think we might have something good to offer.

Mr. FATTAH. Absolutely, and I also, and the Senator knows this, I have the GAO, and we will also have that review to look at.

Senator SPECTER. Congressman Fattah has asked you relevant questions. You have given relevant answers, and you ought to have the opportunity to supplement it with materials which are on your computer. You have a very distinguished record, Mr. Schmidt, but your computer has to top you or anyone else.

[The information follows:]

Question. In how many of the schools managed by Edison Schools are more than 50 percent of the students performing at a proficient level on the State assessment tool?

Answer. Of the 112 Edison Schools that were in existence before Edison was hired to offer its services to the schools, 84 percent of the schools were achieving below the 50th percent before Edison was hired. Eighty-four percent of these schools are ahead of where they began. Sixteen percent of these Edison Schools began with the company above the 50th percent and they all remain above the 50th percent.

Of the 69 Edison Schools sites with primary means of accountability data—criterion referenced tests or the SAT 9—26 had more than 50 percent of their students perform at the proficiency level in their respective State tests. The schools are listed in the chart below.

1st year with Edison	Grade	School name	State	Test
98–99	K–5	Kriewald Road Elementary School	TX	TAAS

1st year with Edison	Grade	School name	State	Test
97–98	K–5	Elm Creek Elementary School	TX	TAAS
99–00	6–8	Stewart-Edison Junior Academy	TX	TAAS
95–96	K–5	Dodge-Edison Elementary School	KS	WBA
98–99	K–5	Academy-Edison Elementary School	CO	CSAP
96–97	6–8	Jardine-Edison Junior Academy	KS	WBA
97–98	K–5	Edison-Ingalls Partnership School	KS	WBA
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Hernandez Academy	TX	TAAS
99–00	K–5	Northmoor-Edison School	IL	ISAT
00–01	PK–5	Montebello Elementary	MD	CTBS 5
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Maple Lawn Academy	TX	TAAS
99–00	K–5	Swift Creek-Edison Elementary	NC	NCEOG
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Medrano Academy	TX	TAAS
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Runyon Academy	TX	TAAS
98–99	K–8	Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School	CT	CMT
98–99	K–8	San Jose-Edison Academy	CA	SAT9
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Blair Academy	TX	TARS
97–98	6–9	Washburn Junior Academy	MN	MBST
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Henderson Academy	TX	TAAS
98–99	K–8	Detroit-Edison Public School Academy	MI	MEAP
00–01	PK–6	Edison-Titche Academy	TX	TAAS
97–98	K–5	Edison-Isley Partnership School	KS	WBA
95–96	K–5	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Academy	MI	MEAP
97–98	K–6	Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences	MI	MEAP
98–99	K–6	Washington-Edison Partnership School	MI	MEAP
97–98	K–5	Williams-Edison Partnership School	MI	MEAP

Question. Please provide independent reviews and analysis that shows Edison is improving student achievement.

Answer. There are currently no independent studies that show Edison has not improved student achievement, nor are there any independent studies that show Edison has improved student achievement. The Rand Corporation is currently conducting the first truly independent study of gains by students in schools managed by Edison.

STATEMENT OF ABDUR-RAHIM ISLAM, PRESIDENT AND CEO, UNIVERSAL COMPANIES

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Islam has joined us, and we are going to include him in the next panel. Thank you all very much. Mr. Islam, you stay with us. We would like now to call Mr. Wendell Harris, Ms. Stephanie Harris, Ms. Christina Rivera, Ms. Margaret Levy, and Mr. Islam we will start with you while they join us.

Mr. Abdur-Rahim Islam, president and CEO of Universal Companies, which owns the Universal Institute Charter School, also serves on the African American Chamber of Commerce, South Philadelphia Coalition, and on the Small Business Support Center, children ages 3 to 22—you are going to have a hard time topping that as an accomplishment. Mr Islam received his bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from La Salle.

Thank you for joining us, Mr. Islam, and the floor is yours.

Mr. ISLAM. Good morning, Senator. Good morning, Congressman as well. If I could just take my 3 minutes to explain, I guess, my role here, just some background, Universal Companies is an organization founded by Kenny Gamble, who is a legendary songwriter and producer here in Philadelphia, and he has taken the initiative to move back to his community in South Philadelphia to rebuild that community.

We have leveraged that commitment, the finances he has put into the organization, the acquisition of a number of properties, and over 8 years we have become one of the largest developers of

affordable housing in the City of Philadelphia. We operate a workforce development center, one of the largest in the State, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a business support center, we operate many retail stores because of the lack of small businesses in the community, and we opened a charter school, about 3 years.

We cannot tell you, as educators, that our charter school is the premier school in the country, but it has the beginnings to get there. We have changed the culture and the environment, and now we can begin educating in a way that we believe we can educate, but my number one purpose here is to basically say what our position is in this whole situation as it relates to educational reform.

We believe that the reason why we are in education reform, as private citizens we can no longer sit back and watch the derailment of education and the derailment of these communities continue. Right now, in our community in South Philadelphia, we have almost 70 percent of the families headed by female head of households. We have almost 55 percent of the kids dropping out of school. Unemployment is just off the record as well, where I mean, we have national and city rates at 35 and 40 percent, depending on where you are looking at.

What is more alarming is, this is going to continue, because all of these things are interrelated. There is a serious, serious crisis between the male and the female, the man and the woman in the African American community, and when you have 70-percent of the head of households are women—you have more women are going to school, getting educated, and 55 percent are dropping out, 70 percent of those are boys. You have more boys going to prison in this area.

So we do not see any real way that this thing is going to change, unless we get ahead of this thing, and that is why we are into the education. We did not get into the education because we are longtime educators. We are in education because the only way we are going to prevent this thing from happening is if we get on the front end of this situation.

So we believe—and we have been pretty focused, because there are a lot of fights in this education issue. There is the State and the city. There is the Republican and the Democrat. There is the unions, there is the school districts. We do not want to get into all of these arguments. Our focus is clear. We have to be able to manage the education process of these schools because we have no confidence in anyone else being able to do it for us.

I will just conclude with this here. In order for you to have real education reform, you must have also community reform, because these kids are not living in the schools. They live in these communities.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Islam.

STATEMENT OF WENDELL A. HARRIS, PARENT, NORTH ACADEMIC AREA REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE PHILADELPHIA HOME AND SCHOOL COUNCIL, BOARD MEMBER OF THE PARENT UNION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND MEMBER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, PHILADELPHIANS UNITED TO SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION

Senator SPECTER. Our next witness is Mr. Wendell Harris, North Academic Area Representative for the Philadelphia Home and

School Council of the Parent Union for Public Schools, and a member of the Steering Committee for Philadelphians United to Support Public Education.

Welcome, Mr. Harris. The floor is yours.

Mr. HARRIS. Good morning, Senator Specter. I see some of the people have left. I would say good morning to all of the distinguished people that came here this morning to discuss these relevant issues.

As you stated, Senator Specter, I am a parent of seven children, and I have invested over 18 years personally in the schools of Philadelphia as a parent volunteer. I have been in the halls. I have even received awards for having been in the schools more time than some of the staff. I have put in over 40 hours a week. I felt this was necessary, and I advocate strong parental involvement.

I, along with many of the parents in this city, feel strongly that reform is necessary. We do not feel what is being given now is true reform. Many up here have already alluded to the empowerment act and to President Bush's Early and Secondary Education Act. As you know, within those acts, starting out, one of the main principles is accountability, results, flexibility, scientific-based research strategies.

I do not feel that has been implemented in this reform that is being undertaken right now in the true sense. I feel there has been very little collaboration. If you know about the empowerment act, Senator Specter, an empowerment plan here in Philadelphia, there was a wide consensus of many different people involved in that, community, clergy, politicians, students, teachers, parents, best practices.

To deviate from that, while everybody applauds the empowerment act as being something very positive, it is somewhat destructive. The Governor made a statement this morning about, it is time to stop tinkering with reform and go forth, and I say to the Governor, if you are going to go forth like a bull in a china shop you are only going to cause more damage. If our kids are in any kind of risk, and they are in some ways, we need reform, and we need it in effective ways, like smaller classroom sizes, qualified teachers—I do not have to go through all of the things you already know yourself.

These things come from resources. It has been more than a decade that this district and other rural districts have been deprived of the proper resources, because it has been derived through property taxes and revenue in that way, and then they ask us to compete with districts that have been afforded the opportunity to have the proper resources, and have the funds to initiative what is real reform.

All I can say to you, Senator, and anybody else here is that we love our children, and we are the most impacted, the teachers, the parents, the community and the students. If we are not part of the collaboration, and true collaboration from the ground up, then it is not going to work, in this city or in any other city, and where it has worked, it has worked because of that collaboration.

Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Harris. We very much appreciate your comments. We wanted at this hearing to

hear from all facets of the community, and we acknowledge the representation you have had in the past.

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE OLIVER, STUDENT, UNIVERSITY CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Stephanie Oliver is a student at University City High School in West Philadelphia, attended the public schools for 12 years, is the founder of the Project Care, a children's literacy program, and is a member of the National Honor Society and Who's Who among America's high school students. Ms. Oliver plans to attend the University of Pittsburgh this fall.

Let us hear the student's point of view, Ms. Oliver.

Ms. OLIVER. In my personal experience with the Philadelphia School District, I have had some very good experiences. I am one of the lucky children who is able to say that I have had great teachers through my entire 12 years.

However, I do also have a younger sister who is a part of the Philadelphia School District who does not have that same experience. She is currently in the sixth grade, and my mother is one of those parents who goes up to the school every week to go talk to the teacher and see how the child is doing, and every time my mother went up there, the teacher would never report to her that my sister was failing. My mother always asked for her class work and the teacher said, don't worry about it, she's doing fine, and so she receives her report card, when she had all F's on her report card.

Now, I look at the situation and I think who is to blame? My mother is doing her job. The parent is doing her job. The teacher is telling the parent a different situation. However, the teacher is failing in some situations.

Yes, my little sister is accountable for a lot of it, but who do we actually go to in situations like this, and this is a part of the reform. You need a parent, as well as a teacher, as well as the student, to make a true change in the school district, and through my literacy program I find that we work with over—I started in September of 1999, and we have worked with over 500 school district students to help improve their PSSA scores, to help improve their regular grades, and it takes me to go up to the school, to go up to the teachers, to hold conferences with the parent as well as the child, and tell them, this is what needs to be done, and if you cannot get all three of them together, then no reform will work.

It does not matter if you just have teachers on a level, because after that 6 hours of class, that child must return back home to their parent, they must go back to their community, so I do agree with Mr. Islam when he said you cannot have school reform unless you have community reform, and that is the only way that I believe this will work.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Oliver.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA RIVERA, STUDENT, MASTBAUM HIGH SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Senator SPECTER. We next call on Ms. Christina Rivera, a 17-year-old student at Mastbaum High School president of the ASPIA Club Federation which helps communities improve their local schools. Welcome, Ms. Rivera. We look forward to your testimony.

Ms. RIVERA. I agree on much of what Ms. Oliver had to say, but I also feel as though the community plays a part and you just cannot give students over to like, let us say, to the Edison Company, who does not understand our community and our children that go there.

You cannot just bring in a company that has no knowledge of our students' concerns and the problems they have, and it is like Edison themselves have their own problem with their own financial thing, because I mean, the stocks are down at $2.6, but they are trying to come into our community and, like, parents are fighting and the community is fighting not for privatization, we are not against reform, but we are against privatization. Why try to privatize our public schools instead of helping reform them, and it is like I said, why not fund, sponsor, and give more attention and after-school programs to our children, instead of trying to come in and privatize.

That is all. Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Rivera.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET LEVY, PARENT OF TWO AND ENTREPRENEUR, PHILADELPHIA, PA, FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Senator SPECTER. Next, Ms. Margaret Levy, parent of two Philadelphia high school students, president of the Home and School Association and Volunteers to Develop School Safety and Discipline.

Welcome, Ms. Levy. We look forward to your testimony.

Ms. LEVY. It is always a tough act to follow students, because they are so eloquent and they speak so well on various different issues. I do want to thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak with you, because a lot of times the people that make the policies do not really know what it is like in the field, and I do appreciate that you give us that opportunity.

I am a parent, and I have been a parent of a public school kid for 12 years. My son is graduating this year from high school. Of the 12 years that I have been in the system, I have always worked in the school, and now I am the president of the Home and School Association.

There has to be a marriage between the home and the school. A child spends 35 hours in school every week, and 133 hours outside of school. Whatever gains are made in the school can be lost when the child is not in school, especially when there is no support.

The dream that I have with the school reform situation is to have communications between the school and the home in a way that is going to effectively help the work of the students, let them stay in school, make them want to stay in school, make them want to go to school, rather than just going to school for the sake of just being there. You have to have support from the home. You have to have a primary care person that is going to really take care of this child, whether it is the parent, the guardian, or a community person or what-not. The kid has to know that someone is batting for them.

We also have a problem with, if we have this relationship that—we have a very transient situation here. The kids are going to go to school, they are going to graduate, they are going to finish up, they are going to leave the school, move on to middle school, move

on to high school. You also have the transient population in the staff.

So I do not know how it is going to work, to really have an established situation, and of course there are schools where you have to identify the parents who are going to lead the school, and you have to have the support from the school. Some schools do not want to have that kind of support, so I guess we need help in getting this sort of thing going.

Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Well, thank you very much for your testimony. We will make Mr. Schmidt aware of what you have testified to, because this panel is designed to give other inputs from the community, from people who are in the school associations. A sort of watch-dog as Mr. Harris is, and students, as Ms. Oliver and Ms. Rivera are, and parents, as Ms. Levy is.

Ms. Rivera, I think you raise a very good question that Edison has no knowledge of the area, and that is why I wish Mr. Schmidt had stayed to hear your testimony, but Mr. Islam has a good answer to that, at least in part. We have 42 schools taken over, 20 are from Edison but the majority, 22, are from other locales. Mr. Islam, I have been with you in your community and walked down South Street with you and walked over to your chartered school. Can you give Ms. Rivera some assurance that, at least speaking for Universal Companies, that you know the community?

Mr. ISLAM. Absolutely. I think it is very important. I think, again, my response to the education is, because we live in the community—I live at 15th and Christian, Mr. Gamble lives at 15th and Christian, so you really know the issues of the community when you live in that community. We do not go down to South Philadelphia, we do not work there, we live there, as a part of our life.

So I think the concept of educational reform must start with community reform, and I think that starting with community reform, you have to live there. I do not really know what all of the other organizations are doing or what their methodologies are, but I know what we believe are key and very instrumental in being successful for us, and that is being a part, understanding the nuances of the community, understanding the challenges, because you really do not understand the challenges in these communities unless you live there.

When you start seeing some of the conditions, you hear about some of the conditions, you might even believe or think that people want to live in that condition, but in reality they do not. I think most people want a better quality of life. Most people want the best of life, but they just do not know how to do it, and what we found in living in these communities is finding out that with the right leadership, the right attention, and the right compassion, and getting the key people, professionals around you, you can make a difference, but it starts with living in that community.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Rivera, may I ask you what area you live in? I will not ask your address, specifically.

Ms. RIVERA. I live in the North Philadelphia area.

Senator SPECTER. Well, you have Temple University taking over some schools there, and there is a lot of community outreach. Of course, I was District Attorney in the city, Assistant DA and then

District Attorney, and have traveled through the city very, very extensively. My wife was a school teacher at Kenderton, she taught the third grade. It has been a while, but we have had some direct contact.

Do you have some assurance with Temple and Penn, which have community outreach, Penn in West Philadelphia, Temple in North Philadelphia, that there is some community understanding?

Ms. RIVERA. Excuse me.

Senator SPECTER. Well, do you think the fact that—you had made a comment about this—Edison has no knowledge of the area, but 22 of the schools are being taken over by agencies or institutions which are in the community.

Ms. RIVERA. Yes, but the majority of schools being taken over is by Edison, and it is in our area.

Senator SPECTER. Well, not quite. It is 20 to 22.

Mr. Harris, what do you think, when you talk about true collaboration? We will be interested to see what Edison does on that collaboration, and we want to stay in touch with you. You have been a pretty good monitor, sort of an ombudsman with your organization. How do you think we might structure some of Edison's interaction, and we are prepared to help you on it, to get some of that true collaboration?

Mr. HARRIS. Well, they are supposedly coming out with some suggestions to implement that type of collaboration, and they are doing it through advisory boards, but we do not know, to be honest with you, Senator, how much real significant input the parents of the community will have on these advisory boards. Act 46 has pretty much given the SRC a full rein.

I have a question for you, though, Senator. Really, given the broad scope of what they are doing here in Philadelphia right now, with the 70 schools and the diverse EMO's, the groups that they are advocating to take over, my personal position is that it is wrong, and this should be done in a cautious fashion because of the sensitivity of the issue, and our children's lives are really at stake, and they say they are already at risk.

I feel to do something so broad right now, if there is any real negative impact it will really have a devastating effect on our children, and I want to know—I know the Governor's view, I know the mayor's view, and I respect you, Senator. I have followed your very illustrious history throughout the years, and I would like your opinion on this particular thing.

I know we are all advocators of reform. Would you be an advocator if it is done in this particular way, in this broad fashion, and so many different EMO's?

Senator SPECTER. I am glad to respond to your question, Mr. Harris. I have not studied the details of precisely what has gone on here. That has really been the function of the city and the State, but one of the things we are here for is to evaluate what they are doing, because we have a Federal involvement as to the funding.

I have been dissatisfied with major school systems in America, not just Philadelphia, but Washington and others, as they have come before our subcommittee. I have been a leader to provide additional funding, but also to see what charter schools would do and what privatization would do so that when you have had this ar-

rangement hammered out in a very tough negotiation between the State and the city, involving the Governor and the mayor. I respect the conclusions they come to, because and I have not been a party to them, to monitor them or to give Monday-morning quarter-backing, but we do intend to watch to see what they do on community involvement.

You make a very valid point, and we intend to see what they do, as Ms. Levy has said.

Mr. HARRIS. Am I to construe, then, basically, given everything you are saying, that you are also saying you are a proponent of charter schools, and maybe vouchers?

Senator SPECTER. Well, I am not a proponent of charter schools, but I am prepared to see what charter schools do.

Mr. HARRIS. Well, there is a lot of history already out there about what they are doing, and a lot of data and facts already out there, if you can look into what is existing already, if you are projecting into the future. The problem is always there. You can change the address, who is going to try to cure it, but the problem is still there, and I look at charter schools as a way of keeping the public schools somewhat competitive, but I do not see them as an answer or an end result.

Public schools have afforded myself and my family members a good education, and it has done well for a lot of people, and I think it is a right that we have, and if we have been underfunded for whatever reason, the way we derive funds, that is something you need to look at, Senator, really hard, because we would not even be in this position in the first place if we were not underfunded, which makes me think—and it is across the Nation. It is across the Nation. It is not just here.

This is America, and most big, urban cities and rural areas, they have the same problem because of being underfunded. You go to a suburban area and you find what is working with them. The first thing is that they are funded correctly, so they can implement real reform, but they do not allow it to happen here in these big urban cities and the rural areas, and then they come here and say, be accountable.

Well, I am saying the Government needs to be accountable, and the people who are in charge will come up with these ideas of how to fund public education. They need to be accountable and put in place, and give our children a real chance to have equality in education, and a real way to compete in a global society. I think we can do this, Senator, if people get for real and get away from just making promises and stepping out there and saying it can happen, and not giving you the tools to make it happen.

A last thing, I feel an education, especially from K to 12, one should make a living, a very good living, but I do not see nowhere where one should make a profit because once it comes to that formula of for-profits, you have to make decisions to cut back here, to give here. I do not see—none of our children should be cut back. I think they need every opportunity to achieve in a global society, the technology, the staff, the teachers, and it can happen.

Are we really serious about reform, or are we just talking rhetoric?

Senator SPECTER. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Harris. You have a lot of support in the audience.

Mr. HARRIS. Well, most of the audience has left. I would have had some more if some few people had stayed.

Senator SPECTER. Well, nobody here is under subpoena, but I have stayed here, Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. I appreciate that. If you had left, I would have left.

Senator SPECTER. I am prepared to engage in a dialogue and answer your questions, and I agree with you. There ought to be accountability by the Government, and that is why I am here, and I agree with you that there is more funding needed, and that is why, when I chaired the appropriations subcommittee every year I worked harder to get more funding. That is why, when the distressed schools came up last year and I talked to the Governor and the mayor and others, I decided to try to get an extra $20 million for the State of Pennsylvania, and why I am going to be in there pitching as we move forward on what this program can do.

I am sorry, too, the television cameras left. I am sorry, too, that some of the people who participated here have left. We have got all of this on the record, but they are going to be back, and they are going to have to answer questions as to what they have done with the Parent-Teachers Association, the point Ms. Levy makes, and what they have done with the ombudsmen in the school districts. This is only one of many hearings that I have had in the period that I have been in the Senate, and I have a very heavy investment in this city and in this State and in this program, and I am going to be following it very closely.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

We appreciate your coming in, and that concludes our hearing.

[Whereupon, at 12 noon, Monday, May 13, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair]

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