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EXAMINING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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EXAMINING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Monday, May 14, 2007
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., at Radnor High School, Radnor, Pennsylvania, Hon. Dale Kildee [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Kildee and Sestak.

Staff present: Julius Lloyd Horwich, Policy Advisor for the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education.

Chairman KILDEE. A quorum being present, the hearing of the Subcommittee with come to order. Pursuant to Committee Rule 12A, any member may submit an opening statement in writing which will be made part of the permanent record. For those of you who are not on today's panel but would like to submit written testimony for the printed record of this hearing, you may do so by e-mailing it to Lloyd Horwich by the close of business Monday, May 21, to our Subcommittee Counsel. He will provide you with his e-mail address upon request. So we welcome any input that will be made part of the official Congressional record which becomes part of the documents we study and part of the archives of the United States.

I am pleased to welcome the public and our witnesses here today for this hearing of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, examining local perspectives on the No Child Left Behind Act.

First of all, I would like to thank Superintendent Cooper and Principal Cannella for the use of this fine facility. I am Congressman Dale Kildee from Flint, Michigan, and I am Chairman of this Subcommittee. I have been in Congress now, this is my 31st year. I am thinking of making a career out of it, though not sure, when I grow up.

I am especially pleased to be joined by my friend and colleague, Congressman Joe Sestak. In a very short time, Congressman Sestak has become a strong voice in Congress on issues affecting our national security, small business and, of course, education. He sits right in front of me at the hearings there in Washington and

he is there regularly. His attendance is—I think you've got perfect attendance so far, Admiral. Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed a Head Start Bill that I authored to provide comprehensive early childhood education and developmental services for millions of low income children and their families. Because quality teachers are critical to a good Head Start program, Congressman Sestak introduced an amendment on the floor. He had amendments also adopted in committee. But an amendment on the floor to provide for loan forgiveness to Head Start teachers. His amendment passed with bipartisan support by a vote of 212 to 107 and, hopefully, will become law soon. I also value Congressman Sestak's input as a member of this subcommittee on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. As Chairman, one of my priorities is to work with my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and educators in Washington and around the country to improve and reauthorize No Child Left Behind this year. That is the intention of George Miller, the Chairman of the Full Committee, and the intention of Edward Kennedy, the Chairman of the Senate counterpart Committee, so that probably will be done. Our country's success in the 21st century economy will be directly tied to our ability to continue to produce a high-quality and educated people and work force. Inevitably that is, of course, directly tied to our ability to provide every child with a world class education. Since 2002, Congress and the President have underfunded No Child Left Behind by $56 billion. And the President's proposed budget for 2008 would underfund it by another $15 billion for a total of $71 billion. I have been in Congress a long time and that is one of the largest unfunded mandates that Congress has enacted.

However, I am hopeful that with this year's new Congress and the budget resolution which we passed, that we will start to do better. The budget resolution calls for increased funding in education and in health. But funding is only part of improving No Child Left Behind. I expect that the law's basic structures, standards and testing, the disaggregation of data, adequate yearly progress or some form of that, which I am sure we will have great comments on that today, and the effects of not reaching AYP, I suspect that structure, talking to both Mr. Miller and Mr. Kennedy, will remain in place. But I am also, as are they, very open to suggestions of how we can improve the law. Some flexibility on the state and local level. And we are here in Pennsylvania to find out how you feel that law should be changed and please don't hold back. I am sure you will not. I have been talking to some of you out in the lobby. You have a great deal of knowledge and some very strong feelings on this. That is why I have held hearings in Washington on how No Child Left Behind has worked for English language learners, students with disabilities and in the area of supplemental educational services. And this is our fourth hearing outside of Washington. We have been to Michigan, California, Arizona and now Pennsylvania. And Field Hearings are important, not only for Congress to hear from those who work to implement the law day in and day out, but also because they remind us that this law was written on Capitol Hill and not Mount Sinai. And even on Mount Sinai, Moses did go up a second time. Sometimes that is called a motion to recommit but we recognize that all wisdom is not in

Washington. The wisdom is out here in Pennsylvania, California, Michigan and Arizona.

In Michigan and California we heard from superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and other experts. In Arizona we heard from Indian educators. Today's panels include an expert in school reform, a superintendent, two principals and a teacher. I look forward to hearing their perspectives on how No Child Left Behind has worked or has not worked and what we can do to make it work better. I am confident that their testimony will play an important role in the Committee's understanding of how the law has impacted not only Delaware, Montgomery and Chester Counties and other parts of Pennsylvania, but also places like them all around the country. And I look forward to working together with Congressman Sestak, along with my Senior Republican Member Mr. Castle, Full Committee Chairman Mr. Miller, and Senior Republican Mr. McKeon and all the members of the committee on a bipartisan reauthorization of this bill.

I thank you very much for your presence here and I now yield to Representative Sestak for his opening remarks.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KILDEE. Admiral, you are on.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. Is this on? I very much appreciate you, Mr. Chairman, being here today. I say that because I consider Mr. Kildee a mentor. As he says, he sits right behind me. I sometimes think about Sister Urbannet saying Heaven's down the road here, sitting right behind me, you know, to make sure I do things right. But I asked him early on if he would come up here to the district and a short time later he handed me a piece of paper and said would this date work out and here we are.

Thank you so very much for that. Because I have learned in Congress that the most valuable thing I have is time and so, therefore, I know the most valuable thing the Chairman has is time. I thought commanding a carrier battle group with 15,000 sailors in a war with 30 ships was demanding on time. It is nothing like this. You have so many things to do and for him to take the time out to come here, I am very touched. Thank you, sir.

I want to thank, again, Dr. Cooper and Principal Cannella. This has been a great place to hold—this is a great place to hold it. Some of the students who are here came down and visited me in Washington and now they are sitting here in the audience. I think if there is anything that should be taken out of today is democracy works. It really does. This is the third education event that we have had. I am particularly taken with this one because it is formal. It will be in the record. It must be considered. The first two were education summits we had where George Miller had come up, Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hinojosa had come up for Advanced and Higher Education. And as Mr. Kildee mentioned, out of that summit, three amendments were considered. They actually got to be part of the Head Start reauthorization and that is why I emphasize, this is not just a walk through. We listen. Clarence Tong and others are taking notes down here and we very much appreciate your input.

I ran back then, as many people here know, on the themes that national security begins at home in the health, the education and

the economic promise of our people. I saw that every day in the military. We were good because teachers, administrators, doctors, physicians took care of the youth to give us a very healthy educated individual. It is why I asked to be on the three committees that Chairman Kildee mentioned. Small Business, Education and Labor, Armed Services, and also two subcommittees on health. I am particularly taken that so many have responded and continue, after the summits we have had, to continue to give me input. They are all looked at and they are all reviewed.

To the panelists, thank you for coming today. A number of you I have met for the first time but a number of you I have worked with before and I am very honored to have you here.

This is another opportunity and a great one on No Child Left Behind which we will begin reauthorizing. I have always said over the past year, there is wonderful value in No Child Left Behind. But now to listen to those who are on the deck plates and working with it day in and day out, to have your input make a good idea be a great policy that can help you do your job better is what this is all about.

So the topics we will go through will be how well is adequate yearly progress, the main accountability measurement we use considered by you on the deck plates. I am interested in hearing, again, the value that some seem to say that we need to consider what is called the growth or value-added models or testing, so that we are not just teaching to a test. Second, the consequences in interventions that are there presently for those schools that are determined to improve student performance. Are we doing it right? What should change? And then finally a topic that I know is dear to everybody's heart, even here at Radnor where there was an incident recently, is the feeling of school safety. I know just from my own background and 31 years in the military, if young men and women felt comfortable in what they were doing and in the environment they were in, they were able to be attendant to what we were talking to them about better than if there is a feeling of unease.

And so thank you very much, Chairman, for hosting this today and I am very much looking forward to listening and the questions that will ensue afterwards.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you for my time.

Chairman KILDEE. I generally say this wherever I go, is that, all of us like to see our published works and this hearing will be published, will be printed, and it takes a while to do that. We will get copies right away and the members will get copies right away but they become part of the national archives. So in a short time when that is done, have your Congressman send you a copy of your testimony here.

I would like now to—first of all, all members of the committee will have seven calendar days to submit additional materials or questions for the hearing record.

I would like now to introduce the very distinguished panel of witnesses that are here with us this morning.

Dr. Ted Hershberg is Professor of Public Policy and History and Director of the Center for Greater Philadelphia at the University

of Pennsylvania. In 1996, Professor Hershberg organized a consortium of 31 public school districts to work collaboratively on standards based reform. In 2000, he founded Operation Public Education to develop a new set of roles and incentives for K-12 education. OPE is now introducing its model for comprehensive school reform to education stakeholders across the nation. I will now yield to Congressman Sestak to introduce our other witnesses who are from his district.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to first introduce Principal Stevenson. He will testify on the topic of school safety without disrupting the educational environment, which I spoke about as I closed my opening comments. He is the incoming principal of Radnor Middle School and currently serves as the assistant principal of Radnor High School. In his career, Mr. Stevenson has experience both as a teacher and as an administrator and has served in the Radnor School District as administrator for the past three years. His undergraduate degree is from South Carolina State University and Master's is from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. We are glad to have you, Principal Stevenson.

Dr. Leslye Abrutyn is the superintendent of the Penn-Delco School District for the last ten years. And she will testify and we have spoken about her thoughts and experience with growth models and differentiated interventions for schools not meeting the adequate yearly progress, the AYP. We are very pleased to have her. She holds a Doctor of Education Degree from Temple and she is a pioneer in recognizing the importance of the collection and analysis of data. One of the real bright spots, I think, No Child Left Behind can help us have. If you read her article, The Most Important Data, which was published nationally and internationally in educational leadership, you will see very much about what her ideas hold for us. She has also co-hosted All About Education, which is a weekly community radio show discussing various educational topics. Doctor, we are very pleased to have you here.

The third witness here that I would like to mention would be Mr. Joseph Howell. He has been serving as the principal of Norristown Area High School since 2004 and he has served as a teacher and administrator in the Norristown Area School District since 1972. From 1979 until 2004, he has served as the principal of Stewart Middle School in Norristown. He holds a Bachelor of Science and Education from Pittsburgh and a Masters of Arts from Villanova University. And I think you are going to find his testimony quite compelling. I am glad to have you here, sir.

Mr. HOWELL. Thank you.

Mr. SESTAK. And finally, the last witness I would like to introduce who will testify on differentiated interventions, what do you do when a school is not meeting the requirement set forth, is Mr. Stephen Kozol. And I am very pleased to have him from Upper Merion High School where he is the Department Chair of the Social Studies Department and where, obviously, he is serving as a teacher. But he is also President of the Upper Merion Area Education Association and brings a diverse background. Prior to entering the education field, which I always think is of value, where he served both at Pricewaterhouse and later as an attorney at Drinker, Biddle and Reath. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from

Brandeis University and a Law Degree from George Washington University Law Center and a Masters of Arts Degree and Certification in Secondary Education from West Chester University. We are glad to have you all here. Thank you.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. We want to welcome all our witnesses here today. For those who have not testified before this subcommittee before, I will explain our lighting system and the five-minute rule we have.

Everyone, including members, is limited to five minutes of presentation or questioning. The green light will be illuminated when you begin to speak. When you see the yellow light, it means you have one minute remaining and when you see the red light, it means your time has expired, you need to conclude your testimony. However, there is no ejection seat there and no trap door, so if you are in the middle of a brilliant statement, I am not going to bring the gavel down. You may certainly finish up your statement.

Please be certain as you testify to make sure your mic is turned on, turn on your mic and speak into the microphone in front of you and turn it off when you are finished.

We will now hear from our first witness, Principal Stevenson.

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY STEVENSON, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, RADNOR HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. STEVENSON. Good morning. Chairman Kildee, Congressman Sestak and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education. I am pleased to appear before you today to testify on The Impact of Student Safety and No Child Left Behind. I would be remiss, however, if I did not also on behalf of the 1269 students at Radnor High School welcome you as well.

Ever since the tragedy of Columbine High School, school districts have been working to address the question of how to keep our students safe at schools. The recent shootings of the Amish students in Lancaster and even the recent incident in our school here, in which a student brought a gun to school, have impressed upon us that school safety is a constant priority.

Schools have a difficult task of ensuring that the school setting is safe on a daily basis. However, we also have to ensure that the school environment is not so overwhelming that true education cannot take place.

The physical plant of a school building is the first area of defense for school safety. Most schools that were built before Columbine were not designed with adequate safety for doors, cameras, escape routes and other equipment that support school safety. As a result, schools were forced to redesign their buildings in a way that would improve the security of their buildings.

However, the physical plant of a school is only one component of creating a safe school. The true way to create a safe school is through the school climate. School climate can be understood as the frequency and quality of interactions among and between staff, students, parents and the community throughout the school area. Research shows that schools with a positive and welcoming school climate increase the likelihood that students succeed academically and socially and help them disengage and avoid high-risk behaviors

like substance abuse and violence. This type of climate can only be enhanced by having educators spend time designing prevention and intervention plans, well-organized crisis teams and maintaining clear lines of communication related to school safety among all appropriate stakeholders in the school community.

According to the National School Safety Center, from a student's perspective, school climate depends upon and is affected by the following. Number one, school involvement. To the degree in which students are involved in and enjoy classes and extra curricular activities in school. Student relationships. The level of comfort students feel in relating to another and the ease in which to make new friends. Teacher support. The amount of help and care that teachers direct toward students. The physical environment. The extent to which the school buildings reflect the caring attitude of the school, the school buildings are clean, well-cared for, supervised and safe. Conflict resolution. Whether students are clear about the rules and feel that conflicts are resolved fairly and rules are consistently enforced. Participation in decision-making. The extent to which students, administrators and teachers share in making decisions about school improvement. Curriculum. The extent to which students feel that what is taught in classes meets their needs. Counseling services. Whether students feel counselors are accessible and able to help with personal problems, jobs and career information and concerns about drugs, alcohol and sex. Recreation alternatives. Whether students are satisfied with existing recreational activities and teachers support all of these activities. Personal stress. The amount of pressure students feel they are under and the resources they have to cope with.

Here in the Radnor Township School District, we make all attempts to create a school climate that creates a balance of creating a safe setting while maintaining a strong academic and social atmosphere for our students. In Radnor, we have several programs that are included, but not limited to, a crisis management team that coordinates the plans for responding to violent and traumatic incidents on school grounds and various emergency drills. The district also works in conjunction with the Radnor Education Foundation in establishing a drug and alcohol task force that meets monthly to discuss drug and alcohol issues that impact our school community. They also provide various programs that address issues related to substance abuse. The Radnor Township School District also collaborates with local law enforcement officials to create an environment that welcomes officials into schools and allows them to be a part of our school culture. Each school also has a Student Assistance Program that identifies students at risk.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, any school, whether suburban or urban, small or large, racially segregated or diverse, wealthy or poor, would benefit from an increase in additional appropriation funds to assist their schools in safety efforts. Additional funding would give schools an opportunity to provide an expanded version of intervention activities that I outlined. This support will also provide schools with the opportunity to create a culture that can provide a feeling of safety while providing an endless possibility of academic success for the students they serve.

I thank you for your time.

[Statement of Mr. Stevenson follows:]

Prepared Statement of Anthony C. Stevenson, Incoming Principal of Radnor Middle School, Radnor Township School District

Chairman Kildee, Ranking Member Castle, Congressman Sestak and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, I am pleased to appear before you today to testify on "The Impact of School Safety and NCLB."

Every since the tragedy at Columbine High School, school districts have been working to address the question of how to keep our children safe at schools. The recent shootings of Amish students thirty miles from here in Lancaster and even a recent incident in our school where a student brought a gun to school have impressed upon us that school safety is a constant priority.

Schools have the difficult task of ensuring that the school setting is safe on a daily basis. However, we also have to ensure that the school environment is not so overwhelming that true education cannot take place.

The physical plant of a school building is the first area of defense for school safety. Most schools that were built before Columbine were not designed with the adequate safety doors; cameras; escape routes; and other equipment that support school safety. As a result, schools were forced to redesign their building in a way that would improve the security of their building.

However, the physical plant of a school is only one component of creating safe schools. The true way to create a safe school is through the school climate. School climate can be understood as the frequency and quality of interactions among and between staff, students, parents, and the community throughout the entire school community. Research shows that schools with a positive and welcoming school climate increases the likelihood that students succeed academically and socially, and helps them disengage or avoid high risk behaviors like substance abuse and violence.

This type of climate can only be enhanced by having educators spend time designing prevention and intervention plans, well-organized crisis teams and maintaining clear lines of communication related to school safety among all appropriate stakeholders in the school community.

According to the National School Safety Center (1990), from a student's perspective, school climate depends upon and is affected by the following:

- Student involvement: The degree to which students are involved in and enjoy classes and extracurricular activities at school.
- Student relationships: The level of comfort students feel in relating to one another and the ease with which they make new friends.
- Teacher support: The amount of help and care that teachers direct toward students.
- Physical environment: The extent to which the school building reflects the caring attitude of the school, the school buildings are clean, well cared for, supervised, and safe.
- Conflict resolution: Whether students are clear about the rules and feel that conflicts are resolved fairly and rules are consistently enforced.
- Participation in decision-making: The extent to which students, administrators, and teachers share in making decisions about school improvement.
- Curriculum: The extent to which students feel that what is taught in classes meets their needs.
- Counseling services: Whether students feel counselors are accessible and able to help with personal problems, job, and career information, and concerns about drugs, alcohol, and sex.
- Recreation alternatives: Whether students are satisfied with existing recreational activities and teachers' support of these activities.
- Personal stress: The amount of pressure students feel they are under and the resources they have to cope with it.

Here in the Radnor Township School District, we made all attempts to create a school climate that creates a balance of creating a safe setting while maintaining a strong academic and social atmosphere for our students. In Radnor, we have several programs that include but are not limited to:

- Each school has a Crisis Management Team that coordinates the plans for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds and various emergency drills.
- The District works in conjunction with the Radnor Education Foundation in the establishment of a Drug and Alcohol Task Force that meets monthly to discuss drug

and alcohol issues that impact our school community. They provide various programs that address issues related to substance abuse.

• Radnor Township School District collaborates with the local law enforcement officials to create an environment that welcomes our local officials into schools and allows them to become part of our school culture.

• Each school has a Student Assistance Program (SAP) which identifies those students who are at risk and implement programs that can help meet their needs.

• Various sports and extra curricular opportunities for students to participate in.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, any school, whether suburban or urban, small or large, racially segregated or diverse, wealthy or poor, would benefit from an increase in additional appropriation funds to assist their schools with safety efforts. Additional funding would give schools the opportunity to provide an expanded version of intervention activities that can prevent and reduce violence in our schools. By supporting the current and proposed safe school programs, schools will have the opportunity to maintain a safe school setting without disrupting the educational environment that is imperative to meet the requirements of NCLB. This support will also provide schools with the opportunity to create a school culture that can provide a feeling of safety while providing the endless possibility of academic success for the students they serve.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. Right in time. Good. Ms. Abrutyn, up here.

STATEMENT OF DR. LESLYE ABRUTYN, SUPERINTENDENT, PENN–DELCO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. ABRUTYN. Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Kildee. It is an honor to be here with you, as well as with Congressman Sestak who represents our area so effectively in Washington.

I am Leslye Abrutyn, Superintendent of the Penn-Delco School District. I am honored to testify today about the current AYP accountability measures and to offer my conclusion on whether they are too rigid to account for individual student achievement and improvement.

I am in my 34th year as an educator and have served ten years as superintendent of the Penn-Delco School District. My goal as an educational leader is to find out the answer to the question everyone asks, what really works in education? I have some answers and the results of my school districts speak for themselves in answering that question.

Here in Delaware County there are 15 school districts, some of them among the wealthiest in the Commonwealth. When these districts are compared by social economic standards, the Penn-Delco School District ranks in the middle. Yet, our students far outscore their predicted berth according to social economic predictors. In some categories, instead of scoring seven out of 15 school districts, we have scored at number two or three. Also, we are outscoring districts that spend up to twice as much per pupil as Penn-Delco.

No Child Left Behind calls for 100 percent proficiency in 2014. I am proud to say that this year, the third grade in one of Penn-Delco schools reached 100 percent proficiency in math. No other school or district in our entire county had 100 percent proficiency in any other category at all.

How can our success in Penn-Delco help with the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind? As with any successful organization, our success starts with a vision. My vision for Penn-Delco has been, in

Penn-Delco we move every child forward every day. This is a vision I created more than a decade ago and still promote daily.

How does one put this vision into action? We rely upon robust, current and accurate data on individual students. Over the years, as technology has permitted, we have gotten better and better at creating, compiling, analyzing and utilizing that data. This data and its successful use have been vital in allowing us to move every child forward every day.

Contrast my vision with the practicality of what happens at most schools under the current assessment system. Most states use either a status model or a criterion-referenced model to assess students, which is not particularly helpful in describing the achievement level of individual children or in prescribing a plan to help improve student achievement.

This is the limitation of the so-called status model under AYP. I hope my value to this committee today will be to describe in real terms what actually happens under No Child Left Behind.

As in most districts, we spend a lot of time preparing students for and administering the state test. What do we have when the results come back? Disaggregated data, which in my opinion, has been very useful in motivating districts to look much more carefully at low-performing subgroups and has been the catalyst for much of the improvement we have seen across the nation. However, the disaggregated data from the current model alone is not enough to move every child forward every day. Disaggregated data is just one of the tools we use in Penn-Delco to assess and then guide instruction.

We add an entire additional layer of assessment over the state assessment. That layer consists of a technology-based system that would be correctly defined as a growth model because it measures students periodically throughout the school year and provides robust, current and accurate data that describes needed areas of improvement for each student. Our practice of using this growth model is what has made us more successful than many other districts.

Members of the committee, I propose to you that we have before us a strategic opportunity during this period of reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Why strategic? Because in the truest definition of the term strategic, there are threats, as well as opportunities, before us. As you know, we are fast approaching the year 2014, the deadline for 100 percent proficiency.

In the early years of No Child Left Behind, there were significant and incremental gains in proficiency across the country. But the concept of a point of diminishing returns is becoming a reality. It is becoming increasingly more challenging to reach the lofty goal of 100 percent proficiency. This, I propose to you, is the threat. We are set up for failure.

What is the opportunity before us? We can change from a status model of measuring achievement to a growth model and thus accomplish three significant things. One, provide robust data on individual students throughout the school year thus allowing all children to continually improve. Two, allow for a more realistic way to describe how districts are leaving no child behind. And three, provide more efficiency and effectiveness in student achievement.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences with you this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

[Statement of Dr. Abrutyn follows:]

Prepared Statement of Leslye S. Abrutyn, Ed.D., Superintendent, Penn Delco School District

Good morning, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Member Castle, and other members of the subcommittee. It is an honor to be here with you, as well as with Representative Sestak, who represents our area so effectively in Washington, D.C.

I am Leslye Abrutyn, Superintendent of the Penn Delco School District, in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. I am honored to testify today about the current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability measures under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and to offer my conclusion on whether they are too rigid to account for individual student achievement and improvement.

I am in my 34th year as an educator, and have served 10 years as superintendent of the Penn Delco School District. My goal as an educational leader is, and has always been, to find out the answer to the question parents, educators, and legislators are asking: "What REALLY works in education?" I have some answers, and the results in my school district over the past 10 years speak for themselves in answering that question.

In Delaware County, there are 15 school districts. When these districts are compared by socioeconomic standards, the Penn-Delco School District ranks in the middle. Yet, our students far outscore their predicted berth according to these aforementioned, and usually accurate, socioeconomic predictors. In some categories instead of scoring 7th out of 15 school districts, we have scored at number 2 or 3. We are outscoring districts that spend up to twice as much per pupil as Penn Delco. No Child Left Behind calls for 100% of students scoring proficient in 2014; I am proud to say that this past year there was only one grade level, in one subject area, in one school, in one school district, in all of Delaware County where 100% of the students scored proficient on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). That grade was the 3rd grade in Parkside Elementary School, one of Penn Delco's schools.

How can our success in Penn Delco help you understand the intricacies and the consequences of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind?

First, I along with most educators applaud and support the goals of the law: to leave no child behind. We hold it as a point of personal and professional pride to be accountable for the job we do. But, we do not want to be, nor is it fair to be held accountable when there are multiple factors beyond our control.

So, allow me to elaborate on how we have been successful and, on how you can reauthorize the law in a form that could replicate our successes for the benefit of all students in our nation.

As with any successful organization, our success starts with a vision. My vision for Penn Delco has been, "In Penn Delco we move every child forward every day." This is a vision I created many years ago, and talk about often. How does one put this vision into action? The successful implementation of my vision relies upon robust, current, and accurate data on individual students. Over the years, as technology has permitted, we have gotten better and better at creating, compiling, analyzing, and utilizing that data. This data and its successful use have been vital in allowing us to move every child forward every day.

Contrast my vision with the practicality of what happens at most schools under the current system. Most states use either a status model or a criterion referenced model to assess students. This means that data on students is determined once per year. That data is then used to determine whether a school has met AYP. But, it is not particularly helpful in describing the achievement level of individual children, or in prescribing a plan to help improve student achievement. This is the limitation of the so called status model.

How is this limitation addressed in Penn Delco? I hope my value to this Committee today will be to describe in real and practical terms what actually happens under NCLB. As a district, we spend a lot of time preparing students for, and administering the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Contrary to some popular, but uninformed opinions on this subject, preparing for the test is not a bad thing. "Preparing" means teaching students critical thinking skills, reading, and math. What do we have when the results come back? We have disaggregated data which in my opinion has been very useful. This aspect of the law has motivated

districts to look much more carefully at low performing groups and has been the catalyst for much of the improvement we have seen in our nation.

However, the disaggregated data from the current model alone is not enough to "move every child forward every day." Disaggregated data is just one of the tools we use to assess and then guide instruction in Penn Delco. We add an entire additional layer of assessment over the state assessment. That layer consists of a technology-based system that would be correctly defined as a growth model because it measures students periodically throughout the school year, and provides robust, current, and accurate data that describes needed areas of improvement for each student. Our practice of using this growth model is what has made us more successful than many other districts.

Members of the Committee, I propose to you that we have before us a strategic opportunity during this period of reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Why strategic? Because in the truest definition of the term "strategic" there are threats as well as opportunities before us. As you know, we are fast approaching the year of 2014; the deadline for 100% proficiency. In the early years of NCLB there were significant and incremental gains in proficiency across our country. But, the concept of a point of diminishing returns is becoming a reality. It is becoming increasingly more challenging for schools to make those increases to meet AYP, and to reach the lofty goal of proficiency for every child in our nation. This, I propose to you is the threat. We are set up for failure.

What is the opportunity before us? We can change from a status model of measuring achievement to a growth model. This shift in thought and assessment will accomplish three significant things:

1. A growth model will provide robust data on individual students throughout the school year, thus allowing all children to continually improve.
2. A growth model will allow a more realistic way to describe how districts are "leaving no child behind".
3. A growth model will be more effective and efficient. You will recall how I described that we are required to participate in the PSSA, which is a status model assessment system, and how we supplement this data with our own in-house growth model assessment system in Penn Delco. If the reauthorization shifts to a growth model assessment system, the required standardized tests will be a more efficient use of time and resources. The data collected will be more meaningful and effective, because it will allow curriculum to be directed by the individualized needs of students, thereby helping students become more successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences with you this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. And Dr. Hershberg.

STATEMENT OF THEODORE HERSHBERG, PROFESSOR, PUBLIC POLICY AND HISTORY, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA AND OPERATION PUBLIC EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. HERSHBERG. Congressman Kildee, Congressman Sestak, thank you for the invitation. I am honored to be able to accept it.

The best interest of our nation will be served by including growth models in the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. They provide a much fairer way than the status model used in current law to measure the performance of schools that differ greatly across the socio-economic and demographic profiles. Second, these models produce unprecedentedly valuable diagnostic data to help teachers improve their instruction and to help principals deploy teachers more strategically. Third, they add a fair and accurate empirical component to improve the evaluation, remediation and compensation of individual educators, both teachers and administrators. Finally, because they provide a direct measure of teacher effectiveness, what students learn rather than an indirect measure, such as whether a teacher is experienced or certified, that can better identify highly-qualified teachers. I believe when historians record the

history of school reform efforts at the turn of the 21st century, they will identify growth models as the most important analytic breakthrough of the era.

I would like you to go to Figure 1a because the critical understanding here is to know what is the difference between achievement and growth. We have all grown up with the notion of achievement. That is how we expressed the learning results. So at a single moment in time on a vertical scale, we can show achievement 90, 70, 50. We could call it status. We can call it raw score. We can call it proficiency. The point is, where do our—on that vertical scale at one moment in time, is always best predicted by family income. Go to Figure 1b. Growth. We are tracing individual children, no longer cohorts. When you measure the student's progress from September to June, that progress is best predicted by the quality of instruction. That is why—in fact, it is 15 to 20 times more powerful than income or race or gender in predicting student progress. When Coleman and Jenks did their important studies that said schools are not responsible for the performance of kids, they were right because they were measuring it with achievement. But they didn't have the data sets and the technology we now have available that link the scores of kids on every subject and grade to the teacher or teachers who taught them. With this new technology in place, a whole new era opens up in American education.

Now, let me use this distinction between achievement and growth to explain the shortcomings in AYP. So if you go to Figure 2, you will see a little matrix with four cells. Achievement is the vertical axis, growth is the horizontal axis. The bottom left-hand cell are schools that have both low achievement and low growth. They are doing a disservice to their children. They deserve to be sanctioned under No Child Left Behind. Go to the diagonal cell, the upper right. These are schools that are giving their children high growth and high achievement. The law is silent on these schools. To me this is the Tom Friedman cell. Raising the bar for everybody in the tense of global economy.

The unfairness of No Child Left Behind is visible in the remaining two cells. In the upper left, our schools with high achievement but low growth. These are typically found in affluent communities. They come from good families, wealthy families, they have high test scores but they are not getting the academic progress they are entitled to. We call these schools slide and glide schools. Many superintendents from the affluent school communities are opposing growth because they fear they will be shown to be underperforming. And the second part of the unfairness of No Child Left Behind are communities that have children with—the schools give them high growth but low achievement. They have come to school so far behind, they do not know their colors, their numbers and their letters. The schools are growing them but because they are still not to proficiency, they are sanctioned. That is terribly unfair to those educators.

The last thing I would like to say is that we put in place growth models where we trace individual kids and we have data now that links the scores. We now have, not only an enormously rich set of diagnostic data to help teachers improve their instruction, but we

have the basis for the first time at the classroom level of evaluating individual teachers and administrators.

And this, I submit, is the single most important breakthrough that we will face. There is much that is complicated. You got to pick the right growth models. There are a series of technical issues we don't have time to get into. But I urge you, you will end up with a vastly more fair system if we shift to growth models.

[Statement of Dr. Hershberg follows:]

Prepared Statement of Theodore Hershberg, Professor, Public Policy and History Director, Center for Greater Philadelphia, and Operation Public Education, University of Pennsylvania

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING GROWTH MODELS IN NCLB

Introduction

The best interests of the nation will be served by including growth models in the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. They provide a much fairer way than the status (AYP) model used in NCLB to measure the performance of schools that differ greatly in their socioeconomic and demographic profiles. These models produce unprecedentedly valuable diagnostic data to help teachers improve their instruction and to help principals deploy teachers more strategically. They add a fair and accurate empirical component to improve the evaluation, remediation and compensation of educators, both teachers and administrators. Finally, because they provide a direct measure of teacher effectiveness—what students learn rather than an indirect measure such as whether a teacher is experienced or certified—they can better identify highly qualified teachers. I believe historians of school reform at the turn of the 21st century will identify growth models as the most important analytic breakthrough of the era.

1. The Difference Between Achievement and Growth

Achievement describes the levels attained by students in their end-of-year tests. Whether referred to as proficiency, status, absolute or raw scores, these points on a vertical scale at a single point in time are best predicted by family background (income and values about education) (see Figure 1a).

Growth, in contrast, describes the progress made by each student over the course of the school year and is best predicted by the quality of instruction (see Figure 1b). Good instruction is 15-20 times more powerful than family background and income, race, gender, and other explanatory variables in predicting student progress or growth.

When James Coleman (1966) and Christopher Jenks (1972) issued their famous studies concluding that the level of academic achievement is determined largely by factors beyond a school's control, they did not have the computer technology to permit the tracing of individual students over time nor the data sets to record their test scores in every subject and link this data to the teacher(s) who taught them

With this new technology and growth models, we now have a fair and accurate way to include student-learning results in educator evaluation, remediation and compensation (discussed separately below).

2. Using Achievement and Growth to Understand Shortcomings in No Child Left Behind

At the heart of this problem is that AYP focuses on achievement to the exclusion of growth. The four cells in Figure 2 help us identify and understand AYP's deficiencies. Proficiency (achievement), high and low, is tracked on the vertical axis, while growth, high and low, is tracked on the horizontal axis.

In the bottom left cell are schools that are clearly not serving the needs of their students—providing them with low proficiency and low growth—and thus deserve to be sanctioned.

Schools in the top right cell are performing wonderfully. They are doing what we want all schools to do: provide their students with both high proficiency and high growth. I think of this cell as responding to the challenges Tom Friedman identified in The World is Flat. Yet NCLB does nothing to encourage schools to reach these goals other than the absence of sanctions.

Schools in the top left cell are meeting their AYP goals—that is, they have high achievement—but low growth. Most often found in affluent communities where high-test scores go hand-in-hand with family income, these schools are often called "slide and glide" because they appear to be resting on the laurels of their students.

It is important to understand that NCLB does nothing to hold these schools accountable for providing their students with the annual growth to which they are entitled. In a global economy characterized by fierce competition for demanding jobs that pay high salaries and benefits, this is a highly significant shortcoming.

Schools in the bottom right cell create high growth, but low achievement. They have succeeded in academically "stretching" or "growing" their students, but given how far behind these students were when they entered school, they have not yet been able to raise them to proficiency. These schools, while not bringing their students to AYP-required levels, are clearly helping students improve their academic performance, yet still face sanctions under current law.

NCLB reauthorization should remedy the shortcomings I have addressed here by embracing the philosophy of growth: all children, regardless of whether they are low, average, or high achieving, deserve a year's worth of growth in a year. Schools should be rewarded or sanctioned based on this principle.

3. Growth Models Provide Invaluable Diagnostic Information and Enable New Approaches to Educator Evaluation, Remediation and Compensation

In order to track student growth, states must have data systems that include a unique identifier for each student and each teacher and to record for every student the test scores in each grade and subject and the teacher(s) who taught them. NCLB reauthorization should mandate or provide incentives for states to develop such systems.

When collected at the classroom level, the data have uniquely powerful diagnostic value that reveal the focus of a teacher's instruction (on previously low-, average- or high-achieving students) and the impact of their instruction (highly effective, effective or ineffective). When students have two or three consecutive teachers from the last of these categories, they never reach the absolute level of accomplishment they would have achieved had they had teachers from the top two categories. When principals are provided with these diagnostic data, they can deploy their teachers so that students are never exposed sequentially to ineffective teachers.

Growth models can also make an important empirical contribution to teacher evaluation, remediation and compensation. As recent reports from RAND, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Educational Testing Services (ETS) make clear, growth models can be used to identify the highest and lowest performers, but should never be used as the sole or principal criterion of teacher effectiveness. The data yielded by growth models should be used as part of a balanced system (inputs, or observation, and outputs, or student learning results), with multiple measures such as those contained in the sophisticated teaching frameworks developed by Charlotte Danielson covering planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities, as well as appropriate safeguards, such as review panels composed of teachers and administrators, to ensure fair treatment for individual educators.

The Congress should also add to the definition of a "highly qualified teacher" those identified as effective by growth models—that is, the lack of credentials notwithstanding, the fact that the students in their classrooms are learning at appropriate levels should be sufficient to earn the "highly qualified" designation.

4. Fixing AYP Without Abandoning Proficiency Through "Growth to Standards"

The essence of the "Growth-to-Standards" approach is to identify schools that are putting their students on growth trajectories to reach proficiency in the future and to credit these schools for that achievement.

Schools could do this by using a growth model that converts the static achievement scores of their students to dynamic growth scores. If students currently performing below their AYP targets are on track to reach proficiency by the time they graduate, they would be counted among those meeting their AYP target in the current year. If a school were to place enough of these students on growth-to-standards trajectories, it could meet its AYP goal for the year. Using a growth-to-standards approach, in other words, would reduce the proportion of schools failing AYP, but without abandoning the commitment to proficiency.

This approach may be criticized for the same reason that the existing definition of AYP is criticized: it creates what many call a "perverse incentive" for educators to focus like a laser beam on one group of students to the exclusion of all others: those close to but below proficiency. Schools choose to ignore students far below proficiency as well as those whose scores already exceed proficiency, the argument goes, because the prime directive in NCLB is for schools to hit their annual AYP targets.

While this is clearly the logic of the incentive, we do not yet know if this is supported in fact. The growth-to-standards approach described above, like AYP, might simply illuminate the pattern—the gains made by those who start just below pro-

ficiency are coming at the expense of those who start the year above it—rather than exacerbate it.

We know this pattern long pre-dates NCLB and has been widespread in poor communities, whether in inner-cities or Appalachia. It explains, for example, the observation made by elementary school teachers that the proportion of precocious students in kindergarten and first grade is sharply reduced by fifth and sixth grades. Faced with so many low performing children, the explanation goes, teachers focus on the bottom of the student distribution so that previous low-achievers get high growth while previous high-achievers get low growth. Sustaining this focus in the early years explains why so few high achieving, low-income children are found in middle school.

When Dr.William Sanders applied his growth-to-standards approach to all Tennessee schools in the 2002-03 school year, he learned that 13 percent more schools would meet their federal goals if this alternative means of calculating AYP were accepted by the U.S. Department of Education. But when Sanders looked more closely at its effects—he examined nine Memphis schools all of whose students were minority and low-income (on free and reduced price lunch)—he discovered some troubling results. While some schools met their AYP through the growthto-standards alternative without denying any of their students adequate yearly growth, others did so at the expense of students who had achieved at higher levels in the past. Seeing no sense in a trade-off that benefits one group of poor minority kids at the expense of another, Sanders proposed a "net" approach: schools would receive credit for students placed on a growth-tostandards trajectory and debits for formerly higher achieving students denied adequate growth in the process.

The U.S. Department of Education has given approval to Tennessee to use this approach in determining if schools meet their AYP goals. NCLB should provide incentives to expand the use of this model in other states.

6. A Cautionary Note: Not All Growth Models Are Equal

This is not the place to discuss the complex statistical issues embedded in the use of different kinds of growth models, such as the "projection" model used in growth-to-standards or the "expectations" model used to evaluate the effectiveness of individual teachers. Some models that are described as "simple and transparent" are actually statistically flawed and will yield specious and erratic results. Suffice it to say that much attention must be paid to the details in order for growth models to be used fairly and effectively.

ATTACHMENTS

Figure 1a: Achievement Figure 1b: Growth Figure 2: Identifying AYP's Shortcomings

Appendix: Theodore Hershberg, "Value-Added Assessment and Systemic Reform: A Response to the Challenge of Human Capital Development," Phi Delta Kappan (December, 2005). Paper prepared for the Aspen Institute's Congressional Institute, The Challenge of Education Reform: Standards, Accountability, Resources and Policy (Cancun, Mexico: Feb. 22-27, 2005).

Chairman KILDEE. I think at this point it is time for the students to change classes, so we will take a two-minute break while they do that. Thank you, Dr. Hershberg. Thank you very much. Thank you for the chart, it is very interesting.

Now, I want to thank the students, by the way, for your presence and for your great attention you have given to the hearing.

Mr. Howell.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH HOWELL, PRINCIPAL, NORRISTOWN AREA HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. HOWELL. Thank you. Good morning.

Norristown Area High School serves approximately 1,800 students who come to us from the borough of Norristown, the Montgomery County seat, and the townships of East and West Norriton.

According to a formula developed by the Philadelphia Inquirer Newspaper for its annual report card on the schools, Norristown is the most diverse public high school in the region. Currently we are

in Corrective Action I after failing to meet AYP in one or more of the 12 reporting categories assigned to us for four years in a row.

We are subject to the same penalties and interventions assigned to all schools with the same designation. We also received $9,500 in state and federal funds for the current school year because we are in Corrective Action.

This morning I respectfully suggest to you that there are two ways in which the implementation of No Child Left Behind could be of greater benefit to me and of much greater consequence to my constituents, students, parents and the community.

First, include a value-added reporting system. Value-added analysis is a statistical method used to measure the influence of a district and school on the academic progress rates of individual students and groups of students from year-to-year. PVAAS, Pennsylvania's value-added system, offers an objective and more precise way to measure student, cohort and subgroup progress. It also has a predictive component that is useful in helping to determine efficient employment of support resources.

While I know how my students performed against the arbitrary 2005 to 2007 No Child Left Behind AYP targets, I do not know reliably how they should have performed.

For example, I know that 60 percent of my total 11th grade population was advanced or proficient on the 2006 PSSA in reading. Is that a remarkable achievement on my part about what it should have been or did attending Norristown High do some students harm? Students who would have scored higher had they gone to school somewhere else. Without this additional data, the practice of comparing schools under the current system is invalid in my estimation unless all schools have the exact same student population. No Child Left Behind contains a school choice component based on the comparisons of schools created by the AYP designations. The presumption is that a student who scores at the basic level in a Corrective Action school would benefit from transferring to a school that has met AYP because it is a better school. If all of my students transferred to a school that has met AYP and all that school's students transferred to Norristown High, would the outcomes be the same? Do the schools we are compared to enjoy the diversity that we do and do their scores include significant subgroups as well?

A value-added system ends that discussion and perhaps results in a more accurate account of student and school performance. Second, I encourage the Committee to consider adding a policy of differentiated reporting, consequences and interventions, particularly if a value-added system is not included in the new measure.

In the school year 2005-2006, Norristown High met three of the four targets, reading, graduation rate and participation rate. While we met the overall math goal, we did not meet the math target for our four subgroups. Since 2004-2005, we have aggressively met the performance gap challenge through a variety of reform efforts. Through our partnership with the Panasonic Foundation, we have attained the services of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education and adopted their high school reform program, First Things First.

We have received a Pennsylvania Project 720 grant and are in the second year of implementation. We have doubled the amount of time for English and math for our freshmen and sophomores and created our own quarterly testing in those two subjects. We have dramatically increased student access to technology-supported instruction through a Pennsylvania Classrooms for the Future grant and added an instructional enhancement team, in large part, thanks to our federal Small Learning Communities grant. We have eliminated tracking and study halls and created more sheltered learning opportunities for our ESL population and will be instituting a rigorous internship program in the fall. We have substantially improved the quality and quantity of our professional development, supervision and evaluation.

Unfortunately, our Corrective Act I status overshadows our efforts. I propose that a school be able to request an amended No Child Left Behind status based on verifiable efforts to reform. This would allow for an accurate accounting of student performance while acknowledging that a school has employed a set of best practices in order to improve. Even a designation such Corrective Action I, school is actively engaged in an approved reform effort, would be a source of encouragement for students and teachers engaged in such an effort. In addition, consequences and interventions must be differentiated to account for the percentage of students tested who fall into one or more significant subgroups.

I would also suggest that $9,500 is not going to move any school from Corrective Action to a more positive place.

I would like to thank Congressman Kildee and Congressman Sestak for the opportunity to appear this morning and for providing our region with an opportunity to weigh in on these deliberations. Thank you.

[Statement of Mr. Howell follows:]

Prepared Statement of Joe Howell, Principal, Norristown Area High School

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, good morning.

My name is Joe Howell and I am the principal of Norristown Area High School in nearby Norristown, PA. Our school serves approximately 1800 students who come to us from the borough of Norristown and the townships of East and West Norriton. According to a formula developed by the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper for its annual Report Card on the Schools, Norristown is the most diverse public high school in the region: 47% African American, 38% white, 12% Hispanic, 62% free and reduced lunch. I have been a principal in the district since 1978 and have been at the high school since April, 2004.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

In its current form of implementation, all 11th grade students at Norristown High spend three days in March taking the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. During the summer we receive individual and school reports that provide us with sufficient data to identify individual student needs as well as the need for curriculum and program revisions. This data is also used to assign one of four categories of performance to our individual students: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced in both reading and math. Student performance is further disaggregated into our significant sub-groups: Black, Hispanic, IEP and Economically Disadvantaged.

In that same time frame, the reading and math data are combined with graduation rate and test participation information and a final score is determined for our school: we either met AYP in all twelve categories or we didn't.

In our case, we have not and find ourselves in Corrective Action I after failing to do so four years in a row and subject to the same penalties and interventions

assigned to all schools with the same designation. We also received $9,500 in state and federal funds for the current school year because we are in Corrective Action.

This morning I respectfully suggest to you that there are two ways in which the implementation of NCLB could be of greater benefit to me, and of much greater consequence, to my constituents: students, parents and community.

First, include a value added reporting system. Value-added analysis is a statistical method used to measure the influence of a district and school on the academic progress rates of individual students and groups of students from year-to-year. PVAAS, Pennsylvania's value added system, is a reliable measure of growth/progress and is intended to serve as a complement to existing achievement measures to use for local decision-making as seen appropriate by the school district. Value-added analysis offers an objective and more precise way to measure student, cohort, and subgroup progress as the value schools and districts add to students' educational experiences. It also has a predictive component that is useful in helping to determine efficient deployment of support resources.

While I know how my students and school performed against the arbitrary 2005-2007 NCLB/AYP targets, I don't know reliably how they should have performed based on their previous performance. For example, I know that 60% of my total 11th grade population was advanced or proficient on the 2006 PSSA in reading. Was that a remarkable achievement on my part, about what it should have been given the education the students received for the three years since their last PSSA, or did attending Norristown High do some students harm, students who would have scored higher had they gone to school somewhere else? Without this additional data, the practice of comparing schools under the current system is invalid in my estimation unless all schools have the exact same student population. If a school that has met or exceeded the AYP targets is underachieving and a school in Corrective Action is shown to have "added value", is the reporting system meeting the goals established by the law?

NCLB contains a school choice component based on the comparisons of schools created by the AYP designations. The presumption is that a student who scores at the basic level in a Corrective Action school would benefit from a transfer to a school that has met AYP, because it is a better school. If all of my students transferred to a school that has met AYP and all of the receiving school's students transferred to Norristown High, would the outcomes be the same? Do the schools we are compared to enjoy the diversity that we do and do their scores include significant subgroups as well? A value added system ends the discussion and, perhaps, results in a more accurate account of student and school performance. Including a value added system in the reauthorization of NCLB may be more acceptable nationally if school districts had the option of designating in advance whether to be rated on a value added or traditional system.

Second, I encourage the committee to consider adding a policy of differentiated reporting, consequences and interventions, particularly if a value added system is not included in the new measure.

For school year 2005-2006, Norristown High met three of the four targets: reading, graduation rate and participation rate. While we met the overall math goal, we did not meet the math target for our four sub-groups.

Since the 2004-2005 school year we have aggressively met the performance gap challenge through a variety of reform efforts. Through our partnership with the Panasonic Foundation we have attained the services of IRRE (Institute for Research and Reform in Education) and have adopted their high school reform program, First Things First (small learning communities, family advocacy, curriculum and instruction professional development). We have received a Pennsylvania Project 720 grant and are in our second year of implementation (small learning communities, family advocacy, curriculum and instruction revision and dual enrollment). We have doubled the amount of time for English and math for our freshmen and sophomores and created our own quarterly testing in those two subjects. We have dramatically increased student access to technology supported instruction through a Pennsylvania Classrooms for the Future grant and added an instructional enhancement team (four instructional coaches) in large part thanks to our federal Small Learning Communities grant. We have eliminated tracking and study halls and have created more sheltered learning opportunities for our ESL population and will be instituting a rigorous internship program in the fall. We have substantially improved the quality and quantity of our professional development, supervision and evaluation.

Unfortunately, our Corrective Action I status overshadows our efforts. I propose that a school be able to request an amended NCLB status based on verifiable efforts to reform. This would allow for an accurate accounting of student performance while acknowledging that a school has employed a set of best practices in order to improve. Even a designation such as "Corrective Action I—school is actively engaged

in an approved reform effort" would be a source of encouragement for students and teachers engaged in such an effort. In addition, consequences and interventions must be differentiated to account for the percentage of students tested who fall into one or more significant sub-group.

I would also suggest that $9500 is not going to move any school from Corrective Action to a more positive place.

Finally, it has been my experience that the provisions of NCLB have had little or no impact on school safety and discipline in my school. While providing our diverse population with a safe and encouraging school climate remains a daily priority, the majority of the NCLB provisions have already been in place in our district for many years.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee this morning.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you, Mr. Howell. Mr. Kozol.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN KOZOL, CHAIRMAN, SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT, UPPER MERION HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. KOZOL. Thank you. Good morning.

As Congressman Sestak indicated, I am a social studies teacher and department chairman at Upper Merion Area High School, where I, myself, graduated some years ago.

Before I entered teaching, I was a practicing attorney for some five years. I became a teacher because I wanted to have a direct impact on tomorrow's youth, helping them to compete in and even lead the global economy of the future. Besides my Undergraduate Degree in American Studies, I completed an Undergraduate major in African American Studies and I care deeply about children of color who have been all too frequently left behind. I am also proud to say that I am the father of a first grader, who attends Upper Merion Schools, that I teach advance placement courses and that I have instructed a variety of courses at three universities. Finally, I am, as the congressman stated, the president of the Upper Merion Area Education Association and a member of the board of directors for the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies. I give you this background not to glorify myself. I do so to show that I have been part of what some commentators refer to as the real world, the world outside of schools.

Let me state at the outset, I believe that NCLB was enacted with a core of admirable intentions. Like its supporters, I believe that as a country, we must ensure that all of our children receive a quality education. My concern is not with the existence of NCLB but rather with some of its side effects if you will. Because of these side effects, this well-intentioned legislation has become what Stanford Education Professor Linda Darling-Hammond has accurately labeled a law that wastes scarce resources on a complicated test score game that appears to be narrowing the curriculum and uprooting successful programs.

Let me give you some examples of this. I work very closely with English and math teachers in my building. This year, approximately one month before the state standardized tests were to be administered, one of these colleagues informed me that he would have to deviate from both the district's regular curriculum, as well as his own instructional methods, in order to prepare our students for the upcoming tests. In fact, curriculum is being rewritten all over Pennsylvania to reflect what is being tested by PSSA and even to coach students on the prompts they will face. Districts have even

lowered themselves to giving students free breakfast, tee shirts and class trips in a disturbing effort to bribe them to take the tests seriously, since the results do not count toward their grades or graduation.

I have also become aware of a new and troubling attitude toward social studies, history and any other subject that is not tested. We have entered a dangerous era of significant de-emphasis with respect to those subject areas that do not have a test. While I sincerely believe this was not the original intent of NCLB, it is, in fact, exactly what is happening all over Pennsylvania.

NCLB also concerns me greatly as a parent. My first grader truly enjoys and excels at school but I worry about whether this can continue with NCLB as it is currently written. Her classwork and homework are clear indicators that she is already being prepared to take the PSSA test in third grade, to the exclusion of numerous topics and skills I believe are critical to her intellectual and social development. This truly takes teaching to the test to the extreme but I do not in any way blame the teachers or administration of her school. Rather, I recognize that it is the inevitable and sad outcome of high-stakes and standardized testing.

Let me comment briefly about such testing and the evaluation of schools and school staff. I am neither a researcher nor a statistician but PSEA has researched the subject of growth, value-added models and has reached two significant conclusions. First, while they can serve as a better indicator of student academic growth, they cannot necessarily isolate the impact of teachers on student performance. Secondly, they can serve as signals but they cannot substitute for an in-depth, on-site evaluation by educational experts if the goal really is to meaningfully evaluate the performance and effectiveness of teachers.

To me the bottom line is this. As an AP teacher, I acknowledge that standardized tests definitely have their place in education. But I must request that you revise NCLB before high-stakes testing takes over our schools. Instead, let us allow schools to be places where original thought and creativity flourish. Places that produce enthusiastic children ready to take on the world.

As a final note, I ask you to consider the effect of high-stakes testing on student and teacher morale. The current system makes it virtually certain that all public schools, including high-quality districts like mine, will inevitably fail AYP and become failing institutions. The consequences in the current law are virtually all punitive rather than supportive. I can tell you from first-hand observation that this can turn a positive, productive faculty, that is, in fact, succeeding, into a fearful and hopeless one overnight.

Therefore, as you consider its reauthorization, please revise NCLB to make it less punitive and more supportive. Please focus those scarce resources we now have on and dedicate new resources to the districts that need them most.

And finally, please help me and my colleagues reach our ultimate professional goal, to teach our children the best way we know how.

Thank you.

[Statement of Mr. Kozol follows:]

Prepared Statement of Stephen Kozol, Social Studies Teacher and Department Chairman, Upper Merion Area High School

Good morning. My name is Stephen Kozol, and I'm proud to say I am a social studies teacher and department chairman at Upper Merion Area High School. I myself attended Upper Merion from Kindergarten through 12th grade, a school district generally recognized as one of the best in our region. In fact, many Upper Merion teachers also attended our schools, and that is a tribute to their effectiveness, as well as to the loyalty of parents, students, and the surrounding community.

After graduating from Upper Merion Area High School, I majored in American Studies at Brandeis University and received a law degree from George Washington University. Before I entered teaching, I worked for the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse, and for one of Philadelphia's most prestigious law firms, Drinker, Biddle and Reath.

I decided to become a teacher because I wanted to have a direct impact on the youth of tomorrow. I wanted to help them compete in the global economy we know they will lead. Since I also completed an undergraduate major in African-American Studies, I also care deeply about children of color, who have been all too frequently left behind.

I am also proud to say that I am the father of a first-grader who attends Upper Merion's schools, that I teach Advanced Placement courses at Upper Merion, and that I have instructed a variety of courses as an adjunct at three universities. Finally I should note that I am the president of the Upper Merion Area Education Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies.

I give you this background not to glorify myself; I do so to show that I have been part of what some commentators refer to as "the real world:" the world outside of schools. I do so also to emphasize that I take my continuing professional development seriously, and so do my teaching colleagues, and that, together, we work as hard and do as much for our country as our counterparts in the private sector. Yet my colleagues and I are frequently denigrated as wanting to avoid accountability. That is a complete falsehood. In fact, teachers pride themselves on their accountability and responsibility every day. The belief that teachers do not want to be held accountable has been perpetrated in some sectors of the media as fact, and that misinformation has unfortunately been intensified by the law labeled No Child Left Behind.

Let me state at the outset my belief that NCLB was enacted with a core of admirable intentions. Like its sponsors and supporters, I believe that, as a country, we must ensure that all of our children receive a quality education. My concern is not necessarily with the existence of NCLB, but rather with some of its "side effects," if you will. Because of these side effects, this well-intentioned legislation has become what Stanford Education Professor Linda Darling-Hammond has accurately labeled "a law that wastes scarce resources on a complicated test score game that appears to be narrowing the curriculum (and) uprooting successful programs."

Let me give you some examples of this. I work very closely with the English and Math teachers in my building. This year approximately one month before the state standardized tests were to be administered, one of these colleagues informed me that he would have to deviate from both our school board-approved curriculum, which is based on the latest education research, and his customary form of instruction, solely for the purpose of preparing our students to take the upcoming PSSA tests. In fact, curriculum is being re-written all over Pennsylvania to reflect what is being tested by PSSA, and even to coach students on the prompts that students see on the tests. Districts have even lowered themselves to giving students free breakfasts, T-shirts, and class trips, in a disturbing effort to bribe them to take the tests seriously, since the results do not count toward their course grades or even graduation.

I myself am increasingly aware of a new and troubling attitude toward social studies, history and any other subject that is not tested. We are quickly entering an era of significant de-emphasis with respect to those subject areas that do not have a test. While I sincerely believe this was in no way the intent of NCLB, it is, in fact, exactly what is happening. What is more, it is not just happening in my district; I have spoken with numerous colleagues across Pennsylvania, and they all recount the same experiences.

This law also concerns me greatly as a parent. My first-grader truly enjoys and benefits from school, but I worry about whether this can continue with NCLB as it is currently written. Her classwork and homework make it clear to me that she is already being prepared to take the PSSA test in third-grade, to the exclusion of numerous topics and lessons I believe are critical to the intellectual and social devel-

opment of a young child. This truly takes "teaching to the test" to the extreme, but I do not in any way blame the teachers or administration of her school. Rather I recognize that it is the inevitable and sad outcome of high-stakes standardized testing—whether it is federally or state-mandated.

The aspect of NCLB that most urgently needs revision is another cited by Darling-Hammond. She says, it "has misdefined the problem. It assumes that what schools need is more carrots and sticks rather than fundamental changes." The law is based on the fallacious, and, frankly, insulting, notion that educators have been almost willfully doing bad things to children, and that the federal government can fix that alleged problem. Both assumptions are wrong.

As I stated at the outset, teachers want to prepare young people as best they can for our world. They want students to have the best curriculum we can provide, not tests that often have little to do with today's realities. I have taught students who failed my course but received the top possible score on an AP test. Conversely, I have taught students who succeeded in my course but were disappointed in their AP score. The point is, tests are admittedly one valid measure of the academic success of both students and teachers, but they are only one measure. Good classrooms use many varied means to assess the progress and mastery of our students, and federal and state government should do the same with respect to our schools. After all, while standardized tests have their place in education, one might ask: how many students will face standardized tests when they go out in the world after school? Or rather, will they face real-life situations where they need to think critically and act and react rationally and responsibly?

A brief word about testing and evaluation of schools and school staff: I am neither a researcher nor a statistician. But PSEA has researched the subject of growth/value-added models and has reached these two conclusions:

- Growth/value-added models can serve as a better indicator of student academic growth. However, many of the foremost experts in educational measurement have written that growth/value-added models cannot isolate the impact of teachers on student performance.
- Growth/value-added models can serve as signals, but they cannot substitute for an in-depth, onsite evaluation by educational experts if the goal is to meaningfully evaluate the performance and effectiveness of teachers.

My bottom line is this: I urge you to revise NCLB before tests take over our schools. We do not want to turn out great test takers who will be helpless when they have to think through complex problems and situations. Instead we should allow schools to be places where original thought and creativity flourish, places that produce enthusiastic children ready to take on the world.

As a final note, I ask you also to consider the effect of this kind of testing on student and teacher morale. The system, as currently designed, makes it virtually certain that all public schools, including high quality districts like Upper Merion, will inevitably fail "AYP" and thus be described as a "failing institutions." The consequences in the current law are virtually all punitive rather than supportive. I can tell you from first-hand observation that this can turn a positive, productive faculty that is in fact succeeding into a fearful and hopeless one overnight.

Schools do not need punishment; we need support. We need more relevant professional development for teachers, and solid mentoring programs for new and young teachers. We, as a nation, need to rely less on property taxes to fund our schools, because they discriminate against poor communities and those on fixed incomes.

As you consider its reauthorization, please revise NCLB in a couple of critical ways. Make it less punitive and more supportive. Focus those scarce resources—and come up with new resources—on the districts that need the most help.

Finally, let me and my colleagues do what we want so much to do—teach our children the best way we know how.

Thank you.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much.

We now will begin the questioning of the witness. I yield myself about five minutes for that purpose.

Professor Hershberg, you mentioned the need for states to have quality data systems in place in order to implement growth models. Do you know how many states currently have such a system and what would the cost of implementing them be?

Dr. HERSHBERG. I believe 15 states have committed to this. I am not sure if all 15 have everything in place and I do not have a dol-

lar amount that you could attach. But, again, if you think of the iron rail that—you know, you would have one rail which is the unique identifier for every student, so you are really tracing individual children. And two, you need an individual ID number for a teacher and then you need to link these two files so that the teachers who teach the kids each subject and the grades are on the same record.

Chairman KILDEE. If we had the—just asking because one of my criticisms of No Child Left Behind is the underfunding. If we didn't have a $71 billion shortchanging, which is taking place, do you think we could develop that? Could that go a long ways in developing—helping these states develop growth models?

Dr. HERSHBERG. I think unquestionably more money would facilitate the development of the data systems. But it has not broken the bank in the 15 states that are committed already. I do not believe the expense there is that substantial. I believe the resistance is more of a political nature than it is a funding nature.

Chairman KILDEE. And we do that for special education children, the IEP follows the child wherever they may go, so there is already a historical pattern for having the growth models follow the child.

Dr. HERSHBERG. Absolutely right. Special ed has had this conceptually and operationally in place for a very long time. The very name, No Child Left Behind, and we are not tracing kids, we are doing cohorts. That is why this changes, so it is so indispensably important.

Chairman KILDEE. The one thing that has always bothered me is that we test the third grade in school and then the following year we test the third grade and find they may not be reaching AYP but it is different kids.

Dr. HERSHBERG. Absolutely. It makes no sense at all. We now can do what we could not do before. We have the technology. We know how to link these files. We know how to analyze the data.

Chairman KILDEE. Mr. Kozol, you mentioned that tests are one valid measure but only one of students' and teachers' success. What are some other measures that we might include in No Child Left Behind as measures of success?

Mr. KOZOL. I am glad you asked that, Congressman, because as a teacher, I would not want to rely solely on a test to evaluate my students. As you know, we look at their work at home and their classwork and, perhaps, their writings, their research, their analysis of books. It seems to me that good assessment is part of good teaching and good assessment is also part of good evaluation of our schools. I do and I hope I was clear in my testimony that I think that tests should be part of it, standardized tests certainly can be. But we might also use, for example, portfolios and that is not just limited to written portfolios. Also art work and music, presentations, research projects, perhaps interviews of both students and teachers. So you have probably five or six right there that can be used. As I said, not necessarily excluding tests entirely.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you. Dr. Abrutyn, can you elaborate on what a growth model would look like in a typical classroom?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Yes, I would. I would be happy to.

There is a little bit of terminology that is associated with picturing what this is all about and it is terminology that really is central to the whole issue.

The status model that we use today is most closely associated with what we call summative assessment, which means that students are tested at the end of the year, so we have a summation of what they have learned for the year and we only test them at the end.

In contrast to that, the growth model is associated with what we call in education formative assessment, which means that we are testing students throughout the school year. And so teachers start off in a regular classroom, the teacher starts off at the beginning of the year getting a baseline picture on every child as to where that child is. And then there is the opportunity to test throughout the school year and test against benchmarks to see how that child is growing. And the teacher in the classroom has an idea of strengths and weaknesses and has the ability to adapt instruction throughout the school year. So that is what we call formative assessment. And in a classroom that uses that kind of instruction, there is a much greater likelihood that every child is going to be able to succeed. We are not waiting until the end of the year to find out that the child made it or did not make it. So that is what we are hoping to do with the growth model.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you. Thank you very much for a very clear answer. I now yield to my colleague, Admiral Sestak for his five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KILDEE. And I will come back for another round as I am sure he will too.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you.

May I follow up on that question? Do you also believe or not believe that it is not just throughout the school year but over the school years? Do you track the individual throughout the school years?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Thank you for asking that question. Absolutely. This was referred to earlier. The growth model is a model that has a lot of promise because we have the technology today to be able to follow students from the time they enter school throughout all of their educational years. And we can track them against a standard—there is a way to do this with standard numbers so that we see growth over time.

Mr. SESTAK. Do you presently do that?

Dr. ABRUTYN. We do in Penn-Delco. We use a technology-based system that is out there and it tracks the students using what is called a RIT score and this is an absolute number that grows with the child over the years.

Mr. SESTAK. You make a great statement in your testimony about test preparation and you are talking about a series of tests here. Would you speak to that issue and those that say tests take away from valuable teaching time.

Dr. ABRUTYN. What I was alluding to in my testimony is the fact that we do prepare students for the test and, you know, we are speaking here today in practical terms about what actually happens in school districts. And that in and of itself, as I said in my

testimony, is not necessarily a bad thing. The test is about reading and math and writing, in Pennsylvania anyway, and those are things that we want kids to do. So when I say that we are preparing students, we are for the standards that are tested. But it is—the data that we get through the state test only gives us so much information and my suggestion is that we shift to a growth model, move away from the state test and go to a growth model where we are looking at individual students throughout their school career.

The law is called No Child Left Behind, not no school left behind. When you look at the legislation or the way the tests are done today, we are getting information on a school as a whole, we are getting disaggregated data on groups of students and subgroups but we are not getting information from the state test on individual students.

So what we are saying today is we have the opportunity to look at individual growth and the type of technology that we use in our school district does track the students individually and frequently and gives the kids the opportunity and the teachers the opportunity to teach.

Mr. SESTAK. And not to keep coming to you but if I could then—if you would answer this question, Dr. Hershberg, also but first, if you don't mind, superintendent is, the comment was made at the first education summit we had by a teacher that said that the present way we do testing, standardized testing, is that it appears to force the attention to be not on those who are highly proficient or those that are likely to fail but on that middle element that, just with a lot of focus and attention, you can get them over the cusp of passing. Is there something to that and is this part of the issue?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Absolutely. In my testimony, I referred to my vision for our school district, which is to move every child forward every day. So the idea is whether a child is at the highest level relatively speaking or the lowest level or in the middle, we want every child to achieve and to move forward.

So the idea is that with the technology and the growth model, every child, when he or she walks in at the beginning of the year or the third month of school or the fifth month of school, we know where that child is and we are continually moving them forward.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Hershberg.

Dr. HERSHBERG. Yes. The unintended consequence of No Child Left Behind is to create an incentive. As you just said correctly, to focus on those students who are as close to proficiency as possible, that if we get them over that hump will make AYP. So like a laser beam, we focus on those kids. Contrast that with the core philosophy of the growth model which says every child, regardless of whether they start the year below grade, on grade, above grade, is entitled at least to a year's worth of growth at a year.

Mr. SESTAK. If I might, Mr. Kozol, would you comment upon that with regard to the last series of questions with regard to some of the items that you had raised in your testimony?

Mr. KOZOL. Specifically in terms of test preparation, is that what you mean?

Mr. SESTAK. Overall the value attendant to switching from standardized testing to growth that would still have testing but

you are able now to focus on the individual child and hopefully across the board and they will all be able with this differentiating data, be able to focus better upon them as you go forward with curricular whatever?

Mr. KOZOL. Well, once again, I want to caution you that statistics and growth-value models are not necessarily my expertise but I can tell you that we desire as educators to focus more on individual students rather than on individual tests. And I think one gets the feeling, you know, in our setting that with AYP as it is currently stated that the goal is to have the school and the school district and all of the individual subgroups satisfied. The tests, indeed, as I said, what happens is curriculum can be sacrificed because you—in fact, you said yourself, time is at a premium and that is certainly true in the school as well.

So we would—I think the average teacher would certainly be in favor of any model that allows them to focus, not just on curriculum, but also the social and intellectual growth of the child more than on the test as of itself. I think we would like to see that, perhaps, the test as a means or any tester model as a means but not as the end.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. Mr. Stevenson, you testified to the relationship between student stress and a safe school environment. What are the various sources of stress? It has been 42 years since I taught so I know things have changed a great deal. What are the sources of stress that students face and how has it changed over the years in your experience? I know you have not been around 42 years but in your own years.

Mr. STEVENSON. Well, one of the things when you talk about a school climate and in relationship to the school setting is that students bring a lot more of their social and culture dynamics into the school setting and it is not in the relationship to stresses at home. One of the biggest things that we are dealing with is the social component of the influence of their peers, in which they are—and so those dynamics that bring into the school is that the school's teachers and administrators now have to make a shift from being just a teacher but social workers to address those issues in relationship to whether it is financial issues that they deal with at home, it is the peer pressure or whatever the social dynamic is at home. Teachers are forced now to take care of those issues in the classroom and to create an academic and a social balance.

So the whole concept of my testimony is that the school has to be a place where kids feel safe and they feel that when they come into school that the school is meeting some of those particular needs. That they are getting their appropriate counseling for those outside stresses. That they are getting the type of support in which to help them navigate their way through academically and socially.

Chairman KILDEE. In addition to the cognitive education, is there a value we should place upon—let me use the term although it is controversial at times—affective education where to help the student have a better feeling about him or herself where they can relate better to the process of education?

Mr. STEVENSON. Most definitely. I mean, a person's self concept is probably the best way to help them excel academically, socially

and to inspire occupationally. When a student has a sense of hope, they have a sense of a drive to more forward. And if a school setting is in a place and they feel a climate where that is a place that helps them grow with their self-esteem, that is only an added component to their success.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. Mr. Howell, can you discuss the impact that the No Child Left Behind public school choice provision has? At the end of two years of not reaching AYP, you are a public school choice and the third year you would have supplemental educational services. Have many students used that? What has the effect been of the public school choice?

Mr. HOWELL. Congressman, it has been very interesting. A school in our situation is required to contact the surrounding school districts and ask if they will accept our students as a part of the provision of choice and all of them annually say no. We at times wonder about that. We do have the extended opportunity, the after school programs that a growing number of our students are taking advantage of. But school choice per se, there is virtually no impact on my school

Chairman KILDEE. Is it because most parents or students want to remain in their own area or neighborhood or locale?

Mr. HOWELL. Well, I would like to think in part that. They stay with us because they see the value in our school. But quite frankly, the other side of it is, there is no place for them to go.

Chairman KILDEE. So really it is very often more theoretical?

Mr. HOWELL. Each of the surrounding school districts has the opportunity to say no to our question, will you accept our students, and they do.

Chairman KILDEE. Ms. Abrutyn, you talked about the law diminishing returns. I have experienced that in golf. I gave up golf. I reached the point where I was not getting any better. I had reached my peak. Could you talk a little bit about the law of diminishing returns?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Not in terms of golf but in terms of education, yes, I believe it is true. I think it was a lofty goal. I think we have to have high standards and I think the law, by setting the goal 100 percent proficiency, that was admirable. But as we try to approach it, I think we need to look for different ways of defining success for every child. And that is why I think the shift towards the growth model makes more sense because we can look at success in terms of individual children and if we—rather than 100 percent proficiency. So the shift would be towards looking at every child growing every year and setting a realistic goal for every child in terms of what that growth should be. And in that way we can assure that no child is being left behind but in a more realistic sense so that we are not labeling schools as failing when, in fact, they could have the opportunity to move the children forward.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. Congressman Sestak.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If I might, Principal Stevenson, do you find that students actually take advantage of your services or is there any data to say?

Mr. STEVENSON. Yes, yes, they do take advantage of it. In fact, at the middle school today, there is what they call an adolescent day where we have some—in conjunction and partnership with the

Radnor Education Foundation, we are bringing in speakers talking about social and culture dynamics to help students navigate their way through. And what we do with that is that we have breakout sessions and then we have follow-up throughout the year, through the remaining year, and as they go to high school, through our SAP team to follow up on instances of drug and alcohol abuse and to look at those statistics. And we found that in some instances they have been very helpful.

Mr. SESTAK. Do you see any areas for legislative action, not just monies, funding to assist in the——

Mr. STEVENSON. I think that it has to be a balance between both. I mean, as I said, we at Radnor are fortunate to have the support of organizations like the foundation who have helped us with bringing those social issues. But those dynamics, those needs of kids to have understanding of how to improve their social and academic ways throughout society has to be a balance in places not only at Radnor but a place where I started off, Coleman Elementary in Baltimore. And so if there is a mandate that requires those types of things to be in place and the financial support to back it, all those kids would also have the same opportunities our kids have.

Mr. SESTAK. Do you find progress impeded at all or it is not the job of the schools with regard to the issue that there is a documented shortage of mental health workers for younger children and the lack to have them more readily available in an area where male parity has become more of a concern as we go forward? Is this an issue?

Mr. STEVENSON. Most definitely. I think that there has been in some places a resistance and then other places lack of funding. I mean, schools have to make choices. Whether you add a new teacher in relationship to make sure that you have covered the basic support so they make AYP or you bring in a social worker or a mental health expert to help with the dynamic needs of the school. And I think most schools would choose the academic issue because of funding. But if there was a clear understanding of the basic needs for the youth for mental experts to come help support their needs, I think that you find a correlation where kids are healthier, not only physically and mentally, you find the correlation between their academic support and success.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. Principal Howell, these are questions about special accommodations and alternative assessments for children that have identified learning disabilities has been something that we have listened a lot to, whether it is a hearing down in Congress or at previous education summits. And recently, the Secretary of Education has changed to three percent those that we might look at for alternative testing. Do you think this figure is sufficient to address this issue——

Mr. HOWELL. Sorry, I interrupted.

Mr. SESTAK [continuing]. Or further adjustments need to be made and if so what are they?

Mr. HOWELL. Quite frankly, I don't understand the notion of a Secretary of Education defining a number. Roughly 18 percent of the students that took the PSSA last year at Norristown High had a learning disability, IEP. We were permitted to test one percent of them in the alternate assessment based on a decree.

Clearly, a definition of which students should be based on performance or based on their IEP, should be eligible to take the state assessment or the alternative assessment is attainable. At that point, we identify which percentage of my students qualify for the alternative assessment and administer it. We clearly would exceed the three percent.

Mr. SESTAK. If I might, the question I wanted to ask, I guess Dr. Hershberg, cohorts sizing, they differ throughout the nation. Pennsylvania, I think, is 40 for the size of the subgroup minimum. Texas is 200. Is this of concern as we—some say to be no more than 20. Is this a concern as you are trying to look at this nationally that we are impacting subgroups by the size of them?

Dr. HERSHBERG. This is all part of a set of finding a way around AYP. Whether it is lowering the quality of the tests, whether it is backloading the progress rates, whether it is manipulating the size of the groups you are talking about. Any way to kind of stay away from the consequences of failing to meet AYP.

Yeah, it is a concern.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. If I could then, Principal, I would like to get back to one other question. It is an interesting comment you made that you go around and ask another school district if they could take a student and every school district has a challenge. But my question is, what is the answer then? Should there be consideration, I mean, is it more SES focus? Some people say we should look at vouchers so that you can take them for private tuition. What does that do to your school budget then? What is the issue for this?

Mr. HOWELL. Congressman, I think the most important point that I could make this morning is that you do not know the caliber of Norristown Area High School or any other school, in particular, based on the data that we collect in No Child Left Behind. And that in order to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind you need to. So in my proposal, if the data suggests we are failing, that ought to require a next step, to come in and see, in fact, if that is so. There are a lot at this point of recognized high school reform programs that are having a positive impact for which there is data to support.

My point is you don't know based on the data that you now have.

Mr. SESTAK. So your answer and Dr. Hershberg's answer, when I hear some of these questions that are being asked like cohorts or having another school take a child, they are really symptoms of a disease. I mean, I don't mean to say—in other words, if you were able to have appropriate growth model testing, the fact of the matter is your school could potentially be better, as your testimony alluded to, than some school that is actually meeting the requirements. We just don't know.

Mr. HOWELL. We absolutely believe that but talk is cheap. The value-added system would answer that question.

Mr. SESTAK. And so some of these—if we don't get the testing correct with the data, we will just be patchworking certain—a system that is on the whole not appropriate. And that is what I am hearing from here, correct? If I could then, I take a school—you know, you see that like up in Darby High School. Not to comment, they are—there are 43 different languages. I mean, it is just a cou-

ple miles down the road and there are 43 different languages spoken at that school. They are one of 15 relocation districts for the Justice Department in Pennsylvania. So they get 150 refugees every year that will come in and they get graded on and that is the challenge here. Should there be? And so as you begin to get the proper growth, it also seems you can not just have mixing with the growth model. Would it also be wrong to say, you just do not want to say those that are highly proficient? I mean, because you could still have some ranking at the end of the road, and those that are not making it, should there be a middle category of those that are trying or something? You know, briefly what I am getting at?

Mr. HOWELL. Yes, it is very simple in concept. Is Radnor High School better than Germantown High School in inner-city Philadelphia? And the answer is——

Mr. SESTAK. In my district, absolutely.

Mr. HOWELL. Right. And the answer is we don't know because the question should always be, how do you deal with the kids that you get. This is the—society deals the cards. Schools don't control who lives in their community. Under current law, if you live in an affluent community, you get high test scores, you look great. If you live and work in the inner-city, you have low test scores. That is a totally wrong way to understand and compare their performance in schools. How do you do with the kids that you get? Exactly what the superintendent said a moment ago, you see how they start the year, you measure them—you can measure them in formative assessment throughout the year but certainly you want to know the growth over the year. Then you have leveled the playing field and you can say, we are a pretty darn good school because we grow our kids. They started well behind but we did a good job with them. They should not be sanctioned under current law.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. This has been—it is and will continue for a while yet. We are getting such good responses. I really appreciate this panel. This is why going out of Washington is extremely important for the Congress and that is, again, the reason why your testimony will be used as we reauthorize this bill.

Superintendent Abrutyn, you testified that test preparation is not necessarily a negative, could you expand on that?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Yes. People will often say that it is bad. It has a negative connotation to teach to the test or prepare for the test. I maintain that if you look at the test, the test if about reading and writing, math. These are things that our students do need to know and that it does have critical thinking skills and the state standards, that is what is being tested. So we certainly want our students to be able to do those things.

And I do maintain that in all of the different subjects that we teach in school, we need to be able to have kids read critically. It is more important today in the world that we live in, with the technology that we have, with the internet. Reading is back big time. You know, students need to read critically. They have unfiltered types of information on the internet, so we feel that these are very important skills. And we don't discount the types of things that are being asked on the state test. So I would like to balance that with people who are critics of the idea that we need to hold kids ac-

countable and we do not, as superintendents by in large—no, we do believe that we should be accountable but we want to level the playing field. We want to have the proper opportunities. We want to have the proper funding. But we don't think that it is a bad thing or I would speak for myself personally, I think, and say that we do feel that kids should be able to do the things that are on the test.

Chairman KILDEE. Could you answer this, is AYP defective or just not as good as growth model?

Dr. ABRUTYN. I think that we have, as I said in my testimony, an opportunity to go to something that will serve all students in the nation better. And I think that the concept of AYP at this juncture—defective is a strong word but I think it is not doing what the spirit of the law says. No Child Left Behind means we want to move every child forward. We cannot tell that with adequate yearly progress because the unit of measure is a school and at best it is a subgroup. So there is a mismatch between what the spirit of the law is, which is to leave no child left behind. The unit of measure is the child, so there is a mismatch between the spirit of the law and the way we are measuring it. And we want to move to a growth model which is much more in conjunction with the spirit of the law, which is the growth model measures individual children. And then you have a true match between what the law is asking for and a way to truly measure that. And it gets us totally away from the idea of labeling schools as failing when they have been dealt the cards that Dr. Hershberg mentioned, you know, a very challenging group of kids or a very high socio-economic group. We don't deal with those things anymore. We are dealing strictly with the ability of the school to educate every single child and demonstrate that that child got a year's worth of growth in one year.

Chairman KILDEE. Dr. Stevenson, did you have some comment that—okay, again we will take a two-minute break for the students, and again, I appreciate the students being here, to go back to your regular class. Thank you very much. We will take a two-minute break. Okay, we will reconvene. It is very appropriate that we have these hearings, right, in an educational environment and with the people who are really so concerned with education. The Admiral and I were talking, this is just a great panel. It has been very helpful to us and we are carrying ideas, not just their written ones but some ideas up here we are carrying back to Washington. Dr. Hershberg, I was fascinated by your chart here, it is very interesting, and I love charts. My counsel here knows that. Can you discuss how Congress can reauthorize No Child Left Behind to help schools in that bottom left cell of your Figure 2, those who have both low proficiency and low growth?

Dr. HERSHBERG. Well, you know, there is a perverse incentive debate that says if you give more money to failing schools, you are rewarding failure and if you take the money away, then you are punishing. How is that going to help the kids? So neither of those approaches are the way to go on this one. Those schools are failing and something has to change. Now, there are a variety of different comprehensive school reform models. In some cases, they might as well close the school or if not close the school, then reconstitute the

faculty. The reality is that they are not providing the children in their community with the education to which they are entitled.

So one solution that I would propose would be to have technical assistance teams that would be composed of outstanding teachers and administrators on a voluntary basis—they could pay but they volunteer to be in the program. They are regionally based. They would parachute into a struggling school and they would be given the decision-making authority and the discretion to use the money on a per capita basis to turn that school around. So you are not putting the money in the hands of the same people that have failed but you are bringing needed resources, both intellectual and financial, so that children can benefit from the change.

Chairman KILDEE. You want to comment on that?

Mr. HOWELL. I did, thank you. I would simply ask Dr. Hershberg to name a place where that worked.

Dr. HERSHBERG. Well, we have very little evidence that has accumulated but in North Carolina, technical assistance teams are in place and they are getting some success but I think it is just beginning. We would use in Pennsylvania—take the regional, take the intermediate unit and have—if you can get high quality—what is the alternative is the question that I would put to that.

Mr. HOWELL. I certainly support the concept of the technical support. And Pennsylvania does have the—I forget the term now—gifted scholar or something like that, experienced scholar—that are made available to school districts. I just have not seen any evidence where allowing those teams to make the decisions for those communities has had any positive impact at all. And, in fact, there is a sizeable school district, pretty close to where we sit, that is living proof that turning that over to the outsiders is not accomplishing much.

Chairman KILDEE. I thank both of you. Admiral?

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Doctor, you wrote a book back in 1997 called, Introduction to Using Portfolios in the Classroom. Could you talk just a moment on what you mean by portfolios, so everybody gathers it and tell me, do you really think that we can do this and can it possibly be legislated?

Dr. ABRUTYN. That book was written in, I believe, about 1997, so that was far before technology had the ability or we had the capability to do what we can do today. And the idea of portfolios just goes along with my vision, again, of moving every child forward and being able to understand where every child is and have rigid information. And today I think that portfolios have a place because we can store the information electronically and be able to document what the child has accomplished throughout the year.

Mr. SESTAK. Just to make sure we are on the same page, when you say portfolios, you mean?

Dr. ABRUTYN. When I wrote the book, it was talking about any type of information, reading or math, and it was storing samples and we still do this in our school district today. What we are looking at is we keep the portfolio through the child's career, so it is all another version of a growth model. It all ties together. And so I think there is a place for it. I do not know that we would necessarily have to legislate it and I think some of the components of

the growth model that we talked about earlier this morning would suffice.

But the idea that you have a portfolio of some sort stored electronically for children, so that we can see through the course of their career in a school district what kind of growth they have had and track it from year to year. It is very valuable. We do not want to have to start over every year with a new teacher and have the teacher wonder what they did the previous year. So I appreciate the question very much because we want to continue to keep going and not spin our wheels at the beginning of the school year.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. You know I joined the military during Vietnam and it was ranked 22 percent as far as the lowest of all 15 institutions the Gallup Poll does every year as far as respect. Now it is ranked number one and I went to Congress and it is ranked next to last. So we are working on it. But the point is I have not—whether it was in the military or the Congress, in both places and in government that I served in 31 years, people would throw bombs at us, government bureaucrats. I was always taken by how much, including, I mean, in Congress how hard they work.

I feel the same way about the teachers and administrators. People say, well, you know, when you rank us as a failing school, it really does have an impact. And I can imagine that particularly if no one is taking your children and all. Could you both speak to that shortly because it is an intangible but having lived it in the military where people were not welcomed as they came home and even if people questioned politicians, would you speak the importance of this?

Mr. HOWELL. Certainly I would be happy to. I mentioned the reform efforts that we began two years ago. Every teacher at Norristown High for the past two years has become a first-year teacher again. Nobody did last year what they did the year before. Now, we knew that we were not going to turn the scores upside down in one year but we worked awfully hard and by a lot of other measures, had a very good year. Yet we are a Corrective Action I. That is one step worse than we were last year.

It is a frustration for the teachers. It is a morale issue. But it is also for the students as well because they also—I have invested in this reform and no one requires more immediate ratification than they do. So my proposal is simply that, while I do not want you to report my scores any differently. I am okay with that. But I want there to be a next step where someone comes in and takes a look to see which of those four quadrants of Dr. Hershberg's that we are, in fact, in.

Mr. KOZOL. Yeah, I agree with many of the things, in fact, that Mr. Howell is saying and I think that our building principals would probably echo that sentiment even though they may not be at the same stage of the AYP game.

The reality is that as currently structured, all public schools will eventually be failing and that is a very sobering thought for us in this field. And that is what leads to the narrowing of curriculum that I spoke about in my testimony. The preparations that include things like free breakfasts and tee shirts and class trips, not that it is not great to take a class trip but not really for this purpose. The idea that a curriculum of a young child does not include social

studies or science. You know, as a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Social Studies, I have been part of a debate which some of our directors have said to me, we need to have a test so that our subject will be taken seriously. To me, that alone indicts the law as it is structured very much.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. Again, I am taken by the word data all the time. When I visit various high schools whether it is Springfield or Upper Darby, the teachers all say this, good thing we have this No Child Left Behind. This data we will be getting to focus upon and here all the heads are nodding when you have done this. If you do not mind, Mr. Stevenson and doctor, to some degree if you go—say, well, wait a minute, I am not going to throw more money in the school system. That is just throwing more money down. The thing I have become taken with is—and I come from a background where we invested in our sailors but we held them accountable. It seems to me that data now has the ability for us to measure the value outcome of putting more investment in education. In other words, it is not just throwing monies to school boards, the superintendents, the teachers, you can actually measure what they are doing with it now because of No Child Left Behind has given us a data to measure. Is that a wrong way to think about this when people say you are just going to throw more money into this issue?

Mr. STEVENSON. I will speak from the school climate and school safety perspective but the data, it helps a lot and we are making a shift now academically but socially too to show the data. For instance, you know, in relationship to our drug and alcohol task force, data helps us to show that only the students and the teachers but the school community what our basic needs are and how—by implementing certain programs, how those things have helped address and bring a remedy to it. Socially, when you talk about kids who have had needs for substance abuse counseling, students who have had need for a mental health support and also look at the data relationship of the funding and the relationship that is required to keep the physical plant safer compared to pre-Columbine. Those kind of things are important to show that this is not just we need money, it is for the basic safety of our children.

And I will just also talk briefly about the academic piece. The same thing in relationship to—because, you know, we are—reality is No Child Left Behind is a part of our school setting and we are, as I say, we are slaves to the test and we have to make sure that we have incorporated all the necessary standards and the necessary supports to make sure that students have the best academic testing scores possible.

Having said that, then we also show the data of saying, what things do we have in place that improved, what things that if we do not have them in place, if we had the appropriate funding, could help us improve those things?

Mr. SESTAK. Doctor, did you want to shortly add to that?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Yes. I think the question, and I appreciate the question, I think it has to do with, is it worthwhile to spend money on what it would cost to get this rich information to districts and I say absolutely yes.

Mr. SESTAK. It is yes but it is actually a little different. Is to some degree, is it also that if you have this data, you are now able

to say to the person who is giving you the money, not just us or the taxpayer, wait a minute, I can show you if it is going to have value?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Yes, you are able to show that. And I think that some people might feel threatened by it, so I would say that it is all in the implementation of how you use it. And we have to be very careful about the implementation of using that data. It has the opportunity to be very motivating because it allows our teachers to have a roadmap and they find out they are being given extra tools to move kids forward, so that they have a better idea of how they need to structure their lessons. We actually use that data for the children. They find it motivating and they set their own targets, so they are very highly engaged in their learning. And our kids can tell you what their target is throughout the year. And parents, we are starting to let them use that information. They have access to the data, so that that is true parent involvement. So there are a lot of opportunities with this data.

Mr. SESTAK. I would like to ask you a question I asked you earlier but just before I did, the reason I am taking with it is, we all saw the Philadelphia Inquirer article about three Thursday's ago that was on the front page of the business section and it is not dissimilar to what I think we face in our district where we have lost 670 small businesses and the concerns with the workforce and attracting and maintaining people here. As it said, why have not we been as successful as we think we should have in the Philadelphia region of attracting the types of industries—we have been somewhat successful but not quite as full as we might. And it has always come back to the issue of education and that is what the business section said why this is such an important issue. But it brings me to another group, you go to the Pathway School in Montgomery County or the Easter Seals School. You sit down at the intermediate units in Montgomery County or Chester County or Delaware County and talk about the disabled and you listen to those in the summit that talk about the need to address this issue but at times the burden to address this for whether we should have teachers that are now having to be highly qualified teachers to teach the disabled. And now if they teach just not a core subject, they teach several subjects, they got to get qualified in each of those. What is the best approach somehow to make sure that these children do not fall through the seams because we will be better for it if they do not and yet I hear consistently that this is an issue for school districts. So did you want to address this kind of——

Dr. HERSHBERG. We certainly welcome the issue of accountability with regards to all of our students, so those with our special needs, as well as our gifted and talented. The highly qualified issue that you raise is a serious problem in that area. We know what makes a good teacher of multiple handicapped students, for example, and just because that student or that child is 15 years old doesn't mean that he needs someone who is highly qualified in math, for example. And we, quite frankly, are going to face some serious issues because there is simply someone who can pass the math test is probably going to be a math teacher. Someone who can pass the science test is going to be a science teacher and finding and encouraging

those people who want to work with special needs students, for example, we are now hindering them with the highly qualified label.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Chairman, May I just follow up with one additional question?

Chairman KILDEE. Sure.

Mr. SESTAK. But is there a better way—I can see you want to drive this and you can—to link the IEPs to No Child Left Behind or is there a better way to address or different way to address this issue by and large? Is this where you were going?

Dr. ABRUTYN. The question about highly qualified teachers——

Mr. SESTAK. Not just highly qualified. I mean the whole issue of the cohort group of disabled and the need to get them properly reaching out so that they are not left behind. Do you know where I am going?

Dr. ABRUTYN. Well, if you are talking about achievement levels for those groups——

Mr. SESTAK. Yes, and the correct measurement of them. You talked about one to two percent, but what is the criteria? Is it more towards the IEPs again or is it——

Dr. ABRUTYN. It truly is.

Mr. SESTAK. But yet if we felt as though it wasn't working right, I gather, when this legislation was passed. Is there a stronger link between IEPs?

Dr. ABRUTYN. The criticism was that you are trying to fit say a square peg into a round hole. The state test, for example, was not appropriate to measure their levels and, in some cases, there was an alternate test and some people were calling out for the IEP to be the sole measure. Their individual plan to be the sole measure of their progress.

So I think it goes back again just to the growth model because special education children can be measured on a growth model as well as any other child. So the growth model would answer that question.

Mr. SESTAK. It is again back to the cause of the disease. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. Principal Howell, you mentioned Pennsylvania's value-added system. Could you describe this system and how it is used?

Mr. HOWELL. Well, we do have access to it now and based on student performance over an extended period of time, particularly on standardized tests, we can measure that growth from year to year and as importantly we can predict it, so that I have not only a measure for myself but also the ability to identify students who might benefit from particular services that we have to offer.

We have that right now for our students in third through eighth grade. I think we need one more year of that so that that will be applicable to our eleventh grade students as well. The issue is that while for us a PVA system is far more useful and a far better indicator of our performance. The No Child Left Behind, the AYP data tends to invalidate it. So that if a—we talked earlier about the people who were giving us money. If the people who are giving us money choose to say, we gave you all that money, you still did not make AYP. And my response to that can be, under the PVA system I can show you substantial growth for kids in third to eighth grade.

I can show you quarterly testing and other things that shows it in high school and the answer always is, but the important score is AYP.

So while we have these other things, we have the availability of them, we need to take the AYP scores off the altar and allow us to have the opportunity to use this other data as well.

Chairman KILDEE. Let me ask you this also, you testified in support of differentiated interventions. Can you explain what sort of interventions we could change No Child Left Behind to support in order to help schools implement systemic reforms?

Mr. HOWELL. Again, Congressman, my position really is that you do not know based on the data that you collect. If, in fact, the data consistently says that Norristown Area High School is underachieving as a school, then that ought to be to somebody coming in and seeing if, in fact, that is true. And if it is true, the things that Dr. Hershberg talked about are fine by me. The things that our governor's commission suggested which includes coming in and removing me. That is okay with me too. I just want it to be based on a real assessment of our performance. I gave the PSSA test last year, the reading test, to 15 students who do not read English. Now, I knew what their score was going to be before I gave them the test. Yet when you—even though they are disaggregated in some reports, when you look at our scores, you see that a certain percentage of our kids did not score advanced or proficient. Hello? I knew that. So all I am asking—I am fine with the accountability. I am fine with the interventions. I just want the measure to be equal and to be relevant and then No Child Left Behind is fine with me.

Chairman KILDEE. Dr. Hershberg——

Mr. HOWELL. Except for that high stake testing thing.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Howell. Dr. Hershberg, Pennsylvania has its test, the standards in this test, we have the state set their own standards and do their own testing. Michigan is changing from what is called the MEAP test. So each state, and they vary. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, I think, has set pretty high standards for itself and pretty tough tests for itself. Some states have lower standards and easier tests, so that creates a little confusion when people compare schools in various states. Should we somehow not use the NAEP test to test the students but use the NAEP test to see whether the state tests have reached a certain standard or level of——

Dr. HERSHBERG. Congressman, that is a critically important question. The coming crisis in education is that even when students graduate from high school meeting the proficiency standards set by their state, they are almost everywhere, there are several exceptions, falling well short of what is now required for success. After high school, that is whether you go into the military, whether you go into higher education or whether you enter the workplace, there has been a convergence of the requirements for success and the gap between what kids are leaving at proficient levels and this reality. That is the coming crisis.

I think all but three states have standards well, well below NAEP. The rough averages—you will see twice as many kids proficient on their state tests as on the NAEP. The range—the latest

NAEP data show that only between 27 percent and 35 percent of fourth and eighth graders in all tested subjects are proficient or higher in the United States of America.

Now, I would much prefer the NAEP standards [tape cut off] by states in my mind are how much failure will the tax paying public tolerate. That is the legislature's question. They are fearful. But the NAEP standards themselves are not set in a way that meets the crisis I just alluded to at the beginning.

We ought to be asking—instead of asking a set of experts what their professional judgment is, let us set the tests that cut scores here, we should be going to those three arenas, the military, the workplace and higher education and say, what do kids need to graduate with to succeed in these three arenas? That is the way we should be doing this in the future. But if we do not speak to it right now, we are going to be in a deep and deeper hole because the state standards are watered down and totally inaccurate in terms of what is required for success in today's world.

Chairman KILDEE. Should we use the NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress—should we use NAEP to test the students or to test the test?

Dr. HERSHBERG. I think we need a better way. I think we need better tests and I also believe that this nation, as an issue of national security, is going to have to come up with national standards. Because what we have done with No Child Left Behind is create an enormous incentive to lower the bar. It is a race to the bottom.

Chairman KILDEE. Mr. Howell, you had a comment on that?

Mr. HOWELL. Congressman, the problem with using the NAEP for anything is getting kids to take it seriously. We struggle to convince them that the PSSA test that they are about to take has a potential lifetime impact on them. And so with tee shirts and breakfasts and all those things, maybe we get them to do that. And then in a matter of months later we give them the NAEP and say, here this is real important too. They do not buy it. So I do not know that I would use the current NAEP results for anything.

Chairman KILDEE. Could we use NAEP though to test the test to see whether the—I mean, we do know certain states have very, very—well, they have lower standards and easier testing. Could we use NAEP to test the test to see and at least report whether this state—and I know Pennsylvania, I know Michigan, Massachusetts have high standards and a good test. Some are rather old. Could we use NAEP to test the test to see how that state stands in relation to other states?

Mr. HOWELL. And I would say no.

Chairman KILDEE. You would say no, all right. Very good.

Mr. SESTAK. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I thought this last discussion was extremely important. I really loved your comment on national security. Everybody thinks national security is about defense. They just do not understand true national security. It is how well educated and healthy our individuals are. And this is what this is all about. The value of No Child Left Behind is that it has become an ongoing debate about education. Not like Sputnik that did it for two or three years. This will go on for a long period of time. And it is why, it is just not my district but these inner-city

ones, they are all part. It is a globalized world. It is certainly a globalized Philadelphia region. It is so important. I go down to Acker Shipyard. They cannot even find 180 tig welders. They import them from the Gulf Coast because we do not have the training attendant to the kids. Jerry Parker, President of Delaware Community College says I trained a couple hundred, I cannot get the skilled force to come and learn how to do mig and tig welding because you do not flop your helmet down, light an arc and lay a bead like 40 years ago when I had the HDs. But you now sit at a computer and have to lay that metal fabrication bead out, you have to have a higher level of education in science. This is not about going to college. This is about doing high-value manufacturing, the artisans skills and everything. So your points are very well taken and I am sorry to go on here. It is why next week we will have an education summit, another one. After our first two—this can be an economic development summit. After our first two education summits, we had the first on the economic summit. We train kids or educate them, not just out of curiosity, but then provide quality of life. And I think your concept of the workforce and businesses, small business community to understand what is attendant to what they need.

And I am sorry to go on but I thought this whole point is so important. Could I ask you a question on violence and come back to you, that you do not mind, you know, giving your test scores out. But we have heard in testimony that schools are loathe and districts are loathe to report the real violence that occurs.

And so, therefore, we really do not have a grip upon that and there are lots of stats and studies that show that. Is there something to that and, if so, what do we need to change that? What is the criteria for what we call violence and there is study after study that shows that this is a significant issue. Yes, sir.

Mr. STEVENSON. I think, first of all, in our district we are very open and clear with the annual state reporting for violence report that is required each year. But I think the larger question in relationship of schools reporting violence is some schools, who do not have the resources in order to keep their schools safe and secure, they sometimes may or may not report some things based on perception or some of what the media will report.

Mr. SESTAK. Because it makes the school less attractive?

Mr. STEVENSON. Well, it makes the school less attractive and I think there is an unfairness in relationship to how you view certain schools. I think that certain schools, depending on where they are located, whether it is urban, rural or suburban, get more attention than the others. And so, I think that the bigger question is how do we know one, ensure that all schools have safe facilities, they have the safe training on safety and then talk about what do you do when a school reports the violence.

Mr. SESTAK. I understand.

Mr. STEVENSON. Because I think that is the bigger thing. When a school——

Mr. SESTAK. Although if you——

Mr. STEVENSON [continuing]. Board says the issue——

Mr. SESTAK. Excuse me for interrupting. But if you do not have the data, you may not understand the depth of the resources needed.

Mr. STEVENSON. Well, I agree with that. You have to have the data but, you know, there has to be a balance with reporting that data and also—so when a school reports that we have a high level of incidents of violence, do we then say to them they put them on this list or then we have intervention support to make it better.

Mr. SESTAK. Do you have just a quick comment on that?

Mr. HOWELL. I agree completely. It is not the collection of the data, it is what you do with it.

Mr. SESTAK. But the studies seem to show we do not get the data.

Mr. HOWELL. But that may be why. Two years ago our pupil services guy called me in a panic because he was doing the report and it looked like we were one felony over the line. That is an absurd way to think about it. We do what we need to do to serve our population and there are times that that means asking the police to support that. I am proud of that. I am not embarrassed about it. But if, at some point, that is going to get me put me on the bad guy list, then maybe the next time I report one less felony or I call the police one less time.

Mr. SESTAK. One last question. I think I am out of time. Can we—actually that is fine. You have kind of actually answered my question which is already—can we really achieve 100 percent proficiency in our students? Again it goes back to the growth model, correct? Am I answering my own question?

Dr. ABRUTYN. 100 percent proficiency would be measured against a state test, for example, so if it is a standardized test that has a finite number of questions and right answers or wrong answers and every child has to take it and that score is what gets reported and that is the status model. And we are saying that by the year 2014, every child is going to get 100 percent of those questions correct. And that is the concept that we are doomed to failure on because it is just not possible.

It is a lofty goal and it is a high goal and it was admirable but we just will not get there, everyone knows it. So we are saying instead that the growth model is a different and better way to go because it will let every child grow every year. And we will have a target that is realistic and we want every child to grow every year. And we have a more realistic way to do that now. And even more so because we have the technology that we did not even have when the federal law went into effect. Technology is at a place where we can actually do this today.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you.

Chairman KILDEE. I am going to ask this question. I probably should have asked it earlier so you could think about it but what would be the most important single change? And if somebody has already mentioned, you want to mention another one, you can do that but the most important single change we could make in No Child Left Behind that would move us in the right direction. Congressman Sestak or Congressman Kildee, what would you recommend? We will start down here and move down the line. Mr. Kozol.

Mr. KOZOL. I was hoping you were going to ask that question, Congressman. There are a number of things, as I have indicated, that I think I would change but if I had to pick one, it would be to change the nature, the structure of the law from a punitive one to more of a supportive one.

I think that that is what it really comes down to. I mean, whatever you are going to use, whatever model you are going to use to measure success, whether it be AYP or whether it be a growth model, I think there is too much to be gained on behalf of our children, not to mention the educators, by being in a educational institution that is supported and does not live in fear of failure. Especially where we have so many public schools that are, in fact, succeeding but are distortedly painted as failing because of the current structure of the law.

Chairman KILDEE. Mr. Howell.

Mr. HOWELL. And that was stated eloquently. The only thing that I would add to that is that we need a way to acknowledge that many of the things that our public schools are called upon to do to enrich the quality of life for our students and things that we do well, do not fit on a standardized test.

Chairman KILDEE. Dr. Hershberg.

Dr. HERSHBERG. I would like to begin by saying the notion that before No Child Left Behind, we had a really terrific public school system and this terrible federal law came in and screwed everything up is an absolute misstatement of reality. As flawed as No Child Left Behind has been, I do not know any superintendent who has not said something to the effect of, we have spent more time in the last couple of years thinking about how to make kids learn than we ever have in our career.

Now, the single most important change is everything we talked about in terms of tracking individual kids and going to a growth model. Without any reservation, that is the single most important thing we could do. It will change everything we do. We collect the data secondly at the classroom level. Let me make a very important point. The unit accountability in No Child Left Behind is the school but the variation in the quality of instruction is much greater within schools than it is between schools. So when we get an average score, it obscures the outstanding teaching and the really terrible teaching, the kind of teaching that harms our children. So if I were to go a little further, I would say growth models at which the data is collected at the classroom level, then we will have the building blocks to understand what is actually going on in our buildings.

Principals are running schools, they have accountability and they do not know empirically what is going on inside each of their classrooms. This has to change and it should change and this technology will enable us to change.

Chairman KILDEE. Dr. Abrutyn.

Dr. ABRUTYN. The single most important thing that the reauthorization can do, I think, is level the playing field and give us a more accurate picture of success in the schools. So I would say moving away from the descriptor of adequate yearly progress and labeling schools as failing or not failing and moving towards the growth model would be the thing to do because it does level the playing

field and gives us an idea of whether individual students are moving forward and it gives us the information through technology and this is the age of information. So we have the opportunity today to get that information and use it as a tool to help us move kids forward.

Chairman KILDEE. Mr. Stevenson.

Mr. STEVENSON. I would just add to what the superintendent said but in a larger context of equity and funding. As a native of South Carolina who grew up in one of the poorest school districts in the state and then compare myself to working and had an opportunity to work in a place like Radnor. My niece and nephew, who attend that school, take the same test that the students at Radnor take. The highest math in that school district is Algebra I. There is no honors English. There is no AP. So when we are talking about taking tests, you have to take in account the equity in relation in backgrounds of the students where they come from and then have them to have the same expectations of students who in districts that have more resources.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. You were hoping I would ask that question, I am glad I did. I think it was very, very helpful. For a final round or a final statement, Admiral Sestak.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. One comment and then a statement. I would gather in the growth model we just have to make sure that the growth is sufficient particularly for those that are further behind. And so I gather whatever that marker or stalking horse is, is a very important part of determining not just the model but the standards in that. And that would have to be determined.

I would just like to say before the Chairman summarizes, thank you again to the Radnor High School principal and superintendent, to the panelists, in particular to everyone who took the time out of the day to come. I know if this was not during the school day for it to come at many times teachers hold these on Saturdays and others. That shows how much interest there that people wanted to come out. Trying to get a schedule to have a Chairman up here was very much appreciated. I cannot say thank you enough to you, sir, and I very much think—I learn always something from this. So I think it was a great panel and, again, for everyone who is here, the comments and statements can be submitted and I am always open, as you know, to getting e-mails. Just thank you. It was a very worthwhile time spent.

Chairman KILDEE. Thank you very much. I concur with you. This has been—I think you can tell yourself, this has been an outstanding panel. It has been very, very helpful and this will be helpful to us in going back to Washington to reauthorize this. I cannot tell you for sure what the bill is going to be like but we certainly have learned a lot by coming to Pennsylvania and listening to you and I am very glad that Congressman Sestak asked me to come up here. I know we may phase in certain things, so we had a five-year reauthorization, that is when I first met the present President of the United States, on a formal basis in the cabinet room and he and I had a disagreement there. We have agreed on certain things since and disagreed on certain things since, as I have with all the six Presidents that I have served since I have been in Congress. But the President proposes and the Congress disposes and we come

out and listen to people like yourself who are really on the front line of education. We have an enormous responsibility, the future of this country. It depends so much upon what you do. We are competing in a global economy and what will give us the cutting edge in that competition is an educated and trained workforce and that is very, very important.

I have already said that education is a local function. You have your local boards of education. It is a state responsibility. I know the Michigan constitution says that the legislature shall provide for a system of free and public schools. And it is a federal concern. It is a federal concern for two reasons. First of all, we live in a very mobile society. A person educated in Michigan may wind up in Mississippi. A person educated in Pennsylvania may wind up in California, vice versa. We live in a very mobile society. Plus, as I said, we are competing in that global economy, so it is a federal concern. But ultimately, it is a local function. It is a state responsibility and we want our federal concern not to suffocate you but to help you. And that is my goal. We are not perfect. No Child Left Behind certainly is not perfect. Quite a departure from the federal role before but you have been very, very helpful to us today.

So I will have to use our parliamentary procedure to close this up since this is an official hearing. First of all, those of you in the audience who wish to submit, as I mentioned earlier, testimony for inclusion in the official record, you will talk to counsel, Mr. Horwich. He will give you his e-mail. You may e-mail that or mail it to us. And as previously ordered also, members of Congress, of this Committee, will have seven calendar days to submit additional materials for the hearing record. Any member who wishes to submit follow-up questions in writing to the witnesses, you may get some questions in writing, should coordinate with the majority staff within the requisite time. Without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

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