

BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
BUDGET HEARING

JUNE 8, 2011

The Budget Hearing of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Area School District was held on Monday, June 8, 2011, at 6:01 p.m. in the Auditorium of East Hills Middle School, 2005 Chester Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017.

BUDGET
HEARING

President Cann called for the Roll Call by the Board Secretary:

MEMBERS
PRESENT

Members present: Directors Burkhardt, Faccinetto, Follweiler, Ortiz (arrived at 6:20 p.m.), Leeson, Tenaglia, and President Cann – 7

Absent: Director Amato and McKeon - 2

Others present: Dr. Joseph Roy, Superintendent of Schools; Stacy Gober, Board Secretary; administrators, members of the press and other interested citizens and staff members.

OTHERS
PRESENT

President Cann offered Courtesy of the Floor on Budget items.

COURTESY OF THE
FLOOR

Steven Antalics
737 Ridge Street
Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Antalics stated: The past board and the present board must be held responsible for the roles in the education of the children of Bethlehem. Hold both responsible but for dramatically different reasons. The former, the Board is grossly derelict in its duties by acting as a rubber stamp to an irresponsible superintendent in his physically outrageous building programs and the lack of fiscal oversight in the prevention of fiscal financial loses in the swaps negotiations. This reputation has unfairly been carried over to the present board causing an acute sensitivity in financial matters. The present board must be held accountable for succumbing to public pressure and by adding politics to its agenda. In this budget period they must do the right thing rather than one that is politically correct. This would mean to give to the present administration sufficient funds to properly educate the children by not eliminating certain programs, which are demanded to achieve this. Programs like preschool, kindergarten and teaching teens. It is not the fault of the board that government funds have dried up but this does not relieve them of fulfilling their mission. How can this be remedied? Simply, but suicidal. To raise taxes to allocate sufficient funds to support these programs. Proper

education of children is demanded if we wish to build future competent citizens, which is the prime mission of the board and the administration. The administration has attempted to do this. The money must be there, and if the government acts irresponsibly then it becomes incumbent upon the board to act responsibly by picking up the slack which can only mean required raising of taxes to meet and justify the needs of the administration.

Jaime Ott
Teacher – Freedom High School

Ms. Ott stated: I am here to represent some of our fellow furloughed members. Today as I was packing up my classroom over at Freedom and preparing for the summer season, I began to think of how meaning changes as our lives change. Of course the end of another school year always brings about a sense of nostalgia but seeing as though I have no guarantee of return for the next academic year as one of the 56 furloughed educators, this year's sense of nostalgia was perhaps a bit more profound. When taking down some personal classroom mementos, I came across a poster that was bequeathed to me from the teacher that mentored me who occupied my classroom here prior to me and the poster read: "Cheaters risk everything and gain nothing". Of course the original message that I intended for this poster to reiterate to students was "keep your eyes on your paper and there is going to be consequences if you copy your homework during a lunch right before my class". However, with time and the building of relationships throughout the last three years at Freedom High School for me, this poster has come to reinforce a variety of things and to back many of the themes that have been presented over my time. It's to remind students about honesty and not to lie or cheat others or themselves and to put effort into all that they do. Today, I thought of this poster in a new way. Its meaning can be a metaphor for the difficult decisions that are being made in the face of education and in the face of our very own school district today. It is time now to weigh the potential consequences against the risks that are taking in the Bethlehem Area School District. Before voting this evening on the proposed budget, it is important to see the inherent risk involved in cheating young, vibrant and invested teachers from their classrooms. Likewise, there is risk involved in removing those influential people from the lives of our students. Granted, money and fiscal responsibilities are a necessary factor and at times a necessary evil in any schools operating budget. But, how much is the

quality of education being risked? How much are our own students being cheated by our proposed 2011-2012 operating budget? How can we possibly aim to make AYP with a reduction in force that eliminates six (6) English and six (6) math teachers from the secondary level. How possibly can we successfully realign our curriculum and prepare our students for success on the Keystone Examination with 56 less influential teachers at the elementary and core content high school levels? While it is no secret that the state level has left our districts as well as many others in a state of financial peril, many others in similar and worse financial states have managed to bridge this gap without losing the secret to a districts success, which is their teachers. For example, the Easton Area School District through concession of their 711 employees was able to not furlough a single educator this year. Another district in Roswald, Maine was able to make up a \$4,000,000 deficit by asking each district employee to forgo one sick day into a bank and work one day without pay per month. This enabled them to preserve all of their faculty and staff as well. While I agree that the claim for the state funding decrease has cheated us out of what we need to operate this upcoming year, I still believe the risk to education by removing teachers is far too great to be ignored. Yes, there is a deficit. Yes we have to make up the difference, but let us work together to find an alternative that won't sacrifice our district's reputation for excellence in all things, our class sizes and the ability to find success for our students. Elected members of the board, in closing, prior to casting your final vote this evening, please consider the risk you are taking for the future of our schools if you cheat our students from their teachers. Thank you for your time.

Chris Nelson
738 Apollo Drive
Bethlehem, PA

John Carlo Kassis
5002 Pretence Place
Bethlehem, PA

John Carlo Pachenzo
773 Barrymore Lane
Bethlehem, PA

Chris stated: We are here to present a petition signed by over 200 families involved in the middle school soccer program through the Bethlehem Area School District. It is our collective

belief that soccer should not be singled out as a sole item cut from middle school sports.

John stated: The evidence against this cut is strong. This sport has more opportunities for players than any other sport other than football. At East Hills alone we had 38 members of the soccer team. The argument that club opportunities are available for soccer is illogical in that there are local club opportunities for every sport offered in the middle school. Further, if this sport is cut, there is no sport for boys in the spring. The savings of \$24,000 is less than 1/10 of the percentage point of the proposed budget. Lastly, we believe that this cut is simply unfair to those of us who play soccer. If you must save \$24,000 on middle school sports, we understand and encourage you to assess a fee to all athletes. A mere \$34 per middle school athlete per sport will more than cover this expense.

John stated: In closing, we ask that you carefully consider all the cuts to middle school. You have cut our teams, thematic programs, and now have started on sports. Where does it end? It is likely that clubs will be cut or something not offered because our teachers will be busy teaching extra sessions and preparing new courses. When discipline issues arise both at the school and in the hours after school, do not be surprised. There is likely to be nothing left for school spirit or for us to take pride in. Please reconsider this cut or an alternative funding source like a booster club or pay to play. Thank you.

Leanna Norwood
Former Student at East Hills Middle School
3176 Gloucester Drive
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Norwood stated: I am here to talk on behalf of a program that was actually recently shut down entirely. Many of the people you see here today are here to support this program. This program is called Harmonium. I am not sure if you've heard about it yet. Nine years ago, I stood in this building and I actually sat in this very auditorium as an unsuspecting sixth grader and I actually witnessed something that has changed my life. I know that sounds absolutely corny, but seventh grade, a year later, after witnessing this incredible music program on this very stage, I stood in front of two teachers, shaking like a leaf. It was my very first audition at anything ever. I had never sung but this program had inspired me so much seeing these kids, it was actually in collaboration with another program

which eventually became part of Harmonium called Songs of the Century, and these kids looked like real musicians, like they were part of that band and I wanted to be a part of that so bad, so I stood in front of these two teachers absolutely shaking so hard that I had to turn around and face a wall throughout my entire audition. Probably from taking pity on me or maybe because they saw something in me that I didn't see in myself, I made it into the program, Harmonium, and like many of the other kids around me, by the end of the year I was standing on this stage by myself singing songs from the sixties that year. The point is that throughout the years, different decades, I grew as a musician. I found my absolute passion in music and to this day I can stand in a room full of anyone and sing my heart out because I found my passion through this program. I am not the only one. Incredibly, I started a petition because I was angry that this program got shut down and it has been up for about two days going around and it has a little over 200 signatures and I've been getting emails from parents saying, this changed my kids life too. My dad always tells me the best thing we could have ever done for this family was move you to Bethlehem because I came here and because I was a part of this program, and I am 20 years old and I am standing here in front of you because this program changed my life. It changed a lot of other people's lives too. I've been getting emails from parents and kids who are absolutely devastated over this and the thing that amazes me the most about this program is that it used absolutely none of the budget whatsoever. All the money that was put into this program came from these seats here a couple times a year when we would put on concerts, \$5 a ticket, and we would pack this auditorium because people knew, aside from the starry eyed parents, that we were something. I think that before the checker boarding of the teachers had occurred and the spear head of this program was removed from this school, a little investigation could have been done to just discover what exactly you were shutting down. A lot is changing now. There is a lot of people and a lot of students with their hopes up to become part of this program that is now never going to get the chance. There is a teacher who has been running this program for a decade. It has been ten years that this program has been going on. I am proud to say I have barely ever missed a concert and neither have a lot of veterans, Harmonium Veterans, and I can speak for a lot of people that say that they are a completely different person now because of it. I think that music and the arts is extremely important despite the reputation that it gets because we all know that the budget mostly goes into building new sports arenas and fixing up the

gym and things like that. We don't really ask for any money. You should probably, just hopefully, reconsider what you have taken away from us because we really didn't use any of your money but we did lose a teacher and because of that we are losing a program. I understand that the whole entire school wants to change its academic curriculum so that it is strictly academic and remove music from the lives of the students, but I just hope that you can realize from the volume of people who are coming to speak out for this, how many lives that could have been changed that won't be. Thank you.

Krista Ebert
300 Timothy Lane
Bethlehem Township, PA

Ms. Ebert stated: I am here tonight in support of Harmonium. With all the budget cuts I understand that there are some things that just can't continue but you somehow manage to keep football, wrestling, basketball and cheerleading. Sure they suffered a little with their being no away game cheering or something like that but that have not been taken away completely. I am not suggesting that you add more cuts to any of those programs, but I am making the point that you have managed to find a compromise, so why not do the same at middle school level. You have managed to remove the team aspect from all four of the middle schools to save money. Teachers will now have to teach an extra class a day. Harmonium takes two teachers, two very special teachers, mind you, whose certifications combined allow them to run the Harmonium program. It has worked really well since it has started in 2001. In fact, three years ago they became fully thematic. Now the rug has been pulled from under Harmoniums feet. Dr. Silva said in a recent Morning Call article that middle schools are more of a family atmosphere and support mechanism for puberty as well as curriculum. Don't you think Harmonium is worth keeping? As students, we are told by our teachers and our parents to try as hard as we can, do our best to be the best we can be. Be kind and considerate of others. From my perspective and with all do respect I am not sure that that is the case with your decision to end Harmonium. It is such a close-knit family and from early on in the year, the teachers become mentors to everyone of us. They are experts at getting the best of us and they see the good in each of us. What you have to admit, is not an easy thing to do. They guide those difficult 8th graders through the year and see in us what we haven't seen in ourselves. These teachers are one of a kind

multiplied by two. They are all that you would hope a teacher to be. Even without the team aspect, these two teachers will not let a student down. Closing Harmonium or transferring one of the teachers will cause Harmonium to come to an end. This is a tragic mistake, which should be avoided at all costs. If you walked into our classroom during the past school year and opened a textbook on any page a Harmonium student wouldn't just recite from his or her notes or repeat what they had memorized. A Harmonium student will give you a full and detailed explanation along with their opinion on the subject because we have complete understanding of what we are taught in the classroom. We have held discussions and have not just heard dates and numbers. In my entire nine years of school I have never been taught that way. We use the Wickki and submit papers via email. Research is done on line. Work is stored in Google docs. We went on a field trip to New York City. At an art museum we had sheets to complete about different pieces we saw. We didn't just write on the paper, we all took initiative to take photos with our phones and text our notes. When we got back to the classroom we transferred them to Google docs. Pretty astounding stuff for 8th graders, isn't it. That is our Harmonium teachers ~ breaking new ground every day. You must find a way to keep Harmonium program going. It would mean 50-60 eighth grade students would experience the best year of their lives next year just like we did and the last thing I have to say, this is the first time I have received straight A's on my report card for the entire year.

Victoria Scovin
2415 Ivan Street
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Scovin stated: Dr. Roy and Dr. Silva may remember my emails I sent to them last week with regard to saving the Harmonium program. In those emails I explained what the program has done for me and I would like to share the same with all of you this evening. Harmonium as most of you know is a musical program that bases pretty much all of our academics on music and music is most of the time involved. We definitely have a curriculum that we have to follow, and we learn enough about it to be successful in high school, but what you probably don't know is that for 10 years our teachers have done everything they can to make this program what they want it to be and for you to just take that all away from them in an instant is horrifying to the students in my class and especially to the teachers, Mr. Cunningham and Mrs. Volpotto. They

basically, give up their entire personal lives for 180 days to give us what we need for life and for education. They will give up their lunch to go over a certain subject with one of us. They will stay for an hour after school to help us in a subject they don't even teach and it is sad that you just took what they live for away from them. At a previous meeting one of your statements was that you give each school their individuality and by taking away our schools thematic programs including the one that didn't cost you a penny is devastating. It is hypocritical of you. You went against your statement. I just wanted you to know that our class is very disappointed with your poor decision. You took away what most students wanted a chance to participate in and what former Harmonium students revisit and cherish. In your reply Dr. Roy you said that I should know that it is not accurate to say the program doesn't cost a penny. Due to the budget challenges we face, we are revising the middle school team model because it is not the most efficient use of staffing and that holds true for Harmonium as well. That doesn't mean the program isn't wonderful, it is. But to transfer a teacher who has taught History, Social Studies and Science to the 8th graders and then to move that teacher into an elementary music position simply because elementary music is one of her certifications, just makes no sense to me. It seems that the checker boarding decision at least in this case, does less for the district then it should. It is bad enough that middle school teaming is being dissolved, why would you choose to move a teacher who is experienced in dealing with 14 year olds and understands them and speaks in a way that gets through to them. Was it taken into consideration when decisions were being made? I realize you have come into the district during a difficult time. I appreciate that you and your administration have a difficult job to do, but please rethink this decision. Keep the Harmonium teachers at East Hills so that they can have some semblance of the program. Give it a chance. Don't ruin it. It doesn't have to become a casualty of these budget cuts. We have brought with us something for each of you to take away and look at after the meeting. Please accept these DVD's and writings and take time to look at them. A sort of homework if you like. These were put together by the class of 2011 on our own time at home and from it you will see that the program creates good, responsible, forward thinking young adults who are fully prepared to enter the 9th grade. Thank you.

President Cann stated: I know you gentleman said you had a petition and if anyone else has papers they want the board to have, you could just bring it down at anytime and put it on

either end and we will pass it through and we will all look at it. I also just wanted to mention, there might be a misunderstanding, we are not voting on the budget tonight. This is just a discussion. The voting meeting is on Monday.

Dr. Roy stated: We have a brief PowerPoint presentation to provide and update, and to review changes to the proposed final budget that was adopted by the board in May. The bottom line is that the milage rate remains the same; however, there are changes in revenues and expenditures that reflect both refinements to projections and new information that has been received in the past month or so.

PRESENTATION OF
BUDGET
INFORMATION

This slide shows just the overall changes. You will notice that the change in expenditure from the approved tentative final budget, to tonight's proposed final budget, on both expenditures and revenues, but they offset each other and the deficit remains the same. The milage needed remains the same and the percent tax increase at 1.7 percent. So the expenditure changes are offset by revenue changes.

To go into a little more detail on the revenue adjustments, we had a relatively minor reduction in the Title I grant application; we have received more information that is still not final. But we received more information on what we can expect to receive.

We have now included into the revenue side of the budget interim real estate tax, specifically the Sands Hotel opened, we had held off including that until the hotel opened, though it was scheduled to open on Memorial Day and indeed it did, there are often delays in the opening of large hotels like that.

Also, on the Accountability Block Grant we now are adding into our proposed budget the \$665,000 that reflects the budget that was passed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, their budget bill. Now that budget bill needs to go to the Senate and the Senate needs to pass a bill and eventually have it signed by the Governor, but in comparison to the Governor's budget, the House of Representatives added money to Basic Education, Bethlehem's Share on the Accountability Block Grants side was \$665,000, and on the feed back from our local legislatures they felt that that number is a pretty solid number that even as it goes through the next steps with the Senate and the Governor that that number might be changed marginally but was a pretty solid number. So we have included that on the revenue side

and later you will see on the expenditure side as well.

Similarly the Pennsylvania House budget bill restored a piece of what we lost in the Governor's proposed budget under the reimbursement for Social Security. So, the district pays for employee's social security, and we get reimbursed from the state that was zeroed out in the Governor's budget. A slight increase now so we have included that on the revenue side as well and then the final item here is more an accounting change.

The Athletic fund has always been a stand alone budget or a stand alone fund that wasn't counted in the general operating budget which is what we are focused on this evening. Under new accounting rules that come into effect this year, for us July 1st, the athletic stand alone fund needs to be counted into the general operating budget as well, so that also goes, you'll see on the revenue side and the expenditure side so the impact is neutral. We are just kind of taking that out that stand-alone budget and putting it inside the general operating budget.

On the expenditure side you will see the offsetting reduction in Title I expenditures because of the anticipated reduction in the Title I grant revenue.

We have made additional refinements in our educational programs department, specifically we are able because of stimulus money that was in this year's, the current year's budget, we were able to make additional purchases of textbooks in particular, so we have refined that and reduced expenditures in that area for next year looking for reductions.

Importantly, on the next one, the salary adjustment, as we went through the checker boarding process, in the end we are not able to reduce as many as positions as initially proposed. Specifically because early in the process we proposed, not replacing 15 retirees, this was in January or February. Since then we have then made proposals to reduce a large number of additional professional staff and due to the large number of subsequent reductions, we could not just absorb those 15 retirements without increasing class sizes and impacting the program changes beyond what we had proposed to the board and approved by the Department of Education. So in essence we had to replace 12 of the 15 retirements, only 3 were we able not to replace on top of all the other reductions. Plus the refining of staffing over the past several years in order to avoid reducing staff, the district had placed permanent employees into

long term sub positions, and in the long run, that is a more costly impact and that refinement accounted for about the equivalent of seven (7) positions and those 12 plus 7, got us to that \$1,000,000 expenditure number.

We also did an analysis of tuition reimbursement because we will have fewer employees we reduced the amount of tuition reimbursement that we have budgeted by \$100,000.

Also in looking at as we approach the end of year expenditures in the health care in our self funded health insurance the end as well as reduction in the size of our work force for next year, we made a reduction to the health care line item.

You will see then the ABG, Accountability Block Grant, proposed expenditures which we will go into detail on the next couple of slides and that again is the balance, we added it to the expenditure side, we added it to the revenue side. I will just pause for a second to mention to on the Accountability Block Grant that again this is until the state budget is passed, that is not a for sure. The message we are getting from our state reps is it's a pretty sure, so we are planning for it now, rather than after the fact later in the summer, but the understanding would be that the items that we talk about, the restoration of cuts that we will propose this evening as a result of that Accountability Block Grant money are contingent on receipt of that money. So, if the ABG doesn't come through, then the restoration of cuts wouldn't happen either.

You will also see the balancing of the Athletic Fund as I mentioned for accounting purposes it is moved into the Budget, into the general operating budget, so it goes on both the revenue and on the expenditure side.

So in the end, the revenues as I mentioned on the first slide and expenditure changes balance out.

I am now going to ask Dr. Silva to speak in more detail about the Accountability Block Grant and what administratively we would like to recommend for restoration of cuts using that \$665,000. First he is going to speak to the criteria and the philosophy that we used in identifying which of the cuts that have been previously recommended we would suggest restoring.

Dr. Silva stated: Thank you Dr. Roy, thank you President Cann. As Dr. Roy mentioned, the district is potentially entitled to \$665,000 worth of Accountability Block Grants designated by the State of Pennsylvania. Its primary purpose being improving student achievement throughout the commonwealth. That \$665,000 and how we would be able to spend it or use it would be subsequent to the vote of the board in a subsequent meeting. But tonight we wanted to make sure that as we are developing our budget plans and our spending priorities for next year that in the classic both sides of the ledger we would be able to have what the revenue would be and what the core responding use of that revenue would be as far as its academic programs with the knowledge that if the ABG money did not come through the other parts would not go forward with the spending, so that would avoid having to open up the budget at a later time, we would just account for the mechanism now on both sides of the balance sheet.

Throughout this entire very difficult budget season, we've tried to maintain some common principles as far as what went into our decision-making as in our administrative recommendations. And we wanted to avoid the traps that many school districts find themselves in with budgets that aren't sustainable or aren't scalable. I will never criticize another superintendent or school board again now, knowing how difficult it is to not use one time monies for continuing program expenses. It is when you have grant funds very difficult to resist the use of those funds and ways that we wish we could use them, but in long term we have to make sure that our budget decisions can shed the stimulus that we have had and can be scalable and sustainable over years to come. So if and when we get this additional funding, we should make sure our use of it, is scalable, meaning that we can expand a particular service or a particular educational program at this time, but if in future years when grant money might not be there, it is not left onto the general operating budget to be able to sustain without the dedicated revenue. We also want to make sure that it is sustainable year after year if it is part of our budget and if it isn't, it has to be able to go away at a time when there are no funds.

Ideally, Accountability Block Grants many school districts find use with them using them for one-time purposes. One-time expenses. Because that is more in line of the definition of scalability and sustainability. We also recommend administratively that we use the expenditures for the areas that we have identified on our Roadmap to Educational Excellence.

On those data indicators that we have been using since December and January in core learning, stretch learning, and in student engagement and we get progress towards those goals but also in a way that gets us the greatest bang for the buck. Both financially and academically. We want to make sure that the benefits of the Accountability Block Grant can be shared with as many students as possible, so that they can enjoy the benefits.

So putting that all together, our administrative recommendation for the use, a strategy for the Accountability Block Grant funds would be as follows: To restore some of our full day kindergarten programs and support class size reduction in the earlier grades where some of those students frankly are going to be more vulnerable because of the reduction of the preschool system, Pre-K programs and having those needy learners in high impact schools. So if we invested in the staff to restore some of our full day kindergarten capacity and maintain a good stable class size for learning in the younger grades, that would be the bulk of the ABG expenditure and if in future years, the expenditure wasn't there, there is always the option of a half day kindergarten as we move forward. But, for next year we believe that would have a long-term impact, have a good impact at the time and subsequently for those children. We also believe that we in our core learning areas in our roadmap that we want to make sure that we make the needed interventions for students who are showing us that they are not progressing as quickly as we'd like, those students who are significantly behind grade level. One of the front line strategies that our district has used, which many school districts have used, is the scientifically based program of Read 180, which is a very programmatic intervention for students behind grade level that requires instruction, but a strong technology integration piece which leads to a lot of use of data and areas of interest for students on the computer. So we would plan on using approximately \$171,530 to support those literacy interventions and replace some very aging Read 180 computers that have been running lately. Mr. Arbushites has a larger technology plan that he is planning on delivering shortly but in that plan the particular computers that are now running Read 180 are getting aged. The E-Max those big white ones and we currently have 207 of those, which may not be able to sustain the next generation of Read 180 software. Which is constantly improving. The benefit of putting the funds into Read 180 is not just the direct benefits behind grade level, but those computers can also be used by other students at other times for other purposes. So we

get a nice benefit for not only the students in the intervention courses but all students and Read 180 does apply both to our elementary and middle school. So where full day kindergarten primarily at a strategy with youngsters, literacy support through Read 180 computers could be distributed through all schools, but the primary benefit would fall upon intermediate students and middle school students and then although it is not a classic part of the ABG funding as far as scientifically based programs, the grant does allow, Mrs. Tate checked, on certain social emotional criteria for the restoration of our high school resource officers to the cost of \$180,000. This is consistent with our roadmap because if you remember we are measuring through our school improvement surveys, our parent surveys, the indicators of how parents, students, and children feel about their security in school and whether we are making progress in school safety and our code of conduct and just the general levels of engagement that students are showing in school and certainly we want to maintain the safety and security of our high schools. Kids have to feel safe and engaged to be able to learn. We believe that restoring the high school resource officers with these funds is a scalable decision that is allowable under those criteria. So adding those together, it comes to roughly the approximately where the ABG portion would be if we had the amount that is reported as a solid amount from our local legislators. Much thought went into it, but we try to live by the principles of good budgeting and our roadmap and what will really effect the organization as broadly as it can possibly be and at this time also retain some of our professional staff who work with some of our youngest children. Back to you Dr. Roy.

Dr. Roy stated: On the last couple of slides, just a review of an updated slide on the critical tasks that are under way. Internally the reassignment and identification of furloughs has taken place, the tentative notice of assignments were due today. That is a fluid target too because as we receive and we have in the last couple of days, retirements, then if someone is retiring, then that is one less person who would be furloughed. So, that is ongoing making adjustments to that. Ongoing, as well with the redesign of the program and scheduling particularly at the middle school level, the support staff as well, we have approximately 70 positions across all of our non-professional, non-teacher areas as well and so the identification of reassignments and furloughs there is ongoing and then the last check there, the review final staff assignments ~ the process is we followed the strict by the contract and by law checker

boarding to properly identify furloughed teachers and then where people ended up was the tentative notice of assignments they received. We do have time now to step back and that had to go out by today, we do have time now to step back and take a look at those reassignments and we are gathering information from individual teachers who are meeting with me, who are sending emails, working with the BEA to get input on those assignments, as well as from our principals, and so with all that information we will take a step back, look at the tentative assignments and then make final decisions for final assignments and that information would happen in July.

So on the last slide, just to close, again with the budget numbers, so we have the expenditures and the revenues, the deficit which requires a .75 milage increase which is equal to a 1.7 percent tax increase which is the same as was approved by the board in the proposed final budget in May.

Director Leeson stated: I am going to start with thematic programs. I saw in the document that I received late last night, the June 8th budget shows that this was recommended on March 24th at the March 24th workshop, thematic expense reduction. I went back to my March 24th papers, and I don't have anything on thematic programs being recommended for reduction and until we started to receive emails, I was not aware that we were looking at the thematic programs. A number of years ago, we looked at it, and I believe it was the Monagacci program and its academic impact. At that time, we had a number of children, it was a broad range of children. Children who were performing at low basic, at basic, at proficient, and at advanced and what we saw from that data was that the students, and most of the students moved, they moved from below basic to basic, from basic to proficient, proficient to advanced, but what was most notable about the thematic program was that they sustained those gains even into 11th grade, and they also sustained their academic report card progress throughout their high school years. That is long ago, and I don't recall that we have looked at our thematic programs for a number of years. But if we are seeing that type of academic progress through thematic programs, I am wondering why, number 1, we would be thinking about getting rid of it, but number 2, it would not be included in the restoration, if that is still holding true and I am not sure that it is, but if that is still holding true, it seems like a relatively low, right now, we are looking at \$18,000?

BUDGET DISCUSSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Roy stated: That item was currently budgeted out of grant funds, but it is in the budget for field trips for the thematic programs. That was just field trip related. On the larger issue, the thematic programs are a form of teaming, and so the proposal to move away from the middle school teaming with the goal of having teachers in the end, the rescheduling as teachers teach an additional period, which then results in the need for fewer staff, that was all part of the move away from middle school teaming. Thematic programs are one form of the middle school teams. Dr. Silva can talk to you about how we are trying to get at some of these.

Director Leeson stated: To that point, in the document that we received last night, it says thematic programs, \$18,000.00, it does not say, field trips and so it shows the cost of the thematic programs as being \$18,000.00.

Dr. Roy stated: Right and that was other than the staffing, that is the districts contribution to the thematic programs and was for those field trips.

Director Leeson stated: Have we looked at reconfiguring and keeping the thematic programs just as we're reconfiguring the teaming. Have we looked at that. Again, I think first we have to look at the academic benefits and are the academic benefits still there? Do those academic benefits hold for all of our thematic programs? If they don't, this is kind of a moot discussion.

Dr. Roy stated: I'll mention that there are a number of things that we are losing in this budget that have positive academic impact, SPARK, all day kindergarten for some, and we could go down the list. These are the difficult decisions that we have had to make. The thematic programs were not a particular issue, they were just part of the larger restructuring of the middle school schedule.

Director Leeson stated: Dr. Roy, I take exception to that because we have asked for longitudinal studies on our SPARK program and have not received them. So I do not have data that shows me that in our system we are seeing those kind benefits. I have not seen the academic benefits of our full day kindergarten program. We have gotten people who give us analogous information but we don't necessarily have data. I am saying, I am going back a number of years ago, we had data on the thematic programs and it was pretty impressive data back in

those days.

Dr. Silva stated: I would agree with Dr. Roy, the issue of the thematic programs is not the \$18,000 which was the budgeted item for the transportation that those thematic programs, not just Harmonium, but others used in that budget, which I believe was spent using stimulus funds last year. The issues are really about the collaborative time that the teachers have in their planning to be able to do the type of unique integrative study and the planning and the events and the time out of class that the students use to integrate their music and core subjects. It really is a human resources issue. The time for those teachers to be able to plan that and in the proposal that changed the middle school schedule, that time affects all middle school teachers, just not Harmonium teachers.

Now the side of what you are mentioning sounds good to me. I like program evaluation as far as using data to see if certain programs are working over time. I happen to believe very strongly that integrated learning is a good thing at that developmental age and we would have to take a look at that in terms of what outcomes, students PSSA testing scores, that might be one of the criteria, but I would also consider kids staying in school. Kids being involved in music in high school. There would have to be a lot that would go into the program evaluation that would determine the success of Harmonium, but at its core in terms of our budget discussions, it is a staffing time issue, not necessarily a data issue.

Director Leeson stated: Then we don't know if there is an academic benefit to the thematic programs, is that what we're saying at this time?

Dr. Silva stated: I am saying, there hasn't been a program evaluation that identified the criteria, gone through the rigorous evaluation of it, and make conclusions on it on the base program.

Director Leeson stated: I'm wondering because I think President Cann didn't you receive information on the Sequoia Program.

President Cann stated: I don't know if it was old or new, but my son is in Sequoia this past school year and when the students were applying last school year, the teachers presented to parents who were interested, the benefits of Sequoia and did

present PSSA testing results showing positive outcomes at that time. So, some of the programs might have it.

Dr. Silva stated: There might be isolated examples of showing it, and those are all good things. You were asking for basically for a program evaluation.

President Cann stated: A district study.

Director Leeson stated: But that is the Sequoia program, when you say isolated that is the Sequoia Program, Harmonium program, I think we have to look at each one of them, but we're getting rid of something that we haven't looked at that carefully and my next question is, what is the cost of the thematic programs. Again, in our documents, it says \$18,000, but what is the cost then?

Dr. Silva stated: It would be the amount of time that the teachers now are spending in the classroom. If instead of being in their team planning period times where they are doing the Harmonium or the Sequoia planning, now they are teaching. The benefit of that being, that now fewer teachers are needed, so you would have to calculate how many sections of planning that the thematic teams were using and how much that equivalent is into the number of periods of a teacher and then you add up the teachers. So, that could be done.

Dr. Roy stated: The related issue too is that the thematic programs don't exist in a vacuum, they exist within the middle school schedule. And so in the revised middle school schedule, there were challenges with the teachers teaching that extra period, team them in the same way they have been in the past. So it is not just a matter of the cost of having that extra team period, it is also the reality of scheduling it in a different schedule.

Director Leeson stated: Have we looked at scheduling this in a different way?

Dr. Roy stated: Yes.

President Cann stated: I just want to clarify what you are saying, that as a practical matter, even if the funds were available to have thematic programs they would be the only teaming situations in a non teaming middle school?

Dr. Silva stated: That would mean you would have to dedicate staff specifically for those purposes and not for the other purpose and that would be an additional staffing expense.

President Cann stated: Is it possible to integrate a single teaming situation into a non teaming middle school scheduling situation?

Dr. Silva stated: You would have to give certain teachers additional planning time and not others.

Director Burkhardt stated: The total cost is 18 teachers, 18 academic teachers in our middle schools are losing their jobs because we have added a sixth teaching period instead of team planning time. That is a very simple answer. Now, I would also argue that some of the best teams are not necessarily, and I am not against any of thematic teams because I think they are wonderful ways for our kids to integrate learning, but some of our best teams are teams where its strictly academics where in some schools, they have taken our most at risk kids and put them together with teachers who love those kinds of kids and they are doing wonderful things, but they are not a high profile team, so I think to even have this discussion that maybe we would allow for some of our kids to have teaming and others not, that would be a very poor decision to make.

Director Ortiz stated: I just have to respectfully disagree with Director Leeson on the fact on SPARK. The fact that we don't have any studies, is really our fault as a school board. So, if this type of program has been going on for many years and right now what do we have to offer for early childhood education. We don't have anything and I believe we will disservice our kids, especially the ones that are at risk, if we don't provide this type of service and we just wipe this whole thing out without giving it a second thought. Now we are going back to middle school and high school, but we are not focusing on early intervention and for a school district this size, we have our priorities wrong. We have to start by giving every child an opportunity to learn and be able to get to that level that we won't have to have so many interventions on the long run. So, I think we are setting our priorities wrong. Early childhood is important. Kindergarten is important. Also, I believe on the topic of middle school teaming. We have to service those kids because we didn't give them an opportunity to be at the same levels with others. We have to provide for them that teaming opportunity. We are just not doing what we are supposed to be

doing at the early childhood level and now we are not doing what we're supposed to give those interventions to the kids that they need. That is just wrong.

President Cann stated: Director Ortiz I just want to make one correction, it is not the school board's fault that there has not been a study on SPARK. Director Leeson asked for that study probably three years ago.

Director Leeson stated: It has been almost every year.

Director Ortiz stated: It is our fault because we haven't enforced it. If you really wanted a study, we are the school board, but now that years have passed by and now we are asking for the same thing, we're asking every year, so there is something wrong with us.

Director Leeson stated: You were on the board. You were on the board when I asked for it and everyone was sitting here. I have been asking for it month after month.

Director Ortiz stated: I have been on the board for two years and you have been on the board for many other years, so if we are going to keep asking for the same thing, then we just have to say this Monday we need that study. But not take away something that is important for our kids, so I believe that we are the ones that are wrong.

Director Faccinnetto stated: The two issues that I see here is, one with Harmonium. We are cutting the teaming which is the bigger model and you want to talk about proven successes in education, it has been a proven practice for longer than I have been alive at a middle school teaching level to have teaming. So I don't understand how we can have one part of teaming and not the other, and the second thing is that there is a lot of things that we cut out of the budget that I think are proven to increase education and boost performance and all the good things we want to do and I just don't know at this point how we can just start picking and choosing programs. I mean if we want to do that I can make a whole list of stuff that I want to put back in, and we can be back to a \$14 million deficit like we were in January and stay here until Monday and not go home and start all over again. But, I can't just focus on one program. Harmonium is a great program and Sequoia is a great program. We have gotten a lot of feedback on it, but without restoring teaming I don't know how we can restore one part of it.

Director Tenaglia stated: We have the academic teams at the middle school level. You are now saying that the thematic programs you consider part of the teaming. We also have dual instruction, co-teaching. You consider that part of the teaming that is going to be eliminated.

Dr. Silva stated: No, co-teaching is separate from teaming . Co-teaching might be a circumstance that is a partnership between special education and regular education as opposed to the four core subjects of a regular at a grade level, so those are two different things.

Director Tenaglia stated: Co-teaching remains, team teaching goes, and thematic teaming goes?

Dr. Silva stated: Thematic teaming is within the teaming model as Director Burkhardt mentioned.

Dr. Roy stated: Co-teaching is really a model for service delivery of special education services.

President Cann stated: I just wanted to chime in quickly that I agree with Director Burkhardt and Director Faccinnetto teaming in middle schools is fabulous, it is also very expensive and we just haven't found the money for it. I wouldn't be inclined to approve putting some back and not others and deciding which part of teaming is more valuable than any other. It would be great if we could get all the teaming, but we are not seeing that right now with the money that we have available.

Director Leeson stated: One of my questions was, have we looked at the thematic programs in another way? Now, is there a way of creating thematic programs without the team extra preparation period and have we looked at that? So, as we talk about this, it is part of teaming, it may be part of teaming now, but are we looking at it and have we looked? Like I said, number one, have we looked at the academic benefits and my understanding going back many years ago to an old study was that it benefited all levels of children, and the second thing is have we looked at this creatively instead of just getting rid of a thematic program? Have we creatively looked at another way of structuring it?

Dr. Silva stated: The answer is yes. The middle school principals and myself have been looking at a new schedule that would instead of calling teaming because implied in teaming is

the professional prep time and the team planning period for teachers that does the planning and the executing and all the enriching stuff that is required of that extra level of effort. You can still cluster children, the same kids with the same teachers, but without the planning period it won't be as robust as when teachers have time to integrate their curriculum and all the rest. So, I wouldn't at that point call it teaming. I would call it clustering within a sixth period instruction. So I don't want to call some, my definition of teaming and teaming as an organizational structure in the education literature implies the time for the teachers to collaboratively plan and collaboratively deliver. That is something that cannot be guaranteed in a clustering circumstance, although you can put the same kids with the same teachers.

Director Leeson stated: I guess the answer to that is yes we could look at thematic programs outside of teaming.

Dr. Silva stated: Correct but that would involve the teachers having the time, and the will to be able to do that without the planning time which I don't know if that would exist.

Director Follweiler stated: Through some of the public comment, I was quite impressed that some of the young people had an understanding of the checker boarding process and as I understand the checker boarding process, in relation to this discussion or any other, it is essentially the budget dictates X number of dollars for X amount of professional staffing and then it works through a seniority process for who is certified to be able to teach at each level and that then creates the staffing for the next year. Is that a fair definition?

Dr. Roy stated: Most importantly in our situation because we are furloughing is to correctly identify the people who would be furloughed.

Director Follweiler asked: Who is qualified?

Dr. Roy stated: When you go through the combination of seniority and certification and many teachers have more than one certification we go through that to properly identify.

Director Follweiler stated: So the role of the board in the process is essentially approve the budget and approve the curriculum that Dr. Silva has brought forth to us. The role of the administration is to work with the administration in each

school as to who is qualified and who has what seniority in relationship to whatever bargaining agreement we have in place with that particular, in the case of these things, it would be the teachers. Correct?

Dr. Roy stated: That is correct and we work with each principal but you look at it from the district level, not by school.

Director Follweiler stated: So even if we were to, as Director Leeson has suggested, look at some programs like the Harmonium, to restructure it, it would not necessarily mean that the same teacher would be involved in that class or program. Is that correct? I am just using this as an example.

Dr. Roy stated: The process of checker boarding yields a result. Everybody is in a slot or you're not and then you are furloughed. Once that is done and that is where we are now, that was the tentative notification, administratively we can go back, and that is what I mentioned, we will go back, and take a look at that and say ok in doing the process to make sure we properly identified the furloughed teachers. We have moved people, and the checker boarding, now where people are on the checkerboard in different spots, we now can go back and say that one just doesn't make sense and we are going to move this, we're going to move that for the good of the students. So, that is the next step that happens, but we can go back and move people, after the checker boarding and that is what we will do next.

Director Follweiler stated: So what you had said in your presentation, that today was the deadline that we identified at least for the purposes of this far into the process, what teachers would be furloughed tentative and the checker boarding process goes basically through the beginning of school?

Dr. Roy stated: The checker boarding is complete. So every teacher in the district received a tentative notification of assignment.

Director Follweiler stated: So the results of the checker boarding is the notification of an assignment.

Dr. Roy stated: Now if you picture it as a checkerboard now we can look at where people are and say ok that doesn't make sense lets put this person back here, let's do this and we will gather input when we are hearing from individual teachers,

working with the BEA, from our principals and so forth to take that look to make sure, and I think we have until August 1st, although we will have it completed well before then to look at any of those adjustments to the straight checker boarding.

Director Follweiler stated: So, again to reiterate the board has, other than approving the budget, and the curriculum, we have really no influence in the checker boarding process.

Dr. Roy stated: That is correct.

Director Ortiz stated: I am just looking at the recommended ABG expenditures, and I just want to ask a question to Dr. Silva on the support literacy intervention, those \$171,530 since our middle schools are the ones that are being hit the most, how can we, I'm up with the restoring the kindergarten and the high school resource officers but on the computers, how can we put those resources more towards our middle school that would be more effective than just putting it towards computers because we are also going to be servicing the elementary with the computers? Everything is OK, but how can, because middle school is being affected the most, how can we put those monies towards our middle schools?

Dr. Silva stated: That is a very good question. Read 180 is sort of uniquely positioned within the district because it does follow students through middle school. Many of the aging computers that are now currently running, Read 180 in our middle schools would be replaced with ABG funds. Let me just explain why that is so important to have those computers in the middle school because Read 180 cannot run independent of the technology, and the technology helps the teacher and the student understand specifically where their lexile scores are, their current reading ability, and it sets up an instructional program that over time has very scientifically shown that students grow more than a year's worth of growth in a year's worth of time and it helps them catch up from being behind in grade level reading. For instance, back in January I got a mid-year report from the Read 180 people saying that in the majority of our schools, elementary and middle schools that are running Read 180 that at the mid-point of the year, they had already, those students, the majority of the students had already had one year's worth of growth in a half year's worth of time. If they kept up that pace during the remaining months of this year, at the end of this year when I get the report in late June, we may see students making two year's worth of growth in one

year's worth of time. So that if at the beginning of this year, they may have been a year or two behind grade level, now they are closer and right at the grade level with their fellow students. That acceleration seems to occur most frequently in sixth and seventh grades statistically in the Read 180 methodology. That is why that part of ABG would sort of have a lot of bang for its buck in the middle school, plus we would be able to use the computers for other middle school students when they are not being used for the students in Read 180. So the kindergarten and the early primary kids Read 180 is more for the intermediate middle school kids although we do have Read 180 in some students who are significantly behind at the high school level, our middle school teachers and our middle school principals are fully utilizing those licenses and they really want to keep those kids in that intervention track on Read 180. That's how it addresses middle schools.

Director Leeson stated: In our middle schools we have classroom sets of computers and we have labs, where are the Read 180 computers and how are they differentiated from all of these other computers that are in the middle schools?

Mr. Arbushites stated: The Read 180 computers are in classrooms in the middle schools. They are different from the classroom sets because the classroom sets travel on carts and our deployment of Read 180 has been on desktop computers at Scholastic's recommendation. We cannot run Read 180 on computers in a wireless environment because of the multimedia and the connectivity speed that we need. So we have to have a wired workstation so we've been using desktops since the very beginning of that program.

Director Leeson stated: First of all, what we are saying is in the middle schools we have laptop classroom sets, plus we have desktops, plus we have a lab, why are we not using the lab for Read 180?

Mr. Arbushites stated: Because the labs are fully scheduled, they are used all day, every day for technology classes.

Director Leeson stated: Well obviously we have computers that are not in use full time at the middle school. We are not using all of our computers 100 percent of the time. Correct?

Dr. Silva stated: What I am thinking, Mr. Arbushites is saying is Read 180 cannot be used on the available computers on the cart because those are not wired enough to be robust enough to run that program.

Director Leeson stated: Is it possible to use the, I am just looking at an economical solution to use the computer lab computers and put some of our laptops into the computer lab so that the Read 180 would be using the desktops from the computer lab?

Mr. Arbushites stated: Because the Read 180 teachers use the Read 180 computers during their classroom instructional time and the lab computers are used in the lab during that instructional time. I don't believe we can use them both at the same time.

Director Leeson stated: I am saying take the computers out of the computer lab, put them into the classroom and use laptops in the computer lab.

Mr. Arbushites stated: Well we haven't really explored that model.

Director Leeson stated: Because we have a tight budget.

Director Faccinetto stated: I did some homework on this because two things near and dear to my heart is technology and reading because I find it astounding we don't teach kids to read all the time. We are replacing 207 eMac computers that are eight years old. Correct?

Mr. Arbushites stated: They are between six and seven years old.

Director Faccinetto stated: So they are pretty much useless for a new piece of software?

Mr. Arbushites stated: Well there is a pressing need to upgrade them because the new version of Read 180 will not run on those computers.

Director Faccinetto stated: So if we don't use the ABG for these computers, this was already in the GOB for next year?

Dr. Silva stated: Yes

Director Faccinnetto stated: So we've taken out of that which then frees up money for you to use other technology sources. Just on Read 180 itself, I was a big proponent of reading recovery which is the lower first grade level and very expensive, but Read 180 from what I understand covers a wider range of students, is the most thoroughly researched, and documented reading intervention program in the world, where it has been proven to improve performance on state test results which is one of our pet peeves it reduces the drop out rate, it improves reading achievement for African and Latino students, it improves reading achievement for English language learners, it improves reading achievement for students who receive special education services, and it increases teacher retention. All of that basically through this block grant that if we didn't do, it would come out of the general operating budget anyway so, to me this is a no brainer to have this as one of the things that we restore. I can't understand why we wouldn't.

Director Leeson stated: We're taking it out of the GOB.

Director Faccinnetto stated: We're taking it out of the GOB, we're paying for it through the ABG because it is an allowed area and then that frees up money to better use our technology or improve some things that need to be improved.

Director Follweiler stated: Before I get on to my other subject, to add to Director Faccinnetto and it is a one time because you are buying the computers, it is not something, that next year you are going to need to buy another set, it will be a few years down the road so it is a good use of a grant. But my other subject that I wanted to bring up was the young gentleman that got up about the middle school soccer program had suggested in their discussion which I've heard at other budget hearings, is that in groups, as that as an example, there are willing to go with a pay to play. Now I had suggested that early in the budget season, and the majority of the board disagreed with any pay to plan option so now where there are groups of students or parents who would like to go with that type of an option, can something like the middle school soccer become a club sport similar to what we have with lacrosse in the high school where it is fully funded by the group?

Director Leeson stated to Director Follweiler: It is in our budget that we are going to have pay to play.

Director Follweiler stated: You're right, it is. I thought we took it out. Is it \$25?

Director Leeson stated: Yes, Middle school and high school.

Dr. Roy stated: And it was proposed as an activity fee not just for athletics but for any activity.

Director Follweiler stated: I still agree with it and it is still in there, but can the group become a club sport similar to the lacrosse should they want to?

Dr. Roy stated: I am not sure of the answer to that because I am not sure who they would play as a club, as a middle school club team, they would be permitted to play in an interscholastic league that our middle school teams belong to.

Director Follweiler stated: If the group, created a club that was two or three or four teams in and amongst themselves. I am just throwing it out there as an option if this is something that the parents want to pursue, we do have precedence in the district where we have club sports and we have a policy on club sports at the high school level.

Dr. Silva stated: That is what I understand. You are right Director Follweiler that would be that Broughal play East Hills, Nitschmann, we would just play each other.

Dr. Roy stated: It is also a possibility that like the high school club version of lacrosse for example does play other interscholastic teams that are officially sports at other schools that might be possible at the middle school level, I'm not quite sure right now.

Director Follweiler stated: It was just a thought for that and yes Director Leeson, thank you and I stand corrected.

President Cann stated: Could you ask Dr. Donaher to just take a look at how that would work, if it could work because where would the funding come from? It wouldn't come from the budget, it would come from where? I don't know what happens with club sports.

Dr. Roy stated: The club sports at the high school level are funded by funds raised by the parents.

Director Leeson stated: On the subject of athletics, and particularly middle school athletics, last month at the May 9th budget hearing I had asked about the middle school athletic assistant athletic directors, and I was told we didn't have any, we had gotten rid of them in previous budgets, and then we received something, a email I believe from Dr. Roy that we were going to think about getting rid of two of them but keeping two of them. I am not quite sure, first of all, why we need middle school assistant athletic directors and why don't we use some of that funding for, if we want to help to restore some of the middle school soccer or something like that, use it from the middle school assistant athletic directors, I don't think it covers the full cost, but it will be a part of it anyway?

Dr. Roy stated: We don't have middle school athletic directors in the way we did in the past, they were eliminated I am told a few years ago. There is an intramural/athletic supervisor, I think they are actually called an intramural supervisor at one at each of the middle schools now and in this budget we have proposed going from four to two. Those folks basically are the onsite, because middle school sports are going on for making sure the umpires are there and everything goes smoothly. They supervise that and so our recommendation was going from one at each school to two, and then having the high school and the district level person kind of help manage that as well. The athletic director position is gone. There was an additional position that we have been using in that middle school intramural position and that is reduced from four to two. I would be hesitant to completely eliminate that because we are going to have people run between two middle schools now to try to manage when games are going on. Basically as game managers.

Director Leeson stated: May I point out that I didn't find that in the cuts by the way. Just to point that out.

President Cann asked: Is the intramural director, is that a stipend sort of position?

Dr. Roy stated: Yes.

President Cann asked: \$3,700 total.

Director Leeson stated: \$3,700 for each.

Director Ortiz asked: Dr. Roy my question was from an email, and I want to make sure that it is clear, we are not creating a position, high paying position or anything like that, and we are kind of diversifying our resources putting people in other areas? What is it that we are doing and what is the cost involved? I just want to make sure that that is very clear.

Dr. Roy stated: Specifically on the athletics. Currently we have a full time athletic director at each high school that is in the teaching unit, who is a teacher but without teaching assignments. So as a full time athletic director and we are proposing removing those two positions from the teacher's association, eliminating those two positions and then creating one administrative position that would over see both high school athletics. We would still need help at the high schools to run the every day dealings of the sports, and we would call them assistant athletic directors, but they would have a teaching load as well so they wouldn't be full time, they would teach with a one period a day reduction, so in doing this it is kind of reorganizing the running of the athletic department. In the end, this year will save \$75,000, and then because of retirement in future years, now for the retiree will also pay health benefits in the immediate years, but in the next, after two or three years, we will realize another \$15,000 - \$20,000 in savings because we won't be doing the health care payment. So, \$75,000 this year jumping up to \$90,000 or so savings in future years.

Director Leeson stated: On that subject incorporated in those savings you also had the two assistant athletics directors at the middle school so this was not completely a reorganization of the high school athletic directors, and we also have currently an administrator who is in charge of athletics and so this is shifting some of those responsibilities to another administrator and there are several other models that we could be looking at and I think should be looking at one is the model that we had about ten years ago here in our own district which was two athletic directors but they were part time. I don't know that we've increased the number of sport, and in fact, we've decreased the number of games I believe in the past ten years. We also had the stipend that went with it. I believe that we would probably see reasonability the savings particularly if we are going to incorporate the middle school assistant athletic director reduction as well. The second model that we could possibly look at is to go to athletic directors as opposed to athletic directors as part of the teaching staff. I believe we originally did part time athletic directors as part of the staff because they

continue to teach, they were teachers in our district. But I think many other school districts have athletic director who are separate from the teacher staff and therefore are paid as an athletic director only. That also would have savings to our district. By the way I do understand that this is part of the contract and that there would need to be discussions with the union as well. I understand that, but I am saying these are several options that we have not explored at this point and I believe we should be exploring. In recent years, we have reduced the number of academic administrators, we have reduced the curriculum office, and we have reduced our academic administrators at the middle school level. We've reduced a few at the elementary level, and now we are beginning to creep up and add more administrators. Last year we took Iris Cintron's job and split it into two, now we are taking Dr. Donaher's job, and we're splitting that job, giving it to another administrator. And some of these although valuable jobs not academic, and so I think this is difficult.

Dr. Roy stated: I think that there is difference in what the, currently the two high school athletic directors are in the bargaining unit. But, for all practical purposes, they act as administrators, they administrate the athletics. So we are posing taking those two and making it one position, that would be the hands on running of the program budgeting, going to meetings, and scheduling all of the things that go on with it. Dr. Donaher supervises the program but he is not the administrator of the athletics now, it is a different role. We're proposing taking the two and making it one with the support from the two teachers at the high schools without a cost to having them do it above what we already pay. Again, the overall savings would be about \$70,000.

Director Follweiler stated: I just wanted to get some clarification on this subject. I see it as Dr. Roy has described as not just a cost savings but also a reduction in overall staffing taking two current positions that are not practicing teaching classroom they are administrative and reducing it to one administrative. If you could please Dr. Roy explain to me the difference in the phrase administrator to administrative. I see administrator as the central office type, I think this is where the differential is, the athletic director would be, I don't know where he will be based, but he will be rotating around the schools, overseeing the sporting activity throughout the schools, if that is the difference.

Dr. Roy stated: I guess the fundamental difference is the work of that person considered part of the collective bargaining unit, the teacher's BEA, or is it not and therefore it is supervisory nature and then it is an administrative position. So, currently those two athletic director positions are part of the collective bargaining unit. So although they do administrative work, they run the athletic programs, they are not technically administrators. So, I mean it is partly semantics, it is partly contractual, but the reality is we are going from taking the two to taking the one with the support of the teachers who would be the assistant AD's but that would not add to our cost by having them do that the way we've proposed it.

Director Leeson asked: Do other school districts consider their athletic directors to be administrators?

Dr. Roy stated: I would say that without a doubt the trend is that AD's are not administrators, not everywhere but it is more and more the trend the athletic directors are administrators and not in the collective bargaining unit.

Director Leeson stated: I know they are not in the collective bargaining unit, but I think there is more differentiation than just collective bargaining unit and administrators those are not the only two positions that we have in the district, we have a number of staff positions as well and I am asking do other schools consider their athletic director to be staff or do they consider them to be administrators.

Dr. Roy stated: The trend is for them to be administrators treated as an assistant principal generally. There are districts that don't, but the trend is definitely towards having an administrator because of the role of an AD with dealing with parents and student issues and supervising coaches and staff and running events that the trend is definitely towards having an assistant principal type person in the same category as an AD.

Director Leeson stated: The way we have been structured the principal was in charge of the athletic director and the athletics within their own school. How is that going to change with this new proposal?

Dr. Roy stated: The principals under PIAA rules are ultimately responsible for their schools so the athletic director would

continue to work with the principals on those issues. The principal is ultimately responsible.

President Cann stated: I just want to make sure if there is other issues that need to be discussed by anyone recalling that the new information that we have today is the few changes that were enumerated and I don't want us to miss anything.

Director Leeson stated: At the last budget hearing I asked for some information specifically on dues and fees and summer school. I received a packet of papers that indicated where everything was being charged, but it did not answer my questions. I did email saying it did not answer my questions, so I am hoping that I am going to get an answer this evening. Dues and fees, why are they going up, what are we paying for?

Mrs. Gober stated: I believe that I recall gathering the detail transactions that went along with that information, but generally part of it is related to the same fees that we have been paying surrounding professional dues to organizations and so on, and I believe that I had qualified previously as well that the other piece of that is more than likely a reclassification of the paying agent fees that had been paid for years on our debt service bond issue payments where they had previously been recorded as professional services and in accordance with the accounting manual they are dues and fees.

Director Leeson stated: I have here the papers that I was given and it has outlined again, the accounting, where it is being charged to but it doesn't really explain to me what it is. What the dues and fees are?

Mrs. Gober stated: They are dues to the professional organizations, primarily as ASCD, PASCAD for all of the administrators, which is the principals association, it is the curriculum association, it is the Pennsylvania School Board Association, those types of dues and fees that are professional dues for our employees and additionally it is the fees that are paid to the paying agent for administering our payments to bond holders.

Director Leeson stated: My second question is on summer school. Summer school – it shows that we are cutting out summer school, but then we have a line item for summer school, what are our summer school expenses and where are they coming from?

Dr. Roy stated: The high school summer school students pay for the cost, so that is self sustaining.

Dr. Silva stated: The middle school summer school was developed by a collaboration among the four middle school principals who felt strongly about having that structured middle school and they are using parts of their building budgets from 2011-2012 that contribute their share for their students who didn't pass two courses. And by policy, they need intervention for summer school.

Director Leeson stated: This was prior to, at least prior to our hearing about the middle school discussion that is why I am still not quite sure.

Dr. Silva stated: It was part of the decision of building budgets for the 2011-2012 school year, not necessarily the big district budget where we are talking about most of the categories related to personnel, etc.

Director Leeson stated: We are showing \$334,000 in expenses for the 2011-2012 year in summer school, and I am trying to figure out where that is coming from.

Dr. Roy stated: The other programs that I think we mentioned last time are extended school year, the summer school is probably not the best term for it but the tutoring enrichment that goes on in a number of our schools that Mrs. Tate could probably share more about. There is also the elementary and middle school falls into that tutoring in remediation piece as well.

Director Leeson stated: Let me ask you. Here we have travel expenses of \$1,000. How do we have travel expenses for summer school? Do we know that that is where this summer school is coming from or are we kind of guessing that this is what our summer school expenses are coming from because here is the detail that I received? The detail has professional salaries, travel, book and supplies, but it doesn't explain what it is?

Director Tenaglia stated: Excuse me President Cann and Director Leeson, we had a practice when a board member made an inquiry of the administration and that documentation was provided, that the documentation was provided to the entire

board, have we gotten away from that.

Director Leeson stated: This was received May 19th and so it may be in your board mailing out from May 19th. I am sorry Director Tenaglia, I didn't make that clear. It is under response to budget inquiries and there were several things.

Director Leeson stated: Our summer school by the way is listed at \$80,000 and our expenses for next year are \$334,000. That is why it is not adding up.

President Cann Stated: That is the grant money, is that the difference? Is that correct?

Mrs. Gober stated: There are grant funds as well as extended school year programs for special needs students that are required due to their IEP.

President Cann asked Dr. Roy and Mrs. Gober to please follow up with Director Leeson tomorrow or the next day to make sure that she has her answers.

President Cann asked: Is there anything from tonight's discussion.

Director Tenaglia stated: The reinstatement of school resource officers – We heard from the buildings that because of the contractual arrangements and under the prior plan we were in a cost sharing on salary, the officers retained all their working conditions as per their bargaining unit. As a result of that there were times when the resource officers were not available to us in the buildings. Have we looked at the possibility of rather than a share salary, a pay detail.

Dr. Roy stated: I had a very productive meeting with the Mayor and the new police commissioner to discuss those issues and so the City wants to continue to be able to have a school resource officers so there are some ideas in place where using their shift system, because they rotate shifts and so maybe it is not the same person everyday but if that person is not there is another person to come into fill so that coverage time is increased. Just to clarify, much of the time if the resource officer isn't available in the building, he is at court.

Director Tenaglia stated: That is part of the work rules. To us, we're paying for a resource officer in the building and again, I understand they are collective bargaining but if we had to pay

detail I think that we are talking along the same lines, that we contract with the City to provide us a police officer or officers within the buildings at a specified time during school days.

Dr. Roy stated: We didn't discuss it in terms like a paid detail. We will hire someone to come to a football game, so I can have that conversation with them. The commissioner's ideas were in terms of using the kind of platoon system to make sure we had better coverage, but, the good point that you are raising is reinstating resource officers is one thing, making sure the coverage is what we want is another and so those are the ideas that we are still developing, so I will discuss the paid detail idea and see what that would cost as well.

Director Leeson stated: Every time I talk about special education, but we show an increase of \$767,000 for next year. I thought that we were decreasing some of our expenditures in special education and that we should have been down closer to \$500,000 or a little below that? By the way I am on page 2 of 16.

Mr. Agretto stated: I believe Mrs. Gober can speak to that number that you are looking at. The cuts that I put forth total about \$500,000, you are correct, but the overall spending of special education increases in salary and benefits and other items that are parallel to other teachers in other programs within the school district is something I believe Mrs. Gober can speak to.

Director Leeson stated: But the increase originally was close to \$800,000, we're still there or at least fairly close to it. Let me double check that.

Dr. Roy stated: So although there were reductions, because of increase in costs.

Mr. Agretto stated: I assume that number Mrs. Gober includes inner system payment costs and students that are outside of the realm of the school district that we don't actually place but we have to pay the educational cost because we're responsible for those things.

Director Leeson stated: I understand but I think before we started to cut the budget back when we were still at that 14 percent number or whatever, if I remember correctly we were fairly close to an \$800,000 increase. We're still fairly close to

that and yet we claim that we've cut, that is what I am asking. Why are we still at this number?

President Cann stated: Actually Director Leeson when looking at page 2 of 16 like you are, I see a lot of reduction in the variance column. The only significant increase is item one is the salaries for teachers assistant.

Director Leeson stated: That is not really what my question is. We're claiming that we are making cuts and I am just wondering where the cuts are.

Dr. Roy stated: We are not just claiming it, we are making cuts. We've cut 11 or so teaching assistants from the ranks and on our cut that is in the packet the student's transportation savings, tuition savings and so forth, they have been offset by other anticipated increase as Mr. Agretto mentioned. We can get more specific details on those individual increases.

Director Burkhardt stated: The highlight of that salary line item for teacher assistants does seem to be out of whack though. If the 2011-2012 budget has a number of \$1,233,000, and it is showing an increase of \$1,101,000 that doesn't seem right.

President Cann stated: It actually was a decrease from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012.

Mrs. Gober stated: That formula is comparing budget to budget, not budget to estimate.

Dr. Roy stated: From 2010-2011 to 2011-2012, if you look at those columns the budgeted amount for 2010-2011 was out of whack at only \$132,000. If you look at the 2009-2010 actual at \$1,500,000 the 2010-2011 estimates, what we're actually going to spend this year is \$1,400,000. We're budgeting \$1,200,000 so the variance is from the 2010-2011 budget to the 2011-2012 budget so that's a little misleading there, so there is a couple hundred thousand dollar decrease in the teacher assistant salaries represented there.

Mrs. Gober stated: And that is primarily because all teacher, and all teacher assistants were budgeting as regular instruction, irrelevant of what their teaching assignment was and this budget now reflects that accurately to be putting the money where they are actually assigned.

President Cann stated: That makes sense now. Do you see that?

Director Leeson stated: I see it. Yes, thank you.

President Cann asked if there were any other topics for discussion.

Director Leeson stated: We talk about a sustainable budget but after having received the five year projection, we know that this is not sustainable, we know that we are going to have difficulties coming very soon, and that this budget will not be able to be sustained.

President Cann stated: We will now move onto Courtesy of the Floor.

Steven Antalics
737 Ridge
Bethlehem, PA

COURTESY OF THE
FLOOR

Mr. Antalics stated: These comments are based about concerns for your personal safety and take it for what its worth. At the last official outing which was in this building mother nature provoked a state of panic which reduced the number of you to irrational behavior and I was advised by the President of the Board to quietly sit down because no one was paying attention which was understandable based upon the observant behavior, but now you are all sitting there in a very rational, calm mood and I've got your attention, so I'll pass on what I think is for your personal safety. Guidelines in a tornado are first, you don't want to be out on the street. Number 2, less safe would be in a moving car because tornados have lifted up tracker trailers. A little more safe would be your home but the super structure in your home is wooden beams. Safety guidelines by experts on tornados say the best place is in a steel reinforced structure which you might have in your basement or if your house is old enough, left over from cold war fall out shelters and if any of you have none of these things then as was recommended your best place is in a steel reinforced building and in that building the best place would be on the ground floor and we are all now sitting in a steel reinforced building on the ground floor. So the best place to have sat here calmly and waited until we got a clear alert, so for your personal safety, next time if we have a tornado, I think we should take that into consideration.

President Cann stated: Thank you Mr. Antalics, if you don't mind me saying, everything you are saying is absolutely correct, I just wanted to end the meeting so that people could make their own choice of whether to stay here or leave. If I kept the meeting going, people would feel obligated possibly to stay, and I didn't want to do that.

Mr. Antalics stated: Well, I tried to give you the best choice, to stay here.

Thomas Ruhf
50 West Elizabeth Avenue
Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Ruhf stated: I was a teacher at Freedom. The one thing that I think is the fact that this is an ongoing issue. The one problem that I have had in the three years being here is much of this is reactive, not proactive. So looking at proactive changes to a long-term district policy needs to be done and not every year at January. Looking at things like the subdivision of district lands at the Ed Center and selling off one of the largest tax burdens within the school district that field that is almost never used and creating three additional lots which you could then sell and then add to tax base. Looking at the increased marketing of the multi-million dollar facilities that this district houses that sit empty, a large percentage of the school year. I'm talking weddings, leasing additionally beyond just the gymnasiums and swimming pools. Leasing the facilities and putting the money that you have invested and that taxpayers have invested to work to make money. I understand this is a public entity and it is not a money making industry, but you have to look at expanding the ways that you are getting money beyond the tax burden because like the United States of America, it is not a revenue problem in this school district, it is a large tax base, lots of money in this area that could be used beyond taxes, cutting spending, so on and so forth.

Additionally, there are quite a few people here that have been principals, the one thing with the younger teachers; you literally have to sell your soul to get a teaching job today. Ultimately you are getting rid of lots of teachers that have spent hundreds of free hours doing things that they are never going to do and you are not going to get, no offense to the older teachers in the room, because they have families you are not going to get them to do those things. It is a sad state of affairs.

Colleen Jeffries
815 Barnsdale Street
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Jeffries stated: I would just like to talk, you were talking about the teaming in the districts and you were saying all of these fantastic things and all the benefits of it, and the only problem that you guys mentioned that I caught was that the extra time that it takes for the teachers to get together so that there academics are collaborative. I was just wondering isn't the benefit of teaming, doesn't that outweigh the extra hours, and I feel that the teachers would be fine for awhile if they could collaborate their academics on their own time or for unpaid hours. I know nobody wants to do anything for unpaid time, but I feel that that would help us with our deficit that we are in right now. Also, you were talking about the \$18,000 that it takes for thematic programs and programs like Harmonium they are completely self-funded, and so if you make all of the thematic programs self-funded then you could have that \$18,000 to spend on other things and help us get out of the budget deficit.

Helen Shey
3281 Riegel Road
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Shey stated: There were a couple of things I wanted to mention. You were talking about the long-term influences of teaming, and I was thinking besides the academic influences on us there is also an influence of leadership ideas. If there are a few teams that are left out of your end proposal or situation, then those students may go on and lead others and influence others beside the ones that are originally in teaming, so from having one person affected, it may be ending up to ten students being affected. So, that would be maximizing your budget.

Another thing I was hearing was about the computers. I heard and from my understanding right now, I think it is possible for us to use the computers in the classrooms because right now we have enough numbers of computers for each of us students to carrying around the whole entire day. So, if we carry those computers into our lab, then we can use the laptops for the computer lab and therefore using the computer lab computers for our classrooms.

I was thinking for the teachers and how Dr. Roy was saying how you should look back about your reasoning on which teachers are in the best placement. Some teachers I know, they have the talents of keeping middle school students entertained and learning really well than other teachers. Some people are good at working with the younger kids and some teachers are just really good at working with older kids. To place them off of numbers and statistics of letters just doesn't exactly make sense because you really have to know each person in order to make the best decisions.

Karen Becker
738 Apollo Drive
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Becker stated: Let me just commend the perspective for data driven decisions and let me tell you a few facts that I've looked up just while I was sitting here. We are now officially in the bottom third of all school districts in the state of Pennsylvania. According to the Pittsburgh journal we rank at 356 out of 498. University of Michigan recently published a study, one of the largest studies looking at the benefits of full day versus half-day kindergarten. Full day kindergarten works, especially for disadvantaged children in their first year in the program. By the third year, those benefits are severely attenuated. Teaming works and it does have long-term benefits. So in terms of academic, social and societal benefits maybe we need to look where that academic block money goes. If we don't have data in our district that shows we're a district where the full day program works, but we've got data that shows teaming works, maybe we should put the money there. So given this data, I think we really need to think a little bit more about the block grant.

I would also direct your attention to a May 25th Wall Street Journal article, it clearly outlines the National perspective on taxes, as well as fees, that are public schools are suggesting. I think you will be surprised. Once again, as I say every time I'm here, the lowest tax rate gets you what you pay for, bottom third. So can we afford to cut programs that build academic success if we are already in the bottom third in the state? I don't think so and I fear for our National Rankings. I really fear for the ability of our students to compete on a statewide level, let alone a National level.

Kristen Grim
Guidance Counselor at Freedom

Ms. Grim stated: I am not a public speaker, so I apologize now and it is also obviously a very emotional thing since I am also one of the furloughed people. I guess the bottom line for me is there is a lot that I don't understand. I hear a lot of you saying there are things that you know work, there are things that you want included for your children and for our students, and yet we don't have the money, we can't find the money. We see other districts doing things to find the money, where they are not just cutting teachers. I know that there are those of you who support keeping as many teachers as possible, but again, I don't understand why all of these other districts are doing things to save their people and we can't find the money. It just seems to me a little bit frustrating.

The other thing that I just wanted to point out is we are a low paying district, we know that, but here you have young teachers, who gave up last night to be at graduation, gave up tonight to be here, because they care so much about their students. They are not in it for the money. We are not here just because we want to have a paycheck come September 1st. We are here because we care. I would hope that knowing that and seeing that would help you find creative ways to find the money. It has got to be somewhere, whether it is taxes, whether its wage freezes, whether it is a combination of a lot of different things, other districts are doing it, so why aren't we?

President Cann stated: We are having a brief executive session after the meeting to discuss personnel.

Director Follweiler stated: I just want to make clarification. Just to answer the last speaker, this board did direct the administration to talk to the bargaining unit about such things as wage freezes and trying to come up with creative ways and that particular discussion did not fruit a result that would have changed the result of this budget. So, we did make attempts for creative ways to find other funding, and it just didn't work out.

President Cann stated: We have one more Courtesy of the Floor.

Leanna Norwood
3176 Gloucester Drive
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Norwood stated: I would just like to say that Bethlehem Area School District is an excellent school district. I think that I got a really great education here. I went to college and I felt completely prepared for everything that came along, and I am sure that some of my former teachers here can agree that when I was younger I wasn't ready and it shaped me a lot, and I think that thematic programs and teaming in the Bethlehem Area School District is something that makes it a great school district, and I think most people here agreed that having teaming in schools is an excellent thing for everyone. Taking that away would be taking away from the greatness of the school district and taking from its uniqueness because I came here from another school district when I was younger, and I think that if I had kids and I brought them to this district I would want them to have the same excellent education that I got and the same opportunity and for you guys you don't have all the responsibility but you have a very big part in being responsible for the education of the kids. I think that there are certain things that money was being added to and taken away from that could have been reconsidered, for example resource officers, because when you take away programs like this, you are taking away things that kids have interest in and then statistically speaking a lack of after school activity and interest in things like that does increase the need for resource officers and things like that within the school district. I am just saying that changing this the way that you are is taking away a lot from the Bethlehem Area School District and taking away from the quality of education because from hearing all of you speak, having teams allows for the existence and the growth of thematic programs which prior statistics have shown is an excellent thing for kids academically and it helps them to find their talent and passion, etc. I think that is something to consider before you change the entire make up of the district is what good it has done and what you are doing to change it and how that is going to negatively affect the kids. I mean it is not going to make a negative impact, but you are taking an excellent education and you are turning it into one just like every other school district and you are taking this school district that I grew up in and I had such a good education and you are making it not quite as good, if you understand where I am going with this. Thank you.

JUNE 8, 2011

Steven Antalics
737 Ridge
Bethlehem, PA

COURTESY OF THE
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Mr. Antalics stated: These comments are based about concerns for your personal safety and take it for what its worth. At the last official outing which was in this building mother nature provoked a state of panic which reduced the number of you to irrational behavior and I was advised by the President of the Board to quietly sit down because no one was paying attention which was understandable based upon the observant behavior, but now you are all sitting there in a very rational, calm mood and I've got your attention, so I'll pass on what I think is for your personal safety. Guidelines in a tornado are first, you don't want to be out on the street. Number 2, less safe would be in a moving car because tornados have lifted up tracker trailers. A little more safe would be your home but the super structure in your home is wooden beams. Safety guidelines by experts on tornados say the best place is in a steel reinforced structure which you might have in your basement or if your house is old enough, left over from cold war fall out shelters and if any of you have none of these things then as was recommended your best place is in a steel reinforced building and in that building the best place would be on the ground floor and we are all now sitting in a steel reinforced building on the ground floor. So the best place to have sat here calmly and

Attest,

Stacy M. Gober
Board Secretary

SMG:pag