

**Transcript of a
Portion of the Board of Education
Regular Meeting**

Held on

**April 26, 2010
At 7:30 p.m.**

Regarding

Proposed Budget Reductions for 2010-11

Transcribed Portion of Meeting held at:
Carpentersville Middle School
100 Cleveland Avenue
Carpentersville, Illinois 6011

Transcribed by:
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for *Office Team*

Transcriptionist Note: Only those portions of the meeting relating to budget reductions were transcribed.

Transcript Begins:

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

We are now at the Public Participation portion of our evening. Sharon, we are going to ask that you go first, please. And you have your name listed twice so you can just run it together.

SHARON FETTING

No. Just five minutes is fine.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

All right. Same rules. I'll give you a high sign at four.

SHARON FETTING

My name is Sharon Fetting. I live at 3 Preston Court in Algonquin, IL. I don't know where to begin with these cuts you've proposed. I will start with the Dual Language Program. I believe this is a great program. I wish my child could get in it, but to say it's available to all is a lie. There is a waiting list of children. So let's get it straight, it is not available to all. Same with the free Preschool for All. It is not available for all. You have to be screened and if there's a spot they will pick you. It is not like kindergarten where everyone goes. Preschool for All is only for a select few.

Extended Day Kindergarten, which I'm not sure is a full day or just a couple of hours longer than half a day, it is not available to all, just at Golfview, Parkview, Perry, and Meadowdale. They received a federal grant of \$375,433 for this year. They do have one in Hampshire (*transcription note: the Hampshire Elementary "All Day Kindergarten" program is totally unrelated to the "extended day" kindergarten program referenced above*), but those parents have to pay \$200 or \$300 a month to have their kids in it.

The free programs are from grants from either the State or Federal Government. I did not realize when we accept this money for these free programs that we are picking up the tab for busing. It does not sound free to me anymore. Just for Dual Language and preschool busing the total cost to District 300 is \$828,000. I have not received an answer yet about Extended Day Kindergarten busing, how it is costing us, otherwise I would have that total, too. I am figuring that would put us over the million mark for just free programs. We have been told for years we do not have money for art or foreign language for all children because of finances. Looks like to me we could stop accepting the free money from the government, we would have the arts back in the school.

The kids who are lucky enough to be in these free programs, it should not be a problem for their parents to transport their child to school. They are being provided great programs for free. If they think it's a problem for transportation, there are 20 kids waiting to take their spot behind them and their parents will transport them.

Cambridge Charter School has the free preschool. Those parents have to provide their own transportation and, I believe, they are full. Why the District (garbled) will have continue this transportation cost for the free program is beyond me. You've taken away gym and music from kindergarteners for All to provide 17 or 57 students, I'm not sure what the number was for the bi-lingual class. What an injustice to all students. You are providing a better education to only a select few.

In your update, you are sacrificing federal funds targeted for a highly effective technology-based literacy program and spending it on Dual Language transportation. Is that legal? When we are awarded a grant, don't you have to use it for what it is allotted for? If not, use some of that stimulus money for gym, music, art, and foreign language for all children. Is it legal for the District to spend their money on preschool busing, which the District does not have to provide, and take from the students in kindergarten through high school highly successful programs? Is it legal? I requested Freedom of Information on all

the federal and state grants we have accepted from 2007 to current. I'm going to go through every one of them and see what extra cost each of these supposedly free money is costing the taxpayers at District 300. I encourage all parents to look for it to be posted on line by the end of the week. I don't know if I would be surprised how little we have gotten or outraged how much it has really cost us while children have vital programs cut from them.

As a side note, if the State cannot pay our School District, are they still providing grants for certain programs? The taxpayers of District 300 are generous people. I don't think any of us have a problem helping families who need assistance with paying for school tuition or the free lunch. I don't want any child to go hungry. That is roughly a savings of \$540 a year per child for the people who need it. However, do not stick your fist down my children's throat and take their share of quality education and programs to give the underprivileged exclusive programs while you tie the taxpayers of District 300 no music, gym or art for all students. In conclusion, is this legal what you are doing by taxpayers money, or better yet, is it fair?

Now this is going to come from the heart here. I don't have this written down. It is incredibly sad ...

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

You're at four minutes.

SHARON FETTING

... that gym and music. I mean if you were to tell me four years ago when I had my twin, beautiful boys that they would not have gym and music in kindergarten, I would have said you were crazy. How this has happened to all these schools? It is just so incredibly sad. I just can't imagine when I was going to school that I had gym, music, art, and a foreign language and we took it for granted and now I'm worrying in the next twenty years what our kids, our grandkids, are going to have in our School District. I don't think they are going to have any of it. It's just so incredibly sad. That's all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you, Sharon. We'll continue with Mark Petersdorff. Do you understand the rules? Okay, thank you.

MARK PETERSDORFF

My name is Mark Petersdorff.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

You can pick the mic up.

MARK PETERSDORFF

Thank you. My name is Mark Petersdorff. I live at 1325 Garinger Road in Algonquin, IL. I am not an employee of the District. I just want to address you tonight about the issue of parochial school busing. I am the, excuse me, I am in charge of the Board of Education for St. John's Lutheran School. And I just wanted to say thank you very much from all of us for the opportunity to work with you through this very difficult and, well, thank you very much. It means a lot for us to have the opportunity to be able to work with you. Thank you.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you, sir. Carol? Carol Norman?

CAROL NORMAN

Good evening. My name is Carol Norman. I live at 1881 Glenmoor Drive in West Dundee, IL. I am not an employee of the District. I am a teacher at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School. I am here on behalf of the faculty, the administration, the parents, and the teachers of our school to offer our most sincere

gratitude, appreciation, and thankfulness to Dr. Arndt and to the School Board members for Dr. Arndt's proposal to revamp the parochial school busing and provide the shuttles. When (Principal) Mrs. Link got a phone call Thursday, she came into my classroom, she knocked on the door, and all of my strictness in the classroom went out the window. I started jumping up and down. I hugged Mrs. Link and she hugged me. I was just overwhelmed with gratitude and thankfulness and I want you to know that. Thank you very, much from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you, Carol.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Mr. Wiener?

DENIS WIENER

My name is Denis Wiener. I live at 1961 White Oak Drive in Algonquin, IL. I am here representing St. Margaret Mary School community tonight. First off, I would like to thank Dr. Arndt for arranging a meeting with me to discuss the busing issue. And I would also like to express our community's appreciation to your Board for listening and responding positively to the parochial school community's concerns that were expressed to you over the past six weeks.

Dr. Arndt laid out a broad framework for a plan that would continue busing our students to parochial school campuses, but under a revised arrangement that would allow for cost savings to the District. I let him know that I would immediately communicate this plan to St. Margaret Mary's principal, who, mostly likely, would have additional questions for transportation officials. I was not in a position to accept a plan for our school and, obviously, I could not accept a plan for the four other parochial schools. I was, however, very pleased to be able to let our school know that a plan had been offered that continued direct busing to our campus.

Dr. Arndt has requested that our school administrators work closely with Transportation Officials in a good faith effort to implement the plan. We discussed that there had been problems with this plan in the past, and that the District would address the problems in the revised arrangement. I can assure the Board that our administration plans to work diligently and to the fullest extent possible with District transportation officials to implement the proposed plan. And I appreciate Dr. Arndt's assurance that if this exact plan is not workable, the District will work with us.

We need to be able to confidently tell our school parents that busing will be available in order to retain our fall registrations. Parochial school principals will be meeting with District transportation officials in the near future to learn of the details and to discuss a proposed plan. While we understand the flexibility of bell times is necessary, please note that the parochial schools need to meet minimum State requirements for minutes attended each day by the pupils.

Now is the time for the professionals to work together to implement the proposed busing arrangement. On behalf of St. Margaret Mary, I want to restate our commitment to work in good faith with the District as busing arrangements are planned and also through the implementation phase this fall. We are counting on just as strong a good-faith effort on the part of the District officials as well. And we want to work together with you. Again, please accept our thanks for continuing busing for our campuses and I will e-mail you a copy of these tomorrow. Thank you very much.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you, sir, very much.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Tiffany Potter?

TIFFANY POTTER

Good evening. My name is Tiffany Potter. I live at 216 Aspen Circle in Gilberts, IL and I am not an employee of District 300. I have a child attending St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School in Hampshire, IL. And on behalf of all parents at St. Charles Borromeo, I would like to thank the Board and the Administration for working with us in coming to a compromise on continuing parochial busing for next year. I hope that we can all continue to work together in the future and keep our communication open. Thank you.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you very much.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

I would just like to make a comment that I want pay particular attention to Dr. Scarpino, Donna Bordsen, and Dr. Arndt, who really spearheaded this resolution.

Also to Mr. Wiener who helped us understand and was the first to meet with Dr. Arndt and helped bring this together. And also I want to pay particular attention that we have received several petitions signed by, I'm guessing, roughly a thousand people representing this group. And when I said early on as we were beginning to make cuts (that) I needed to hear from the public because we never hear from you, we heard from you loud and clear. And we have hundreds and hundreds of e-mails in our inboxes, and we have read each and every one.

I also want to acknowledge that we were fully prepared to be here until about 2 a.m. this morning, expecting there would be hundreds here to speak to us tonight. And I want to thank Dr. Arndt and the representatives of different schools who heeded our request to please not do that, but maybe have one representative from each school so that we could all get out of here at a decent hour.

Obviously, the vote has not taken place yet, but we are quite optimistic. And again, I want to acknowledge Dr. Arndt. You put together a plan that seems to have flown. And I understand the commitment that if it does not work out, that we will basically revert back to what we have now, and there is strong support for that as well.

So, thank you all very much. And thank you Dr. Arndt, Donna Bordsen, and Dr. Scarpino.

SUPERINTENDENT DR. KEN ARNDT

We are basically just going to show four PowerPoint slides. For the past three to four months now, we've been presenting to the public detailed analysis of our budget.

First of all, I would just begin by saying we are truly a victim of the State's insolvency. That's the only reason why we are looking at these budget reductions. It's not because of mismanagement. It's not because the Board spent money unwisely that they didn't have. Hardly. In fact, we now have the highest credit rating we've ever had in our 61-year history. We've had a balanced budget now for four consecutive years. That's a first, ever.

But when you're expecting \$11.2 million this year from the State for services that everybody recognizes are very valuable, somebody has to pay the bill. That \$11.2 million has already been spent (this year) on staff and transportation and materials. And so now the local taxpayer has to pay that bill that we were expecting from the State.

So we began this journey thinking that maybe we would only have to cut \$6 million (from the 2010-2011 school year budget). But then Governor Quinn proposed his budget for next school year, and that \$6 million then escalated to \$15 million. And that was predicated on an increase in the State income tax, which right now does not appear to be a very viable option. So, as many of the media representatives have been reporting now for months, this is like trying to work with Jello. The number constantly keeps

changing. School boards and local municipalities are now in a very precarious situation trying to balance a budget, not knowing exactly what the numbers are going to be, and knowing full well the numbers probably will not be known until after the November election. Way, way too late for us to try to balance the budget for 2010-2011.

The Board has approved \$6.9 million in cuts. We have tentative agreement (with employee groups) right now of (an additional) \$1.1 million. The \$1.1 comes basically from DESPA (the secretaries/custodians union)) and the Administration. The Administration next year will be paying a much higher medical insurance premium, and we are also looking at furlough days for Administration. Looking at the 100 employees (in the administrator group), they are going to have next year a reduction of between \$800 and \$6,000 total in their paycheck, compared to what they are making now—plus the furlough days. The custodians are also pulling up their sleeves. The secretaries are pulling up their sleeves. So \$1.1 million is in tentative agreements (with DESPA and Administration).

So that makes it \$8 million, where we're at. But we are still not at the \$15 million (target). That brings us to this evening's presentation. The Administration is asking the Board to vote three separate times on these budget reductions. First, let me spend some time talking about the parochial busing. District 61, excuse me, District 300, over the last 61 years has had a wonderful working relationship with our parochial schools, except two different times. And they both dealt with transportation. The first time was (around) ... five years ago. (About) five years ago we tried to save costs by saying, "Okay, let's look at the parochial bus routes. Could we ask the elementary parochial schools to reduce their schedule?" Well, that was a great idea that was immediately shot down by the Diocese. And their reason being, "How do you expect us to have our children learn religious instruction?" So, we then said, "We could do another system using our middle schools as the vehicle to get the students back and forth."

Well, six years ago, the Board of Education asked the Administration to conduct an outside audit of our transportation services. And it came out saying that District 300 had the second worst transportation system in the nation. Yet we thought we were going to be able to pull this all together with the parochial schools. It was a disaster. And the bottom line was we thought we had shuttles going to our parochial schools, and the shuttles never arrived. We had buses getting to the wrong location. We had supervision problems. We had so many problems. That plan lasted only one week. And that (led to) the plan we have now, where we basically have the elementary students on our elementary route, but we have a dedicated shuttle service to the students' parochial homes after school—and that is where the additional cost is coming from, that you normally do not find in other school districts.

So now we are really, truly going on faith, if I may use that term. And that's a good term to use. The faith is that we're going to make this program work. And we learned (about) the stakes five years ago. We are not going to have those parochial students waiting for a shuttle that does not appear. And we're not going to have our public school kids wait for the parochial shuttle for over 30 minutes when they want to get home also.

So when this idea was floated (again recently) – knowing full well it did not work five years ago, in fact, it was a terrible decision – the faith says, "You know, maybe this will work this time." Because this was the first year – seriously, in nine years – the first year that we have never really had any significant outcry regarding transportation. And I kept my fingers crossed this year. I thought it's (the outcry) going to happen. It never happened. And why? Because we now have the right people driving our buses. We have the right management. We are keeping cost under control. It is a level of service now that we needed for a long, long time.

And I will also reassure the parochial parents we have absolutely no interest in having you go through any more anguish. Because I realize that even if you had a five percent reduction in enrollment, that would significantly hurt you next year. I realize you're living on a hope and a prayer.

So with that, we are going to do everything we can to make sure that this parochial transportation system works—which will mirror, by the way, Woodstock schools. In Woodstock (D200), our neighbor north of us, they have the (elementary) parochial students ride the (public) high school and the middle school buses. They have been doing it for years. And I think if Woodstock can do it, we certainly can do it in 300.

I also know that it's going to take all of us a little bit extra initiative to get this to work. But this is definitely going to have our highest priority. Because we wouldn't be here tonight unless these seven members of the Board, or six tonight, said, "You know, let's do whatever we can to get this to work." We have worked well for the last 61 years. We have no interest in changing that direction because the parochial families are our families. They are our neighbors and many of those students eventually go to our high schools. In fact, you'll probably see many of those students (being honored here) today that went to a number of our parochial schools. And I'll leave it at that.

I apologize for all the grief and consternation. But we only did it because we were forced to because of the State insolvency. That is the parochial busing restriction plan dealing with the middle schools.

Now let me add now the other proposals. Preschool for All. Absolutely wonderful program. We need it. It needs to be expanded. But it is extremely expensive, and when you look at the costs that are being spent transporting the kids, this is the cost to educate them. We are spending almost as much, in fact more, to bus than to educate. That's because we cover 118 square miles. And we are also going to serve the children that need those services the most. But we can't do both. I wish I had a grant that we could pull out and say, "You know what we're going to use the preschool grant fund." But then who's going to pay for our teachers, and who's going to pay for the services? It's \$671,000 of transportation. We still want to keep the program alive and well, but we've got to ask our parents, "Please, can you get them to the school and then we'll educate them?" And we realize also we are dealing with the youngest children that we can possibly educate. Preschool for All. We still want to hold the program. A lot of school districts in this State, if you've been hearing, are closing those program doors because they can't afford it (without the state funding it as promised). We're going to try to keep it together with local funds, but we cannot afford the busing. Likewise, with bell times for deLacey, that's an internal arrangement; we're going to just do it because we have to try to save those funds.

Now let me share with you what hasn't come out with the ECC Partnership. Those are basically our first generation college goers. They are high school students. They are very talented high school students and they have the ability to do college work. Without us trying to encourage them to try those college classes at ECC—which, by the way, we have a federal grant for—for the instruction, many of those students probably would never go on to higher education. It's been a wonderful program that we've had for many, many years. Unfortunately, again, we don't have enough money for the buses and also for the education. We're hoping that the high school kids will be able to find (transportation) means of their own to continue this ECC Partnership that all three high schools benefit from.

Ombudsmen busing. If you don't know anything about Ombudsmen, these are students that have serious emotional problems at times who can't behave in our schools. And so instead of (saying to) those kids, "I'm sorry. Hit the streets and you're on your own," we still provide instruction so they can get a high school diploma and become a gainful member of society. Because as everybody in this room knows, (non) high school graduates have a very, very dire future. And this is the one program that is their last chance. So we are going to reduce busing. We're going to keep the program alive, but (the busing) has to be cut back.

The area that in Vote No. 2 that has also caused a lot of consternation is technology. Technology is absolutely our future. It is something that we all want to procure more of. But again, we ran out of money. So technology is on the reduction list because we just are not going to hit the \$15 million (target). And I took it off, and I put it back on, and I've gone back and forth. I'm sorry. There are just no more funds for that.

Regarding (district-level) literacy leaders: That is going to be another very difficult situation for us because we have been using our literacy leaders for a variety of different initiatives, especially in terms of literacy. But they've also been helping us with trying to reduce the number of students that are being accepted into Special Education services, also known as Response to Intervention. Because, you see, Special Education is also a very costly program. We basically spend 30 percent of all local dollars for 16 percent of our student body.

Building budgets: that request is to be reduced by 10 percent. What does that mean? Less textbooks, paper, supplies, field trips, professional development opportunities. It is going to be difficult. But again, we are running out of options to look at for the next year.

So where does this take us? The goal, again, is \$15 million based upon the Governor's budget proposal just two months ago. We can identify \$6.9 million. I've just told you where the (\$1.1 million) tentative agreement is going to come from. It's coming from the administrative, custodial, and secretarial employees. But we are still short.

There's approximately \$4.2 million right now that is in the realm of collective negotiations. \$4.2 right now is proposed agreements with the various associations, primarily the teachers' association. With their support we will almost make the \$15 million mark.

I am not going to try to sugar coat this and say this is easy. It's not going to be easy. We are going to have at least five more kids in every classroom next year across the board. Every school is going to be affected. We are bringing back about 130 teachers that we presently have. There is very, very little fat left to cut, if there is such a thing. Everybody is rolling up their sleeves. Everybody is taking a hit. There hasn't been one program that has been spared.

Next month we'll be looking at extracurriculars. I will not recommend that we eliminate extracurricular programs that all the other Fox Valley schools have. That's not fair to our kids.

Just like next year, while it's going to be difficult with higher class sizes, we're still generally going to be able to provide the programs and services for our kids that they presently have. And, yes, our kids are going to be able to get into the colleges of their choosing. But I will tell you, it will be difficult for some because it is not going to be a pretty picture in 300 next year. You can't possibly reduce almost 15% of your budget without saying it's going to have an impact because it is. Everybody is struggling.

This has been a truly emotional, gut-wrenching initiative. And as Mr. Stevens mentioned, the Board received hundreds and hundreds of letters regarding parochial transportation. We have received hundreds of letters also from parents and staff saying, "Please, don't touch my program." We understand why this is said. But again, there's no other place to touch. Every aspect has been hit for next school year. And so these are difficult times for our Board. As I mentioned to a number of people, this is it. We are done with budget cuts after tonight, Board willing. It's already going to be extremely difficult next year. We can't go any higher. And even whether we'll make the \$15 million is another question, though we have truly tried everything we can to hit that target—which just six months ago we didn't even realize we would have to hit. So with that I will turn the floor to the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you, Dr. Arndt, very much for those remarks. I think it was very helpful to understand the situation.

Just to talk about one of the other elephants in the room: These numbers assume that we will get the \$11.2 or \$12 million that the State owes us. If we don't, the situation is even bleaker than we have anticipated, and we do not anticipate next year to be any better, and we may have to make further cuts.

So none of us like what we feel is like a disassembling of a system that has worked pretty well. But we really have no choice. And if we dig ourselves in a hole now, it will be very hard to dig out of it later.

Transcriptionist Note: Transcription stopped for items not related to budget.

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BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

At this point, before we move on, Mrs. Miller has asked to make several comments on two different topics.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Well, I'm going to wait until after we have the motion.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Okay. I'm the one. You go ahead on the certification.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

This is a very simple comment. There has been some misunderstanding regarding some of the staff that we let go. The way things were phrased was "due to certifications," hence to deal with teaching staff that was let go. The certification issue does not have to do with the staff that was let go. Their certifications are in order. The reason we called it "certifications" was we needed to recall some of the previously let-go teachers, who had specific certifications, to fill spots that we needed to fill. In order to do that, we needed to let go additional staff. So it's gotten out in the world that there were certification issues. The certification issues are not with these staff. It is not because certification was in any kind of error. It was to fill specific certified positions that we needed to recall.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Thank you for that. Item 9.40. Could I have a motion, please, for the restructuring of the parochial school transportation by eliminating dedicated routes and running shuttles from middle schools only? And, with your permission, also if this does not work per the agreement, it would be revised to its current level by the second term.

SUPERINTENDENT DR. KEN ARNDT

Well, as soon as we could. But we're going to make it work. You've got to give us at least a couple weeks though.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Could I have a second to the motion please?

BOARD MEMBER MONICA CLARK

So moved.

BOARD MEMBER DAVID ALESSIO

Second.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Wait a second. I have a so moved. You're taking a second?

BOARD MEMBER DAVID ALESSIO

Yes.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Is there discussion on this?

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Yes.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Mr. Alessio.

BOARD MEMBER DAVID ALESSIO

I appreciate everyone working together to make the new proposal work, as Dr. Arndt said. I believe by, especially the participants in the program, helping the District transportation department we can make this as efficient as possible, and help us save money while restructuring it to benefit everybody. I think as long as we keep in mind the need to safely transport all students within our District, we'll get the job done.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Sorry. I've been told that I'm not always able to be heard in the back. I wanted to let people know the thought process that I went through in reaching my vote. We've sat and we've read and we've listened to several comments coming to the Board regarding parochial busing. Most of the answers have come back; the responses were through our Communications Director or through Dr. Arndt. I thought that it was appropriate if you could follow through my thought process knowing how I came to the conclusion to encourage Dr. Arndt to come up with a different proposal and to support this one.

So listening to and reading the different reasons from parochial parents on why we should not support cuts: First, I should say, yes, I'm an attorney, although I was not an attorney when I was first elected in 1997 but after that I did become an attorney. I do not offer legal advice to the Board. We did have a legal opinion based on the reading of the statute. There were several comments that said our legal opinion was wrong and incorrect, and that we were not given a corresponding, contrary legal opinion. So that was not part of my decision. Okay.

We were told there may be a lawsuit that would be filed. Well, I know from experience those lawsuits can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, take time, plus an appeal process. And by the time we got down to that, the students that we're trying to help would be out of the system.

The next comments that had been made was that, "We're going to sending lots of students to District 300." All right. We're already going to have crowded classrooms, but I think District 300 has a very strong educational program. We have a diverse student body. We draw students that have over 60 different languages. We have, although it's not a Christian-based foundation here, we do have character-based program in each of our schools. And I think we have a very good education program. So if your students were to come to our schools, they would get a good education. So I thought, "okay, that's not threatening me or swaying me."

Finances. There were comments that were made, "District 300, your finances are always bad. You're always off." Well, within the last several years, we've had balanced budgets. Our Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Crates, has won several financial awards. Our Moody's rating has just been increased. We have the highest state status for financial responsibility. Okay, granted, it's coming from a state that really is not one that I would want to say is financially responsible. I looked at this as, "Okay, don't tell me that our finances are bad. The financial situation that we are in is not of our own doing. There have been times when it has been. But it is not now."

Then the next (common statement from parochial parents) is, "You know, we're taxpayers. We pay money in, and we don't get anything out of it, and we should have this (busing) for our children." So I think, "Okay, but so are seniors (senior citizens). And actually, quite frankly, so am I." I have three children. They all graduated. So I no longer have current students. I'm sort of like that in-between: not quite a senior citizen and not really quite an empty nester because they keep coming back. Many seniors

don't come up to me and say, "What do we get back for paying our taxes?" You get us. You vote for us to represent the whole District. So that was a point in favor. I thought, "Okay, you know what, we do represent the whole district, everyone."

Then the comment was made, "Don't pick on us. Why do we always have to be the ones that suffer?" As Dr. Arndt has pointed out, we've had a good relationship with our parochial schools with the exception of the last time we tried to do something with transportation, and I remember that well. But, as you heard tonight, it isn't just parochial schools that cuts are being focused on. Kindergarteners, preschoolers, teachers—it's across the board. So I didn't buy into the argument, "Why us, only us?" Our administrators are giving back to the district.

Then I had an issue with administration. I thought, "Okay, we have spent more time listening to people on this topic, reading on this topic, audience participation—more time than was put into coming up with the plan." So I had a little bit of an issue with, you know, all of a sudden this comes up.

So for me it came down to two things: One thing, surprising enough, was being reminded by a rabbi of what I should think about. And what I try very hard to think about when I do my decisions isn't so much what or who someone is advocating, but it's a question of what is right.

The other part of my decision came from one e-mail out of the tens of hundreds, all the e-mails we got. It was a very short e-mail from a parent, a mom from Emmanuel Lutheran in West Dundee. And the comment was, "My child needs your help to get to school; please help me help my child." Well that made ... there was no question.

The reason why I can support this is because it is the right thing to do. It's not because we have been badgered into doing it. It's not because of all of these other reasons that we were given. It's because it's the right thing to do. Because it is not right to build a chasm between parochial and public. It's not right to have parents and families worry about how to get their students to school. But for me, weighing that fiduciary responsibility to the community, representing the whole community including those children that don't attend our schools, it comes down to this was the right thing to do.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Any other comments? Mrs. Roeckner?

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT KAREN ROECKNER

Just one, and I am glad we did read hundreds of e-mails, and I am glad that we could work through this situation.

But I also think that it's really important that when we begin this process when school starts again in the fall, that there's regular communication as to—whether it's weekly or however you want to do it—that all the administration from our private schools communicate with our staff to make sure this is working, and that we don't let it go long periods of time and then say, "Well, it just didn't work so we want to go back." So I think it's really important that we really communicate and make sure everybody is talking to each other when we begin this program in the fall. So just a note of how we communicate is up to everybody else. But I think it needs to be done and make sure everybody does that.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Mr. Ryan?

BOARD MEMBER JOHN RYAN

Thank you, Mr. Stevens. For the members of our audience, some of you may be aware that even though I sit on a public school board, my wife and I made a decision many years ago to pull our children out of public school. And, in our case, we home school. But the reasons that we do that are probably very similar for the same reasons that you choose to send your children to parochial school. And so I always

felt that in this issue I had a little bit of sensitivity in terms of where our parochial parents were coming from. Winston Churchill once said that democracy is the most terrible form of government there is— except for all the other ones that have been tried. And, you know, democracy is, no doubt, messy. But left to its own devices, and assuming that there is not intentional sabotage mixed in with it, that more often times than not the right thing does get done. It may take a while. It may be a lot of hand wringing and grey hairs and blood, sweat and tears. But eventually it does get done right.

I would simply remind all those involved that from the beginning nothing was ever cast in stone on this. The recommendations from our administration were just that, recommendations. And the process worked. There were no foregone conclusions, you know.

I had read some things in the press, where somebody representing one of the parochial schools actually said that “the Board conceded and we won.” Folks, I’m sorry but that’s not the case. There are no “winners” here. Reasonable people got together and made a reasonable decision. And I’m glad that we were able to find something that, although it may not be perfect and although it’s something that we would all rather not do, that in the outcome, you know, that we did have the best interest of the kids at heart. And that moving forward from here I’m very confident it will be the right decision to make. Thank you, Mr. Stevens.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Anyone else? Please call the roll.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER AND MENTIONED BOARD MEMBERS

Miller – Aye; Alessio – Aye; Clark – Aye; Roeckner – Aye; Ryan – Aye; Stevens – Aye. Motion carries 6-0.

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BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Item 9.50. Could I have a motion please for the recommended 2010-2011 budget reductions listed totaling \$1,461,657?

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT KAREN ROECKNER

So moved.

BOARD MEMBER JOHN RYAN

Second.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Is there discussion?

BOARD MEMBER MONICA CLARK

Yes.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Mrs. Clark.

BOARD MEMBER MONICA CLARK

I want to say that I’m going to have a very difficult time. I still have not made up my mind on how I’m going to vote on this. I am disappointed that Dual Language (transportation) was removed from this (package of cuts). As we had agreed, I thought we were going to vote on all transportation as a package.

We were talking about parochial school busing. I feel that parochial school busing – those kids are entitled to an education and a core education, and that’s where their parents chose to send them. So I was not going to cut parochial school busing.

But Dual Language, as much as I like the program and wish my children were able to participate, (busing for it) is right now something that we cannot afford. And it is not equitable to the other students in our district who don’t have it available to them. I find it offensive that we are removing it from Gary D. Wright (Elementary) where it was offered, but is no longer going to be offered, to benefit the children in Liberty to make sure that program continues. So I am very disappointed that it was removed from this (package of cuts), and it is making my decision whether to vote on these next cuts positively or negatively. I still have not made the decision on what I am going to do. So I need to say that. We are in tough financial crisis. We can no longer afford Dual Language (busing) at the, what am I saying, substituting or at the benefit of something else losing.

And I don’t think it’s fair just because one group of parents spoke out louder than anybody else, that they should get it. So I am very disappointed in where this is going at this point. That’s what I have to say.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Are there other comments? Mr. Alessio?

BOARD MEMBER DAVID ALESSIO

I feel all these programs are worthwhile. The Preschool for All Program is very important for many areas of our district, and the ECC Program is also important for a lot of people getting introduced to college. But I believe we just have to focus on K through 12 right now and do the best we can with the core grade levels.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Other comments?

I would just like to address Mrs. Clark – your comments. I feel similarly with regard to (busing for the) Dual Language program. But I would beg of you to please recognize that voting against this isn’t going to bring that back and will only make our overall (financial) situation worse. I think they are separate issues. But, obviously, you will vote your conscience.

Are there any other comments?

Please call the roll.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER AND MENTIONED BOARD MEMBERS

Roeckner – Aye; Ryan – Aye; Stevens – Aye; Miller – Aye; Alessio – Aye; Clark – No. Motion carries 5-1.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

I also failed to mention that (Board Member) Mr. Stanton is very ill tonight with a good case of flu that has had him down for about a week, and that is why he is not here. I failed to mention that. I apologize. But that is why we are at 6 (Board members) and not 7 tonight.

Item 9.60. Could I have a motion please for the recommended reductions from the 2010-2011 budget of Literacy Leaders and building budget cut totaling \$540,832?

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT KAREN ROECKNER

So moved.

BOARD MEMBER JOHN RYAN

Second.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Is there discussion?

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Yes.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Mrs. Miller?

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

I just want to point out that I have an issue with this, again, as I have in the past with any staff reductions. Again, going back to requesting to see what the overall picture looks like. And the task force involved in helping with reductions. So this one, because of the literacy reduction, I've already expressed to Dr. Arndt that I would not be able to support it.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Any other comments. Mrs. Clark?

BOARD MEMBER MONICA CLARK

Dr. Arndt, correct me if I'm wrong, but is this where the money is coming for the Dual Language transportation?

SUPERINTENDENT DR. KEN ARNDT

No. The Dual Language money for transportation is coming from the Federal Title III funds, and those funds can only be used for English language learners. So they can only be used for students who do not speak English. So it can either be spent on technology, which is how it's presently being spent—on technology, or Dual Language education or it's for transportation. So it's the money that is restricted and can only be used for the ELL students.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

So it is not this amount of money.

SUPERINTENDENT DR. KEN ARNDT

No. These are all local tax dollars.

BOARD MEMBER MONICA CLARK

I have to say I agree with Mrs. Miller in that I am very upset that we are cutting (district-level) literacy leaders when we are having trouble as a school district to improve our reading skills. I wish we had been able to find something somewhere else for this \$200,000 that we're going to be saving by getting rid of our (district-level) literacy leaders.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Are there other comments? Mr. Alessio?

BOARD MEMBER DAVID ALESSIO

I just want to mention I wouldn't be able to support this (proposed cut) at the current time. If you're not familiar enough with the building budgets – I know there's some disparity between different buildings and how much they are relied upon. But I know I count on all schools to be as efficient as possible and, of course, expect reductions in all budgets.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Okay. Mrs. Roeckner? Mr. Ryan? Please call the question.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER AND MENTIONED BOARD MEMBERS

Roeckner – Aye; Ryan – Aye; Stevens – Aye; Miller – No; Clark – Aye; Alessio – No. Motion carries 4-2.

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BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Item 9.80. Could I have a motion please for the approval of the policies 2.26 Uniform Grievance Procedure, 4.11 Transportation, 5.110 Recognition of Service, 5.280 Educational Support Personnel Duties and Qualifications, 5.33 Educational Support Personnel Sick Days, Holidays, Vacations and Leaves, 6.20 School Year Calendar and Day, 6.50 School Wellness, and 6.60 Curriculum Content?

BOARD MEMBER JOHN RYAN

So moved.

BOARD SECRETARY ANNE MILLER

Second.

BOARD PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. STEVENS

Is there any discussion? Mr. Ryan?

BOARD MEMBER JOHN RYAN

I just want to make a comment about (policy) 5.110: Recognition of Service. This is something that, again, is just an unfortunate action that the Board has to take. No stone, as Dr. Arndt has said, is left unturned. And, you know, as part of our financial trimming a recommendation was made that past practice would have to be discontinued in terms of actually providing a token of appreciation to our departing employees. I just, from a Board standpoint, want to say that this in no way, shape or form affects our appreciation for the years of service that those employees have given to the District. And we are very truly sorry that we're not able to (afford to) give you a tangible memento of that.

Transcriptionist Note: Transcription stopped for items not related to budget.

Transcription Ends.