

***THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA***

**MINUTES**

**Meeting of:** December 2, 2002

**Call of the Meeting:** Regular Meeting

**Members Present:** Mr. Brentley, Mrs. Colaizzi  
Mrs. Fink, Mrs. Harris, Mr. Isler,  
Mr. Matthews Mr. McCrea  
Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Wood

Present 9.

**Members Absent:** Absent 0.

**The following matters were received and acted upon.**

**Actions taken are recorded following the reports.**

**THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15213**

**Administration Building  
341 South Bellefield Avenue**

**December 2, 2002**

**AGENDA**

Election of Officers and Conduct General Business

**TEMPORARY ORGANIZATION**

- |    |                                 |           |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Election of Temporary President | Roll Call |
| 2. | Election of Temporary Secretary | Roll Call |

**PERMANENT ORGANIZATION**

- |    |                             |           |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Election of President       | Roll Call |
| 2. | Election of Vice Presidents | Roll Call |

<b>ELECTION OF SECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES AND SETTING OF BONDS</b>	Roll Call
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<b>ELECTION OF SCHOOL TREASURER AND DEPUTY SCHOOL TREASURER AND SETTING OF BONDS</b>	Roll Call
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<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	Roll Call
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## **ELECTION OF SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES AND SETTING OF BONDS**

**RESOLVED**, That John W. Thompson, Ph.D. be elected as Secretary of the Board of Public Education in addition to his other duties as Superintendent of Schools, without additional salary, and that bond for the office be set at \$250,000, the bond to be furnished at the cost of the Board.

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, That Stephanie L. Royal, Richard R. Fellers, Peter J. Camarda and Christopher M. Berdnik be elected Assistant Secretaries of the Board of Public Education in addition to their other duties as Solicitor, Chief Operations Officer, Executive Director of Budget Development and Management and Director of Finance, and that bonds for the offices be set at \$250,000 each, the bonds to be furnished at the cost of the Board.

**ELECTION OF SCHOOL TREASURER  
AND SETTING OF BOND**

**RESOLVED**, That Richard M. Fees, Treasurer of the City of Pittsburgh, be elected School Treasurer and that bond for the office be set at \$250,000, the bond to be furnished at the cost of the Board.



1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MS. FINK: This meeting will please come  
3 to order.

4 Will Everyone please stand and salute the  
5 flag.

6 (Salute to the flag.)

7 MS. FINK: Our first order of business  
8 tonight, will be to elect a temporary president, and  
9 then a temporary secretary.

10 We will elect our temporary president, they  
11 will then assume the president's seat, then we will  
12 proceed with the election of the temporary secretary,  
13 and on to the election of the Board officers.

14 So the floor is now open for nominations  
15 for temporary president.

16 Mrs. Wood.

17 MS. WOOD: I nominate Floyd McCrea.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Second.

19 MS. FINK: Do we have any more nominations,  
20 for temporary president?

21 Hearing none, Floyd McCrea is unanimously  
22 elected to be temporary president.

23 Now we will change places.

24 MR. MCCREA: Okay. Let's start with the  
25 roll call.

1 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Brentley?  
2 MR. BRENTLEY: Here.  
3 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?  
4 MS. COLAIZZI: Here.  
5 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?  
6 MS. FINK: Here.  
7 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?  
8 MS. HARRIS: Here.  
9 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?  
10 MR. ISLER: Present.  
11 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?  
12 MR. MATTHEWS: Present.  
13 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?  
14 MR. MCCREA: Here.  
15 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?  
16 MR. MCCREA: Here.  
17 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Wood?  
18 MS. WOOD: Here.  
19 ATTORNEY WEISS: All members present.  
20 MR. MCCREA: Okay. We will proceed then  
21 with the election of the temporary secretary.  
22 Do I just read this up here, or --  
23 ATTORNEY WEISS: This is temporary  
24 secretary.  
25 MR. MCCREA: All right. Are there any

1 nominations, then?

2 MR. TAYLOR: I nominate Mr. Brentley.

3 MR. ISLER: Second.

4 MR. BRENTLEY: I don't accept.

5 MS. COLAIZZI: I nominate Mr. Taylor.

6 MR. McCREA: We don't need a second?

7 Mrs. Colaizzi nominated Mr. Taylor.

8 Are there any other nominations?

9 MR. TAYLOR: I decline.

10 I nominate Miss Colaizzi.

11 MR. McCREA: All right.

12 Mr. Taylor then nominates Mrs. Colaizzi.

13 All right.

14 Do you want to turn your mic off.

15 MR. ISLER: Second.

16 MR. McCREA: Okay.

17 All those in favor?

18 (Thereupon there was a chorus of ayes.)

19 MR. McCREA: Any opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. McCREA: All right.

22 MR. MATTHEWS: One abstention.

23 MR. McCREA: Sorry?

24 MR. MATTHEWS: One abstention.

25 MR. McCREA: One abstention.



1 Did you get that?

2 All right.

3 Next, I will ask for nominations from the  
4 floor for president.

5 MS. FINK: Mr. McCrea, I would like to  
6 nominate Darlene Harris.

7 MR. McCREA: Are there any other  
8 nominations?

9 Mr. Matthews.

10 MR. MATTHEWS: I would like to nominate  
11 Randall Taylor.

12 MR. McCREA: Any other nominations?

13 Then let's proceed with the roll call vote,  
14 for -- how do we do this, either one or the other,  
15 or --

16 ATTORNEY WEISS: We will call the roll, and  
17 the member voting should indicate which candidate they  
18 are voting.

19 Mr. Brentley?

20 MR. BRENTLEY: Mr. Taylor.

21 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

22 MS. COLAIZZI: Mrs. Harris.

23 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

24 MS. FINK: Mrs. Harris.

25 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?

1 MS. HARRIS: Mrs. Harris.

2 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?

3 MR. ISLER: Mr. Taylor.

4 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?

5 MR. MATTHEWS: Mr. Taylor.

6 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

7 MR. MCCREA: Mrs. Harris.

8 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

9 MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Taylor.

10 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Wood?

11 MS. WOOD: Mrs. Harris.

12 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris is elected

13 president, 5-4.

14 MR. MCCREA: Okay. Now we can proceed with

15 the first vice president.

16 Mrs. Colaizzi.

17 MS. COLAIZZI: I nominate Mrs. Fink.

18 MR. MCCREA: Are there any other

19 nominations?

20 Let's take the roll call vote, then.

21 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

22 MR. BRENTLEY: Abstain.

23 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

24 MS. COLAIZZI: Mrs. Fink.

25 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

1 MS. FINK: Mrs. Fink.

2 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?

3 MS. HARRIS: Mrs. Fink.

4 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?

5 MR. ISLER: Abstain.

6 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?

7 MR. MATTHEWS: Abstain.

8 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

9 MR. MCCREA: Mrs. Fink.

10 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

11 MR. TAYLOR: Abstain.

12 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink is elected 5-4.

13 MR. MCCREA: Mrs. Wood.

14 ATTORNEY WEISS: I'm sorry, Mrs. Wood,

15 excuse me.

16 MS. WOOD: Mrs. Fink.

17 ATTORNEY WEISS: I'm sorry.

18 MR. MCCREA: Next is the --

19 MR. TAYLOR: That's not 5-4, that's 5-0-4.

20 ATTORNEY WEISS: 5-0, correct.

21 MR. MCCREA: The next is the second vice

22 president.

23 Any nominations?

24 Mrs. Wood.

25 MR. MCCREA: I would like to nominate

1 Theresa Colaizzi.

2 MR. McCREA: Are there any other  
3 nominations?

4 Then we can proceed with the roll call  
5 vote.

6 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

7 MR. BRENTLEY: Abstain.

8 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

9 MS. COLAIZZI: Mrs. Colaizzi.

10 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

11 MS. FINK: Mrs. Colaizzi.

12 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?

13 MS. HARRIS: Mrs. Colaizzi.

14 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?

15 MR. ISLER: Abstain.

16 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?

17 MR. MATTHEWS: Abstain.

18 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

19 MR. McCREA: Mrs. Colaizzi.

20 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

21 MR. TAYLOR: Abstain.

22 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Wood?

23 MS. WOOD: Mrs. Colaizzi.

24 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi is elected  
25 five yes, four abstentions.

1           MR. McCREA: Next, then do they take their  
2 seats, or do we just --

3           MS. FINK: Yes, Darlene will go over there  
4 now, and then you do this.

5           MR. McCREA: Take their seats? Very good.  
6 I'm done.

7           More musical chairs.

8           MS. HARRIS: May I say something before we  
9 proceed?

10          MS. FINK: I think we will proceed, and  
11 then you say something.

12          MR. McCREA: Proceed on those things.

13          MS. FINK: Give her those two resolutions.

14          ATTORNEY WEISS: The secretary, and  
15 assistant secretaries.

16          MR. McCREA: Do you have those?

17          Do you have a copy of these, too?

18          MS. HARRIS: Okay. The election of  
19 secretary, and assistant secretaries and setting of  
20 the bonds.

21          (Mrs. Harris read from prepared material.)

22          ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

23          MR. BRENTLEY: Do we vote on this?

24          ATTORNEY WEISS: Yes.

25          MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

1 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?  
2 MS. COLAIZZI: Yes.  
3 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?  
4 MS. FINK: Yes.  
5 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?  
6 MS. HARRIS: Yes.  
7 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?  
8 MR. ISLER: Yes.  
9 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?  
10 MR. MATTHEWS: Yes.  
11 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?  
12 MR. McCREA: Yes.  
13 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?  
14 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.  
15 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Wood?  
16 MS. WOOD: Yes.  
17 ATTORNEY WEISS: The vote is nine in favor.  
18 MS. HARRIS: Okay. And then we have the  
19 election of school treasurer and setting of the bond.  
20 (Mrs. Harris read from prepared material.)  
21 MS. HARRIS: May we have the roll call  
22 vote.  
23 MR. FELLERS: Mrs. Harris?  
24 MS. HARRIS: Yes.  
25 MR. FELLERS: There is an omission on this

1 item. It needs to read, "Further resolved, that  
2 Linda M. Kuzner be elected as deputy school treasurer,  
3 upon the recommendation of the treasurer," and for a  
4 like bond.

5 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Fellers, Mrs. Kuzner  
6 is no longer employed by the city.

7 So, it would seem to me that when a deputy  
8 treasurer is appointed, which I understand is to be  
9 early next week, the Board may take this up at the  
10 regular meeting.

11 MR. FELLERS: Thank you.

12 ATTORNEY WEISS: She now is employed  
13 elsewhere.

14 MR. FELLERS: Thank you. I was not aware  
15 of that.

16 MS. HARRIS: May we have a roll call vote.

17 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

18 MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

19 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

20 MS. COLAIZZI: Yes.

21 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

22 MS. FINK: Yes.

23 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Harris?

24 MS. HARRIS: Yes.

25 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Isler?

1 MR. ISLER: Yes.

2 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Matthews?

3 MR. MATTHEWS: Yes.

4 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

5 MR. McCREA: Yes.

6 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

7 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

8 ATTORNEY WEISS: Mrs. Wood?

9 MS. WOOD: Yes.

10 ATTORNEY WEISS: Nine in favor.

11 MS. FINK: Is there another resolution?

12 MS. HARRIS: No, that's all for the  
13 resolutions.

14 MS. FINK: Then, you can make your --

15 MS. HARRIS: Okay. I would just like to  
16 make a comment.

17 I would like to thank Mrs. Fink for her  
18 year of devotion to this District, and I would like to  
19 begin by thanking my fellow Board members for their  
20 vote of confidence.

21 I look forward to leading this Board, and  
22 working with all of the members.

23 In order to encourage the spirit of  
24 cooperation, I will soon schedule a Board retreat as  
25 an introduction to seeking mediation to bridge the



1 divide that exists between us as colleagues.

2           Additionally, in the weeks to come, it is  
3 my intention to reach the goal of a collections based  
4 balanced budget, as directed by my fellow Board  
5 members. Living within our means, and spending only  
6 the amount of money that we have taken in within a  
7 year is what the public expects.

8           The Board can help avoid tax increases for  
9 the citizens of Pittsburgh, if we manage our money as  
10 if it was our own family budget.

11           Further more, building bridges to all of  
12 our partners, from foundations, to parents, will be of  
13 the utmost importance this year. To that end, I will  
14 reintroduce the building on basics blueprint submitted  
15 to you last year, as a means to direct us along the  
16 path to provide educational excellence for all of our  
17 students.

18           Thank you.

19           DR. THOMPSON: Madam President?

20           MR. FELLERS: Yes, Dr. Thompson.

21           DR. THOMPSON: I would like to offer my  
22 congratulations to the newly elected officers, and  
23 pledge to them, that the staff is ready to move  
24 forward, to a world class School District, under your  
25 leadership, and we are here to work for this 35,000 --

1 35,600 students in our School District, plus the other  
2 10,000 students that we serve daily in this School  
3 District.

4 And congratulations to all of you.

5 Miss Fink, I congratulate you on the year  
6 that you had in the office, and we look forward to  
7 your leadership continually throughout the rest of the  
8 year.

9 Thank you, very much.

10 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Is there any other  
11 business?

12 If not, may I have a motion to -- yes.

13 MR. MATTHEWS: Let me say, that this is a  
14 fine way to start off the year, because in one breath,  
15 you indicated that you wanted to work together, and to  
16 bring about cohesiveness to this Board, and then on  
17 the other hand, you said you are going to carry out  
18 the mission of a collections based budget, as directed  
19 by your fellow Board members.

20 This Board member did not direct anyone to  
21 do that.

22 I don't know if Mr. Taylor, Mr. Isler or  
23 Mr. Brentley have also directed you.

24 It appears that once again, your directive  
25 comes from the five Board majority.

1           The legacy that Mrs. Fink left, was one of  
2 a tragedy, and I would only hope that -- what is your  
3 legacy going to be? What is your legacy going to be,  
4 in terms of the continued downfall of this District?

5           It's a shame, that through this whole  
6 process, that this District is being led by a  
7 majority, and I have to state that it is a Caucasian  
8 majority, who is destroying this system, without input  
9 from the African American Board members, and  
10 Mr. Isler, and it constantly continues to go to the  
11 fact that five Board members have continued to run  
12 this District any way they see fit, overriding the  
13 superintendent, not consulting with other Board  
14 members. You know, everything that you guys have  
15 done, you have done in secrecy, because you five Board  
16 members, have voted along those lines, discussing  
17 things.

18           Mr. Taylor wasn't consulted on a lot of  
19 issues, myself wasn't consulted, Mr. Brentley,  
20 Mr. Isler, and we continue to say it's the Board, and  
21 we need to be very clear, that the Board is five  
22 majority white folks, who are leading this District,  
23 without input.

24           My community, which is made up of African  
25 Americans, as well as Caucasians, have absolutely no

1 input into the decision making of this Board.

2                   You know, it is one thing for me to cast a  
3 vote, and it fails, but not to even be included in the  
4 discussion, you are leaving out the African American  
5 communities.

6                   Now, that was Mrs. Fink's legacy. What is  
7 your legacy going to be? How are you going to convert  
8 this Board, and make us work together, allow us to be  
9 cohesive together, working with the agenda of the  
10 superintendent, and not -- and try to eliminate the  
11 racial overtone of this District, of this Board?

12                   This Board is very, very much, in a racial  
13 disarray.

14                   No one wants to deal with that.

15                   You want to have retreats, that's fine, but  
16 until you start dealing with the racial issues, this  
17 Board will continue to cause this District to go  
18 downhill.

19                   It's already on its way.

20                   And I don't see any change in the  
21 leadership.

22                   The only one person, who has any kind of  
23 reasoning, is now not even an officer, so I don't know  
24 what kind of decision making is going to happen now.

25                   You know, not one African American was

1 asked to be on your cabinet, wasn't nominated on your  
2 cabinet.

3           And so it just shows me the type of  
4 leadership that you are already displaying, because of  
5 your comments, of your saying that you are going to  
6 work with the whole Board, and then you talk about  
7 that the whole Board, that the Board gave you a  
8 directive.

9           No one gave you a directive.

10           And so, I don't know how it's going to be,  
11 but I can only see that this District is still going  
12 to plunder down hill, with your leadership, with the  
13 leadership of the new officers, because of the fact  
14 that you don't include -- you don't include our input  
15 from our communities, you don't take the advice of  
16 your own staff, you do what you want to do.

17           So I am just wondering, what is your legacy  
18 going to be? What are you going to leave this  
19 District, when you leave as president? What do you  
20 want people to say? That we had a collections based,  
21 because five Board members wanted this, and we got it  
22 done?

23           What is your legacy going to be?

24           MS. HARRIS: Hopefully, Mr. Matthews, with  
25 our retreat, you will be one of the members that would

1 like to go into mediation, so that we can resolve some  
2 of our differences.

3           So it will not just be up to myself, it  
4 will be up to all nine of us.

5           So let's see how we can work together, in a  
6 spirit of cooperation, starting with a retreat, and  
7 working our way to talking about -- everyone has to  
8 agree to go into mediation, or it never does work,  
9 Mr. Matthews.

10           I will be first to say, that I will, as a  
11 Board member, go into mediation.

12           So let's see what happens.

13           Thank you.

14           Mrs. Fink.

15           MS. FINK: I just wanted to say that,  
16 although Mr. Matthews didn't appreciate the way this  
17 was done, we did discuss this at a meeting of the full  
18 Board, and you elected not to come to that meeting,  
19 Mr. Matthews.

20           MR. MATTHEWS: What meeting was that?

21           MS. FINK: That was agenda review last  
22 week.

23           MR. MATTHEWS: Okay. That is agenda  
24 review. this is a budget item, this should have been  
25 done at a budget meeting, not at agenda review.

1                   When I get -- when I get my package of  
2 material, I can pick and chose. I was on my way from  
3 Harrisburg, I can pick and chose what meetings to go  
4 to.

5                   The budget was not on that agenda. That's  
6 agenda review. That is agenda review. That is the  
7 part that bothers me, as long as you have been in the  
8 leadership of this District, you still don't  
9 understand the workings of this Board.

10                   MS. FINK: I am talking about --

11                   MR. MATTHEWS: You don't understand the  
12 workings of this District, because for you to say,  
13 "Yes, you gave a directive, at an agenda review  
14 meeting."

15                   Had you told us it was going to be in the  
16 meeting, then we could have made sure that we were  
17 there, and that we were present.

18                   But you didn't do that. That is your  
19 leadership. And I am not dealing with your leadership  
20 any more, because we know for a fact how chaotic that  
21 was. Now we are dealing with Mrs. Harris, and her  
22 leadership, and I am hoping that things will become  
23 quite different, than what it is that you have  
24 demonstrated.

25                   And you didn't learn from the best. You

1 didn't learn from the best. I don't know what you  
2 have learned. I surely don't know.

3 MS. FINK: You were president before me,  
4 and I learned from you.

5 MR. MATTHEWS: And this District was great.

6 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Is there any other  
7 comments, or can we have a motion to adjourn this  
8 meeting?

9 MS. WOOD: Move we adjourn.

10 MS. HARRIS: Mr. Isler.

11 MR. ISLER: Thank you, Mrs. Harris.

12 I am a little dismayed, at this move to a  
13 retreat, given the fact that during this past year we  
14 had three retreats, without any follow up.

15 We were promised, in December of last year,  
16 I have the minutes before me, that we would deal with  
17 something that Mr. Matthews spoke about this evening,  
18 and spoke about in the meeting of December the 19th,  
19 of 2001.

20 That was the issue of trying to deal with  
21 race on this Board.

22 Mr. McCrea made a recommendation, that I  
23 think should be the number one on the agenda.  
24 Mrs. Fink responded absolutely. 12 months later, we  
25 are nowhere.



1           In fact, if anything, I think we have gone  
2 backwards.

3           I don't want to cast blame. I want to  
4 guarantee that we are going to move forward.

5           I agree with Mr. Matthews, that nothing  
6 appeared on the agenda dealing with the budget, at  
7 agenda review.

8           I think that any budget proceedings must be  
9 open to all Board members, announced in advance, and  
10 dealt with in the public, not behind closed doors, and  
11 not with just a few Board members.

12           I also would hope that in your spirit of  
13 trying to bring this Board together, that you talk  
14 about fiscal responsibility, where we bring all of our  
15 costs under control, and that we clearly manage all of  
16 our resources effectively; that we take a look at a  
17 District wide reorganization, so that we can match up  
18 what our student and community needs are, with what  
19 our actual needs are.

20           And that we become a data driven School  
21 District, and start talking about data that is factual  
22 and accurate, and it is data that everybody agrees  
23 with, not just a few.

24           And my final recommendation, and I am  
25 appalled that in 12 months, we never asked questions,

1 how is student achievement in this District.

2           Every decision we make, should be based  
3 upon how is it affecting student achievement.

4           We have responsibility to the students, to  
5 the parents, and to the community at large.

6           But our number one goal, is student  
7 achievement. And I have to say, that as far as I am  
8 concerned, this Board, if graded on this past year,  
9 all nine of -- us, all nine of us, not just a few of  
10 us, would be getting a failing grade.

11           And I don't think that is fair to the  
12 students, and I don't think it is fair to the  
13 community.

14           I could go in to a litany of what's  
15 happened in this past year, to the national story  
16 about the loss of funding from the foundation  
17 community, to the appointment of a mayor's committee  
18 to study three aspects of this District, that this  
19 Board should be looking at all the time, and we are  
20 not.

21           I am going to take you at your word,  
22 Mrs. Harris, and hold your feet to the fire as the  
23 leader of the Board, that we are going into retreat,  
24 and we are going to work, and working together, as  
25 nine members, for all students in this entire city.

1 MS. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Isler.

2 Mr. Brentley.

3 MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

4 Miss Harris, I just also want to just make  
5 my comments to this Board majority, and I am sure it  
6 is nothing -- shouldn't be anything new, but I just  
7 want to remind you again, that over the last year,  
8 under the leadership of Mrs. Fink, and this five  
9 majority, you have hurt so many people.

10 This city is actually -- we are actually  
11 beginning to take sides now. You can't go throughout  
12 a day, without somebody saying, "What side of the  
13 Board do you support, are they right or are they  
14 wrong?"

15 You talked about bringing this Board  
16 together. Let's not forget some of the things that  
17 have happened over this last year.

18 We are talking about watching our dollars,  
19 but we opened up three new schools, Mrs. Harris, that  
20 you helped lead the charge with.

21 Those three schools continue to be the talk  
22 of the town because, as you know, like everybody else,  
23 it is causing some legal problems for the District, it  
24 is causing a bigger racial divide once again, we have  
25 an issue where this majority again voted down the best

1 qualified MBE coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh,  
2 and now, this city has to wait, while you hand pick,  
3 go through the process and hand pick who you want to  
4 be there, regardless of the process that we used, that  
5 this District put in place, for anyone interested in  
6 being employed in this District, but now you are going  
7 to go back and hand pick, which is going to create  
8 another problem, on top of that we are talking about  
9 watching the dollars.

10 To date, I know from this Board member, I  
11 have yet to receive a detailed report on how you are  
12 planning on spending that million dollars.

13 I don't know what the plans are, and we are  
14 talking about watching dollars, and bringing our best  
15 foot forward, or showing in the spirit of cooperation,  
16 Mrs. Harris. That was wrong.

17 Never before in the history, have the Board  
18 majority put aside that much money, that was not  
19 earmarked for any particular category.

20 Nobody knows still, to date, the negative  
21 atmosphere that was created by this new majority.

22 So I am saying, again, pretty much the same  
23 comments Mr. Matthews made, it is going to be very,  
24 very difficult, and how -- how can we talk about  
25 coming together, when we have already created such an

1 atmosphere, especially along the racial lines.

2           It is going to continue to create problems,  
3 and we have yet to address some of the major issues  
4 that work within this District.

5           I want to make it very clear, that I think  
6 something you may want to consider, and that is, if we  
7 would keep in mind that we are all on the same team.

8           You should not be, and your leadership  
9 should not be competing with the man at the other end  
10 of the table.

11           And that's what we have been experiencing  
12 over the last year.

13           We are working together, we should respect  
14 the recommendations of his staff, and I would hope  
15 that somehow, some way, some of these issues would  
16 begin to be addressed.

17           I am once again disappointed, because you  
18 had a great opportunity, I think this majority had a  
19 great opportunity, several times, over the last four  
20 or five months, to at least give some kind of hope in  
21 this city, that, look, "Hey, it's not a racial thing,  
22 hey, we are serious, hey, we are honest about dealing  
23 with the children," but you never took advantage of  
24 that.

25           So I am once again, I am concerned about

1 the leadership of this Board, I am concerned about the  
2 atmosphere that this city will continue to look at, on  
3 a negative level, coming from the Board, and this  
4 leadership.

5                   So, you know, we don't know exactly what to  
6 expect from your leadership, but based upon what you  
7 have been involved with in the past, I'm really  
8 fearful, not only as a Board member, but also as a  
9 parent, and that at times, can disturb me.

10                   MS. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Brentley.

11                   Mr. Taylor.

12                   MR. TAYLOR: I want to congratulate our new  
13 elected officers. And I also want to thank my  
14 colleagues, who supported me, for School Board  
15 president.

16                   I have spoken to you, Mrs. Harris, and  
17 Mrs. Wood, about the importance of making a change in  
18 the School Board president.

19                   I thought a lot of damage was done, and I  
20 thought it was important for us to make a statement to  
21 the public, to the taxpayers, we have learned from  
22 some of those mistakes, and we made change at the top,  
23 and we hope to deal with in the future.

24                   We, and many of those -- and I want to  
25 also, you know, thank Mr. Isler, Mr. Matthews, and

1 Mr. Brentley, and myself, who were willing, in the  
2 spirit of compromise, to support Mrs. Wood as the next  
3 School Board president, for the very purpose that at  
4 least she, at times, has cast enlightened votes. She  
5 had a number of votes, which she will have to carry as  
6 part of her legacy. But Mrs. Wood, at least has a  
7 relationship with all of the School Board members.

8                 Mrs. Harris, unfortunately, you don't have  
9 that.

10                I think that is going to make it very  
11 difficult for you to operate as president, because of  
12 your lack of a relationship with all of the Board  
13 members.

14                But we have to keep an open mind. We have  
15 to hope that there has been a conversion, Mrs. Harris,  
16 in your views, as a School Board member, and now as a  
17 School Board president.

18                But as I mentioned to you on many, many  
19 occasions, it is not about the words, because those  
20 were very nice words that you gave, and I hope that  
21 those words become the reality. As much as I hoped  
22 that former President Fink's building on the basics,  
23 would have become a reality, when we know that was  
24 never seen or spoken of, let alone adhered to this  
25 past year.

1                   I am expecting -- and these next few weeks  
2 will tell the story, the next few weeks.

3                   One, I am expecting a budget that is  
4 supported truly by our superintendent, one that is not  
5 a reckless budget, one that is a very fiscal  
6 conservative budget, which budgets for the worst case  
7 scenario, not the most rosy scenarios.

8                   I will be looking also in the new budget to  
9 see how you wukk address the severely, under capacity  
10 schools of Bon Air, of Spring Hill, and of Arlington.

11                   You cannot in one instance say that you are  
12 being fiscally responsible, when you are operating  
13 schools of that population.

14                   I will also be looking for a direct  
15 accounting of -- if the \$1 million Board line is kept  
16 in the next budget, my expectation will be a clear  
17 understanding of what those dollars are going to be  
18 expended for, and I hope you will be comfortable with  
19 those, and also, we would hope that in the future,  
20 there isn't a large amount of money sitting under  
21 -utilized as happened with some of the million dollar  
22 budget.

23                   I also will be looking for a clear process  
24 on school closings, and one that is free of Board  
25 members, one that is free of favoritism, and other



1 things that are unfair to those who are not  
2 politically strong enough to get what they need for  
3 their communities.

4           And finally, I expect that next year -- and  
5 I expected this year, that many of these things will,  
6 you know, not occur, and that I will continue on my  
7 responsibilities, and I expect my other colleagues in  
8 minority, to fight as hard and as fierce as we can,  
9 for this District, and for these children, and my  
10 sincere hope will be that the public will understand  
11 that we are not concerned about politicians, we are  
12 not concerned about foundations, we are concerned  
13 about the children of this District.

14           And in 2002, that we fought very hard on  
15 defense to fight as hard as we can, and I think some  
16 we were able to slow, some we able to stop, and  
17 unfortunately, a severe, severe amount of damage was  
18 done.

19           But I can promise you in 2003 we are going  
20 to put a progressive pro child agenda in front of this  
21 School Board, constantly, every single vote, every  
22 single legislative meeting, and defy you to vote  
23 against the children.

24           And as we know, elections are coming, as I  
25 always said, and always found out, now celebrating my

1 fifth anniversary now on the School Board, elections  
2 are the only things that have made a difference out  
3 here. This is my sincere hope, that this Board  
4 separated, as only five people in this city have, are  
5 now going to face the voters, and now there is going  
6 to be five more people, that are going to make a  
7 difference to the Board.

8           But I will guarantee you, that there will  
9 be a very pro, progressive pro child agenda in front  
10 of you.

11           And one of the things I would like to start  
12 with, if we are allowed, under new business, I would  
13 like to make a motion, that we did a very great thing  
14 last month, as far as passing unanimously, for our  
15 meetings to be televised, but there was an omission of  
16 public hearings being televised, and I believe that  
17 the public hearings are a very important vehicle for  
18 the public to hear what is on the minds of other  
19 members of the public, parents, students, and I would  
20 like to make a motion that we amend the legislation  
21 that we passed last month, to allow the televising of  
22 our regular monthly public hearings.

23           MR. ISLER: Second.

24           MS. HARRIS: Discussion?

25           MS. WOOD: I won't agree to your

1 recommendation, Mr. Taylor, and I think we have  
2 discussed the fact that the agreement was for the way  
3 it was on the agenda, and the way we voted for it, for  
4 one year, until we saw how this went, and how it was  
5 received, and also, till we see that we get some  
6 television time for the School District, to promote  
7 the children, and the District itself, and when I see  
8 that that happens, I will be happy to vote for  
9 additional meetings to be televised.

10 MS. HARRIS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

11 MS. COLAIZZI: I also will not support  
12 that, because more importantly, before I would support  
13 a public hearing, that anybody can come and watch, I  
14 would like to support an education meeting, or a  
15 business meeting.

16 I think that that would be more important  
17 to go before a public hearing.

18 I think that if the people were able to  
19 watch TV and see that, they would learn more about  
20 what we actually do, and then what we end up voting  
21 for.

22 The public hearing is basically people then  
23 can come and speak on what they have already heard us  
24 discuss.

25 So, I wouldn't support that at this point

1 in time.

2 But I would support business, or our  
3 education meetings, again, down the line, after we  
4 have tried this out for a while, and see how it went.

5 MS. HARRIS: Mr. Matthews.

6 MR. MATTHEWS: Well, I would hope that my  
7 colleagues have a change of heart.

8 Simply for the simple fact, that when the  
9 public hearings are televised -- and I understand the  
10 reason why most folks don't want it televised, is  
11 because the community has been coming out, speaking  
12 out against the actions of this five Board majority,  
13 and they don't want that televised, because just like  
14 the people there listen to the complaints of the five  
15 Board majority, let's not let other people see what is  
16 really happening.

17 If you really want to be proactive, if you  
18 are really sincere about getting everyone involved,  
19 then allow people to see what other folks are talking  
20 about, at the public hearing.

21 Allow them the opportunity to engage, if  
22 you will, the conversation that's being taken place by  
23 the speaker, because maybe somewhere in their mind,  
24 they may think, "That's an issue I need to get on  
25 board with," or "I disagree with that speaker, let me

1 go down there, and make sure that my voice is heard."

2           That is freedom of speech. That's what it  
3 is all about.

4           That's where the actions really take place,  
5 see what people -- how we intergage -- engage with the  
6 community.

7           When the speakers come, and present their  
8 testimony, that's what we ought to be listening to,  
9 and that's what citizens, listeners around this city,  
10 should be listening to; to see what other people think  
11 about this whole conversation about education, about  
12 the conversation that's taking place on this Board.

13           And for us to sit back and say that we  
14 don't want that to occur -- and like I said, I  
15 understand it, because you don't want people to see  
16 the complaints, and things that are coming toward the  
17 five Board majority.

18           They don't want that.

19           But I am saying that is part of reality; it  
20 occurs.

21           When the issue reverses itself, and people  
22 were coming about the school closings, they were  
23 attacking the majority at that time, and I agree those  
24 ought to be televised, regardless of who they are  
25 coming after.

1           Because that's what the public is trying to  
2 convey their message to us, and allow other people to  
3 listen to that conversation.

4           That's all we are asking, is to allow them  
5 to listen to the conversation that is being taking  
6 place, at the public hearings.

7           So they may want to get involved.

8           MS. HARRIS: Mr. Isler.

9           MR. ISLER: I would agree, I think that the  
10 more we can inform people about the workings of this  
11 School Board, and this School District, the better off  
12 we are, and I think we should take every opportunity  
13 that we have -- every opportunity that we have, and I  
14 agree totally with Mrs. Colaizzi, I don't think  
15 anybody should be, or anything should be eliminated, I  
16 would like to see it all.

17           But I think that public hearings, where  
18 people come out, with a variety of issues, I don't  
19 care what they are speaking about, I think that it is  
20 good, that we let people know what's going on.

21           And I don't think we can get people enough  
22 information.

23           So I think eliminating anything, is a  
24 mistake.

25           MS. HARRIS: Anyone else?

1 Mrs. Fink.

2 MS. FINK: I thought long and hard about  
3 how we were going to do this, and should we include  
4 public hearings, and there seemed to be a lot of  
5 sentiment on both sides, but in order to see how this  
6 goes, I think we have picked the two most crucial  
7 meetings.

8 I would agree with Mrs. Colaizzi, that  
9 since we are about education, to televise the  
10 Education Committee meeting, and wouldn't it have been  
11 great to have been able to put that math meeting on  
12 television, so that everybody could become versed on  
13 this issue.

14 Unfortunately, people that come to public  
15 hearings talk about a great many things, other than  
16 education. You know, they are upset with the mayor  
17 for something, so they come here to vent.

18 We don't -- I would rather use our  
19 television time more wisely, and to me, that an  
20 education meeting, particularly, would be the third  
21 meeting that I would want to add.

22 Anyone who wants to come here, and speak at  
23 public hearings, is welcome to do that.

24 The unfortunate part of the way our public  
25 hearings are structured, is that we don't interact

1 with the speakers.

2           The last time I tried to do that,  
3 Mr. Taylor reminded me that I was prolonging the  
4 meeting.

5           So, we -- and I have done that to other  
6 people who have responded to the speakers.

7           And that's certainly not giving the public  
8 a good impression of how we react to the information  
9 that the speakers bring us.

10           So, I just rather leave that one alone,  
11 until we really get a taste for the televising, and  
12 seeing how these meetings go, and then if we want to  
13 reformat the public hearings, and give time for  
14 interaction, if we want to do something altogether  
15 different there, to make it more palatable for TV,  
16 then I think we talk about that.

17           MS. HARRIS: Okay. Mr. Brentley.

18           MR. BRENTLEY: Yes. I just want to  
19 encourage my colleagues that this is clearly an  
20 opportunity to show a majority vote.

21           Let's not forget the purpose of the public  
22 hearing, it is two-fold.

23           The public hearing, the first part of the  
24 public hearing is an opportunity for this District to  
25 put its best foot forward, in recognizing outstanding



1 students, outstanding staff, outstanding teachers,  
2 et cetera, et cetera.

3           That is a very important part, in molding,  
4 and shaping a positive image for this School District,  
5 and to walk away from that opportunity, I think is  
6 something that's just not something that we want to  
7 just kind of say, "No, we are not going to support  
8 it."

9           If you want to do it, and do it on a  
10 probationary basis, of four to six months, then so be  
11 it.

12           But I would encourage my colleagues, to  
13 vote no against this particular recommendation, would  
14 clearly send a signal to the public that we do not  
15 want to boast about all of the good things that are  
16 coming out of this District.

17           It would also begin to send some messages  
18 that we are not interested in the public comment, or  
19 what you have to say, or what you think about the  
20 District.

21           So I would just ask you, you know, each  
22 colleague to kind of reconsider here. Over the last  
23 year we have had some pretty sharp students, that came  
24 before us, on these public hearings, on their  
25 recommendations, nationally, locally, and different

1 contests, and the whole bit.

2 We cannot, and we should not let that  
3 opportunity go. So I am asking, I just want to --

4 MS. FINK: I agree. We should switch those  
5 awards to the legislative meetings.

6 MS. HARRIS: Mrs. Fink. Mrs. Fink, you are  
7 out of order.

8 MS. FINK: I'm sorry.

9 MR. BRENTLEY: I just think, that let's not  
10 flip the script now. Now there is an opportunity to  
11 let the people hear the real public, in its uncut, and  
12 unedited form. Let's not do that, Mrs. Fink, let's  
13 not begin to say, well, now we will shake things  
14 around, and turn around, so that we cannot get --  
15 encourage public involvement.

16 I am asking for this Board and, Miss Harris  
17 here is a great opportunity for you to show your  
18 leadership.

19 This is something that we all can support,  
20 this is something I think the public will begin to  
21 support, and I think it's a great opportunity, and I  
22 would hope, and I would encourage you for your first  
23 opportunity here, to use your leadership, in coming  
24 forward with a majority vote, of a unanimous vote, on  
25 this particular new business.

1 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Anyone else, who has  
2 not spoken?

3 I believe you have already spoken,  
4 Mr. Matthews.

5 MR. MATTHEWS: Right. But I had my hand up  
6 again.

7 MS. HARRIS: Well, I would like it, and let  
8 me take note now --

9 MR. MATTHEWS: The rules of procedure says,  
10 that unless you specify that there is a certain time  
11 element to the discussion, or if you are going to  
12 limit people from speaking, that has to be said before  
13 the discussion.

14 You did not do that.

15 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Well, I will make  
16 sure --

17 MR. MATTHEWS: So I had my hand up for  
18 recognition.

19 MS. HARRIS: Go ahead, Mr. Matthews.

20 MR. MATTHEWS: Thank you.

21 MS. HARRIS: But I will state that at every  
22 other meeting.

23 MR. MATTHEWS: And I hope that applies to  
24 your five Board majority, too. Because that --

25 MS. HARRIS: Absolutely, Mr. Matthews,

1 absolutely.

2 MR. MATTHEWS: Because that's how a lot of  
3 conversation comes back, because of things that you  
4 five Board members continue to do.

5 Mrs. Fink, I guess one of the things I want  
6 to talk about, with this public hearing, is that  
7 Mrs. Fink brought up the fact that people vent out  
8 against the mayor.

9 Now, if my memory serves me correctly,  
10 reference was made to the mayor coming back and tying  
11 it into your actions, the actions of this Board.

12 This is not -- it was not anything that was  
13 directed, say, "We are going after the mayor," because  
14 then that would not be appropriate for our public  
15 hearings, and then whoever is the chairperson, if that  
16 is the avenue the person is taking, then we stop that.

17 We have to be about the business of  
18 educating our public about what is happening.

19 And everything we do here, is  
20 educational. Whether it's the business meeting,  
21 whether it's the educational meeting, whether it's the  
22 special session meeting, everything we do is  
23 educational.

24 We do the budget, that is educating the  
25 public, about what's happening, with our finances.

1                   That's educational.

2                   Those are topics that the public will speak  
3 about.

4                   You know, what if someone comes up, and  
5 they want to speak about the transportation, and even  
6 though that is not an issue that we are voting on,  
7 maybe there is a problem that maybe someone in the  
8 television audience can listen to, and say, "You know  
9 what, I have the same concern," or "that doesn't  
10 happen to me, let me go out there and voice my  
11 opinion."

12                   That is educating people about issues.

13                   Allow everyone the opportunity to hear what  
14 folks are thinking and saying.

15                   Allow that discussion to take place.

16                   And if they come back, and they criticize  
17 us, as Board members, then that's fine, that's part of  
18 educating the public about what's happening to this  
19 educational process, to this educational system of  
20 Pittsburgh.

21                   That's what it is all about.

22                   And as such, I would ask, because unless  
23 the majority five are going to change their minds on  
24 this issue, then I would ask my colleague, Mr. Taylor,  
25 to take this off the table, so that we don't discuss

1 this issue any further.

2 MR. TAYLOR: Can I make one comment again,  
3 President Harris, in the future, if you think you are  
4 going to use a time limit, to quiet dissent out here,  
5 it is never going to happen. All you are going to do  
6 is turn this place into chaos.

7 So if you think you are going to say, "You  
8 have 32 seconds to be against some proposal," it is  
9 never going to happen out here, you are just asking  
10 for this to break out into chaos.

11 Could I ask our solicitor, this is an issue  
12 which I would like to bring before the public every  
13 month, until the Board majority supports the public's  
14 right to hear other members of the public speak about  
15 the issues, and to hear other parents, students, and  
16 others that come to our public hearings.

17 I don't want to put myself in a position  
18 where I am not able to bring this up, and speak on  
19 behalf of the taxpayers of the city, every single  
20 month. So you tell me the process, in which -- is it  
21 best that I withdraw this motion tonight, and  
22 reconsider it next month?

23 ATTORNEY WEISS: I would recommend, if that  
24 is your wish in the future, that you withdraw your  
25 motion.

1 MR. TAYLOR: Miss Colaizzi, I hope in the  
2 future, we can talk about, because I do think we  
3 should have business affairs, any education meetings,  
4 and along with the public hearing.

5 But I do think the public hearing, is most  
6 important, because as I said before, this is the  
7 public's business out here, they deserve to be in this  
8 room, more than we do.

9 So in the sense of me trying to get a  
10 further clarification, I will withdraw that motion.

11 MR. ISLER: I will withdraw my second.

12 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Any other business, for  
13 the good of the School District?

14 Yes, Mrs. Colaizzi.

15 MS. COLAIZZI: I believe that Mrs. Fink  
16 just made a comment about changing the awards that we  
17 give out in front of the legislative meeting -- and  
18 before the public hearing, I'm sorry, to do it before  
19 our legislative meetings.

20 I would love to make that a motion, if it  
21 is appropriate to do so.

22 MR. TAYLOR: We should discuss that  
23 before --

24 MS. FINK: I would second that.

25 MS. WOOD: Can I make a comment?

1 MS. HARRIS: Yes.

2 MS. WOOD: I think that should be on the  
3 agenda for discussion.

4 MS. COLAIZZI: Absolutely. Then I will  
5 withdraw that.

6 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Anything else?

7 MR. BRENTLEY: I do have one question, I  
8 think I would like to ask for our legal, because I am  
9 a little confused by Mr. Taylor's comments.

10 If we are talking about televising, our  
11 Board members, then does that prohibit the news media  
12 from bringing their cameras in as well?

13 Or what's the difference? I --

14 ATTORNEY WEISS: Well, are you recognizing  
15 me?

16 MR. BRENTLEY: Yes I --

17 ATTORNEY WEISS: Well, the news media is  
18 here as the news media, they are free to tape whatever  
19 they wish to tape, and they are free to leave whenever  
20 they wish to leave.

21 The arrangement, the Board approved at the  
22 last meeting, was an agreement with the cable provider  
23 for the city, and the city to actually televise, I  
24 guess on a live basis, and then on a delayed basis,  
25 the entire meeting.



1           The media is free to come to any public  
2 meeting, and tape whatever they wish to tape, and the  
3 reporters are free to take down whatever they wish to  
4 take down. The Board does not, and cannot, and has no  
5 desire to control that.

6           But the issue of which meetings are  
7 televised, as live matters, as the City Council  
8 meetings are televised, is a matter the Board has to  
9 decide.

10           So there is a difference.

11           MR. BRENTLEY: Let me just ask this  
12 question: So if one of the local media outlets  
13 decided to put up a crew, to televise the entire  
14 public hearing, will that prohibit them from doing  
15 that, or they can do that, if they so -- if they  
16 decide to do that?

17           ATTORNEY WEISS: If somebody wishes to,  
18 news media wishes to televise any public meeting, that  
19 is the news media's prerogative.

20           MR. BRENTLEY: Which is not subject to any  
21 legislative action from this Board.

22           ATTORNEY WEISS: It is a public meeting,  
23 they have a right to be here, and televise, and tape  
24 whatever they wish to televise and tape.

25           MR. BRENTLEY: Thank you.

1 MS. HARRIS: Anything else?

2 Motion to adjourn?

3 MS. WOOD: So move.

4 MR. McCREA: Second.

5 MS. HARRIS: Okay. This meeting's  
6 adjourned.

7 - - -

8 (Thereupon, at 6:25 p.m., the Board  
9 Organization Meeting was concluded.)

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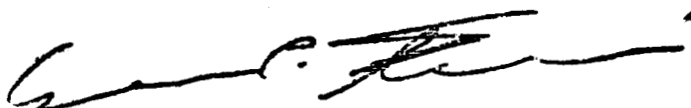
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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

I, Eugene C. Forcier, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing forty-six (46) pages are a true and correct transcript of my stenotypy notes taken of the Board Organization Meeting held in the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education, Administration Building, Board Room, on Monday, December 2, 2002.



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Eugene C. Forcier, Court Reporter

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