WASHINGTON STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting was held of the Washington State Advisory Committee beginning at the hour of 10:02 a.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2006, at 1900 Fifth Avenue; Seattle, Washington.

The Committee members were present as follows:

NORWARD J. BROOKS, CHAIRPERSON

ORIGINAL

MARILYN HURLEY BIMSTEIN

KATHARINE M. BULLITT

ANDREW DE LOS ANGELES

ERNEST B. MARTIN

For the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Western Regional Office:

THOMAS V. PILLA
Senior Civil Rights Analyst
300 N. Los Angeles Street
Suite 2010
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Also Present:

MARY BASS
DAVID MARSHAK
BETTY PATU
VON PAUL PATU

REPORTED BY: Thad Byrd, CCR

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Seattle, Washington; 3/16/06

10:02 a.m.

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THE CHAIRPERSON: I will read a brief statement, which I am to read as the chair.

Good morning. This briefing of the Washington Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights will now come to order.

I am Norward Brooks, chairperson of the Washington Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The Commission on Civil Rights is an independent agency of the United States Government established by Congress in 1957 and directed to investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin or by reason of fraudulent practices; study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws under the constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin or in the administration of justice.

Third, appraise federal laws and policies with respect to discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws; serve as a national clearinghouse for

information about discrimination; and submit reports, findings and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

The Advisory Committees were established in each state and the District of Columbia in accordance with enabling legislation and the Federal Advisory Committee Act to advise the Commission on matters pertaining to discrimination or denials of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or the administration of justice, and to aid the Commission in the statutory obligation to serve as a national clearinghouse for information on those subjects.

The purpose of this meeting today is to obtain information on the impact of the Washington State school exit examination on students in general, and minority students in particular.

Based upon the information collected at this meeting, a summary briefing memorandum will be prepared for the use of the Advisory Committee and submitted to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

Another member of the Washington Advisory Committee with us today is Katharine Bullitt, who has been with us for 30 years.

Also present with us today is Thomas Pilla of the

Commission's Western Regional Office in Los Angeles. Please seek Mr. Pilla out if you require any assistance.

This meeting is being held pursuant to Federal rules applicable to State Advisory Committees and regulations promulgated by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. All requests regarding these provisions should be directed to Commission staff.

I would like to emphasize this is a briefing meeting and not an adversarial proceeding. Individuals have been invited to come and share with the Committee information relevant to the subject of today's inquiry. Each person who will participate has voluntarily agreed to meet with the Committee.

The record of the meeting will remain open for a period of 30 days following its conclusion. The Committee welcomes additional written statements and exhibits for inclusion in the record.

These items should be submitted to the Western Regional Office of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 300 North Los Angeles Street, Suite 2010, Los Angeles, California, zip code 90012. The Commission staff should be able to assist you in the process for submitting information.

Now, let us proceed. Please state your name and spell it for the record. Now, when you speak, the

recorder would like you to give your name so that he can identify you. And if there's any exchange of information, questions from the speaker, please state the name each time so that we can identify who you are for the record.

We have another member to introduce here.

MR. DE LOS ANGELES: Andrew de Los Angeles.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We will go according to the agenda, and everyone that will speak has 20 minutes. Now, we're not going to really hold you to this, but they want us out of here at some point. But anyway, we would like to get the information. That's more important than the minutes.

So we will start here. David, you will be the first speaker. He's a professor at Seattle University.

MR. MARSHAK: So I'm David Marshak, and I'm a professor in the College of Education, Seattle University.

So the question, as I understand it, is what is the relationship between the testing program that's being carried out in the State of Washington by the Superintendent of Public Instruction per instructions of the Legislature and Governor, and the issues of civil rights or violation thereof?

And so my presentation is going to speak to what

I understand to be the outcomes as we understand them so far. I can't speak to the law. I'm not a lawyer, so I'm not going to get into that territory. That's beyond my purview.

Clearly, though, I would argue that the data so far show us that both in Washington State and in every other state that has put into place the kind of standards and testing program that has become normative in this country, only Nebraska actually has failed to follow the lemmings over the cliff, and Iowa sort of, but not really. So this is clearly the norm throughout the country that we can see what I would describe as institutionally racist outcomes.

I don't use that term lightly. It's obviously a loaded term in our culture, and what I mean by it is that the definition of institutional racism is a situation where you have an institution that in some way interacts with the population.

And as a result of the outcomes of the institution's effect or treatment of citizens, in this case children and adolescents, you see a clear racist outcome, an outcome where there are outcomes that are clearly and consistent by race.

So one of the interesting things about the study of these phenomenon in the last 30 years is that I would

argue we have fewer and fewer individuals in our culture who are explicitly acting out in racist ways, and obviously we have civil right laws that are designed to protect citizens from explicitly racist behaviors, particularly on the part of government officials, but on the part of other folks as well; employers, for example.

But one of the anomalies of our history of racism is that it's very possible, and I explain this to my students every year and we spend deal a good deal of time on it, it's very possible to have institutions that are institutionally racist without finding individuals in them who are personally racist.

So these are two separate phenomenon, and it's important to understand it. I'm not saying that Terry Bergenson is a racist. I believe that she's not, from all that I know of her or anyone else who's been involved in this process.

But if you look at the data, and I'll share some of this now, it's very clearly -- I've just pulled out the 10th grade WASL passing scores for reading, and then these are labels that are used by the State of Washington. I wouldn't use them, but these are the ones the state uses. 77 percent of the white students passed, 79 percent of the Asian students.

And as I expect Mr. Patu will tell you later on,

the use of the label Asian is very confusing and hides the significant complexity in that group of people, which is an issue that you could perhaps do a service to the State of Washington NOSPI and bring that to their attention that this label really confuses the issue.

Rather than clarifying the data, it lumps together many, many different ethnic groups that have totally different histories, totally different resource bases and totally different outcomes on the WASL, just an as aside.

So 79 percent of Asian students, 54 percent of what they call Black, 53 percent of what they call Hispanic, and 56 percent of what they call American Indian. And this data is all available on the Web site. I didn't make copies, because I would imagine your staff could get them for you. It's very easy to find.

The pattern in writing in math and science, they're all similar. I'm not going to take the time to read them all. Why don't we just read the math because it's even more stark.

52 percent of the white students passed the math test, 57 percent of the Asian, 20 percent of the Black, 24 percent of the Hispanic, and 27 percent of the American Indian.

So one argument that could be made is that while

this is unfortunate, perhaps it describes the starting place, and perhaps this system of standards and testing is reducing the gap.

So I looked at that, and again, just taking the reading for the 10th grade, the gap for 10th grade between white students and black students in 1999 was 32 percent. So the white students scored 32 percent higher in terms of passing. In 2005, so it's six year later, it was 24 percent, so it has been reduced marginally.

In math, however, the gap was 28 percent in 1999, and now it's 32 percent, so it's increased marginally.

If you go through, and I calculated this -- and again, I'm not going to take the time. Some of you could have staff do it if they wanted to analyze it. There's no consistent pattern of reduction, work increase.

So although all the scores have gone up, basically the schools have learned how to teach -- and this is an argument that goes on in the education profession -- how to teach kids the skills that are measured by these tests and/or how to teach kids to prepare to take these tests. And I would argue it's some of both, including what we're seeing is some of both, but we still find profound race outcomes.

So one other piece of data I would share with you, one of the arguments is, again, that, well, we're

moving in the right direction. So I went and looked at Massachusetts, which is a state that is five or six years ahead of us in terms of having the 10th grade test count as a graduation requirement.

And one of the things that Massachusetts is doing, and again, I would urge you to consider this in looking at the issue, is that because of the high stakes that are attached to testing, one of the ways that school districts, and for that matter state officials, have tried to hide -- and I don't use that word lightly. I believe it's intentional. It's too explicit and consistent to be other than intentional -- hide the real outcomes of testing is to put kids, who are not going to pass the test, into categories where they never show up in the accounting.

And this was pioneered in the great state of Texas where you could go back and find data from 1999/2000 that show that when -- well, actually when testing began in Texas, there was what's called a high school attrition rate. So we have a hard time figuring out who's actually dropping out, because the way that the dropout rate is calculated historically is designed to hide the actual number of dropouts.

So there are a number of non-profits. There's one particularly in San Antonio based in the Latino

community that has tracked what they call the high school attrition rate in Texas for the last 20 years. And the high school attrition rate is say you take the 9th graders who arrive in a particular year in a particular school, and you count them. And then three years later when the school submits its roster of attendees for state aid, you count the number of 12th graders in the same school.

So arguably there's some problems with this. People move, there's growth, there's loss of population. But it's interesting because in the last several years a couple of studies, one funded by the Gates Foundation that has tracked a much more accurate high school dropout rate, has found that the actual high school dropout rate is much closer to this attrition rate than it is to the published NCES rate of 12 or 13 percent. It's much more like 30 or 35 than 12 percent.

So in Texas what we found is that when they began testing there was a state-wide attrition rate of 34 percent. About the time that then Governor Bush left the state to become president, it was up to 43 percent, and now it's dropped back down again to 34 percent, which is not a victory by any means.

So they've learned somewhat better how to get kids to pass these tests, and one of the arguments is that the Texas tests have been made easier over the period of

time.

So, again, one of the things to look at is how many 9th graders actually show up in the testing data that's claimed by the state, and the best example of the deception on this part is Massachusetts.

And this is particularly pertinent because our state leaders, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction, has been touting the fact that Massachusetts claims that 95 percent of their kids pass their test. And because they went from having 50 percent pass to having 95 percent pass, there's really nothing to worry about in Washington.

So if you look beyond the claims of the various state education officers in Massachusetts, if you look at the entire population who entered 9th grade in 2001, which is the class of 2005, you find that only 76.6 percent of the students passed the test, not 95 percent.

So what they're reporting is the number of kids who reached 12th grade and who passed the test, so that means about 22 percent of the incoming freshmen did not get to 12th grade.

Of those numbers, 82.5 percent of the white students passed the test, not of the 95 percent, but of the whole cadre that began 9th grade in 2001. So 82.5 percent of the white students, 82.7 percent of the Asian

American students, 61.6 percent of the African American students and 51 percent of the Latino students.

So you find the same pattern in Massachusetts of institutional racism. It's complicated by the deception that's being perpetrated by the state officials, but nonetheless, the pattern is very consistent. And, you know, we could spend the morning here, I could find 15 other states. The data are consistent in every state.

So the second piece that I would suggest to you, or the second part of my presentation, which I'll go through quickly is why is this happening? Well, obviously, we have a history of both personal and institutional racism in this country. We have many hundreds of years. We understand you can change the law, but changing the law doesn't change people's lives overnight in and of itself.

And I would suggest to you that we are at a time when we do, in fact, have the cultural knowledge available to us to transform public education. And unfortunately, we have both political leaders and then educational leaders who are whetted to an understanding of school that is partly a 19th century Prussian artifact, and partly an early 20th century artifact, so let me illustrate what I mean by that.

The most powerful structural artifact in

schooling is age grading. So we take kids when they're five years old or six years old, we put them all together, and we say everybody should perform at the same level. And if they don't perform at the same level, we begin to tell the kids who are not performing at the same level that they're failures.

It's not done because teachers are evil. It's not done because teachers are necessarily racist or classist. It's done because children are not stupid, and they see what's going on in the classroom. They're aware of what's going on in the classroom, and they know who the winners are and who the losers are.

So the idea of age grade, this was invented in Prussia in 1806. This is a pre-psychological notion. The Prussians didn't have any psychological research in 1806. They didn't have human development models. We know very clearly that children grow and develop at very different rates. They bring very different cultural experiences to the classroom.

We know that if you can support the development of children at their own rate and not label them, that they're much more likely to not develop negative self-identities and/or to give up, which happens beginning in 4th or 5th grade for a lot of kids.

So this is just one example, and we know what to

do. We have many multi-age elementary classrooms in Washington State. There's a couple hundred of them within 10, 15 miles of this room, but it's not a normative structure in schools, and there are only two or three all multi-age schools in Western Washington that I'm aware of, elementary schools.

So, again, we have significant data. John Goodlad, who I'm sure most of you have met at one time or another, wrote a book in 1958 about the non-graded classrooms and laid out the arguments for getting rid of age grading in 1958.

The arguments haven't changed. Here we are 48 years later, and we have 48 years more of outcomes that are negative to many, many kids.

And, again, the way that this plays out also is that in single grades, first grades or kindergartens or second grades, there's a limit to how much any teacher, no matter how well-intentioned, can bond with a child, because basically you get 25 kids or so, or if you're lucky, 20 kids in September, and nine months later, 10 months later you say good-bye to them, no matter how involved you are, no matter how well you know them, no matter how much you care about them, and these children move to another teacher who starts all over again.

This is a completely absurd way to organize

schooling if we're concerned about adults caring about children and supporting their intellectual and social and emotional growth. So, again, we have a pre-psychological format.

I see my time is getting short, so I'll go through the other parts of this more quickly.

Secondly, we need to reduce student mobility. It's very clear in the research that children who go to three elementary schools or more are very likely to drop out of high school unless they're in the Armed Services, and the reason that Armed Services schools are different is because they're all the same. They have the same curriculum, and because there is a culture of support where everybody's moving. So it's normative for them to be moving around.

But basically outside of the Armed Services schools, children whose parents or guardians have relatively less economically are much more at risk to being compelled to move. And because families of color are vastly over-represented in low income groups, the same thing said about families of color is said about low income families.

So children bond to a school, parents bond to a school. The best elementary school principals know every child in the school. They know every parent in the

school.

John Moorefield, who I expect many of you know from his work in Seattle over many years, is someone you could go into his school, and it was a large school. He had 500 kids, which is a large school for an elementary school, and he knew every parent, every child and every grandparent in that school.

So, again, we can't expect every elementary principal to be exemplary. You know, in life that's not possible. So if we change the structure, we could get people involved in reducing mobility. We could also get other social service agencies focused on helping, and mostly it's mothers, helping mothers to be able to understand why they want to keep their child in the same school, and then helping them figure out the housing logistics or the transportation logistics that would allow that.

Another piece of research that's relatively new suggests that actually the schools are doing better than we think with kids from low income families, and that the real problem is something that's been called summer setback on reading achievements.

So this is a body of research, and I'll just quote here, quoting from an article by Richard Allington: Summer reading setback occurs when students return to

school after summer vacation with diminished reading skills, presumably from a lack of adequate reading practice.

Research indicates that the reading achievement of poor children as a group typically declines during summer vacation, while the reading achievement of children from more economically advantaged families holds steady or modestly increases.

So, again, this is actually a positive finding because what it suggests is that even with all of the limitations that I'm describing, our schools are actually doing better than we think, and that the problem is that we have an 18th century school schedule that says that we close schools for three months in the summer so children can work in the fields, except we don't have any fields.

So, again, one way to respond to this would be to say, what if we focused all of the resources that we're putting into summer school that are spreading a whole vast array of different kinds of programs, which have very limited success, and focus them on elementary children reading programs?

Reading camps is the idea that I've come up with, and both the advantage of that would be both the focus on reading, and also to create a context for children in the summer where they would be doing things other than

watching television or other than being left alone without adequate supervision because their parents need to work because of economic requirements.

The last two things very quickly, small personalized schools. There's been an enormous body of research that says that the smaller the school is, the more that it serves children well who come from the lowest income families, and that's all about relationships. It's all about caring. It's about personalization.

One of the concepts that I'll close with this that's been in the literature recently is this concept of resiliency, and one of the questions that people ask is why is it that some folks come from situations that are challenging, families that have low income and are struggling, there may be parental discord, there may be a single parent who's very young, all of the characteristics that we identify with likely school trouble, why is it that some kids make it? Some kids do incredible things in their lives, but the majority don't; why is that?

So one of the interesting outcomes of the resiliency research is that there's been a look at a lot of different individuals' life stories, and basically the common thread is that each of them had some adult or adults who was there for them throughout this period, particularly at childhood. It may have been an aunt or an

uncle or a grandparent or family friend or a neighbor. It may not have been a parent in the conventional parental role that we think of.

But resiliency is something that can be supported in school, and one of the ironies that I think of is we have three million people that we pay in this country, roughly three and a half million, whom we pay to take care of children. They're called school teachers, and yet for the most part the structure of schooling that we've created limits their capacity to do that, to actually care for children as individuals.

And the structure pushes them towards looking at them not as individuals, but as members of a group. And I would argue that unfortunately we've gone on a very wasteful detour.

Back in 1990 there was a lot of discussion among both political and corporate leaders about creating schools for the 21st century that would have really different kinds of characteristics than the industrial model schools that we've had through the 20th century, and basically that whole program got waylaid and was reduced to this very narrow standards and testing model.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Interesting.

Should we take questions? Reading the papers today I noticed that the schools are going to be closing

12 schools, and most of those are due to population.

Secondly, some of them at least are going to be in communities that are low income, and you made a comment that the smaller school the better. And using population as the criteria for closing schools, do you think that's going to affect the plight of minority and low income?

MR. MARSHAK: Well, I mean, it certainly will. It could be compensated for, though, if the school district or any school district were to move into significant structural reform.

A couple of years ago there was a story. I believe a young African American woman who was teaching at Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, and she had agreed to do looping. So looping is when you keep the same kids for 1st grade and 2nd grade. It's better than single grade because you have two years of relationship.

It's not as good as multi-age, because what multi-age does is it gets rid of the pernicious competition about all kids being the same chronological age and supposedly being able to do the same things, which, of course, we know is not true.

So she was looping at Thurgood Marshall. She had originally done it because of a numbers problem, not because of an idealogical orientation. And the newspaper article was talking about what a wonderful teacher she

was, and how wonderful the outcomes were for her students.

And, again, we have these individual examples that are identified throughout the system, but what we don't have is leadership that understands that we need systemic transformation.

I mean, the irony of the situation is that if you look at American schools, if you go back to 1915 or so, the best example is a gentleman named Elwood Coverley (phonetic), who was a professor of education at Stanford, and actually Coverley Hall is the ed. school at Stanford.

And Elwood Coverlet was one of the most prominent educators in the nation at that time. And I'm going to paraphrase, because I haven't memorized this, but basically what Dr. Coverley said is that you can tell what a child's station in life will be by looking at the station of his parents. And, therefore, we need to construct a school system that will give proper education to children for the class identity that we know is their just desserts.

I'm not making this up. This is the way that folks thought in 1915, and I know members of the Commission, this is not a surprise to you. So, again, the system was constructed to produce racist and classist outcomes. They didn't see it that way at the time obviously, but looking at what they were doing from our

point of view, that's clearly what they were trying to do and they succeeded. They weren't incompetent in what they did.

MR. PATU: Mr. Marshak, you mentioned the same thing about these small classes, the teacher delivered their expertise very well and being accepted by the students.

What do you think of some other equations, the same thing to reduce the 30 kids by having two people in the classroom? Is that another way? Considering the crisis that we are facing, the districts, especially the Seattle School District, the lack of dollars to do many good things, how about two people in the classroom? Does that help?

MR. MARSHAK: Well, it's important to distinguish between class size and school size. So there's a significant body of research that speaks to the school size issue.

The class size issue is actually -- one of the things with a lot of research that gets done on education, as is true in any social science, is that a lot of research and education is done over a very short period of time, looking at a very narrow range of elements, and ultimately doesn't tell you very much, because what happens in the lives of human beings takes place over

years and years, and there's really no way to know what's going to happen 15 years later based on something that happened in that earlier time unless you actually follow people, which for the most part in social science we don't have the money to do.

So one of the singular studies that speaks to this was in 1986 Tennessee, under the leadership of Lamar Alexander, who was governor then, funded a class size study, and the legislature came up with millions of dollars. This is a very atypical and very interesting idea, and they had hundreds of teachers, hundreds of classes, thousands of students, dozens of schools, and they basically set up three different treatments, is the word we use in research.

One is they left the regular class size, 26 kids in 1st grade with a teacher. This was normative throughout the state, and they left that. The second treatment was to put in an aid, so a paraprofessional into the classroom with the teacher with the 26 kids. The third treatment was to put the teacher in the 1st grade with 16 kids.

So the State of Tennessee put up the money to fund the reduction in class size, because reducing class size is very expensive because every child -- I forget the figure in Washington, but every child that you reduce

class size it's some millions of dollars.

So unlike small schools, which are not more expensive despite what the leadership of the Seattle Public School District might argue, there's a lot of data that shows that this is not true, and reducing class size is expensive because you need more teachers.

So what they found at the end of three years -- and they had dozens of classes, one of the best scientific studies that was done. And if you want to look this up, you just go to the Web and look up Tennessee STARS. S-T-A-R-S is the acronym for it. There's a Web site.

They found that at the end of three years, having the paraprofessional in the classroom didn't help at all, but having the class size of 16 made a profound difference, and that the children on average in the class size of 16 were about eight months ahead on reading and math. So eight months in 36 months, three years, that's an enormous gain.

And because the findings were so positive, the researchers were able to go and get significant funding from Ford Foundation and other folks. So they followed these kids. These kids have now graduated from high school. I think last year or the year before they graduated from high school, so they followed them out through the end of high school.

Beginning in 4th grade the kids were back in regular classrooms, so 28, whatever the normative was in their district. And what they found was that the gains that they had achieved in the first three years not only stayed, but actually increased.

They also found there was a significantly higher rate of high school graduation among these kids, and also significantly lower rates of behavioral problems, disciplinary problems.

I mean, the way to understand this is that the key set of skills kids need to learn in the first three grades is to read. And if you learn how read, you can do okay in school. And if you don't learn how to read, then you're not going to do okay, and having 16 children to focus on is just much more doable than having 26. It's just an enormous difference in complexity.

MR. PATU: In the school board several teachers came up and testified, Mary was there that day, that the troublesome behavior of the kids in the classroom that reduced the potential and the ability of the kids to deliver their expertise.

MR. MARSHAK: Absolutely.

MR. PATU: And the crisis we're still facing, many, many millions of dollars to bring them in, but how about in terms of getting any kind of help from

our State Employment Security? We have hundreds of people in the line looking for a job. How about them coming in to help out in the classroom? How about our -- what do you call -- welfare recipient? They have potential to help out if you put them into the classroom.

MR. MARSHAK: Only if you could train them to do that. You need to have the money to also train them to be useful.

MR. PATU: They may change their minds to take a career as becoming a teacher. We have a lack of teachers.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We're going to have to go on or we're going to run out of time.

MR. MARSHAK: One thing I want to say, I just want to apologize in advance. I need to leave at 11:00 because this is exam week, and I have final exams to give, so I apologize to the other speakers. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Why don't we go on.

MS. HURLEY: I am Marilyn Hurley Bimstein, and I'm the Director of the Institute for Motivating Reading. And I love following the professor, because I was asked today just informationally to tell you about a program that works. He was so clear and so profoundly right about what we need to do systematically.

And we, who are involved radically, are going to put our shoulder to the wheel and make these changes happen.

In the meantime, we have children who are in school now, and we have to find programs that are the most efficacious to serve them now. It's like what mathematicians call an elegant solution. It not only solves the problem, but it solves other problems.

So you have to take what's given, and make it work better. And as our focus, we are concerned and have been concerned about the level of reading and what it produces when you have people who are not asked to read at a high enough level.

We have a little scary statistic there for you, and it's probably higher now, more than 90 million functionally illiterate people in this country. And those aren't people who can't read. Teachers, against all the odds in the classrooms with 30, 40 students, are teaching them to read.

And Mr. Patu, I would say to you that it's not a question of adult to student ratio. I was a teacher for years and years. It's exactly what David was saying. It's about creating relationship. And when I taught for those 20 some years and even now, I see the role of a teacher as calling each child in the class from the back of their soul and knowing them and asking something of

them.

And if you don't establish that relationship, no matter what body of information you impart, it's not going to be useful. The long-term effect, and as a society we need the long-term effect, is based on the relationship, and I think that the teacher is probably a key place, too, to make those changes happen.

So we're all entering the future, and it is a future that requires that we be capable readers. 90 million people reading below an 8th grade level is an epidemic. It's really a critical problem, and we have to address that problem.

The best way to address the problem is preventively. That means catch them while they are young enough and make them vital readers. I love the summer school notion of all summer schools being put together with focus, which is make people readers.

Our belief is that if you make them readers for life, our whole society benefits. The cornerstone of democracy, of course, is informed consent.

Reading -- you all know this -- is the two pieces. The basic reading is decoding, knowing that those funny squiggles say "bah," "tah." And so in kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, those early years or however long it takes, I so agree with everything that you've said. Every

child is exactly where he or she belongs on the continuum, and we as teachers need to meet them there and stretch them from where they are.

Now, every class as it exists now is heterogenous, no matter how they're trying to make it otherwise, whether they have gifted or special ed. Special ed., of course, destroys part of your soul in the process, so it's counter-effective.

So decoding and comprehension are the two pieces. Decoding, I think we're doing pretty well teaching to decode. Comprehension is the key, and comprehension is directly linked to practice in reading. Another statistic on that front sheet is that children read on average zero to 10 minutes a night.

What would they be doing otherwise? Television. Parents who say, "Oh, but they're on a computer. They're playing computer games." They aren't reading some historical novel on the computer, and there's a direct correlation between practice in reading and comprehension.

So the more you read, the better you get no matter where you are on that continuum. And in that 5th grade classroom, we target 4th and 5th graders to catch them before they have totally given up on school, and get them to reconnect and not become functional illiterates.

Most of that 90 million, by the way, are high

school and college graduates. That's a very sad statement on our public schools and how we're doing, but that's the reality.

And the stakes are extremely high, not just because reading is the cornerstone of education, but I think we have enough evidence from our daily experiences that if we do not get informed consent, we are going to lose our very democracy.

And we're in the information age. The coin of the realm in that information age is the information that you read. So the key is that we make powerful readers and thinkers. If you're a powerful reader, you're a thinker.

It's a critical problem, and we need to create a solution. It's an epidemic, and you need a vaccine. I'm old enough, or young enough, to remember when polio was a frightening prospect in my childhood and everyone's childhood until Dr. Salk came up with a vaccine. We now have that mark on our arm, and we stopped getting polio. You need to inoculate against the epidemic before it happens.

Now, the effect of having 90 million people functionally illiterate in our work community is that companies are paying, not because they care about the worker that much probably, but corporations like AT & T are spending over six million a year to retrain entry

level workers because it's killing them. It's hurting them, and they retrain them by bringing them in, paying them for six months and putting them on mainframe computers and bringing them up to speed in reading.

So it'd be much more cost effective, and effective in human loss to inoculate against that early, and the way we do this is we have a program called the word market. We disseminate by training classroom teachers. And, again, our urgency is such that it's not taking the kids who are the most injured now or taking someone here at this point in the classroom. It's the whole classroom, the microcosm of our community. And the day that we get that microcosm looking like that and acting like that and everybody stretching and growing will be the day we don't have meetings anymore. We'll all just get together and have tea.

You have to have every child in that classroom change the behavior. So if you're all in that classroom and you're massive readers already, you're in my 5th grade class reading at 9th, 10th grade level, you will still need to keep reading more. I want to catch Anthony, who's reading below the 3rd grade level, and if he doesn't start to love to read, he won't ever change. If reading is something you're good at, you want to read. If reading is a habit you love, you do it, not because your mother says,

honey, you have to do this, but because you can hardly stand not to.

So that's what we have to produce, and the way we do that is -- I don't have time enough today, but our strategy is a tool for teachers. It works with any reading program, so it's not a new curriculum. It's not costly. It's very cost effective. It does what everyone would like to do, which is make the player want to play.

If you had a wand and you could do one thing, I know what I would do. I would make everyone wake up tomorrow loving to read, hungry to read, read the newspaper, read everything that they could get their hands on. And I think we have as close as we can get to that by tricking kids to become massive readers at the better strategy of the game. It's an auction, and the money for the auction is words.

You can only get your words in meaningful reading, so you read like mad. So the first motivator is greed. If this is money, and the only way I can get more money is to read, I'm reading along and I come to a word I don't know, they tick the word and harvest them into a notebook, and they mint their money to spend at the auction.

And what do they buy at the auction with these words like "eloquent" and "quell," all from their reading?

So the vocabulary is important, but it came from context, much more significant, and they read harder and harder books. The teacher has to match them to the book, more of a relationship until by the end of the year, 4th, 5th and 6th grade, by the end of those years, they are readers. They don't turn back ever, like I could never make you stop reading, so that's our goal.

And it has to work with every child in the class. It can't be if we could get 10 of those 30 kids in the class, we'd be doing great. No, I would bleed down the back of my soul with those numbers. It has to be every child. You have to reach every child and make them take hold of their own life and build from there, empower themselves.

So greed is the first piece, and then you invite parents and grandparents into the once a month or once every two week auction, and then they are heroic. So the next piece is glory. You bid, what do I have for this fantastic pack of words? Five, I have 15, 25, 30 bid, now 40, 45, now 45, 50, the bid is now 50. Do I hear 57? Sold for 57 words. So if you bid 57 words, you come up with exactly 57, and the auctioneer asks you every word.

So it's a legal chance to show off. Everybody is seeing you. Everybody claps and cheers for you, and there's a lot of work. Engaging the player to play means

the worker to work, so they don't have the first auction until probably the end of October, and they're all waiting to see what they get. And what they get is more words, but the thing is you could hold up an old boot and they'd bid on it, because it's the compelling focus of everybody bidding at the same time. It's the energy of an auction that has them. They want to play.

And everybody can win. That's the other thing. You can't set something up where the same people will win again and again. So there are ways to play with the system that they never know. There's a secret number so that Anthony, who finally is reading like mad and has 57 words, while you have 120 and you have 89 and you have 119, is never going to be the high bidder. And the three high bidders is what they all want, because then you wear the hat, the crown, goofy hat, whatever. You become the auctioneer.

So we go from greed to glory to power. They all want to be the kid saying, what do I hear for this fantastic pack of words? And so the teacher, who is only the facilitator, helps read the words that they can't and says, could we have a secret number today? Could I pick it?

And if you're the classroom teacher, you're supposed to be paying attention, following through, and

everything you do relates to that. So you have to know that Anthony, who's working as hard as he possibly can and is growing more than anybody in class, but isn't going to catch you because you started out reading 9th grade, 10th grade, he's supposed to grow from where he is in his year or two or three years, however we have this set up.

And so how many words do you have? How many of you are ready for the auction this week? Everybody is, and your job is to go around. How many words do you have, Anthony? Oh, I have 57, but Mary has over a hundred and Kenny has -- no, no, bid your words. You're responsible for you, make sure you bid, and bid them all. You test to make sure it's exactly 57.

And then days later when someone says, "What do I hear for this?" and the teacher is sitting benignly, "Can your majesty make a request?", they defer to the majesty. And the request is, "May I choose a number?" And you automatically have that number, which should just come from your head, the year my grandfather moved from California to whatever nonsense, 57. So if anybody picks that number, that's the guy that comes up.

So it's not, oh, come on, let's let Anthony win. We do a terrible disservice for our children to do that, anything that smacks of special ed or giving someone their chance. You know, I can't do it on my own. Yes, you can.

And so he does. He's up there heroic, and then he's one of the three auctioneers.

So it works, and I'll quickly go by that. We started with a 10 classroom pilot in 1988, and we trained teachers in the summer in a four-day training. The model that we have now works perfectly because the trainer goes into the classroom once a week for the school year, but it's limiting the amount of teachers we can train, the number of teachers, so we're looking for stepping that model up.

If you're doing what you need to be doing in the classroom -- this is about the WASL, and I concur on all the levels about the WASL itself. There needs to be some normative standard. We all agree, so you can measure it. Have you actually done what you think you're doing in teaching? And now it happens to be the WASL. But without teaching to it, without doing any of these things that we know is happening, we know teachers are teaching to it, if everybody is reading massively, it'll show up. If you're doing what you should be doing in the classroom, it'll show up in the test. If you have taught the math, if you have done the reading, and it's done over years and years, it's not a one off thing, you can't rush and catch up in a year.

In this instance, we just took the scores from --

this is one I put on Power Point 2000 that shows the level. And this is exactly the categories: Literary tests, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard at the overall state level, 68.1, the district, 65.8, and then the school, those 4th and 5th graders. And that meant every child in the class, nobody pulled loose or anything like that, 80 percent of those met or exceeded.

And we sort of expect that. Everybody has begun to read. They must read 30 minutes a night or more. It's required. And then by Christmas they're reading more. How much are you reading? You know, an hour a night. Gosh, Paul has more words than I have. You know, gosh, that's tough. What are you going to do about it? Well, you know, and you're reading? Yeah. Until they finally decide to take that responsibility and say, I guess if I read more, yup, that's what I do.

So I think another thing we should do in schools is as often as we can help children take hold of their own lives, give them all the resources we can and take away all the barriers, but give them opportunities so they actually get the glory so they've done it themselves. And that's so-called objective measures, and you can observe it.

So I have two or three of these to skim through.

Marjorie Lamar (phonetic) was going to be with me here today, who is a word market teacher and a fan of the word market, and I particularly like her remarks because she grew up in the Islands, and she has a very high standard for her students. And she's given a class where she has to bring them up and make up the difference, and she does it. You saw her. She does it with love and using strategies that will make everybody grow. And she's on a camping trip with students this week, so she couldn't be here.

So we're now looking for ways to disseminate faster. The model we have now is that we raise money in the community, and then we give this to the schools. It's less than a hundred dollars a student, which is very cost effective. And once the teachers train, our expectation, our hope is they'll keep using it, but it's still too slow a process.

So we want to leverage what we're doing, and move it through the state faster. Instead of training 30 teachers a year, we'd like to train 300 just over the next three years. So instead of it being 1,500 students a year, we go to 9,000 students having that impact, and the next year the teachers continue to do it. So instead of in three years having 27,000 students, you have 54,000 students. You train 900 teachers, but you have 54,000

students who benefit because it keeps accumulating. That's what we need to do if we're going to turn things around.

I'm going to finish with remarks that I ask teachers at John Muir and other word market schools to give me about the WASL, and I'm particularly interested in how it benefits or doesn't benefit or how underserved minority students are at a deficit. And Marjorie Lamar in particular said there's a huge deficit for underserved minorities or anyone underserved if they're not readers already, if they're not great readers.

So the most powerful thing that we can do for our children is to make them powerful readers, and the most powerful way to do that is to create schools that nurture them just to unfold, not you're late.

In 1st grade reading, below 1st grade reading, how could you be late as a six-year-old? I mean, you're exactly where you're supposed to be. The teacher has to find you, or even as a nine-year-old. You're not behind. You're where you belong. The teacher has to find you.

So we are working as fast as we can to make a difference in the moment, and our beloved professor is working as fast as he can to make systematic change happen. And I think all of us have to support that which works, and that which will accomplish the overall good for

society. And it means change, and we have to get behind that, and it has to be change for everyone. It'll benefit all of us, not just our children who are underserved regularly, but it will benefit everybody and we need that.

Thank you for your time. Any questions I would happily answer.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good. Any questions?

MS. PATU: I guess my thing is within the Seattle School District, I've been there for over 20 something years, and I've seen so many programs that's come and gone and introduced and teachers' training. As a matter of fact, right now teachers are getting trained for that new flight school thing. And what I've seen is that --

MS. HURLEY: For curriculums, right?

MS. PATU: Yeah, for the curriculum.

MS. HURLEY: This isn't a curriculum. It's a strategy. It's a tool to use. That's going to keep happening, new program here, new program there, baby out with the bath water, whole language, phonics, you know, this works with whatever program because -- I don't know how to control that piece, and you're right. Even when it's good, good programs, and then just arbitrarily it's gone.

MS. PATU: That's the thing. You know, you go through training, and all this money is spent, even for the AVIV program. I hear that this is the last year for AVIV. That's going out, and all the dollars that's been spent to send teachers across states to train them and bring them back, and now it's out again.

I guess my thought is that if we really want to make systematic change with our kids, we need to look at programs that are going to last and continue on, on a regular basis other than coming in and going out. I mean, that's where a lot of our dollars are wasted.

MS. HURLEY: That's what our program is about.

MS. PATU: The programs are actually not stabilized to give our kids the change they need in order for them to be able to progress and do what they need to do, because they need to change with time and not do the program for the time being, and then we get rid of it and then something else comes in place.

MS. HURLEY: Ours is based on the capriciousness of programs that come and go. And if we want things to change, we go even more bottom line, which is no matter how bad the situation is, we need to give them the tool that's going to work with an overcrowded classroom. It's going to work with a reading program that

isn't suiting everybody. This is going to bypass all that and make the reader want to read. And it isn't money taken from the schools, because part of our basis has always been as a non-profit. The schools don't ever have enough money.

So even the $100 a student, that's raised in the community and given to the schools, and the school's obligation becomes kind of $10 a student after that. But it's not a huge expense of training and materials and then two years, 10 years, whatever later, that's no longer in fashion and all that money has been wasted. It's gone, and you start again.

This has to keep working with the people we care most about, which is the children, and also making the teachers better. It makes them better teachers because it requires that they engage with the students. It's all in the follow through.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good. I guess I wanted to comment that all programs, our pilot project and so forth, they all have been good. There's got to be something that works.

MS. HURLEY: And it's just making the commitment to continuing it. We made ours one where they couldn't say, gosh, we think it's terrific, but no more money.

So, first of all, it doesn't require school money. In the beginning $100 a student is required.

MR. PATU: So you raise your own money?

MS. HURLEY: We raise our own money because we couldn't do that. I mean, we couldn't be part of something where it just keeps being pulled out.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Mary has a question.

MS. BASS: A quick one, actually. I want to know more about the comprehension and decoding aspects, all the prolific readers, and they're 9 years old or 10, how to use whatever tool is in the building to measure what understanding, whether they can read a short problem, a mathematic story problem and decode it and whether they can solve the problems.

MS. HURLEY: Well, the comprehension piece, that's why you would use a WASL. I mean, you really want a standardized test that everybody can use so that it's measuring that you can take the same piece of information, and from it you can solve the problem.

One of the good things I would say about the WASL, and teachers that I've spoken to say, is that it's not like some tests in the past, which is just about an information base and it's spitting out on the page. It's asking kids to think. You know, it's choose a good title for this story and justify why you chose it.

So it's asking them to think. That sort of comprehension has more value in their life than what's the answer. And then the math is the same thing, not just an answer. What's the process you use to get the answer, which is much more valuable and powerful.

Yes, so we use, again, whatever tool is there. If it's the ITBS, then when they take that test, we want to know how did word market kids -- how did this school do versus this school? What's already there, we just use the measurements and say, well, over and over again, same populations, but in this school doing the word market, they're doing better. And not because something miraculous isn't done in the classroom, sometimes it is, but it's just that you have engaged the player to play, to read, to be a reader.

And if you're reading one minute a night, and all of a sudden you're reading 30 minutes a night, your reading is going to improve. If by the end of the year you're reading an hour a night, you're unstoppable.

If I could give a gift -- Martin Luther King is one of my heroes, and he said -- my favorite line in any of his speeches is, "We must hue from the mountain of despair a stone of hope."

And I thought, you know, what could be the stone of hope for every child I ever teach? You know, I only

had one year as a classroom teacher when I was a classroom teacher. And I thought, you know, I've got to get everybody. I have to have them so touched by me that if they have the dark night of the soul when they're 20, they think, "Ms. Hurley believed in me. I can't quit."

So I thought what could I give them? A talisman. I thought, oh, gosh, if I could make them all great readers, if you're a good reader, school is easy, you like school. And if you like school, you stay in school longer and longer, and then you have all the opportunities. So that was -- that's my focus, and it's still my mission to make them great readers.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good.

Mr. Patu?

MR. PATU: Thank you. We do appreciate allowing us to come and be part of this wonderful group to share our view and our perspective, and I have Betty with me.

In my culture we were taught in my upbringing to always have the men come first, but she's my partner. She's a lady, so in my German ancestry, they taught me to have the ladies first.

MS. HURLEY: Nice segue.

MS. PATU: That's just an excuse, but that's okay. Actually, when I was following the WASL, and

actually I've been very much a part of helping monitoring the WASL with kids at Rainier Beach High School, one of the things actually that I find out that makes it difficult for a lot of our kids of color, especially Pacific Islanders and African American kids that I have worked very closely with is that the learning style of a lot of these kids is something that I think has been ignored for so long.

As I worked with many of these kids over 20 years, I realized that the kids, these particular students actually, are very -- they're actually right-brain learners, which is something that I've been really studying up on.

Many years ago when we couldn't figure out why Pacific Islander students could not learn like every other kid, Dr. Muse from Woodworth University came down and actually did some testing that actually proved the theory we had of the reason why a lot of our kids don't learn is because they're more right brain. A lot of them are right-brain learners, and the teachers who actually teach our kids are left-brain learners.

Now, in summing it up to plain English is that when they teach our kids, their teaching method is more college style where they just lecture, and they expect kids to have a good concept of what they're talking about,

whereas a lot of our kids -- you know, we come from -- for our particular kids, we come from an island where many years ago we had no written language, and keeping our language was actually by performing it, you know, body language, the dances that we do, the movements that we do actually was the way of our actually holding our history together.

So when our children come into a state where actually they're taught to think and be able to hopefully figure out what the teacher is talking about, it's real hard for them to actually to be able to figure something out if they have no idea what the heck they're talking about.

So the way a lot of our kids learn is actually they have to see the picture as a whole, they've got to touch it, they've got feel it actually in order for them to visualize the concept of what anybody is talking about.

So in the classroom our kids are taught in the lecture style. A lot of times when they go into a language art class or history class, they're made to just sit and listen, and many times they don't see the picture until at the end of the lesson.

So many times a lot of our kids will sit there and not have no idea of what the concept -- of what the teacher is talking about, so they begin to be withdrawn.

They start becoming behavior problems.

And I see this very much also with African American students. When they have no concept what the teacher is talking about, they become behavior problems, because no child is going admit to anybody that they're stupid or they don't know what's going on, because everybody wants to be smart.

So what happened is that -- when that happens it just becomes a continued behavior on an ongoing basis. And through the work that I've done with -- when I used to work with middle school kids -- and now I've worked with high school kids for almost -- for the last 19 years. I realized that that learning style continues on, and many teachers do not either have the time or the patience or even the knowledge to really teach our kids that particular style so they can actually be able to learn.

And then when you talk about -- Marilyn talked about, you know, you don't let go of a kid until you reach into the back part of their soul if you really care about these kids, and what's happening is that a lot of our kids are falling through the cracks because of that reason.

You know, we say to ourselves, why are these kids not learning like everybody else? Why are they not progressing like everybody else? Well, you know, the thing is that they have a learning style that needs to be

taught, and for many years we still are not teaching these kids' learning style. And at the same time, these kids are really flunking out because of that.

And then the WASL is a good example. They have to read the WASL in order for them to be able to get a concept of what -- you know, whether to mark the right answer or whatever. Well, they have no idea. They're just sitting there looking at them. They may read fluently, but in concept, not visualizing what they're talking about, and a lot of stuff in the WASL test is stuff that a lot of our kids are not familiar with.

So when they're reading this stuff in there, they sit there and they look at it. They have no idea what they're reading. So that's why probably about 70 percent or 80 percent of them are failing the WASL, because they have no idea what they're reading.

So what happened is -- and then they don't visualize it. They can't visualize, because they don't see a picture. And so it's really -- I think it's -- you know, for our kids -- you know, when the professor talked about racist, you know, to me that's a sort of racism because our kids are not being taught the way they learn.

And for a lot of us, we have to be taught -- you know, for me when I was going through college, I had a hard time learning the same way, because I have to see

things. You know, I'm one of those people that has to visualize. If I'm a visual, I need someone to show me what the picture is. You know, tell me what are you talking about.

You know, so for me, I had to actually go back after the class is over. I've got to go talk to the professor and say, tell me, what do you really mean? And for us as an adult, we have to -- that's the way we learn. We have to be able to find a way for us to be able to learn what actually -- what the lesson is all about, otherwise you're going to fail on a regular basis.

So for our kids, you know, a lot of times you just don't have time to say, okay, I'll talk to you later about it or let me explain, because when you have 30 some kids in the classroom, it's really hard to explain to kids or try to teach that learning style in order for them to be able to have a concept of what they're doing.

So as we continue to ignore the fact of the learning style of these kids, our kids continue to fail in numbers, and especially Pacific Islander students and African American were the two groups that Dr. Muse tested, and his testing came out. I'm sorry I didn't bring the studies, but if anybody wants it, I can actually fax it to you or mail it.

But it's very interesting, because I realize

after all these years as we continue on -- and this study was done way back in -- actually, in the 1970s when we actually did the testing. And up to this point, no one ever mentions about why are these kids -- you know, the learning style of these kids.

I know I've been at several meetings and have talked about it, but it's like a dead end. You know, nobody seems to listen why our children are not learning the way they should. So I really think we're doing our kids a disfavor when we really don't listen to the way these kids think.

And like I said, you know, with the school district, you know, because of so many kids, because of lack of funding, it's really hard for these kids. I mean, they get lost even more so than they were before, and then they expect these kids to take tests and a WASL test in order for them to be able to graduate and get a diploma. We're asking too much of these kids, especially if we're not teaching to their to learning style.

MR. PATU: I just want to add onto the learning style of, again, Dr. Muse mentioned that how about if the schools are to test all the teachers to see if their teaching style are left or right, and then test the kids to match the kids who are the learning style is left brain, and have the left-brain teachers match with

them in their classroom or the right brain, because most of our kids are right brain, and we could find right-brain teachers' teaching style is right brain to match with them.

I think that might help, Mary, to see and experiment, you never know. There are so many good things, actually one of them or two works for our kids, and that's going about this learning style stuff. And we can provide the documents from BYU stated particularly for this kind of learning style/teaching style that might help the teachers to learn it, too, in the training.

The WASL, our perspectives as being South Pacific Islanders -- oh, first of all, thank you so very much again, and our heartfelt to all of you for encouraging the baby of the family. We consider ourselves we are the baby of the families; why? Because we are the production of Asia, Africa and Europe, genealogy, the study of that. Yes, we are proud of that, too. So thank you for packing our bags to keep on going and striving and moving on and catching up.

The WASL, thank you so very much that we appreciate the OSBI, Dr. Terry Bergenson for the spirit, for the intention and good heart is there, but how? That's where the conflicts, the debates have been going on of the WASL. That's like what you call a child -- what

you call it?

MS. PATU: No child left behind.

MR. PATU: No child left behind. We look at it, and that's like our way of looking at it as South Pacific Islander is just like no child left behind is someone in D.C. trying to sweeten the whole ocean with one teaspoon of sugar.

So how can that happen when they don't put the dollars on it? All the ocean still salty unless the right chemistry to make the ocean work and sweet and so forth. That's how we view the WASL.

I have been involved with OSBI to deliver the messages to all the community about the WASL, how good the WASL is. And also WASL is another thing we look at it is they are providing a food and giving no teeth to chew the food with, and no dollars to follow with their theory.

Like I said, it's good, nothing wrong with the theory, and global competitions behind of what they are striving to make our kids to -- not the word conform, but give them choices to become the best as well.

So, therefore, we adding another piece to it the way we look at it to conquer the broader basis of the world internationally, also have learned their languages. It's much better as well.

The most successful people in education,

business, economic, social, they speak seven languages and up or maybe three. That's another alternative. We can look into it to add onto the WASL that helps our young people to compete in the global world and so forth.

South Pacific Islander, Everett, 65 percent failure of the WASL testing. So the little thing that I share with you is to let you know the obstacles, why some of the things that we need to reduce like dropouts, truancy, non-attendance, study smart, your method and so forth, we need to have those things to go together with the WASL.

How about another view of the WASL? Let's have the WASL, not to say if they don't pass it they cannot graduate. It's kind of a touchy issue in the community. It's not quite fitting there. How about we say we use the WASL as the smelling test, a smell test every quarter implemented in the classroom? The more they take it, the better off they are as long as they pass it.

Another view of it, why we have the WASL as a mechanism to come between the college and the high schools? If they pass the WASL, yes, sky rocket straight forward as a missile to four-year college. If they don't pass the WASL, they can go to the community college and so forth.

That's just a thought to share with you, and I

think that's all I have, and I thank you. Let's see if I missed anything in my notes.

MS. PATU: No, you didn't.

MS. HURLEY: I have a question for both of you or just generally all of us. Part of the complaint about the WASL is that it's a one off. It's one measurement, one form of measurement. And if you are not going to perform well on that, that's it. But there are plenty of teachers I know who are supportive of this, and educators who say we should have a combination of testing tools, as in a portfolio, your work that you have done all along, and teacher recommendation and the WASL taken together. Now, I don't hear a lot about that.

MR. PATU: May I see if I can -- the WASL was created by a group of experts, and the WASL was brought in without the inputs of the teachers. So when that happened, how about the chances for our teachers, before they finalize, to say, hey, let's take a look. Give the teachers chances to see what their perceptions and how they see things, because we all see things from different perspective. So see what they can say, and then add on that recommendation to them before they finalize and imposing it to our kids in school.

MS. HURLEY: Right, if we made it more than just the WASL.

MR. PATU: I mean, like I said, it's a wonderful thing to do, but we keep on debating on it and talking about discussion.

MS. HURLEY: Well, certainly the number of people failing isn't wonderful and having it be a big cut off. So a way around that seems to be reasonable, but that's not the only measurement. I don't really have an objection with the standardized test. Only if it's the only thing that's used, then how do you accommodate, not just different learning styles, but people who -- you know, if it's biased informationally, they don't get it.

So if you had a combination -- for high school graduation we're talking about, high school graduation -- of the portfolio, the teacher references, the grades.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We would ask that they would have three alternatives. One would be that they had -- or four of them. I know of three of them. I guess one is if your peer class passes, say in math and you pass with them, but you failed the WASL math, then that's considered a pass; is that right, Mary?

MS. BASS: A GPA amongst your peers would be a part of that, and it's weighted.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And the second one is a portfolio.

MR. PATU: One more thing before I

forget. Sorry, I missed the very important one is ethnic identity. We have been enjoying the milk and the honey of America for the last -- for many, many years. We would like to become part of America as being a South Pacific Islanders American.

We have five categories always in the community, the state, the city, the federal and the county. The Native Indian American, African American, Asian American, but we are tied into the Asians, not because of something else, but when we go into education, the Asian American achievement is up there, and everybody thinks we are up there, too. No, we are here (indicating).

So there's other distinctions of some of the things that we love to being ourselves. Like I said, we are the babies of the family, but we don't want to be the babies of the family for the rest of our lives. Allow us to climb up the tree. If we fall down, you are there to help bring us up. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And now we'll go on to Mary.

MS. BASS: I have to say that Mr. Patu speaks in the visual. I think he brings that real -- he speaks in a way that people can connect with his words and see a picture and understand that he speaks this way all the time. When he comes to the board meetings, I just

have to say that what that does with learning or how it doesn't mesh well when you're a right brain or left brain, I think that's certainly an interesting point to bring up with our educators at Seattle Public Schools.

And before I go on, I have to say, I carry this also with me wherever I go, and I put it on my desk and hope you're all familiar. It's a picture, an etching, and I don't know the psychological nature of it all because my background is in economics and my Master's is in Environmental Economics at the University of Washington, but I had an undergraduate economics course talking about data, and how data, given a finite set of data, you can come up with absolutely opposing truths, different truths. That's how I use it, and I use it in my communities.

Actually, Mr. Patu has been a wonderful supporter over the years and has seen that picture, and all the other ones that have been sent to me that make you go, "I don't know if I see that other truth."

And I told myself I was going to be an analyst when I grew up, and my job was to bring everyone at the table with their points of view and their interpretations and their filters to come to see the other truths.

So we may all have our different way of interpreting and seeing things and coming up with very different looks of life and may not even know that we're

looking at the same set of data, and not even know that the other exists because we're going down parallel or very similar tracks, but never coming together, understanding where those points of intersection possibly could take place and if they ever do.

And somebody might need to be the facilitator of that kind of expression and interchange, and that's why I hope to be able to do more of that as I go along, because I force myself, always as an analyst, and I think we have one at the end who resembles that remark, to look for the other truths in data, in verbal kinds of expression, and to understand and get behind some of the surface that's out there.

So I have to bring my girl. So whenever I say to the school district, "My ladies are talking," that's what I'm referring to if I'm about to say something that's going to set me in opposition to someone on the board, but it does make a difference, and we all have our cultural filters.

But the other interesting piece about that is that when we look up or when someone brings you to that realization, I mean, who doesn't know how they feel when that ah-ha moment happens? And you all ask yourself how in the world could I have looked at that, been a part of that, looking at that etching for the last 10 minutes, or

it may take a year, who knows, to see that other one and not see that other truth. I'm looking, I'm staring, I'm being talked to or talked at, and you don't see the other truth.

So it would behove all of us to make the effort to see the other truth, to understand the cultural components, to understand learning differences, to understand language, and some of the physical expression as well.

When I see a 15-year-old boy who's six two and doesn't weigh much more than this portfolio here, but is carrying on in what some people term as an aggressive manner, that's the way he talks at home, talks on the street, it's his way of getting his point across, but others are intimidated by it. Nobody's ever taken the time to explain to him other than dismissing all the time, disciplinary actions or whatever. And when you're being disciplined and expelled, you know, put into detention without any instruction, you do fall behind.

So we like to get them early to understand that there's many, many ways of expression in culture. The reading piece is critical. There's not much more I could probably add to this group today after Professor Marshak, Marilyn, the Patus. It's really critical the things that they've mentioned in illiteracy, comprehension, decoding.

It's all a part of -- that's what I expressed here with this one simple etching that was made so long ago and how important it is to be able to decode our greater cultures with teaching and learning, and how we need to decode it and spit it back in that same format that is really very foreign to a lot of young people, and particularly the groups you've mentioned already, Betty.

So now coming into -- I do want to just kind of draw on a couple of things that David mentioned and others. We talked about looping, and it was Anitra Pinchback, by the way, at AAA, African American Academy, that was the one being taken all over the state and shown to have great outcomes from the WASL; all but one child made it.

But there was a time a hundred years ago or more that they had -- when you referred to multiple age schools, multi-age schools in classroom settings, that there was just the one-room school house, a little red school house, the only thing for 180 miles. You had your 6-year-olds and your 18-years-old or whatever age in the same room all day, every day for the years that they were together.

So when I heard about looping when I first came to the school board, I really did say that's not new. I said it out loud and that kind of got me in hot water.

But it isn't a new concept, but it's given a new name, "looping," and it's usually for a two-year loop, not 18 years, and you're keeping a group of young people together that know one another very well. The families all know one another, the teacher knows everyone in the class, and their families and their siblings, and the good things that happen at home and the bad things, the strife, and knows how to handle that situation because of that closeness and relationship that takes place.

They understand cognitive development ability, even though they weren't tested in it. And he mentioned some of that, but cognitive ability and that development we definitely know a lot more about now-a-days in a scientific way, but also we have now this hundred years of proof, I think, from experience as well.

And I'm glad he brought all that up because it isn't new, and we do know what to do with students. So don't get caught up in the language. This is what I want to say to the board that's here today. Don't let the trickery of this language catch you up in something as if we had no clue how to deal with kids who didn't know how to read at whatever age. We always have known what to do.

You could be 18 and still taught. You could be 87 and be taught to come to that place where you can be a very good reader. It's the same with mathematics. I

think it's the same with language. I think it's the same with everything.

So to have a disguise in all this new education reform to me is part of the trickery, and I don't mean that as a slight, mind you. I want people to understand that it's a play on words and a play on the aspects, and there's this undercurrent of newness that has to be brought to the age old problems of human beings on the planet. That would be an amazing thing if we were so different that for the short period of time that we needed such new models that have not proven to be successful, even though it's been a short time, that we couldn't just simply do what we already know to do.

And the one thing that has changed, and also Marshak had mentioned this, is that culturally we are so much more aware of one another. We've got a long ways to go. Racism is still one of the big taboos to talk about out loud in any kind of situation.

I got lambasted in the media for saying institutional racism was the thing to go after. They expected me to challenge that, but I really wanted to get a message out there coupled with no child left behind coupled with standardization, or WASL in this case, is death, particularly for children of color already straight across the board, and to come to that realization years

ago before it became fashionable to be out against these things, and all these things tied together are absolutely critical to understand.

So I would hope that the board, the Commission looks at how these things work together, and how they were developed together, and how the timing of all this came together, some of which Marshak also hit on.

And it took me a while. I had to go back and really learn about why this stuff didn't make sense to me. I had to put the pieces together, and why they would allow, they the decision maker of the day, why they would come up with a system that was going to be so detrimental to pockets of youth that are consistent.

And by demographics, social economic factors, they're very consistent no matter where you go across the country, certainly here in Seattle and the public schools. And I do want to say that the Seattle Public Schools did come out with alternatives for the multiple kind of variables to look at, you know, achievement, so we did get that in legislation. That's not the end of it, though, you know.

One other item that I wanted to talk about, he mentioned transitory populations always have a difficult time, let alone in a decentralized, destandardized system. I mean, for years before all this came on board, we had

students with transportation needs. We'd find that busing, going far from their center, home, their community, to another school and with all the stuff that comes with it, just getting to know other kids and understanding neighborhoods, and understanding why people are staring at you or why they touch your hair.

I don't know if you guys ever experienced that, but I did back in the day. Everybody wanted to touch my hair, and I thought it was very unusual. I didn't fight or get offended in that sense, but one day I finally said, "Why do you have to touch my hair?" Because they'd never touched hair like mine.

As I was growing up in my neighborhood, in one block we had Japanese, Filipino, white, black, we were always braiding one another's hair playing, but it was never something where we'd want to go out and touch just because -- you know, walk up and touch your hair.

So taking that piece of just what kids have to go through now, I come from a pretty solid place and I'm an old lady now. But if it wasn't for having parents who could champion, first language educated and so on, who were educators, what do you think happens to all our immigrant families, especially immigrants who would never challenge authority because that would be the teacher? That would be just about anyone or anyone of age.

They respect that, and they revere that, and we don't respect it in the same way as other cultures. But a six-year-old who's being -- and I hate to use the expression, but that's the way you call people, that it's very disallowed in many cultures outside of the U.S., and it's with a finger. You usually don't beckon with a full hand, but to not know that -- a six-year-old may not know how to express to a teacher, "I can't come forward. You're calling me a really dirty name in my country, my language." They don't know how to do that. They just think they're being obstinate and mean.

And I took this up with bilingual folks, and actually the people spoke up about it, meaning that that's exactly right. They were Somali, they were Filipino, many other cultures divided by many miles, actually, who understood you don't do that.

So understanding there's really subtle things, and knowing that a little person really won't be able to challenge, they're going to need someone to champion and watch that.

The same with tests. They're not going to expose themselves as saying, "I don't know what it says or what the words mean." And, yes, they can mimic the words. They can sound the words out, like the African Americans, who have been born and bred here for generations, if they

can't read, they can read the words and not know a word or understand it, but can mouth it perfectly wonderfully.

And most of you maybe have learned a language, and you learned how to pronounce things, but didn't always have the comprehension behind that, but you did learn how to speak Spanish when you're in 7th grade, or French.

And then understanding it's not a direct kind of correlation with the word. It doesn't directly translate. You have to have nuance, and you have to allow for the nuance to get the understanding of the meaning of what's being written in the other language.

Now, the WASL is written with a very culturally based expression of words, and you still have to be able to do the math piece as well. So if you don't understand a cultural use of words, then you're not going to do well on the WASL. If the WASL doesn't take into account that -- we have 11,000 in Seattle. I think they call them language learners. That's another thing that keeps shifting, you know, ESL, ELL.

Folks who didn't come up reading or speaking English really have a difficult time. But if your home language, and I mean community language, the community, what they speak in my neighborhood, if things are expressed that way, then I, too, no matter how long my lineage goes back in this country, I won't be able to

because that's not my first language at home, and that's very true with African American families.

I wanted to show you the parallels in the sense of why some English language learners are also failing because they're black and brown, Latino. Black children are also failing at the same really 50, 60 percent rates.

Hiding data, it happens a lot as David Marshak mentioned. Texas is notorious for this because they got called out nationally, so it was a big deal. But we, too, when we move our 9th graders back as we've just done, the 10th graders who were not able to move on because they don't have the right credits, that in a way is hiding it.

And believe me, you may not get this outwardly, but most educators internally will tell you, if you pull them to the side, this will make the WASL scores look better, because we knew this. And they are now designated as 9th graders, but 9th grader without a real clear plan on how to become 10th graders or 11th graders. They may only be off by a credit or some other reason.

But you've got to have a plan. You can't do the same thing that you did the first time you did not make it to that point. You have to maybe change the teachers because of the way the information was relayed to that child, and help them understand the nuances.

So I do keep up on several schools, Rainier

Beach, Cleveland and Garfield in particular because there's large numbers of children that were identified to be redesignated. And I would hope that every school -- and I check with them how they're going to use the extra money that's supposedly coming. I don't want to say extra, the needed money to address the remediation, whatever that might be, if it's WASL prep, if it's because they're behind in math, if they're behind in middle English arts, credit retrieval. There's a lot of things. Summer school is an option there, the fact that we're partnering with the community colleges this summer.

One thing I don't think was mentioned well and clear enough today was this alignment piece. Our teachers in colleges absolutely in my book are not the kind to teach in an urban setting, and we still get the bulk of our teachers from right here, close in. They're not coming from somewhere outside a setting where you don't have 119 languages spoken, which Seattle Public Schools do.

So they're not prepared to deal with the cultural nuances. They're not prepared to understand that doing this with their hands (indicating) and being very expressive physically is not an aggressive thing. It has to be both ways. Feel free to express yourself, but understand that you need to pull the right tool out of

your bag to get you through whatever communication you're trying to make with the group that you're dealing with, and no one's ever told them that.

So with the WASL push back -- and these are the things I'd like. I don't know all of the things that you guys looked at. These are things I'd like the Commission to look at, and then to couple it with the, I guess, capitalization, entrepreneurial spirit that has come with privatizing public systems. And I'm not one against a good capitalist. I live here, too. I understand the motives. I wouldn't have studied economics -- I believe in that kind of mechanism.

You have to have caution when you work in the public sector, but even more importantly with children, because there is no going back to correct that widget. And you don't think of it in terms of widgets and markets alone, because once that year is gone, they're gone. And once they're 18, that's it for a lot of the kids.

A lot of the statistics have already been covered, the dropout rates and why students don't come back. The WASL has been around 13 years in development, and you have to ask yourselves where has any type of intervention been in 13 years? Those are the questions I would hope that folks would ask, check the validity and to know that the math cut scores were dropped two years ago.

And I didn't get a clear answer when I asked about that, but certainly more kids will look like they're passing the math portion when you lower the cut scores.

Getting behind the data is going to be key to seeing the truth behind WASL information. And with all that said, and it's kind of, I guess, the negative side of WASL, I'm going to be the one here today to tell you that I absolutely still want it around. I still need, as a school board person, a measuring tool, which is what these tests were actually designed for.

And what you heard most of today was about the effect on kids, the effect on kids and how devastating, and that penalties are misplaced when you're having kids not graduate because of the WASL.

Why don't you use it to get rid of a board member in between terms? I think that's a good way to use it. If you're not performing on the WASL, then your four-year term is cut short. You have a year and a half to clean it up, or other administrative decision makers. Why wouldn't you use it that way? That would straighten up a lot of people or certainly straighten out the problems with the test.

But if it was meant to check a system to see what the teachers and administrators are doing with children, if you have a standardizing curriculum and expectations, I

want to know if these pocket of kids at a particular school are performing like the other pocket of kids at another school. And if one isn't doing so well, I want to be able to take and replicate or find out what's going on. You know, is it the teaching style, the methodology, the delivery? Is it just that we don't know how to learn?

And actually when I say that tongue-in-cheek, it might be because teachers really aren't trained to have multiple ways to teach multiple types of learning styles. So teaching the vertical alignment in the horizontal problems that we have with alignment are key to any system, WASL or not, and you have to be able to move around. And the transitory population, again, is minority children particularly in our city that do move around more than other neighborhoods.

You have to be able to go across town and get the same lesson, and you can't. You can't be a 6th grader in one school and a 6th grader in another. You're either ahead or behind, and we hear it all the time because of the autonomy that was allowed a few years ago for schools to make these independent decisions about what's going on in their schools.

So there's no alignment, horizontally or vertically, let alone what the teachers are doing. You get layers of this over years and years, and then all of

that built into policies that are woefully lacking and addressing any of these issues that have not been assessed either.

But those are the things, the system pieces that have to be looked at, your assignment plan and the way the students learn are the two biggest policies that anyone could look at and get to learn, and they're the ones that need to be broken down for the institutional factor as well as the distribution of money as well as the actual distribution of the children around our district.

There's a race-based policy. It's the only one we have, and how that affects the placement of children across the system, and then having them standardized on top of that has never been looked by the Seattle Public Schools, and hopefully we will get some agreement on at least looking at it. I'm certainly pushing for two pieces.

So in a nutshell, I don't know if you need any more statistics. I'd like to keep it around and adjust it accordingly. I don't know if we have enough people to do that, but just to make sure that it's really an effective tool for diagnostic reasons.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any questions?

MR. MARTIN: Ernie Martin here. You know my brother Rodney Martin.

MS. BASS: I do.

MR. MARTIN: I noticed like in Garfield that it's almost like a two-tier system in terms of education. You have Caucasian kids, Asian kids, Japanese, Chinese, who were raised in the United States in those high level classes in terms of economics, and there's another tier where you have most of the minority students, African American, Hispanic and Asian -- well, students moving into this country here, so there's kind of a gap.

MS. BASS: Well, Garfield is a great example of what's going to happen. If you want to get rid of the WASL, there's going to be some failures in APP. It means they're not going to be able to pass the WASL. If you tell them there's probably going to be some kids excelling at the third year of college level, all sorts of things, paid to go to Yale if they don't pass the Washington State assessment of learning, you'll see a break down then. And actually a lot of them -- it's being used now to qualify, to stay in APP in the lower grades.

I don't know if you're aware of that for the little kids, and you have to take that thing every year, which, of course, once you're in APP, you've got a seat for life at school. You don't have to worry about the assignment plan, which all the other struggle with. You have an automatic pass to Garfield if get in at the 1st

grade, and that's the division of going in and pushing out the neighborhood children. You're right.

MR. PATU: The burden now we have come up with through services, the suspension and expulsion of the kids is kind of to reduce somehow reasons behind, because right now we have a long list of all of the alternative to accommodate the suspension and expulsion long term, whatever, coming from the regular schools. There are waiting lists, and it's real long.

I have a few of South Pacific Islanders that stay home three weeks, no place to go, and I know sooner or later they going to be on the street causing trouble. And I brought it up in the board meeting last night for your attention of the board.

Second one is that have you, the board, explored the possibility of the state negotiation with the Governor to allow the people that are unemployed, they have stipends already, to come and help the school to play the role of intervention/preventions? Because the whole intervention/prevention of crew or the staff is what happens because of no money.

And also the welfare recipients, they have potential. They can help out, reaching out, do something four hours a day. It's a great help reaching out to our kids, wanting to see the board and administration have

check out something like that. Like I said, they have stipend already. They have a little bit there, but we know there is not enough money to support the whole family, but at least something. As long as they don't have any criminal record, they're okay.

MS. BASS: But that's part of it, and I get a lot of great ideas. This is certainly one, and when you have engagement, a lot of folks engaging with young people, I think it fosters that good relationship, and all eyes on kids while they're out in the communities, such as when I grew up.

If you were in another neighborhood and you should have been home, somebody would have called my parents, and I'm sure you all experienced that. I was doing something wrong, and they knew before I got home.

The problem with implementing something like that system wide is because you've got people moving around, so one kid in the neighborhood doesn't know the other kid. You do have to have background checks. You have to do a lot of these kind of pieces before they can work in Seattle Public Schools with the children.

If they volunteer, there may be some ways to do a little less than that, but then they have to be managed. There have to be some infrastructures set up to manage even volunteers, and I don't know what the cost would be.

There'd have to be some costing of that. It's not that it's not a good idea.

MS. PATU: It's a lot of work.

MS. BASS: Everything's a lot of work. I don't discount the work, because I do believe in hard work, and I have the -- it is like a divide and conquer, meaning I'll have something dangling over here. I'll try to get my vision over here, but I have to stay focused, you know, over here to watch what's really happening.

The work is going to be there. Maybe we need more people doing the work, the hard work of setting it up, costing. I don't have a staff, but some board members see themselves as an extension of the district. Some board members seem themselves as "I."

I see myself as an extension of the public, so I'm going to be doing the public's bidding, which also sets me up, aside from the very people who could be supporting me with my data, my research, typing, writing, whatever.

So I end up kind on the outs because the majority or those with enough pull say, why would I support her? Because she's pointed out we've got some other issues here, no matter how nicely I may point those things out.

So this piece, the work would have to come from community based and others to kind of pull together to

help foster the new ideal and to force or help be the -- I call it the 9th man on the board, just like the 12th man in football. I need a public voice to help push some of the ideas and to leverage other board members to do what I would call the right thing, because so much of it has to be political, and we deal with constituents, and Olympia has a pool as well, you know, our different representatives.

This is a very sensitive subject, the WASL, because a lot of the business core -- and everybody should know that by now, and I mean the very powerful business core of the state is involved, and many people don't want to disrupt their relationship with that group of people.

MR. PATU: The only reason is because of the crisis. I mean, it's not -- the districts don't have enough dollars to hire intervention/prevention specialist to work in the school to help kids out because all of this problem.

MS. BASS: I'd be glad to pass that on.

MR. PATU: But there are some people are available. They have credential. They have declarations with credentials. They can do something good.

MS. BASS: We need several hundred.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, we're about at the end. The one thing I observed that we didn't talk

about, and it's probably something we shouldn't talk about, we talked about the effects of the WASLs on the students, but we don't say too much about the teachers. And there must be some experience with teachers, because I know that there are a lot of substitutes in the teaching field, and a lot of teachers are teaching subjects that they have no idea what they are teaching, and yet that is going on the student's transcript.

The students have to have the ability to understand that if they're going to pass the test, especially reading, if you're talking about reading, and you have someone who can't teach reading, you know, you've got a real problem. And I don't think there's a real assessment on the teachers, per se.

MS. HURLEY: The teachers pretty much get a feedback from their students, and they get credit or blame, deserved or not deserved. And I think it's true if your students have done this on the WASL, then somehow it's due to you or it couldn't be, or if it's not, then it's your fault. And then there are some teachers, of course, who have the approach, "I taught those kids long division. They didn't get it." And my answer is always, "If they didn't get it, I didn't teach it."

MS. BASS: Teachers were very compelled under no child left behind, and that's why we have the

standardized tests all over the place and throughout the country. They teach to the WASL because they would have been under the AYP. The alternative governance would have kicked in in two years, which might have meant that those kids were going to leave that school, go to another school, and they were going to be displaced. So, again, it's called misplaced incentives or penalties.

And teachers still feel compelled to spend several weeks in preparing for the WASL, and every kid will tell you that we had to stop our lesson in something that they like to study up for the test they have to pass that week of March.

So there's a lot of information with regard to how teachers feel about this WASL, yet they're all about -- they don't mind the rigor, which everybody wants to see, and standardizing some things along the way, meeting the expectations of math at 3rd grade or math at 10th grade. We're not going to get away from the paradigm that David Marshak mentioned, but this is going to be with us for quite a while.

I think we can still work with that until there's that multi-age school system. I'm not going to say it's going to happen any time soon, but in the meantime getting everyone to do the long division, you know, within a certain range of time. It doesn't have to be that same

year. It's critical, and that's true for everything across the board.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I agree. Well, I appreciate all of you and your presentations.

MS. BASS: Thank you for having us.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And we will have an opportunity to review what you've talked about and hope that we might come up with some favorable conclusions, so thank you very much.

Tom, do you have anything you want to say to them?

MR. PILLA: I want to thank everybody who participated. I really appreciate it from the staff point of view and the regional office point of view. I don't know what people know about the Commission, but it's gone through some tumultuous times over the last 10 years, and has a very limited budget. We have three staff people for nine states out of the Western Regional Office, and I have two secretaries.

That's highly unusual, but we've attempted to work within the State Advisory Committee structure and do some positive things. They've limited us to teleconferences for about the last two and a half years, which has been very difficult because of budget, but we're moving along now it seems, at least with the four states

that are currently chartered in this region out of the nine.

So, again, thank you very much for participating.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We have some housekeeping for the board members. Thank you.

(Whereupon the meeting concluded at 12:07 p.m.)

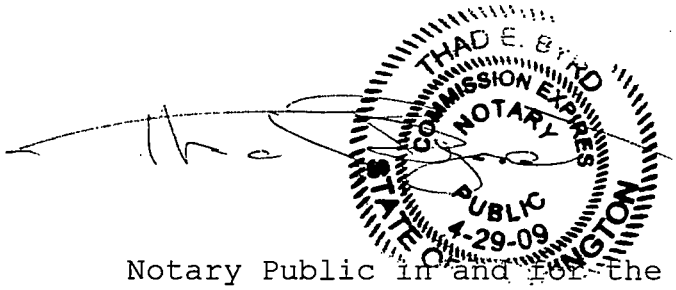
STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH)

I, the undersigned Notary Public in and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing proceedings held on the date indicated on the caption sheet were reported stenographically by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction;

I further certify that the transcription of the hearing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

Signed this 22 day of March, 2006.



Notary Public in and for the State of Washington, residing at Edmonds.
My Commission expires 4/29/09.
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