MPCSD BOARD MEETING – OCTOBER 18, 2016

ITEM 5B: Preliminary Recommendations on Reductions to Address MPCSD Structural Deficit

GHYSELS:
The agenda tonight is to recap and review. We talked about this at length in the past: recap and review the planning and the input process; the structural deficit that we face; reduction levers that we started to look at last spring; the framework which we developed last time and presented to you as well as reduction considerations in the process itself, and how I came to the preliminary recommendations for reduction. And then, at a slower pace, go into the actual list of preliminary reductions; other potential reductions that the Board asked… gave direction to staff to follow up on; the updated financial model as well as different scenarios for potential parcel tax, and then next steps.

So, this is the process map that we have been using, and right now tonight we are in the red, and last time we talked about, well we listened to both the input on the debrief of the parcel tax, and then also looked at the framework and looked at the levers, and we said we'd come back tonight and have a discussion and report on the reduction.

Tonight's discussion will be preliminary. They're the first ideas that I have and I'll go over the process as how I formulated those options for you. Then coming to here we have the directions that will have further iterations on not only the reductions but also the parcel tax timing and structure. On the right side we have the revenue stream which is being driven by the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Communication, and looking not only improving our communication to having it be more effective, but also listen to our community, our staff, all of our stakeholders about potential scenarios for parcel taxes. And I'm going to ask Erik to just briefly describe not only what you've been doing, but also critical next steps and invitations to attend future Board meetings.

BURMEISTER:
Thank you, Superintendent Ghysels. This is a reminder, you and the Board on September 13 directed me as the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Communications to gather our team to begin soliciting input from the community regarding their feelings towards addressing our fiscal situation in some other way other than reductions, understanding that we have the responsibility to address the fact that the parcel tax in May of this past year did not pass, and thus we needed to move forward during the Regular Board meetings in the process of planning for reductions.

We have begun the process of gathering that input. On September 27 in this room, we had a videotape and the audio is also being dictated and posted on the website, community input session regarding what we can learn from Measure A and Measure C--the failure of Measures A and C parcel taxes in May of this year. After today's Regular Board meeting where you are just about to present the initial recommendation for reductions, we will have an opportunity to bring the community together again next week. We will have two meetings, they will be the same meetings, and they will be facilitated by our team, our Communication Advisory team, with you as Board members as the audience listening to the input of the community. At 9:00 AM on Monday, that's this coming Monday, October 24, in this room, we will have our first of two community input sessions to address both the response to the cuts and reduction recommendations as well ideas and willingness towards looking for other opportunities for revenue. In addition, we will have a repeat of that session with as many new members of the community or repeat members of the community that want to participate the following day on Tuesday

in the evening at 6:00 PM, again in this room. Both of those input sessions will be videotaped and the transcripts will be transcribed and posted on the website, as well after all of these series of processes, we will take all of that information and present it to the Board on your regularly scheduled November 9 Board meeting where you guys can use that information to review, obviously you'll also participate in these meetings and are hearing it live as well as receiving it in written format. In addition, we have an online input form, and I'm happy to report that as of earlier today we have over 100 entries to the online input form. That's a pretty good engagement. We have parent volunteers who are diligently getting the word out on social media. We've posted two ads in *The Almanac*, letting people know about these public input sessions, and in a week and a half we'll be launching our first-ever community wide survey to the community that will be sent to all registered voters in the community as well as all parents who are parents of Menlo Park City School District students. That is well over 16,000 adults in the Menlo Park community, and we hope that we will get a large turnout in response to that effort.

So as you can see, the Advisory Committee on Communications is doing a great deal of work to try to get a pulse on what the community thinks and encourages everyone to participate. We want to thank everybody for being here. Hopefully, our work in getting the word out is part of why you're here, and we will stay as long as takes the get the input that our community would like to give.

GHYSELS:
Thank you, Erik and Communications team. So, onward to recap the structural deficit. Our operating deficit rose from $1.7 million in 16-17 this year to the year 21-22 to $5.3 million. The district economic uncertainty reserves fall below 10% in 2018-19 and are depleted by 19-20, and simply put, the district cannot sustain current operations financially beyond the 18-19 school year. So the net is that the district must reduce expenditures, increase revenues, or both.

THYGESEN:
Can I ask a quick question? Ahmad, do these numbers include the reductions that were already being put in place this year, or are they before those *(inaudible)*?

GHYSELS:
Correct, they included $900,000.

THYGESEN:
So, if you added $900,000 to $5.3, you're looking at there was a $6.2 million bogey and you've already taken action on $900,000.

GHYSELS:
Correct. So, again, why is there a structural deficit which MPCSD faces? Well, very clearly, Measure C expires this coming summer in July and we have expenditure increases. We have an increase of cost because of increased enrollment, and this is kind of a situation where are a go-to district. We deliver a very high quality student experience, and where other districts are not necessarily experiencing growth, we are. And as a community funded school district, our funding remains relatively static as our student enrollment grows. We've had a lot of information about this and this is a summary. Also, the increased employee pension cost, which is a mandate and required by the state. So, what I'd advise the audience to do is that we do have an interactive portal on our district page. The Finance and Audit Committee developed that, it's called OpenGov, and the hyperlink is right there.

CHILD:

Maurice, I just want to make sure with a couple of clarifications. First of all, I believe the parcel tax expires in 17-18. It does not expire this year. It expires July 1, which is 17-18.

GHYSELS:
Right, July 1….

CHILD:
Just so everybody is clear…

BURMEISTER:
It expires the end of this school year.

CHILD:
Right, right. But we get the money this year. And secondly, I just want to clarify your comment about it. I look at revenue…I think this revenue versus enrollment…I just think they're separate. I mean, I think the way to look at it for me is enrollment does not drive revenue. Enrollment…revenue may be driven by other things, but it is not driven by enrollment. OK. It doesn't mean it's flat, it could go up, it could go down. It really has nothing *(inaudible)….*

THYGESEN:
I mean, from that standpoint, using the word revenue is actually sort of acts like there's a product being sold *(unidentified male agrees),* and actually that's not the case—we receive funding, right…

CHILD:
Right, yes, that's a better word…

THYGESEN:
So it might be better not to use the word revenue, to use the word funding because we get a certain amount of funding *(unidentified male agrees)* and we get a certain amount of students and then that's the situation.

CHILD:
Thank you, that's a better word. Yep.

THYGESEN:
If we were a private school, revenue would apply.

GHYSELS:
So the distribution of expenditures is even there. The bottom line on this one is that 89% of all of our expenditures are in people, salaries and benefits account for almost 90%. So the purpose of this is to really explain to you that any meaningful reductions likely to have a direct impact on the student experience is about related to the reduction of employees, and you can see there is a distribution of salaries. I'm not going to go through all of these, but very clearly 89% of expenditures is people.

Now, last time we talked about the framework of reductions and how we were going to address those, and I'll go into the process a little later. The priorities to align reductions to the guiding principles, the strategic directions, and these are what we're all about, looking at our core values, what our vision is, and also the areas of the directions that we developed last year based on that platform in teaching and

learning, talent, wellness, technology, the vertical K-12 experience, and also program priority that overrides start date. So, what that one particularly means is that anything that came later in terms of addition or most recently is not the first one that we considered to reduce, I think is a very important thing. So we looked at all the expenditures holistically. We also looked at the district standards in terms of preserving district academic programs in Special Education, Math, ELA Science, Social Science, and as we *(inaudible)* aside, PE, Visual Performing Arts and World Language. We also look at planning for reductions, which you'll see in a multi year effort to minimize the impact and adhere to your Board policy on reserves. And also that they should not be supplanted by PTO funds; so, in other words, if a cut is made, we don't expect the PTOs to backfill the funding for those reductions in replace of those reductions. Also…

THYGESEN:
Can we just be clear on why that's the case?

GHYSELS:
The case is that we have moved in this district where MPCSD is core and critical in funding the educational experience, and things like professional development , the substantive amount of technology, and capital investment and things like that, capital meaning building and facilities development, should be the responsibility and the onus of the district and the PTOs; likewise the PTOs are fundamentally a volunteer organization and they are involved with building relationships, and funding certain things like field trips and staff team building and things like that, but the preponderance of expenditures that are more directly with the education experience should be the responsibility of the district.

THYGESEN:
I would add to that, that our experience in the past has been that when there are cuts made that then there are sort of the PTO backfill, that it turns out to…it's the same people that are donators to PTO that are donating to the Foundation for the most part, and people tend to have a certain amount that they are going to donate, and to the extent that then they need to donate more to the PTO, it typically turns out to be less to the Foundation, which then means that it hasn't really been a cut, it's simply been something there was an allocation of funding to something that turns out, that means that we then have to cut something that was determined to be even more core and critical, usually meaning personnel. So if we, for example, in the past we had a situation where we cut the budget for classroom supplies, and then there was a rallying to say, 'Oh, please donate more for classroom supplies', but then what happens is if we end up falling short in our Foundation funding goals, which means that we then don't have enough money for things that were even more at the time determined to be more core and critical which usually meant teachers and classroom aides and things like that. And so by making cuts that then we allow to be backfilled by the PTO, we are actually not making cuts, we're simply cutting…we're not making real choices here, so that's why we have to be disciplined about this, because we can't assume that our parent population is just going to do more, more, more all the time. They do end up shifting between the two organizations as they see the need, so we have to be really careful to communicate really clearly to them about these types of things. So, anyway, I just want *(inaudible).*

CHILD:
The other thing I might add is, you know we're a district of core schools and want the schools to be equal *(inaudible)…* think to start cutting then you may have PTOs react differently and certain schools getting something and other schools not, and that is not…we don't think that's fair and certainly doesn't meet the goals that we've laid out *(inaudible)*.

HILTON:
And, just to underscore what Maurice said, which is this is Menlo Park City School District and it's a holistic look, and in doing such it is very important that if we are going to as a community make certain value statements as to things we are going to invest in, then we all as a community should continue to support those trade-offs. And by backfilling at individual sites in a less transparent way, it masks this struggle and the real trade-offs that a entire district goes through, and undermines our real opportunities to continue to make the investments in the areas that we collectively believe are important to the student experience. And I think your example is a good one. Yes, you have supplies, but the rest of the district is cutting down the number of music teachers, and I think the average parent doesn't understand that and it's been obfuscated through a PTO site driven activity.

GHYSELS:
Thank you. The next framework we…criteria of the framework that we talked about last time was the $900,000 of reduction included in this year's budget should be again be re-evaluated, and we did revisit it. And then staff added an additional one and that is reduce programs positions that may be restored expediently as funding improves. So in other words, sometimes when you cut a service or program, it's very difficult to bring back. People don't necessarily see the value against it, maybe against a particular strategic direction, and we wanted to be sensitive about reducing something or eliminating something that would be more difficult to bring back sooner if the money came back. So this was the framework last time. The direction was to go forward. I'm sensing that that last criterion was something that you would feel comfortable without.

So, reduction considerations and process. This is kind of a surreal experience going from such a wonderful thing as opening a school and doing it so well, and at the same time doing one of the toughest things that we've done in the district, and I wanted to talk about considerations. We value every program and particularly team members in MPCSD. This is heavy work that we're doing, and we don't take it lightly, and I'll talk about the process and how much we thought, and how much we talked, and how much we felt about particularly our people. There isn't a way, however, to get $5.3 million without eliminating some of the programs reducing what we value. And again, these programs and people matter not only to us, but most of all to our students, and there's no doubt that the preliminary recommendations that I will be discussing tonight are going to affect the student experience. So the process that we used was one that we talked about, and we started with the district Leadership Team, we met for an entire day. Ginny Maywald , the Director of Student Services did the facilitation. And we looked at the framework and we looked at all the expenditures, not one rock was left unturned as we looked at every program and all positions in the district. *(Jeff asked Maurice to clarify the Leadership Team).* The Leadership Team is all of the site and district administrators—so, the Principals, Assistant Principals, the Directors, Erik and I, there was about 19-20 on the Leadership Team; thank you, Jeff. And then Ahmad and Erik met with the Menlo Park Education Association and Ginny, and also the union with our classified CSEA, and our parent leaders, the District Council….

THYGESEN:
You know, I think when you say Menlo Park Education Association, people get it confused with the Menlo Park Atherton…yeah, right, so I think you need to be more clear.

GHYSELS:
That's the collective bargaining unit, the teachers union is MPEA, thank you, Terry. And the District Council, parent leaders, PTO presidents, Foundation leaders and the like. We listened, we learned a lot,

and then what my cabinet did, which is Erik, Ahmad, Ginny and I, we reviewed the input against the framework. And so tonight what I'm going to present is the preliminary recommendations for discussion, and as important, for you to hear public comment, and I thank everyone for coming tonight, thank you to the Communications Team for getting this out in multiple channels, and then also to hear direction from you and to discuss next steps.

So with that, when we look at potential reductions in the distribution, you can see here the distribution of the $5.76 million. We actually cut the piece of leather bigger than we need. That was to be conservative. And you can see the distribution there starting with staffing, class size, almost 30% and so on and so forth. Again, we did an exhaustive reduction assessment. We looked at everything. These are preliminary. I think it's important for everyone to know this is the first blush, no action will be taken tonight based on this again. The directions that you give me and staff, I will come back with the next iteration. We also again, we looked at..addressed more than identified, and we also came up with ultimately $4.5 million, which is required, because you'll see the way we serially placed the reductions over a three year period, which I will explain, just like when you give a pay raise and that expenditure compounds over time, in reverse a save does that also. So, because we did things the first year, the second year, the third year--particularly in the first year--we got the compounding effect of expenditures, so in the end we only had to address $4.5 million, not "only", but out of the $5.76. And what's really important too is that what I'm about to show you in the list of reductions need much more further evaluation. We wanted to get your feedback first, your direction, and then get into more of the details of what they are. We can conceptually explain a lot of these. Obviously they are doable, otherwise we would not list them, but at the same time we need to do more homework. So here it goes.

First of all, it's a three year phase-in and I'll talk about the amounts each year. We have not serially placed each preliminary recommendation in a particular year. We have not done that yet. We list them here all in toto by area and then you'll see how much each year later. So the first one is Staffing, first and foremost, looking at administration and district office.

- Educational Services recommendation of $230,00, and this is a reorganization of the Ed Services Department and curriculum, instruction, testing and assessment. Eliminate TOSA positions, which would eliminate the Math, Science and ELA Social Studies teacher and curriculum training and support services. And then to the Business Office, the reorganization of the Business Office resulting in $50,000. These suggestions are all related to FTE people.

- With Class Size…I'll go though the entire list and then we can entertain clarifying questions. In Staffing, Class Sizes, reduce the kindergarten through fifth grade average by two students up to 1-24, that would be over $1 million in savings. Increase 6-8 class size average at Hillview, that would be a savings of $650,000.

- The next page, Reduce Hillview Electives, which would be $1.7 full time equivalent, which would mean fewer electives at Hillview. Reduction of the fourth and fifth grade music time with instruction by 50% - $190,000. That would reduce our instruction from 90 minutes to 45 minutes per week for each fourth and fifth grade class.

- Modification of the Library Program - $250,000. The libraries would be staffed by aides with a certificated district librarian (1), the teacher will obviously need to be present at the library because of regulations related to certificated supervision. One librarian and the rest of

library staff with classified personnel. Modifications also to the…excuse me.

- Elimination of the district K-5 World Language program. Elementary World Language would be limited only to Spanish Immersion or after school programs, for a save of $210,000.

- Modification of Elementary Art Program - $206,000. Art program would be staffed by aides, and teachers will need to be present at art time with classified personnel, just like with the library situation.

- Elimination of Elementary Science Aides. They vary at different schools. That would need to maintain one aide to manage the Foss Kits, however, as the teachers would teach Sciences for $127,000 reduction.

- The Reduction of Instructional Aides except for kindergarten would result in a $360,000 save.

- Custodial Reduction, and this also is a TBD in terms of where that would come from, that would be $60,000 in saves.

And you can see the subtotals in each area, this area here with Staffing is $1.6 million. The one before that was in Staffing, $530,000, and Class Size is $1,690. And then the next set of reductions would be the Technology budget, and this would be significant curtailment:

- Elimination of the iPad program and other initiative, and this is addition to the $100,000 decrease implemented as a part of the $900,000 reduction for 16-17.

- Elimination of the middle school….

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:
Maurice….clarification on the iPad reduction, is that in the middle school, or is it elementary school, or have you not determined…

GHYSELS:
Not determined yet, not determined.

- Elimination of the Mini Courses. Now what we could see is the opportunity to save $80,000 if it was completely eliminated at Hillview. However there is options to maintain the mini course for possibly one--one grade level, which would be a reduction of $53,000.

- A Reduction in Site Budget. Approximately one-third of the Site Budgets for supplies, professional development, training, and this does not include grant funding which remains static and separate.

- Elimination of Summer School - $120,000. Elimination of just regular school classes, but students that need additional support, we have to maintain the mandatory and required extension school year, ESY, as required by individual IPs for students in both the elementary

and middle school, and the middle school math bridge.

- Reduction in Professional Development - $100,000. District Professional Development budget would be reduced by one-third.

- Reduction in the District Instructional Online Subscription. There is an array of them. Some examples include Ten Marks, Dream Box and various smaller other online support programs. Total in this area, non-staffing reductions - $700,000.

- And in Compensation, a reduction of teacher work year by three days. This would be a part of their three days of Professional Development, moving from 189 contractual year to 186. This must be negotiated.

- Reductions in Principal, Directors, and Assistant Principals contractual work year by five days. And this would be suspend five work days per site and district administration. In other words, they'd have a shorter year.

- And this last one is we do have assumptions in our budget looking to the future about increases in compensation. This one is slowing down those assumptions based on benchmarks like the Consumer Price Index, inflation, by .5%, which would result in a save of $800,000.

These need, again, to be prioritized. We also had a discussion about the word "suspend" versus "eliminate" versus "reduced", and any of these could be looked at as suspensions, meaning they could be brought back, and I think that's important in terms of understanding the nomenclature.

So, I want to now give a direct response to your directions of last time to talk about three particular areas that you asked us to delve into, and we actually have a lot more information that these bullets describe right here. The first one is about an early retirement incentive. And this would be to use one-time money expenditures to encourage the retirement of teachers who are placed on the higher salary schedule, and to do this we have to purchase through the STRS system two years of service credit, and that would come out of one-time money that the district expends. The potential savings would not come for at least two years.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:
Can you, just for the audience sake, define STRS, please?

GHYSELS:
Yes, the State Teacher Retirement System is something that the district and the employees contribute into. It's mandatory, it's required. It's not a local program. Every public school in the state is a part of STRS. And STRS has a growing requirement that we put in more of the percentage in our contribution and the employees are putting more in. We've talked about this a lot in the past, but I think it's important to reiterate that not only is it mandatory and required, but the total contribution of both the employee and the district will, in a couple of years, approach almost 30%, 29%. And so, right now, Ahmad, what is it this year for us to contribute? I think it's 11%, so those are the numbers that we have calculated and that is the amount that we have to contribute for two years of their gross salary to purchase service credit. In other words, two years of service that the teacher wouldn't serve, but for which we fund.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (CONTINUED):
So you're saying in order to implement this kind of opportunity, we would dedicate funds to the retirement pension such that you could then, in essence, help buy retirement earlier *(Ghysels: Yes)*, and it would be something eventually that you would tell us how many teachers and it would be a voluntary thing, and how many would be our target, and how many potentially opt in, and what that sliding scale would be, and how much it would cost us now versus savings in the long run…

GHYSELS:
And the savings in the long run, it is after two years because you have to pay the two years, the percentage of service credits up front, and it's not until the long run after two years and thereafter that the saving comes from--this is a must--hiring a teacher with experience and less units so the Step and Column on the salary schedule is less compensation. And the difference between the less expensive placement on the salary schedule and the retired teacher over time exceeds the cost of the two year service.

BURMEISTER:
The other stipulation, if I might, President Child, that I'd like to clarify for the Board is that is only an option for districts who are facing potential layoffs, so you can't just do this because you want to be creative one year, you have to actually be facing potential layoffs.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (CONTINUED):
And to underscore that point, which means that by potentially having in a district like ours that is growing in enrollment, and many of our costs are associated with teachers yet to be hired in order to address those incoming students, we would be able to mitigate cuts of teachers because we in essence could provide an opportunity for teachers to retire, and then we wouldn't actually refill those positions and potentially our class sizes might go up, but it's not as if we had a teacher in our system that we had to lay off.

BURMEISTER:
That's correct. And then the math would have to work out, but the idea would be in doing this, not only are you encouraging the opportunity to hire less expensive teachers, but you are also availing yourself of the opportunity not to lay off any or as many teachers as you might have to if you didn't offer this opportunity. I just would like to stipulate for the record, and I'm sure you all agree with this, that this is in no way a reflection of how we feel about our teachers who have a lot of experience in the classroom, and certainly the argument could be made that the teacher that has that level of experience is the best investment we can make. So you wouldn't go into this decision lightly.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (CONTINUED):
Right, well, in all it's been a voluntary one, so there may be teachers who, while they are perfectly wonderful in their contributions might personally want to leave two years earlier than potentially they would have otherwise.

BURMEISTER:
That's correct.

SHEIKHOLESLAMI:

Maurice, if I could add another word because one of the things, we would have to do further analysis if this is of particular interest because we've already planned for retirement and resignations in the model, and so what this would do, what should do, maybe more retirements earlier and then the models are actually capturing some of these retirements, and so we'd have to do a little bit of financial analysis and scenario looking before we could make a recommendation, that it would actually turn into a savings to the district.

GHYSELS:
So, recapping, there is a potential long term benefit with this. The risks are the costs. The implicit cost is that where you could lose talent, experienced teachers, and that affects the students' experience. The other risk is that people may take the early retirement and would have planned to retire anyway at that time. So it could be a faux incentive on our part.

THYGESEN:
You know, I think, I mean the problem with this is that if this is actually a good strategy for what it's…I mean, I heard what you said about no disrespect to our teachers who are at the high end of tenure and salary schedule, but if it's actually a good idea then what it's saying is that our salary schedule isn't correct and that there's too much differential between the high end and the low end because…I don't believe this to be true, I think the more experience our teachers have, the stronger they are, and so I think to lose some of our best, most experienced teachers who not only are benefitting the children in the classroom, but are benefitting their colleagues with all their experience and wisdom and so on, that it's, you know…if it's really a good decision for the district to say let's lose this person who is costing us $110,000 and replace them with two people who are costing $55,000, then what that…and we're better off from the value that we're delivering to students? I think that's then saying something's wrong with our salary schedule. And so, I just kind of feel philosophical problems with this approach.

BURMEISTER:
Thank you, Terry. I do want to add—this is an important point—in addition to being in charge of Ed Services and also in charge of Human Resources, this would need to be a decision were we to pursue early retirement that we would need to make very quickly because there's a 60-120 day window in which the folks can make this decision, and we would have to get all our ducks in line, and there's a lot of paperwork that would need to be submitted to the County and to the State to even be granted the opportunity to offer this. And so if the Board is interested in us pursuing this, we would need to have a pretty good indication by either this meeting, or certainly our meetings next week, so that we could prepare for you, get as close to a decision as possible by the November 9 meeting.

GHYSELS:

Thank you. And then just wrapping up here, I just want to just briefly say that we did analyze the half day kindergarten, or assessed it, I should say. The way, really the only way to look at saving money with half day kindergarten is if the teachers, the kindergarten teachers themselves, in their release time not working the full day, would take on intervention of students. And you see this in other school districts….

THYGESEN:
What about the scenario of early birds and late birds with the overlap…

BURMEISTER:

It's not possible to do and save staffing . *(Thygesen: How come?)* Because the way that you organize it still requires two FTEs. So you could do half day kindergarten, but it's not a savings in terms of staffing.

THYGESEN:
Well, I realize that it's something that would require renegotiation of that contract that with the 27 max that's currently in the contract, but if you had a situation where you have, you know, where you have a…well, I believe…I'm not advocating for it, but I don't believe that this is correct.

BURMEISTER:
Right, well, I talked to the County and I talked to State, and the information that they gave me was that you still have two FTE teachers teaching…you have one teacher teaching early bird and then helping with the late bird, and then the flip-flop happens with those two teachers. So you're not creating a savings, you're just providing a half day kindergarten.

THYGESEN:
But that's if you structure it that way. There's different way to structure it with a much larger class size…

BURMEISTER:
I don't know of any district that does it in the way that you're speaking and that allows for a savings of staffing.

THYGESEN:
Explain to me how Laurel for years and Oak Knoll had all-day kindergarten. So…how's that work there?

BURMEISTER:
I wasn't here., I don't know.

THYGESEN:
That was nice to be told about…*(inaudible)*

BURMEISTER:
No, I actually don't think that that is the case, but I think that it's a matter of the number of students that a teacher sees in a day that a teacher is responsible for in a day. I can call them again and ask them, but this was a …..

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (CONTINUED):
Let's imagine a scenario where you had a kindergarten class of 40 students *(Burmeister: Yes…*), OK, so you have a class size of 40, that's outside the contract right now, so understand that. But if you had a class size of 40, for example, and you ran that as early birds/late birds where you had 20 kids there for part of the time, 20 in the early side, 20 kids for the later side, there was some period of overlap where all 40 were there. Potentially a classroom aide was there to assist with that period where there was a large number of students. Then you would have a scenario where you have one teacher throughout the day so, it is actually….I'm not advocating for it, I like what we're doing now, but I think that this is an…I do think that…

BURMEISTER:
What I can tell you is, the County said there are no examples of that kind of program happening, and the indication that they gave me was that it's not, for whatever reason and I can find out what that reason

is, it wouldn't be possible. I asked them directly: How do you save money by having a half time program? And the answer that they gave me was you supplant services that other teachers are doing in the district with kindergarten teachers doing *(inaudible).* For example, a kindergarten teacher might teach a half day in the morning and then do…provide EL services in the afternoon.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (CONTINUED):
And that's the way we used to to it at Oak Hill many years ago. It was very difficult to manage the resources effectively and have it actually work out well. But I do think that there…I'm not advocating for it, I'm just saying that I do think there is another scenario, and so before we say that they're, you know, if we're looking at draconian cuts in other areas, I think we have to have one more go-around, and I'd be happy to assist looking into that if it's necessary.

GHYSELS:
Thank you. And then the last one we took a look at, outsourcing the transportation, I'm not going to read the bullets here, but basically what we've done by creating a robust neighborhood busing program we actually have increased the cost of busing our students in the Tinsley program. So if we eliminated our busing, our Tinsley program would go up in cost per student. And also, outsourcing is very expensive. We took a look at that and we could give you more information. I think the net here, with all of the discussion and particularly with the opening of the Upper Campus and seeing just a few cars drop off students, that the bus was full this afternoon, I think what I feel good about is that our transportation is safer. We have relationships with our bus drivers, and I think it's something that our community greatly values.

OK, so now we go on to the updated financial model for reductions, and this is where we're taking a look at , we are making reductions early again to feel the effects of the compound savings that provide a return *(inaudible)* to hire the…solve the $5.3 million deficit. So what we're looking here as a smooth budget reduction, again $4.5 million in the red for 17-18 and the two following years. So we take it $1.5 every year down for three years, a $4.5 total cut which would compound to $5.3 million. As a result of that we see our deficit which in parentheses, of course, is a negative value, start to correct itself in 19-20, and then other reserves from economic uncertainty, you see that amount there and I think the bottom line is the most important in terms of your reserve policy, and that is in 17-18 , 16%, 14%, 16%, so we're hovering right around that required 15% floor.

So, I think that you also need to know that in all of these preliminary recommendations, we also took a look at and revisited the $900,000 that we made last spring and those have all been taken into consideration, and the preliminary recommendation is that we hold on the cuts that we made for this year.

This is kind of the crescendo slide here in terms potential parcel tax scenarios. As you see here, with no parcel tax renewal, it would be the $4.5 million which would be compounded to the $5.3, so that would be the status quo, a lot of red, in that top blue bar. If we renewed the parcel tax at the current Measure C rate starting next year, we're funded again for this year, at $207 a parcel, we would have a shortage of $2,7 million and so on. If we increased a parcel tax to $300 per parcel, we would still face a shortage of $1.9 million—in other words, we'd have to do $1.9 million in reduction; and that if we went to $400, a $1 million; and that if we increased to $515 per parcel, we would have no reductions necessary at all.

So, the next steps, and I'm going to open it up for…turn it back to Jeff, get your directions, and obviously public comment tonight, and then I'll list the community input meetings later on.

CHILD:
My thought would be, if we go back to the various slides and see if people have questions or comments on, it's slides 1 & 4, I think it is which have the reductions, and if you have clarifying questions, if you want more information, and then if outside of that framework you have other ideas, like we had last time, we threw a few things out there, start with that. And then we have community input, and then we come back and see if based on that if there is more. Does that sound logical? Do we maybe want to handle it that way, does that make sense?

THYGESEN:
I think that sounds great. I do have a couple of questions and comments on some specific line items, but I have sort of a general comment…

CHILD:
Why don't you start with that then we'll go to specific line items.

THYGESEN:
You know, this is a horrible night. I'm sitting here reading all these potential cuts to get us where we need to be to be able to balance the budget without additional parcel tax revenue, or funding I should say. And what I look at is I'm looking at the dismantling of a really high quality education for children that this community has worked very hard to fill over the last 15+ years. And when my children started in this district, it was a…my children have not been in the district for many years, but it was a very different place that we see today. And the…what we built, starting…obviously, always people working and trying hard to to improve things, but the big improvement came in, starting in the year 2000 with the parcel tax that was in April of 2000 that year, and that parcel tax was about helping good schools get better. It was for our children, for our community, and what that parcel tax did was, it wasn't about savings things from being cut, it was about making improvements. It was about reducing class sizes, it was about having more professional development for our teachers, it was about increasing the breadth of our program and doing more and better in Music, Art, PE, providing more counseling services, and that was really the bulk of what it did. So community passed that over the next…you know it takes a couple of years to implement programs, but over the next couple of years programs were implemented. And in 2003 we had another parcel tax election to renew one that was expiring, and also add some to, this time to add back what was being cut by the State as a result of the budget crisis that was happening in 2003 and which we've never gotten the funding back from that, and so on. And if you look at the improvements that were made in that program, our programs went from looking very different than they look today, to having everything that we see. And, you know, so we had programs that were not comparable to the other communities that we all sort of feel that this community is comparable to—Las Lomitas, Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Woodside, Hillsboro, those have been the communities with school programs that we've looked to to say those are the programs that have the quality and the breadth that we wanted for our children here. We implemented those programs starting in the year 2000, we saved them from being cut because of State budget cuts in 03, and then we saved them from being cut again in 2010 as a result of continued lack of support from the State in addition to this point, enrollment growth, that was outstripping the funding *(inaudible).* And you know, this district has never been one that considers test scores to be the be-all/end-all of what's important, but it is the one objective comparable measure that we have, and if you look at what's happened with our test scores during that period of time, there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the Menlo Park schools compared to those other districts that I just mentioned in test scores, and when we implemented these programs, within a few years we saw that our test scores were increasing at triple

the rate that the other districts were, such that we ended up closing the gap an number of years ago and have been performing at comparable levels to them. And you k now, I lived in this community back before these programs were implemented, and I can tell you that the people who lived here back then were every bit as intelligent as the residents we have now, they were every bit as highly educated, and they were every bit as invested in their children, but what they didn't have is they didn't have programs that were supported at the level with Palo Alto and Las Lomitas and Portola Valley and Woodside and Hillsboro all had, and as a result our test scores were less. Now test scores are not the be-all/end-all of everything for sure, but they are an objective measure, and so we took action as a community to invest so that our schools could provide comparable programs. Once we did, our staff delivered on that, and our staff had delivered a high quality program such that we're now getting programs that are comparable. And oh, by the way, we're doing it still for less money per student. We've spent less money per student on a consistent basis than all those districts I just mentioned, all along. But, you know, it's more than money than we would have been spending had we not had these parcel taxes to rely on.

So, you know, I'm really disheartened to be sitting here tonight going through a list to dismantle everything that so many people in this community have worked for so long and so hard to build. And I look at t he extra criteria that you put in here, Maurice, about reduced programs that may be restored expediently as funding improves, and that's great but I can tell you that I've seen when things get cut before, and when things get cut, you don't just snap your fingers and have them added back. You know, there's a long lag time, and if we go out and we cut our music program, or we go out and we cut our counseling program, or we go out and we stop doing the kind of professional development that we've been doing, you don't just snap your fingers and add it back. It takes a number of years to get back to where we were, and so having to proceed with doing these cuts is going to do real damage to a high quality school district that is contributing a lot of value to the community. It's contributing a lot of value first and foremost to the students that it serves, but it's also contributing a lot of value to the residents such as myself who don't have children in the schools anymore, because I value a high quality education for all students in the community. I also value maintaining my property value and I can tell you, you talk to any realtor about what the value was of Menlo Park property back in the 90s and what it is today relative to these other communities, and we're in a different place. And so that's certainly not my first concern, but this is just crazy. This is absolutely crazy that we're sitting here. *(Applause from audience)*

The other thing I would say is that I feel terrible because I feel like, you know, gee I'm the one who's been sitting here the longest, I got first elected in 2000 and how in the heck am I sitting here…you know, I feel like I, you know, I obviously blame myself for having not done a good enough job with communicating what the situation was and so on. There's plenty of blame to go around and we can all do a lot of finger pointing, we can all be blaming, you know, who did this bad job of communication, who did that…this and that and the other thing, or we can just get together people and solve the problem. We can just get together and solve the problem. So can we please just get together and solve the problem? *(Applause from audience)I*

OK, so, enough of my whining…I can't talk much longer or I'm going to start crying, but I do have some specific comments on the specific cuts that are being listed here. I mean I don't like any of them, but I'll…Elimination of District's K-5 World Language Program: OK, doing that violates our guiding principles because first of all, where Language is one of our core district academic programs, and so to eliminate that program while maintaining an Immersion program is not providing something for all of our students, so I feel like that is a real problem because it violates our guiding principles. I think there…I could go through many of these other….

HILTON:
I'd just like to hear *(inaudible)* as a historian, that it's important that you say that, and that Jeff is here, because you are two out of the three of the majority that voted for the Immersion program with the stipulation that a World Language would be included? And that is one of the only major decisions I can think of, not to mention any decisions that we make in this district, and my tenure in the district, that has ever been a split vote. So while it seems easy to lop off, it's the second time we've lopped it off, and being a family that never received that, and joined the Board right after *(inaudible)* and then inherited the implementation of a program that wasn't fully supported by administration at the time but has flourished, I don't think that it is equitable for the community and those many people who were sort of sacrificed in the process to, while it seems simple, to just eliminate it. Anyway, there's a bunch of others on there either, but I'll save my further comments until later.

LAMBERT:
I guess I would agree with Terry, just on the *(Thygesen: This is crazy)*, yeah, this is crazy and I'm just so disheartened to see the size and the magnitude of all of these cuts. At the same time, I do think that we are going to probably have to do some combination of some cuts and some increased revenue, so I do think it's really important to at least start having a conversation about if we need to do some of these cuts, to start prioritizing them. And I guess for me, when I look at a really bigger amount on your chart, the one that leaps out at me, at least initially, is the Class Size. And I have a question about that actually. On your chart you have increase K-5 class size by two to 1:24? , that the current K-5 class size average is 1:22, so you don't make a distinction between K-3 and 4 and 5, and I had thought that we had that distinction, or at least in the past we have, where we had smaller K-3 class sizes and somewhat larger class sizes in grades 4 and 5. Are you proposing to eliminate that and just have an overall average of 1:24 all the way through K-5, or would you still have smaller class sizes in the early grades?

GHYSELS:
We would have 1:24 K-5 and that's for a couple of reasons. One, is the shimmy between K-3 and 4-5 going from lower class sizes to larger class sizes in 4-5 presents optimal problems, optimization challenges. It's easier to matriculate the students from 3-4 when they're equal. The other thing is, and I think it important…

LAMBERT:
Thank you, because I didn't understand that before. That does, that makes a lot of sense.

GHYSELS:
I think an additional that you did not ask, but we have thought about and something that I would expedite, and that is more classes that would be multi age, for example. It would be very difficult to allocate class sizes. This is a gross average of K-5 per school, it's not every single class will be close to that average, and with that restraint, it would cause a greater need for fluidity with things like multi age so that we would not have a very small class as an addition. So in other words, we'd have to tighten up staffing and not just add another class.

LAMBERT:
OK, so I guess my initial thought is, you know, to get to the numbers you are talking about, even with a renewal of the parcel tax-- I just want to make sure I'm reading this right…even with a renewal we would still need to make it looks like, $2.7 million of cuts? And so it seems to me that there would have to be some combination, even assuming there was a renewal, of some increase in class sizes, or at least that would preference, as opposed to gutting all of these other programs on your next page. And I guess I'd

like to hear from teachers and from principals, you know, people in the audience who have more expertise than I do about this, because I guess to me as a parent I would rather have another couple of kids in my child's class than to get rid of a lot of these other things that you're proposing including, you know, Elementary Art, Music, World Language, Mini Courses, Hillview electives. To me, I just I can't even imagine doing a lot of those things. And so I guess I'd want to hear kind of what the trade-offs are, and what do the educators think about that versus class size versus maybe, I guess one of your other options was reduction of teacher work year by three days; like, how do they look at that trade-off there? And also I guess your item about the reduction of .5% in compensation--I guess I'd want you to explain that a little bit more, I didn't totally…I guess that would be over some period of years in the proposed budget--is that right?

SHEIKHOLESLAMI:
Just to clarify, that is not a reduction in current salary level, it's a reduction in future…

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE #1:
It's a reduction in a projected future increase.

GHYSELS:
Correct.

THYGESEN:
It's basically assuming that you're not going to keep up with inflation with your salary.

LAMBERT:
Over some period of years….

THYGESEN:
Because the budget has been keeping up with inflation at this point.

LAMBERT:
I guess again I'd want to hear what the people thought about that versus, for example, the increase in class size or the cutting of those other programs. I mean none of them sound good to me, I think they all sound pretty draconian. But my initial reaction is I would probably increase and probably look at the class size one.

HILTON:
So, I just have a following question to that, and in looking at this 169, is this through just not hiring? Is it not hiring and attrition and potentially retirements, and/or including…like, how do you get to that?

BURMEISTER:
I think it depends on all of those things that you said. I think that because this is a three year phasing, we have the ability to sort of spread it out over time, and because we have that ability for a district our size with the levels of retirement and resignation that we've had in the past, it is possible that we could do this through attrition; however, the longer the span of making those cuts, the less compounding you have and so the sooner you make the cuts, the more savings you get over time. And that really just has to be…you know, we have look at the numbers and sort of do a bunch of "if/then" statements. I will tell you that if the increase in class size comes with an additional reduction in program, for example library specialists, art teachers, and so forth, those teachers would very likely bump younger teachers who are

teaching in the regular classroom, which could increase the number of teachers that we would have to lay off as a result of having to find places for those more senior teachers to be teaching.

HILTON:
That was going to be my next point, which is when we went through this exercise prior to the 2010 parcel tax, we learned that exact lesson, which is that those things that Joan is interested in trying to preserve actually helps us to also, if we can get there in this area through attrition and retirement, we won't be looking to--fingers crossed--have to look to lay off people. So there are some things where given, where the right to work lies, we need to be able to do that, and that we may very well end up doing that in a creative way where maybe somebody was going to retire and so then we're looking at ways we could do this for a year, buy ourselves some time, that way we're…my biggest interest is not putting valued professionals at risk, and if there's a way for us in this jigsaw puzzle to look at trading off some of those things…when I look at this one, I assume that we can get the good bit of *(inaudible)* there given that we're going so fast through attrition and retirement, so it becomes attractive to me as a mitigating step.

LAMBERT:
I agree completely agree with that. I guess I was operating under the assumption that we would do much if not all of this through attrition and retirement.

SHEIKHOLESLAMI:
Just another clarifying question. A portion of that is also growth related *(inaudible)* that we were basing on a current model, and so now with that model 24:1 and 27:1, we recalibrated the model.

CHILD:
Can I ask you, do you want to….you know, that's not one of our current criteria, but do we want to add that and as the staff does more work, include that in the analysis, which would be: how does this affect our current staff as they are today in terms of layoff? I'd be in favor of adding that, I just want to make sure I'm hearing you on this issue.

LAMBERT:
Oh, I would absolutely be in favor of that.

CHILD:
OK, because that's not a current criteria, at least as I read the criteria, maybe I missed it. Did I miss one or is there….but I think what the Board is saying is we'd like to certainly…whether that's a criteria or an analytical tool or an analysis we'd like to see. I think that's what you're hearing. We'd like to see how these impact our current staff. Not tonight…

BURMEISTER:
Absolutely, we can certainly include that into consideration. I do want to let you know that you're a little bit against the clock of the school Ed Code, calendar year, HR year, and I know that a lot of the average doesn't understand how schools work and how the ed code regulates a lot of this process. But we have to notice all teachers that we would be laying off by March 15 of 2017. That does not give us a lot of time.

THYGESEN:
And really notice anybody that there's any potential of layoff…

BURMEISTER:
Right. And so what I was going to say to you is that the best laid plans are probably…unless…basically the best laid plans are going to involve teachers and staff receiving pink slips, which is the sort of crass term of saying layoff notice, because nothing that we can do to address these short of doing those cuts and having to lay off those people, is going to make it in time for that March 15 with the exception of a March parcel tax election, where we would still have to alert people to the possibility of layoff, but would not actually have to give it to them should some kind of parcel tax pass that would change our math in any significant way. So very likely we would have to give pink slips no matter what. The question is, to what degree and in what areas would be given those pick slips. And this, you know, there would be a lot of domino effects depending on the decisions that we would have to make.

HILTON:
And we went through that exercise before, so at least some of us are familiar with that, and I think the most important aspect of that is that it's bureaucratic that you have to do those things, but if we're very clear and intentional as to what we would like to do and where we plan to preserve, then hopefully those will just be just a matter of paperwork.

THYGESEN:
That being said, that may have been the case in 2010 when, you know, but if I'm a teacher today and I'm in a situation where everybody else is hiring—hiring, hiring, hiring…

BURMEISTER:
And offering signing bonuses because there's a teacher shortage.

THYGESEN:
Right. And that wasn't the case in 2010, and I'm also looking at: 'Gee, my district just lost the last parcel tax election. Yeah, they're out for one but if they don't get it, I've got this pink slip and I believe that I have enough of a chance of being laid off, but I can't just sit back and not go out and interview, and so I think that we're….'

HILTON:
I totally get that and I understand it completely. At the same time, back to your earlier comment, it's a crappy situation for us to even have to be in, so I think you…if a teacher is in that position, we do whatever we can to support them. And in being supportive of them getting a job where they feel security somewhere else, we have to do what's best for them in the long run as well. And it would be a terrible loss, but unless this community….

THYGESEN:
I just don't want people in the community to have the impression that we can provide sufficient unofficial assurances to our staff that people who get pink slips aren't going to be out looking and needing to take other jobs, and not be waiting around, you know, to see whether things pan out because we got enough retirements or something like that. Because first of all, there are enough, there are many more good jobs for them to be taking now than there was back in 2010 first of all. And second of all they're going to have less confidence in us as a district because we just lost the last parcel tax election. So I think that to the extent that we do end up noticing people, even if we think that maybe a certain percentage of the ones we notice actually won't have to be laid off when push comes to shove. I

think we'll end up losing some of our best new teachers which are the future of our district, and it will be a very bad thing for the quality of education.

HILTON:
And it's not the first time we've had that conversation.

LAMBERT:
At some point, it doesn't have to be going through all of these right now, but can you help us understand which of these things would actually result in someone potentially losing a job, and which would not. Like for example, I'm looking at your first page under Eliminate TOSA Positions. So, I guess I'm clarifying that I believe that both of those TOSAs are certificated teachers, so even if we eliminated that position, they would still have a job. So can you go through and kind of…I guess I would want to…

HILTON:
But just say…no, it's a little bit more complicated, so yes they have the right to go back to the classroom, but then let's say you look at the whole list and tenure, and so what if their tenure is…you know, if they're a new teacher doing that, then they're potentially…I wouldn't expect them to go through…

BURMEISTER:
It would be impossible for us to tell you right now whether…

LAMBERT:
You don't need to tell me now, but I just want to make sure that we at some point we can understand that, and then also I'm wondering if any of these are actually reductions in future personnel, like that aren't actual real people. For example—I'll just pick one randomly, but a custodial reduction—is that someone who's actually working, or are any of these reductions in people that had planned to hire?

SHEIKHOLESLAMI:
The only one that is planned to hire reduction is the numbers you see under Class Size.

JONES:
I concur with my colleagues that this is not fun, and crazy, and I, like Joan, am curious to hear the public comments and see what folks have to say.

CHILD:
So, I'll echo Terry what you said, I spoke with somebody who voted no on the parcel tax and their reason was: 'We don't really need gold plated schools around here, and why do we have our kids go it Ivy League schools, why is that so important'. And I kind of went home and I was sick. So I was shocked that people are out there saying that. I'm with you. I think, Erik, we should get the data and show it to the public that…you know, and I'm with you, test scores aren't everything but at least they're objective and I think we could show people what this district has accomplished in the last…call it 15 years, and whether it's test scores, whether is breadth of program, I think there's a couple of other things. And I think to educate people, really that this investment has been the best investment you can make as a taxpayer. And I don't really…so, I think we should make sure we do that for the next one. And I think that's sort of what you were hinting at, Terry, is to show people, you know….

THYGESEN:

When our programs were not comparable to Palo Alto and Las Lomitas, and Portola Valley and Woodside and Hillsborough, our results weren't comparable either, even though we had comparable input in terms of, you know, the parental support and all that, we weren't able to provide the similar output. And so if we want to return to that, I cannot believe that that's what people want to return to, but let me add just one more thing and then we'll get…because I want to hear peoples' comments too. And that is that I've heard, you know, some critics saying this thing that says: 'You know, the school district needs to be like, you know, other agencies and just learn to live within their means. You need to learn to live within your means, Menlo Park City School District.' And you know , what are our means? Our means are whatever this community decides our means are. We don't have to sit back and be victims of Prop 13 and you know, the current allocation of our tax revenues in the County. We have an issue where because of Prop 13 there is a very rigid structure to how the tax revenues are distributed amongst the various different agencies. And because of that, it's just, you know, through whatever set of circumstances, the Menlo Park City School District, if you look at the number of students we have to educate and the amount of funding that we have from our property taxes and other local sources prior to parcel tax, which is adding additional resources, it's less. We get less funding per student than they get in Palo Alto and Portola Valley and Las Lomitas and so on and so forth. And so if we want to offer comparable programs, the only way we have to do it is to decide as a community that this is important to us, and this is an investment we want to make in the community. And so for us to say that we have to live within our means is a completely false argument because our means are whatever the people in this community decide our mean are. And so that's what this is about right now, is for the community to tell us: 'Schools, this is what we have decided your means are'. And whatever the means our, obviously our staff are going to do the best job they can to deliver the best quality programs that they can possibly deliver—just like they did back in 1996 or something, when my oldest first came to kindergarten. And they'll do the best job that they can, but you know what people? You don't get something for nothing. There's no free lunch out there and we don't have a bunch of magic tricks where we're going to be able to deliver the quality of programs that you're getting today for a lot less funding per student than we've been putting into it heretofore. So people are just going to have to decide: what kind of schools do they want?

CHILD:
The one…Terry, you kind of mentioned *(inaudible)* program, World Language. The one that would be hard for me to stomach is the elimination of summer school. When I started on the Board, one of the first question I asked is why do we have certain kids achieving at this level, and another set of kids achieving at this level. I think we've made progress. I think taking out summer school, which really focuses on these kids would be a huge mistake, basically saying we're OK with achievement gap and we're not going to go the extra mile to close it. So that would be one that's tough for me. I mean I'm not trying to line in the sand, I don't think that's the way we can go at that, but if you want to hear the one from me that's pretty difficult, it would be that program. I think it's helped us make a lot of strides and I would be interested in again when people are public commenting on, if I'm wrong in that assumption, please tell me, but that's one that I feel very strongly about .

LAMBERT:
I just want to say that I completely agree with Jeff on that, and I think…I would put the elimination of summer school way at the bottom of any potential cut.

CHILD:
Ok, so now what I'm going to try and do…I've got a lot of people who checked 5B, 7B. I tried to put those all in 5. So let me read the names that I have that have given us cards under 5, and if I missed you, just

let me know because I must have thrown you in the other category. And this is the order of speakers. So, Amy Kingsley, Tracie Piombo, Nicole Scott, Trish Stella, Stephanie Noon, Tom Lyons, Jerrod Coombes, Vincent Lopez, Janet Hampton, Sidney Merck, Iameo Prondey, Karen Thiering, and then I've got a couple more, Jacqui Cebrian and Scott Saywell. So if I missed you…why don't we get through these set of comments and you can then raise your hand and I'll get you to talk, if that's OK. Again, I'm trying to do these based on the cards.

BURMEISTER:
President Child, can I just make a note to the audience. We are videotaping this meeting, particularly this session, so when you speak into the mic, speak directly into the mic as I am doing right now. And please also make sure to state your first and last name as we would like to give credit to where the credit is due for your wise words. Thank you.

CHILD:
OK, so Amy Kingsley. And we have a lot of comments, which is great. We are going to try and hold…we are going to hold to three minutes, so I would appreciate…and if somebody has said what you want to emphasize, feel free to let us know that, but be respectful. We'd like to get as many comments as we can here tonight. Thank you.

AMY KINGSLEY:
Hi, Amy Kingsley, French teacher at Hillview Middle School. As a World Language teacher, I wanted to address the budget cuts seemingly to the Spanish programs at the elementary and potentially middle school level, and in terms of the elective cuts at Hillview—I'm not sure if that addresses French and Spanish, but I wanted to talk to the importance of those programs. I feel that it would be unfortunate if Menlo Park students could no longer could choose to study both French and Spanish. World Language students learn to be global citizens. Through cultural studies, they learn that Menlo Park is not the center of our universe. Through grammar studies, they gain a deeper and genuine empathy for people learning English. Additionally, since French provides the base for more than 30% of modern English vocabulary, students who have studied French earn the highest scores on standardized tests like the SAT and ACT, which provide a clear advantage for college admission. This advantage should not be denied to Menlo Park students. Most of my staffs are French specific but I do want everybody to know how great our program at Hillview is. We have gained national recognition for the Hillview French program, for our students medal winning scores on Le Grand Concours which is an annual French competition. Last year 22 of our students ranked between 3rd and 16th in the nation. For the French 2 exam, Hillview Middle School was the only school in Northern California who had middle school students earn medals. All other competitors were high school students. Last year Hillview Middle School was awarded full privileges as an academic chapter of Young Friends of French National Honor Society by the American Association of the Teachers of French. Our unique status as a middle school having an academic chapter instead of a cultural chapter is based on our strong academic focus where we offer high school level French in middle school. It takes time to build a French program, and I'm only part-time. Over the last four years the French enrollment has increased in Level 2 from four students to 23 students. These students are choosing French over other elective offerings that we have. The students who complete French 2 at Hillview place into French 3 as freshmen at M-A. They're among the top of their class, they set themselves apart and reach advanced placement level in their junior year. The M-A French teachers continuously praise the fluency and pronunciation of our Hillview students. On behalf of all students who study French and Spanish and their parents who support them, I ask that you continue your financial support of World Language programs that give Menlo Park students a clear lead in high school and beyond.

VINCE LOPEZ:
Hi, my name is Vince Lopez, I teach third grade at Oak Knoll. Nine years in the district and I'm also the President of the Menlo Park Education Association. At last count there are 47 teachers as well as classified staff here at this board meeting tonight. I'd like them all to stand up right now, please. Stand up, please. They are wearing black because as the classroom teachers in front of children every day, we are largely being asked to bear and to pass along to our students the cuts and reductions that are being discussed here tonight. Whether it is the teacher who will be handed a piece of paper that says she no longer has a job next year, or the teacher who has to figure out how to fit six more desks in her classroom next year, these reductions that have been presented to the Board are going to impact and affect every teacher that is now standing behind me, and possibly even eliminate some of them from Menlo Park. As you the Board continues in this process of gathering information and closing this projected $5 million budget shortfall, I want to reiterate and remind you that at the most fundamental level, this shortfall that you have projected for yourself will never be solved by expenditure cuts alone. Any viable long term solution must come from increased revenue sources. I also want to urge caution when you the Board considers larger class sizes and teachers layoffs as a level to save money. The minute you hand out and follow through with layoffs you begin to irreparably damage the reputation of MPCSD, and MPCSD will begin to travel down the road in mediocrity like so many other underfunded California school districts. We have an agenda item coming up in the next few minutes about Recruitment and Retention Task Force. Think about how you will impact future recruitment and event current teacher retention when MPCSD becomes known as just another school district that lays off its teachers when it needs to save money. Thank you for my comments. *(Applause from audience)*

TRACY PIOMBO:
Hi, my name is Tracy Piombo and I've been one of the teacher librarians at Hillview for 12 years, this is my 12th year and hopefully not my final year. I have kind of a unique perspective here because I made a decision a bunch of years not to bring my kids here for various reasons, and I bring them instead…send them to the local school district, the Mountain View School District, and I think it was Erik who first mentioned teacher shortage, and I feel kind of like the ghost of your teacher shortage future because I'm really seeing the effects of that in my daughter's school. My daughter Julianna's in fourth grade and she's had five teachers in the previous four years--that should tell you something right there. Of that, none of them had been in the district for longer than three years, and three of them are now gone. And the impact on Julianna is very stark. She talks about missing her teachers. She feels, I think, a little less connected to the school. It's a great school and she's got great teachers, but they're new. And I think that it was Terry who was talking about the strain when you bring in so many new teachers on the veteran teachers. I see that my other daughter tends to have those veteran teachers, because she's a little bit trickier, and her teachers are always trying to bring up the new teachers in the curriculum and the culture, just basics of teaching and management, and it's a real strain on them, and I don't want to see this happen to Menlo Park. I know it hasn't come up yet, but one of the budget items is considering limiting who can bring their kids to our school, and I will say I'm glad that I send my kids to the local district. There's a lot of great things here, but there's great things there too. But it is tough, and it is a strain, and our schedules don't always mix and I'm very often struggling to find coverage, and I don't know if I was in the classroom…I do work hard as a librarian, but if I was doing all the curriculum planning and the collaboration and answering 20 emails at night at minimum from parents, if I could do this, if I could travel like this. It's so hard to come back for evening events after I've had to go home and get my kids. And I just hope that you guys will consider that because we will be seeing a lot of new young teachers and they will have to commute farther and farther away to send their kids to good schools if they're unable to bring their kids to this amazing school district. We went through teacher

negotiations in Mountain View a couple years ago, and one of the things that came up was that they were considering themselves sort of a starter district where teachers, you know, started off, got some experience, and then went to districts like ours; in fact, my teaching partner did start off in Mountain View, and I don't want to see us lose that destination district reputation that have--I really feel that we are that. And I'm gratified to hear that so many of you Board members feel exactly the same way about that and want to retain that, and I just hope that we can work together to do something to make us stay that destination district and a great place for our kids and for our teachers. Thank you.

NICOLE SCOTT:
Hi, my name's Nicole Scott and I'm the counselor at Oak Knoll School and I just wanted to speak to the reductions you were talking about for Library, Art and Music. In my work with students I'm often working with students that aren't finding success in the traditional classroom, either because of academic challenges or social and emotional challenges that prevent them from excelling in academics. And the students that come to my space, that come into my room whether in a group or individuals and I ask them about their day, their highlights of their day often are Library, PE, those kind of…and Music…where they can excel in an outside academic area. Our amazing resource teachers…they see every single child every week, and they know their names, they know their back-stories. It's amazing the lives that these individuals change just by their presence, in offering them an opportunity or place to succeed that's outside that academic space. The other part is the World Language at Oak Knoll. We have Spanish as our World Language and it's been amazing to watch our kids that are often not the highest academic learners. Those kids that come in speaking a second language, most of our kids that speak a second language are Spanish speakers and it's been amazing and so pleasant to watch them be the leaders in an academic space because they are the experts in the Spanish language. Just this last week, having a kid who is a native Spanish speaker come on and do a lesson on our TV station KNOL in Spanish, was just a connector for the kids to see that student as a student leader. So, I hope those programs get to stay with our students. Thank you.

TRISH STELLA:
Hi, Trish Stella, kindergarten teacher. Happy, proud kindergarten teacher at Oak Knoll. You certainly covered it all when you went through this reduction thing, that was for sure. I don't want to be one of those early ones that you're looking to get out for retirement. Anyway, I know I'm primarily speaking for myself , but I know that most teachers share my feelings as well, and in the hopes that our exemplary schools can remain this way, which is truly what we are here in Menlo Park--is exemplary. And we want to continue, teachers want to continue doing what we do best which is to educate the full child to their fullest potential, and we do this through our various programs. And we know that we can only do this when the current state of programs and the quality of education that our community has become so accustomed to is unchanged. And we teachers want to make sure that this is a reality, so we're certain…I'm certain that this is depressing is right, but I want it flip switched, and I'm certain that a clear and concise and well constructed parcel tax presented to the community in a transparent way will pass. And I know that I'm committed, and I'm sure that the majority of other educators would be fully involved and supportive of this direction instead of reducing programs and teachers, which is only detrimental, of course, to our greatest investment which is our students. Thank you.

STEPHANIE NOON:
Good evening members of the Board, I'm Stephanie Noone. I teach kindergarten through fifth grade Art here in Menlo Park, and before I tell you a little bit about my program, although Nicole Scott said a lot--thank you, Nicole--I agree with with everything she said. I just want to let you know my skills and services extend outside the Art room. Currently I'm doing yoga every week with kids on Thursday

morning. I think we can all use a chance to breathe, so take a big breath in. And the kids are really benefitting through it as well. I've also implemented Imagination Playground on our playground through a Jeannie Richey grant, and helped make our kindergarten playground a more creative space with Ahmad and some of the other kindergarten teachers. As far as my program goes, I see the children once a week and we cover all types of mediums and artists, from painting and print making, to clay and weaving. Currently we're doing clay right now in the art room and I think it's the kids favorite project all year, and what's always interesting is I notice the kids who I know are more under-performing in other subject matters, they are thriving when it comes to clay and they have their hands in there and they're building and they're solving problems. A separate group of students…I just saw my students with severe learning disabilities today, and of course they have those aides, and I know aides were on the cutting block as well. Let's hope it doesn't come to that, but those kids as well are expressing themselves in ways that were amazing. And it wasn't just *(inaudible)*, I mean they were working, they were getting into the clay and rolling it, and they were just really expressing themselves. So I thank you for helping all children have access to the arts with resources in small group studies. It's really difficult to teach art with classes of 30 or more. Some of our most under-performing students are the students who need art education the most. The arts help students solve problems creatively, build confidence, keep kids engaged in school, and build community. And thank you for your service to the children of Menlo Park.

TOM LYONS:
Hi, I'm Tom Lyons. This is my 24th year of teaching science here at Hillview and I want to share some of my concerns. When I think of Menlo Park, we've always been able to lure the top talent from other places, experienced teachers, and the way things are looking we're not going be able to do that in the future. So that's a big concern. When I think about our various programs, and we stated tonight that we're really efficient. We deliver what a lot of the *(inaudible)* districts deliver with less money per student. A lot of that though is…the delivery is through teachers and their hard work. And the office staff at sites help with that, and aides, so we need to keep that in mind. So as we face cuts, I'm worried about the class size. So, what's crucial is this relationship between teachers and students. And as we increase the numbers of students, it gets more difficult to maintain those relationships, and I'm not sure where I'm going to put three extra students in our science classrooms now. We're already stumbling on each other during lab time anyway, so three more students is a little scary. So, I have a couple suggestions. Number one, I'd like us to take a serious look in reductions in the office. We've had a lot of positions in the office and I think we need to take a look at those first. We need to maintain and keep the numbers for the front line educators, those are the teachers and the aides that are working with students on a regular basis. When you look at Mini Courses and some of the other new programs, although Mini Courses and 1-to-1 iPads are certainly valuable programs, there is an expense, and I'm not sure that when we're talking about cutting teaching positions that we should be doing that until we've gotten rid of some of these other bonus programs. Again, they are essential programs in some ways, we've certainly come to appreciate them, but I think we can get rid of some of these things like the Mini Courses and the 1-to1 iPads. Thank you.

JARROD COOMBES
Hi, Jarrod Coombes, the CCSA president. I've been with district and I've watched it grow, but prior to that I did a lot of work with the technology aspect of the district since 2005, and I've watched the district grow as well, I watched them *(inaudible)* some of those problems too. And prior to that, I spent the better part of a decade in and out of schools in California and everywhere, and I can tell you, when you start pink slipping teachers the culture changes dramatically. And as much as the teachers are great at keeping that away from the children, they pick up on it. I've seen that, I've been in classrooms all the way from kindergarten upwards. So, the focus, I think, should be on going for that parcel tax in trying to

up that as much as possible, and being as transparent with the community as possible. And for the people who don't have kids in the school district that go on about 'why do we need gold plated schools?', as you said, it should be pretty clear to them that if the quality of this district falls, the value of their house would fall as well. It may be a delayed reaction, but it will happen. And I think that is all I have for now. Thank you.

JANEL HAMPTON
Good evening Board and administrators, certificated and classified staff, and especially community members. It's really good to see you all here. My name is Janel Hampton and I am the CSEA Labor Relations Representative, so I'm the Labor Rep for the classified folks. And I have to tell you, I've learned a lot at this Board meeting. I've been to a ton of Board meetings and this one has been interesting and intriguing, and you guys are asking great questions and making observations. I've been working for this district for a year now so I know some of you up here, it's good to see you all here now too. One thing that I can make…one observation I can make very clear is that I have not run into one person in one position who does not see this district as a family, who does not see their true purpose and meaning in serving our students the way they do. So already everybody in this room has a lot in common and I want to give that to you, because I come from…myself, I come from Oakland public schools and I was public education kid my whole life, and late coming into Labor, but I love it, so that's good. I've also observed great things about the programs that you offer as well. I've heard a lot about them and I think that's, you know, wonderful and very different from a lot of the other districts that I work with even now. I agree with you guys when you say "this is crazy". Coming from a non Menlo Park/Palo Alto district, I can see…it's sort of questionable to me, how did we get here. There's a ton of money in this district and you are using it in ways that really benefit the students. And at least previous to some of the things that are coming in this moment in time, this is truly a place where teachers want to teach. You know, administrators, assistants want to assist, custodians want to sweep, bus drivers want to drive—this is the place to be. And I think that it's really important that we do everything we can to keep it this way. So to that point, I would like to say, prioritize cuts away from personnel, period. It is not iPads that make a gold plated school. And it is not test scores that make a gold plated school. It is you, the elected leadership in this community. It is you, the outstanding administrative efforts that are poured into this district on a daily and nightly basis. I am sure of it, I'm sure you stay here late. And it is all of you and us, the employees, the certificated employees and the classified staff. We are what make a gold plated district. And the children and students you serve deserve no less. So I see that all the recommended cuts can be moved forward year to year. I recommend reorganizing the cuts and at least consider putting off personnel cuts and pink slips and all that for a year, because the model you're working with was made by someone. The framework you present was made by someone. It was made with insight from everyone, that's possibly true. I've only been here a year so I'm sure, but I do know that you're still here, you're still fighting, you're still hearing and listening to the people who work here, and so you can still change the model, change the framework. A custodian's working environment is every student's learning environment. We don't ask them to take out trash—or do we? A parent educator's job security is a student's learning security. An administrative staff personnel's working environment is a student's learning environment and an educator's working environment. And a teacher's working environment is a student's learning environment. These are things we must hold sacred and honor. *(Child: It's three minutes…)* Oh, that's so hard…sorry *(Inaudible)*, just kidding. I don't really have more else to say than this. I look forward to working with you guys to gathering in the future the parcel tax, because you guys can't do that alone, Board. And administrators, you can't do it alone either. And neither can the classified on their own. And neither can the teachers. But we are all trusted adults in these students' lives and their parents and their families care about that. And the community here cares about that too. If we work on the upcoming parcel tax together and work as a team, it will pass. If it can pass in

Ravenswood, it can pass here. I'm sure of it. So I'll look forward to going on that journey with you guys together. Thank you.

SIDNEY MERCK
Good evening, hello everybody. I'm Sidney Merck and I have been a teacher in Menlo Park for the last 19 years. I live here…I'm lucky enough to live here in Menlo Park and my son also attends Hillview, so I'm a triple threat. As a taxpayer, parent and teacher in the community, I'm here to urge the Board to go forward for plans to put forth another parcel tax to the voters. We must not lose our great school system. We must not allow cuts that will increase class sizes. I'm repeating what a lot of people said and I won't do that, but I do want to give a just a very kind of clear example of how much class size really matters. You know, the way we remember schools maybe is not how it runs anymore. Our district has invested heavily over the last six years at least in the Teachers College Reading/Writing project for elementary level. That is a workshop based curriculum that is really powerful, but it's also an incredibly individualized curriculum, and I really don't see that that can work very well with many more students in the class--even a couple. You conference with kids 1-on-1, you conference in small groups, you need to be able to have a small enough class so the other kids can continue working as you're going around basically with roller skates on meeting with all these children. If there's even a couple more kids it makes it that much harder and that much less attention those children will be getting. So I just want to put that out there that our way of teaching has drastically changed and we depend on the support that we have with smaller class sizes and all the wonderful things that we have in this district, so I just want to urge you…and I agree, you know, with all of us working together we can do this, we're not going to go back. *(*

AMY OPRANDEY:
Thank you for the opportunity to make my comment. This evening I'm going to be speaking on the interdistrict student attendance. My name is Amy Oprandey and I just want to urge you….

CHILD:
Do you want to….I'm sorry…

AMY OPRANDEY:
Do you want me to hold my comment until 7B?

CHILD:
If you wouldn't mind until we're on that subject. I'm sorry, it said 5, I realize which part of 5, so if you don't mind? Thank you.

KAREN DEARING:
I'm Karen Dearing . I know a lot of faces in the room. I've got two kids at Oak Knoll. I've also served on the MPAEF board, and worked with the Oak Knoll PTO. I sit on the Oak Knoll Site Council, and professionally I work tangentially in education so I think I've come at this from a number of different perspectives. My comments tonight sort of came up as I was listening to the conversation, I'm not a regular attendee at Board meetings. But it occurred to me that the conversation that is happening tonight around the level…the detailed level of cuts that need to happen because A and C failed is precisely the conversation that should have been part of the campaign for A and C. And I'm shaky in my voice partly because I don't like public speaking, but partly because sitting here actually made me kind of angry and frustrated with our district leadership that the campaign for A and C wasn't more clear and obvious. This was the level of detail that the campaign should have been. What we were going to lose is level of detail that the campaign should have been. And not only was it not that, and there was a pretty

strong opposition, and there was never a real retort to the opposition. But the message I've heard from other district families and perceived is that because this level of conversation wasn't part of the campaign, it came off that the district leadership is somehow sort of casual in its consideration of how either it spends its money, or how it assumes that district residents will fund the district and continue to support these parcel taxes, it felt casual, and there's nothing casual about this conversation. I mean the anger that Terry, and the frustration and sadness that Terry and Joan and Stacie all expressed, everyone in this room feels it, that's why we're all up here speaking. That was the conversation that needed to happen. There's no doubt in my mind that this district is going to put forth another parcel tax. I hear people say "if", I just assume "when". That's the level of detail that needs to be part of that campaign. You need to not convince people that let's just keep our schools great, you need to be very clear about what we're going to lose in that. That's my comment. My question, and it doesn't need to be answered but it should be answered to the community, that I've heard a number of families raise is…you mentioned, Maurice, that the district…you didn't call it revenue, you called it funding…district funding has remained relatively constant even though our enrollment continues to grow, and yet we walk around this neighborhood and we see home after home after home turning over, being sold, which every time a house sells means an marked increase in the property tax revenue that that home has generated, going from, you know, $1,000 a year to tens of thousand dollars a year. Why is it that revenue and funding is constant when there's so much turnover in homes, and therefore the property tax sum total in our district is increasing? I understand that property tax revenue is a little sliver of kind of what we get, and the district only gets a sliver of that pool…

THYGESEN
Can I just *(inaudible)*, Karen? *(Karen: Yeah)*. So the district's funding has been going up, but it hasn't gone up at a rate that allows the funding per student because the enrollment has also been rising.

KAREN DEARING:
But see, that's where the detailed numbers need to come in. This is a community of really, as you pointed out, intelligent, savvy people, and when you say a general statement like that it sort of falls on deaf ears if you can't back it up with data. And so when I know that house turns over and it was valued for property tax purposes at $150,000 of something, and it sells for $6 million, it doesn't take a genius to do the math, that that's a big chunk of money. So I get the increase in expenditures, I get it, but there needs to be data presented as part of parcel tax campaign that explains why that revenue, that funding, is functionally holding steady, because it seem like it sometimes.

CHILD:
I would just encourage you to also go to OpenGov which we just put in place and it answers exactly the question you're talking about: What's happened to our property taxes, and then it looks at them normalized against student count. Start with that and then, you know…and it's new, it was in response to what we heard from the parcel tax, so we're trying to get better information out. I want to move on, I don't want get into…

KAREN DEARING:
I would just take the point of it felt like a casual ask for more money. I know it wasn't a casual campaign, it was a…

THYGESEN
Were you at any of the…how many meetings did we do, Jeff?

(Several people talking at once….)

CHILD:
Let's move on.

THYGESEN
We should have an offline conversation, Karen, because there were problems, but the data that you're asking about was out there, it was just a problem of getting it communicated. Let's have an offline conversation; I'd love to talk to you. Call me.

JACQUI CEBRIAN
Hi, I'm Jacqui Cebrian. I am a Reading Specialist at Oak Knoll. I've been in the district 13 years and my daughter is in seventh grade at Hillview. Quite honestly, I have seven public comments for all the different… I've written in response to all that was up there. I forgot my black today, but the black and blue thing…like, I'm feeling it. I have to say, so a friend of mine, her son goes to school in San Mateo, he just started sixth grade this year. He's had four long-term subs in four different classes and his Science teacher is leaving mid-year. So that teacher shortage on the Peninsula, it is there. And I think, to what everybody else has said, the pink slips, you know, it's hard enough to stay here for people. I think that can be the thing that pushes them away from us. We are an amazing district to work in, and Erik said it last time, that we are a great place to have career. Like the professional development I've been provided is amazing. We don't just go to conferences now, like Oak Knoll presented at a Learning and the Brain conference. We are an amazing staff and I think to dismantle the programs that you've built is a shame. I don't know where to start to tell you what to cut, I just believe that the community ??? to the message that's been out there, I think the take-aways you took from the last parcel tax are dead-on to what the community said, and I urge you to increase revenues, and as a stop gap measure I would like to see a line item in there for that that 17% reserve helps backfill some of these problems that don't result in pink slips.

SCOTT SAYWELL:
I'm Scott Saywell. I have a kindergartner at Laurel and a second grader at Laurel, I'm President of the Site Council at Laurel, and my wife and I have each been a part of this community for 43 years--our entire lives. So there's a couple of comments I wanted to make. You've heard me say at every meeting we really need to focus on the customers, and that our customers are the students. And I did see a couple of words on the side of the slide about student experience, but I think what would be useful for the broader community…not everyone , only 20% of the community currently has students in K-8, they may not understand the true impact of any of these cuts on the students day-to-day experience. So what happens if you take an aide out of a classroom and then there's one destructive student, and then that distracts the teacher from teaching the whole class, right? We need to talk about those things and actually give really good illustrative examples of the impact of any of these cuts on someone's child. I also think it's important to be talking this…I fundamentally believe and I think the community believes that this is a funding gap and not an expense problem, and as I'm out there talking with a lot of the community that their kids are long gone…I was in a meeting in someone's living room the other day and they were surprised to hear that we really don't get any funding from the State. Though I know to all of us in this room, that's obvious, but a lot of people don't understand our funding structure. And I know you've tried to communicate that, but we've got to come up with different ways to communicate that. In terms of return on investment, I do think there might be other ways is to talk about, besides test scores, about the services that we're providing. The number of, for example, there was a stat at the meeting about the number of EpiPen injections given in a day. You know, those are done by nurses and

not the teachers, so that the teachers can focus on providing the rest of the class, services. So, I think there's got to be some other examples and metrics that show the value that we're providing with their investment. And then also, the value to the community isn't just in the value provided the customers, it's not just in property taxes but creating good, productive members of our community, right? There's a lot of value there. My first job was a TA at summer school at Laurel, I did that for two summers. I had to go get my workers permit to go do that, right? For example, my wife went to Laurel, Encinal and M-A, and now she's was lead researcher for Lehman (?), right, and that's benefitted all the women here in this room. She's working at Stanford, and she's getting teachers access to go get trained and be (*inaudible)* over at Stanford. There's a lot more benefit and value that our school system here provides to the community beyond property tax.

ELIAS BLOUGHIE:
Good evening, I'm Elias Bloughie, I'm a Menlo Park resident. My children graduated from the Menlo Park City District many years ago now, so I speak to you as a parent once upon a time and a general community member, someone is that 75% of folks who don't have kids in the district at the current time. Karen's comments earlier resonated with me: vote for what it's worth. I am very supportive of schools conceptually. I once, as a student representative at the end of high school experience, sat on a budget committee and cut millions and millions of dollars out of a budget in 1976 and 77 dollars as Proposition 13 got implemented. I don't envy the choices you have in front of you, and you will have to make the numbers balance pending changes to your revenue side of your model. And I don't…you're struggling with tough things. The only guidance I might suggest there is that I guess I would not assume that every number is sacrosanct, and somewhere in the analysis that you've been through, you probably have found areas that regardless of the funding available to you, you may have better places to put that money. So, consider those. I would also say I do think you have your job cut out for you. I do think you need to communicate better with the community…the 75% of us no longer in the schools. I would say if things have changed in 15 years, and I think my children got a good education, I think we need to understand that better--we don't as parents who have kids who are long gone from the local schools. The final thing I comment on is that I notice--and I'm somebody who's at the intersection between Menlo Park City political matters and school district from prior lives—every time you mention revenues you always coupled it to property tax. You always made the assumption of a certain kind of property…parcel tax, rather, the certain kind of tax. You've made the point that much of what you're struggling with is due to growth of enrollment. Other districts do consider development impact fees. Fremont, from where I grew up, is in the midst of doing that. Some of the districts out in the Tri Valley area are looking at that. I would urge you to look at that. As a resident, as a citizen, when I'm being asked to fund , as an empty nester, schools where much of your impact is occasioned by growth, I would ask the question: Why isn't that growth paying for their fair share? I think there are some creative vehicles you can look at there. Frankly, in Prop 13 I would not assume that you cannot get 2/3. With the right programs, with the right message, you might get 2/3. You have considerably different tax tools available to you if you want to think beyond just the typical dollars-per-parcel parcel tax. Thank you very much.

HILTON:
Elias, I have a quick question. How did you find out about tonight's meeting? What mode of communication do you prefer?

ELIAS BLOUGHIE:
Well, so I read *The Almanac,* I read *The Mercury*, I read *The Mercury* web. I hear from my fellow citizens. I'm not somebody who participates in the 50 people that from my perspective are what Menlo online

chat room is *(laughter from audience)*, where I think there's been a lot of controversy about what the effect *(inaudible)*. So basically, more general media.

HILTON:
Ok, will you make sure that you definitely check your mail because you will get a very valuable envelope to us that will get you connected for our community wide outreach to those 16,000 community members that we would like to hear from on a regular basis.

ELIAS:
If you're referring to the survey, I heard that, and I do respond.

HILTON:
It'll come in the mail, so register please. Thank you.

LAMBERT:
I also want to make sure that you get more information, or make sure that issue gets answered on the developer fee. I don't know that we have the exact statistics here tonight, but maybe, Ahmad, you could follow up just to make sure that…

ELIAS:
And my points were not to…you're focused on the budget side, the expense side this evening. But in due course as you get to the revenue side, consideration…

THYGESEN:
If Ahmad has a short answer on development fees, he should just give it right now.

SHEIKHOLESLAMI:
The developer fees are usually assessed for construction of new facilities. We do collect developer fees to the highest level that we can as a community and those fundings were part of rebuilding both the Hillview school and the new school at Laurel, or campus. So we do utilize those funds, and there are different arrangements when you build new subdivisions that cities and school districts enter into. But what we're talking about is ongoing revenue for operational and those are usually different from developer…

THYGESEN:
But even on the capital side, we're maxed out…there are no additional impact fees that we can legally collect.

ELIAS:
We can save that discussion for another time. My impression was, with what Fremont and the Tri Valley areas are pursuing, there's yet another super level.

JOE GIARUSSO:
Thank you. So, yes, I would agree that you have a pretty sucky job right now. It is a terrible position to be put into, but it is reality and it is something that you as the Board need to address and evaluate. I think what we saw tonight on the screen was a worst-case scenario, which is fine. You know, that's assuming no additional funding coming in. I did the one slide that was very informative that at these different funding levels, let's say additional funding levels, this is the amount of reduction that would

have to happen. And again I've said this, kind of acknowledging at other meetings, it is going to have to be a balance. So I don't think is going to be just necessarily we're going to go out and the community's just going to say, 'Here's another check, great job, do what you want.' It is going to be…here's what we're putting back in, and here is what we're asking you as residents to fund going forward. I did like some of the comments. I think Mr. Lyons' comments, I think were one of the best that I heard from the teacher community, and that was one of let's have a conversation. Yeah, there probably are things that can be done to reduce, without necessarily issuing pink slips, maybe it doesn't impact, it's other things like whether it's 1:1 iPads or other programs, the Mini Courses, and I like that idea of dialogue, that there is a dialogue that happens out there with the community, with the teachers, with the parents, so that it comes with something that everyone can kind of live with. This is not about one group of people imposing their will on everyone else. It is a shared opportunity here. The only thing,…and I know, Jeff will let me know, will respond back. But the only thing that I am concerned about, I saw the max was like $515 parcel tax to make up the deficit. Now, in the Finance Committee meeting, I thought that, in the end, I asked the question: It looks like for me that you're going to need more like $800-$1,000 long term in terms of being able to maintain, so there is a disconnect there. I'm sure there is some reason for that, and Jeff, you can talk to me later about that, but just a little concerned that I'm seeing one thing here, but in the Finance meeting I heard something different.

CHILD:
We can clear that up, sure.

KATE KENNEDY:
Hi, my name's Kate Kennedy. I have two kids, a sophomore at M-A and an eighth grader at Hillview, so we have spent a lot of time in MPCSD and my kids have gotten an amazing education here. Not only that, but it's a special place. It truly is a family. I've given a lot of my own time and heart and energy to volunteering, and I would easily say that I've gotten back more than I've given. And sitting here watching these proposed reductions really breaks my heart to think of the kids coming along behind my kids who might not have the same experience that my kids have been fortunate enough to have, and that we've had as a family. So I would strongly encourage the Board and the community to do everything we can do to support another parcel tax endeavor. I think that it's really important. Sorry, I lost my train of thought.. One thing that I am really distressing through this process is that I see a lot of…almost I would say, willful misinformation out there, and I had a question how to counter some of that information regarding people who say in a very sort facile way that rising property taxes offset enrollment growth. You know, I would like to have facts and figures at my fingertips to counter that when I see it. I'm also curious, I know that there are State mandates about how those reserves can be used and not used. But I'm also curious, I feel like that we are in an economic…a rather dire economic situation, and is it possible to touch those reserves in order to preserve jobs? Because it just feels weird to be talking about pink slipping teachers when we're sitting on those reserves. Ideally it would be great not to have to touch them, to have other funding sources come in, but if it comes down to it, is that a possibility? That's it, I think that's all I have to say. Thank you.

THYGESEN:
Before we move on, when there's a point of information, I think it would actually be helpful…you know, the financial projections that Ahmad has done in concert with the Finance and Audit Committee use the reserves to the greatest degree possible that enables us to maintain any…you know, the absolute minimum level of financial stability, so that's already incorporated into the projections, so there's no assumption of maintaining reserves more than are required for financial stability.

BURMEISTER:
Just one point of clarification. It's not just the enrollment that's causing our situation. I think it's really important to just remember because I've heard a number of people that we're also experiencing a dramatic increase in the required amount of money that our district must put forward towards the State Teacher Retirement System and the Classified Retirement System, which they deserve and we're happy to do it, but where the State used to bear more of that burden, and now the district and the individual are bearing more of the burden. And the situation's compounded by the fact that in about six months we're going to lose the benefit of Measure C, which is $1.6 million per year, so the problem becomes compounded very quickly by those three factors, not just enrollment growth.

AHMAD:
And I just want to add one comment on reserves. Reserves is one-time money and the reason the district has the ability to do these reductions in a more tidier fashion and not take deep cuts is because of the reserves that it currently has. And it's taking them to a percentage, which is about 15%, that's for a basic school district is pretty much the minimum that we should *(unaudible)*. So, that in the future if there is an economic downturn or other issues that we face, then we can again be in a position that we can absorb those things without doing drastic cuts. These policies have been built to protect our students in that learning environment.

CHILD:
Could you send Kate, there's a link on…I think the question you're asking about, funding versus student enrollment, I think there's a link on our OpenGov that specifically addresses that, so maybe you can send that to her. See if that's helpful. If it's not, we'll take another shot at it, but the idea of that was to try to answer the question.

DIANE GLASSER
Hi, my name is Diane Glasser . I'm a homeowner in Menlo Park for the last 20 years, a parent of two girls who have gone through the Menlo Park schools, and I have been a teacher here in the district for the past 16 years. I feel I'm in a unique position because I wear multiple hats in our community. As a longtime homeowner, I know how important it is to live in a neighborhood with high quality schools. Even before my husband and I started our own family, we chose to purchase our first home in Menlo Park because of its reputation of having great schools. We value education and wanted our future children to have the very best. For 20 years we have been active in our community, volunteering, coaching, and paying taxes, and it is the quality of the schools that brought us here in the first place. As a parent, I've been extremely satisfied with the education my children have received. We have loved the out-of-box thinking and innovative programming offered throughout the years. For example, both of my girls attended full-day kindergarten. Fortunately my oldest daughter entered school the first year it was offered. Furthermore, both of my girls thrived in the multi age experience at Oak Knoll. I am thankful that they both had rich opportunities to participate in the special electives as they both enjoyed music, the arts, and PE throughout the years. I am proud to be a teacher for the last 31 years. I love working in this profession and making a difference in the lives of children. I'm standing here tonight to tell you that in light of our looming deficit, that's imperative that all budget cut considerations be kept as far away as possible from the direct impact on our students. I know how vital it is to limit class size, Menlo Park City School District emphasizes inclusiveness and success for all learners. One of our hallmarks is the ability to differentiate instructions for the wide range of student ability levels that make up our classrooms. By keeping class size low, teachers are able to consider the varying needs of their students and plan instruction accordingly. With increased class size, teachers will be less able to differentiate instruction for individual student needs and be less likely to address individual learning styles. Our teachers work

hard to not fall into the trap of a one-size-fits-all model. *(Break in audio)* This takes careful planning, building of relationships with students, the knowledge of how to best serve students with varying needs and strategic implementation. Teaching is a craft. A skill that is honed with experience and time. We need to support teachers as they do this important work. It is unacceptable to put student learning at risk due to increased class size. I can't stress enough how critical it is to maintain our current class size limit and to continue to hire highly qualified teachers who will differentiate instructions so that all students can reach amazing heights and achieve their goals. Thank you.

MAYRA GARD:
Hi, I'm Mayra Gard, I have two children in Oak Knoll. We just moved to the district last year, and we've always lived in very good communities, good school systems. We are enjoying how much Oak Knoll has to offer. And I look at this and no one ever communicated to us the financial issues of the district, so I look at this as a communication gap. You're not connected with your community *(inaudible)*. And the second piece is we are here just talking about the details of what we are cutting, but there is no vision to say: Where do we need to head to, what are our options? And all of us here are here because we care, so you have to give us a call to action. What do we as parents do to help solve this *(inaudible)*. I'm hoping that we get the vision and the communication skill that's needed here to connect us to the community to solve this. Thank you.

JENNIFER LEVY:
Hi, I'm Jennifer Levy. I have three children in the district, and thank you for hearing me talk quickly, I hope. I want to remind our community tonight that the children we're educating are the future leaders of tomorrow. That's how I like to think of them. And looking at this list of reductions, the possible reductions tonight, made me want to sit here and cry. And in my opinion we're facing…we're going from this robust, amazing district with Art, and Science, and PE, and Library, and Language to a school…we're proud of, oh I'm so proud my children go to public school in Menlo Park, to going…this is like a school that likes eking by. I'm like wow this is great…it makes me want to cry, I agree with Terry. I also wanted to point out to the community that several of these cuts affect some of our most…the children that at most at risk in our community, to your point, Jeff, and some of these programs: the summer school, some of our English language learner programs that we have for the children, that first of all it makes a difference for the whole class to help the children that are most at risk, and it's making a difference for these children at risk, helping them in…not just get through our classes, but to thrive in our district. So in closing, I beg the School Board to call for a parcel tax in 2017. I beg the community to get behind this. No one is trying to sneak a sneaky tax into our budget, pulled under the rug, and I beg our community to come together to help increase our funding of our district. And I also beg our community to stop the the anonymous unkind posting on all these message boards.

JOHN ASHFIELD:
Hello, I'm John Ashfield, I teach Music at Encinal School and previously I taught at Oak Knoll and at Laurel. I wanted to bring up a bit of historical perspective, because I'm kind of an old guy now and I've been here a bit. When I was hired, I was the third Music teacher here. Bob Crabb taught Instrumental everywhere and Bee Tee taught elementary school.

THYGESEN:
And you were hired thanks to the 2000….

JOHN ASHFIELD:

....2000 parcel tax, so the reason I'm here is because of that. Now I can say that I've seen our Music Department become what I think is probably one of the best in California. You know, I was on the interview for Richard Vaughan and he's amazing. I was on the interview team for Emily Chiat and Rachel Knight and Piper Redman, and every other Music…Rachel Bergeron, and I've seen our Music Department do amazing things. And looking at… you know it seems pretty simple to say oh, we'll just have Music once a week, but that's pretty drastic because the only time the Instrumental teacher sees them is that once a week. The only time I really see them is that once a week. And if you've been to any of the concerts that we've had…you know, I play tambourine and I'll have 40 kids playing guitars and it's all very spirited, but I'm really proud of the fact that I don't have to prop them up because I can teach them how to do it on your own. And I've had kids write their own songs, the Encinal School song was written by students. These are things you can't do once a week. You can't, because there is just no retention. I've been here when there were no Art teachers. Seeing that Art thing where it's parents doing it, we had Art in Action and I was here when Stephanie was hired, and I saw how much that changed everything for the kids that need Art. So, looking at these cuts it might not seem like a big deal to say: Oh, we don't have Art, you know, there's artsy parents that can do it. But that's not the same, and saying that we can cut…it said $190,000 for Music, that's 2-3 people and that's huge. That's things that just don't happen. Concerts? There's no way. You know, it just can't be the same. I've seen the district go from hardly having anything, like most schools in California, because when I talk to other Music teachers and I talk about the things we do, they kind of look at me like they want to kill me, so they can get my job, or they want to know how they can get in here. And because of this, we've been able to hire the finest Music teachers. Out of all the Music teachers I've seen, you know, you can't get a better teacher than Emily Chiat or Rachel Bergeron, or Rachel Knight or Bee Tee. You know Bee Tee was one of the persons that hired me. So it's money, but it's money well spent. And I know all of you don't want to do these cuts of course, and I know everybody else here doesn't, but it's a big deal and it means a lot of changes that would make this place much more humdrum. You know, we have all these beautiful spaces, but what's going to be going on in them? So…thank you.

JEFFREY MEAD

My name is Jeff Mead. I'm the eighth grade English teacher here at Hillview and I have the best job in the world. I want to tell you, when I came here from Portola Valley I had been teaching eighth grade for about 18 years. I was really, really surprised at the way Hillview focused on building community. One of the ways is on Thursday night, we're going over to EPA to have conferences with those parents and their students. The other way is, when I came back to school this year, I sat down with my principal Willie and we went over some test scores, and he said to me, "How are you going to make your year so that you have jumpers--kids who improve, and no sliders--kids who move backwards?" And we talked a lot about a plan, and the plan that we came up with was very individualized, and it actually involved 1-on-1 communication, 1-on-1 work with kids, and I really like that. But one of the best things that happened to me since I've been here is, I believe it was last year, we went to a faculty meeting and we walked in, it was a regular day and there was a whole big agenda, but we walked into the room and there were names, all the students' names were posted on pieces of paper all over the room. And about halfway through the faculty meeting we were given green dots, yellow dots and red dots, and we were to walk around and we were to put green dots on kids who we had a very close relationship with, that we said hi to everyday, that we knew their names, we knew things about their families; maybe yellow dots on kids that we knew their name, maybe had them in class but didn't know them that well; red dots, kids we really barely knew; and no dots. I was kind of like: wow, that's really interesting, we have a really big school. At the end, our administration got up and explained to us that those names were arranged by their test scores, and that the kids with predominantly red dots and no dots tended to score really, really low. And our objective was to go out and to make personal connections with those children in

hopes of actually improving their learning and improving their test scores. I know I went home that night, and know several other colleagues did, we made phone calls, emails, and we really worked at getting to know those no dot kids. And I just thought that was really amazing, and I'm worried that with those teacher cuts, if you cut the teachers, you're going to cut the connection. If you cut the connection, you're going lose the student. If you lose the student, there's no learning and there's no great test scores. So, I really hope you can make it so we don't lose teachers. Thank you.

KRISTEN GRACIA
OK, so since Joan said she'd love to hear from a Principal, I thought 'Sure'. I think this is the first time a Principal has done public comments, and it's a little new for me. So thank you for saying that. A little bit just about me. I consider myself fully invested in our schools. I've been an educator and now Principal in this district for the last 17 years. I've been a resident in a little shoebox over near 101 for 15 years, and a parent in the district for 10, so I'm triple threat like Sidney Merck. So, I'm so disappointed, like you said, Terry. This is really disappointing that we're here talking about these things. This is not the community I know, and in fact I remember when Maurice came to our district, I wrote a note just welcoming him, just saying hey, welcome to Menlo Park School District. One thing I absolutely love about our district and what makes us amazing is that we have the space to innovate to make school work for every kid, and really make the best student experience possible. So I guess I'm coming up here really to say that I will personally do whatever needs to happen as a Principal, an educator, a parent and a community member to get us out of this and to preserve our programs and keep our teachers, who are the reason we are so good. And really the reason my two bedroom shoebox on 101 is worth $1.5 million, which is ridiculous, but it is because our teachers are so good. And a little bit about student experience because that's…I feel responsible for the student experience at my school. And we must preserve the experience because we believe is this experience. And I know at Oak Knoll everything we do, everything we do is intentional, and every experience and situation we're providing our students, all of our students, points directly to our mission, and our experience produces exemplary scholars, valued friends and courageous citizens. So this is my invitation to the community: I invite anyone to come to Oak Knoll and I will personally show you why we need to continue what we do. This kids are the future. And when I'm at Oak Knoll, and I've said this to parents…and when I'm at Oak Knoll, I am reassured that we are going to be OK, meaning our future, our community, our country, our world…and I'll tell you, it's the best thing to do after a presidential debate, is I show up at school and I'm instantly reassured that we are going to be OK. And, you know, it's not just our neighborhood kids that reassure me, it's our kids that participate in the Tinsley program, and our staff kids that are at our school, that reassure me that our future is bright and that our kids are the ones that we should be investing in because they are the ones who are going to take care of Menlo Park and our country and our world. And so, the reason also I feel reassured by watching them, the reason it is so reassuring is truly because our teachers and specialists are teaching our kids to think and problem solve, and take risks, and be creative, and take on challenges, and work together and be compassionate. And believe me, you don't want to mess with that. And so, here we are. And I just want to say let's do this, let's tell our story. It's not a new story, it's a story that needs to be told, and again I invite anyone to come to Oak Knoll and all those *Almanacs* maybe get off the blogs and come on over, and I will show you why we need to *(inaudible)* keep these programs. Thank you.

EMILY CHIAT
I am Emily Chiat and I teach at Oak Knoll Elementary, I teach Music. And I came to Menlo Park School District in 2011 because I had been working in Santa Clara Unified and they went through a very similar process. They cut all their Elementary Music and they laid off in addition to my position they laid off another Music teacher and tons of other teachers, and the effect on the district was entirely predictable. So we all left and we found other places, and I remember bragging to people who I had

worked with that I had found this oasis in Menlo Park, which is true. And within the next few years they lost over 20 top notch administrators. I don't exaggerate when I say that, because the district was essentially falling apart. They tried to pass a measure to fund the district, very much like we tried to, and it failed. I think in part because of the messaging on it. And so, I am having a big moment of déjà vu looking at the cuts that you're proposing, which are nearly identical that the ones that I saw in 2011 in Santa Clara, and they have yet to recover from it. And I don't think that they will recover from it. That sounds very dramatic, but you know, a year after I came here I got a phone call: Can you come back, we're trying to do music again? And I said why would I do that, I've found this amazing place. And then two years, they called me again. Why would I come back to you, I found this amazing place. And last month they asked me again and I told them I have an amazing job in an amazing district, don't call me again…

THYGESEN
Wait, don't go! We'll fix it! Don't go!

EMILY CHIAT (CONTINUED):
So, you know, a lot of times people contact me and say hey, are you interested, very informally, and I always turn it down. And it's not about me. What I'm point out here is that once you lose a teacher, that teacher is gone, and I do not want to be calling Piper Redman and Rachel Knight in two years and begging them to return to us, and them saying to me: Why would I come back there, I've found this oasis somewhere else. As John pointed out, we have amazing teachers here and once they're gone, they're gone, OK, but I am a solutions oriented lady, alright? So we need to pass that parcel tax, obviously, and I think, you know…we talk about this OpenGov website which is great, we want transparency because people don't just want to spend their money unnecessarily--that's reasonable. But people also don't tend to go to information; information has to come to them in bite-sized bullet points *(audience applause)*. Thank you. We need to leverage social media and we need to have some bite-sized bullet points that people repeat to the public until it is drilled into their heads. This is why we are doing this, and this is why we need a permanent tax to fund all lf this. So thank you for listening. I hope we continue to have an oasis here in Menlo Park.

MARK SCHACK
(Inaudible) rank on Tom Lyons. I'm Mark Schack. I've been here 29 years, and in many ways these are the good old days, and this is part of what you've been talking about in terms of what you built in the last 15, 20, 25 years. I know there's a position that this is a gold plated district, and I would say that it's a district that does have gold plating, and I think that that's where you really have to look as you make these cuts, is what's the gold plating? Because the other reality is that the basic district is pure gold. And it's gold because of people who stood when Vince asked them to. And it's important that you let that gold shine, and it doesn't need the fancy *(inaudible)*, and I think that's what you're going to have to look at. It's going to be tough. I mean it's tough and I'm glad I'm not sitting over there. But I think that it's really important to you as you go through this process, this very unenviable process, that you preserve the gold. You've got to preserve the gold.

CAROLINE LUCAS:
I'm Caroline. I teach Spanish full time and coincidentally I ended up in Las Lomitas, actually I was pink-slipped. I was pink-slipped. I don't blame Dr. Ghysels. I worked in this district and I was pink-slipped. I've lived that story, it's not fun, it hurts morale, but that is how I ended up. And I was a really good teacher, and I'm teaching at a really good district right up the street. I hope that doesn't happen to anyone, but I just want to put it out there that it is a reality that happens sometimes. It was a different economy, it

was a different district. But what I want to talk about are my three comments on the proposed reductions. I want to preface by saying I'm a Spanish teacher and I've taught Spanish for decades, from 3 year old to adult, and on the World Language program, I'm concerned when I see word 'elimination', and on lot of other programs I see the word 'modification'. I see modification of the Art program, the Music program, the Library program, and I'm wondering about modifying the Language program instead of eliminating it. And I understand the credentialing about the teacher during his or her prep period being in the room with a paraprofessional in those other areas, and that might be how we can prereserve those programs and I'd like to encourage everyone to think about doing something like that for Spanish. I feel like I can say this without insulting Language teachers. A paraprofessional could teach that level of Spanish. We're talking days of the week, colors, numbers, the levels that are taught at kinder-first, if it were a way to keep it in and have that credentialed teacher in the room and have that para doing the…it's a lot of bingo, it's a lot of singing. I would encourage you to find a way to modify instead of eliminate the Language program. I just think it's so important and it kind of goes along with what the French teacher said and the results at the high school. The second is on the kinder. I kind of am where Terry is about thinking it doesn't seem totally right that we can't pick up any funds from doing something creative with the kinder, and I'm wondering K-1 combos and the multi age *(inaudible)*, what if they were all multi age, right? I mean it doesn't have to be that everybody only teaches kinder, or that you teach kinder in ELD, or you teach kinder in Reading Recovery, but if you had K-1, I just think there might be ways. I don't know what they are and I'm actually like Terry--I'm not advocating for it, per se, I just want to explore because I would like to find ways to make reductions that are least close to the kids, meaning not getting rid of these programs but finding creative ways to use our teachers. Third, I am wondering why all the reductions are so close to the kids' hearts. You know, I look at all of these, the class size, and I just didn't see any cuts that were way far away from the kids. I'm kind of looking at the administrator ratio, and I'm kind of looking at what I have up the hill, and what I had in Portola Valley, and there are lot of administrators here….

THYGESEN
You know, Caroline, it's just not true what you're saying. It's just not true.

CAROLINE LUCAS (CONTINUED):
OK. OK, I mean this is my personal experience. I think teachers are the closest to the classroom and they're closest to the children, and so I just wonder if there are places far away. And then ending, I guess, to use the word 'dismantle' like it's negative, and I'm wondering if there's a way to dismantle all together and rebuild using totally different models like online learning or different kinds of things. We're working off of a model that's one teacher and 23 students, and we're looking to making small tweaks to a really old model, and I'm wondering what it would be like to design thinking and look at a totally different model that might not require the same ratios and life as we know it. We're kind of looking at just trying to keep life as we know it. So I know you have a hard job. Thank you.

ESME COLLIER:
I wasn't planning to speak tonight, but I felt inspired. My name's Esme Collier, I'm a third grade Immersion teacher at Encinal and have been in the district six years. And I wanted to talk about a couple things. One thing I wanted to comment on was talking about pink-slipping and layoffs. I come from in a district in Southern California where I was laid off as a new teacher, going through a budget cut process, and so my own personal experience is similar to Emily. I can say, I know we talked about the concern of losing teachers. It definitely, as Jerry mentioned, affects the culture of the whole school, and it's not just the end of the year which is an extremely defeating feeling for a teacher to find out in March. It feels like you're not important and that what you're doing is not important, and to show up every day for the rest

of that school year and have to give at the same level that you were giving because you believe in what you're doing, it turns you upside down. But it also affects the beginning of the following school year because then all these teachers potentially had to move out of their classrooms, move out of their space *(inaudible)*, you know, not know, maybe you're going to be in the same grade level or not. Even if you are brought back, it's this whole puzzle that has to get put back together, and potentially more new teachers that have to be trained. And also just thinking about the investment that the district has put in new teachers over the past years with programs like Readers Workshop and Writers Workshop, and Design Thinking, and Restorative Practices, and all these things that help make us such a strong school and a strong community, and that we can all be together and be building on the same thing, that we're losing that as well. And then I just wanted to say, you know, kind of on a different perspective, I tell people that I love my job, because I do, and I feel like I am the place where teachers are allowed to grow and be supported and give that to the student. When I tell people what we have here is amazing and the kind of education that every child deserves. This is what every school district should have. And so to me, like, cuts are: 'Wait, no, we had it, why are we going backwards, don't let go'. And so, I just want to end with like a word of caution about increasing class size. Just to be aware that it can be a slippery slope, you know. You can say an average of two more students, three more students per class, but what exactly does that mean? Does that mean there could be a class with 28 or 29? The Immersion teachers, there's, you know, the model is tricky because we have to count for attrition. That means our kindergarten teachers already start with 24. And so, just to be thinking about that, to be clear about what it means, if that's where we end up going. Thank you.

ANGHAROD MUSLADIN :
Hi, my name's Angharod Musladin. I am an Inclusion Specialist and Special Ed teacher at Oak Knoll School, been here for five years. Been in the community for 15. I have three children in this district, two at Oak Knoll and one at Hillview. And I wanted to tell you a little bit about what I do. I supervise peer educators and I train them. They're aides that work with children with special needs, students who cannot access the curriculum without a person by their side. And my other job--you know, the Inclusion Specialist part of my job is also to make the least restrictive environment for these students, to fade that aide to make them independent. And our specialists, our librarians, our Art teachers, our Music teachers, our Science teachers, they are so important to this model. They're often the first place that I actually get to make my kids independent in. BT at Oak Knoll was the the first person to say "I got this, leave the para at the door, thank you very much." They can do this because they have a linear view of our children. They start in kindergarten; they end in fifth grade. They have amazing talent for connecting with our kids and getting them independent, and that makes my life a whole lot easier. It makes kids independent with special needs. So that's all I really wanted to say, and yeah, anyhow, don't cut these guys.

KRISTA WEST:
Hi, my name is Krista West and I am a community member and parent with kids in the district, and I don't like public speaking either, so I apologize if this is a little scattered. But I was inspired to talk tonight because my husband and I fell into this district, luckily. There were two apartments, one in Burlingame and one here when we moved here five-plus year ago, and we knew they both had good schools but didn't really know what that meant because our eldest was in preschool. And I cannot believe the level of schooling here. It's amazing and it's what every child needs. The low teacher-to-child ratio is so important because every kid is an individual, and every kid learns differently, so if you are one teacher to--maybe the average is 24, but you're right, the real reality could be 28 kids, you can only teach general compared to 1:20, you know, really connect with the student, figure out what they need versus this student. And the things that inspire our kids besides about being excited learning this math

skill is….sorry, my son loves Science, he would be crushed if he couldn't…he couldn't be excited to go to Science class and see the gross snake in there and everything else. And my daughter is so in love with Music, I don't think I could console her or myself if we lost Ms. Chiat. It's what excites them to go, and I just want to say as a community member that the school is such a community, the love and awesomeness that you feel on campuses is something that you don't feel at other schools. I certainly didn't when I was growing up. My parents were teachers, I don't ever remember them speaking about it. And as a community it overflows into the job community. The school is teaching things besides academics, which are stellar and amazing, they teach empathy, they teach these children to be good citizens, they teach them compassion and grit and stick-to-itiveness and recycling…you know, I mean my kids know about recycling better than I do, and these are things that are community wide, they're just not school centric and I can't imagine one item being cut. As a parent and as a community member, I say let's go for as much parcel tax as we can. Let's make it as abundantly clear, and yes--let's go out to the community and list individual things in *The Almanac*, list it everywhere where everyone can see it so that we can win it. Let's be creative.

ALKA GUPTA:
Hi, my names Alka Gupta and I just had three quick comments. One is, I totally feel all the passion and the emotion that everybody's echoed, and I want to do everything to preserve and work on the revenue, so please, let's move forward with a parcel tax, and I look forward to working towards that revenue. With that said, I understand that we've got this list, and unfortunately we have the tough job, or you have the tough job of prioritizing . So to the extent that in the meanwhile we have to look at revenue and costs, the thing that would help…I propose perhaps it might be helpful on that list, to look at each of those items. I would assume all is not, as we've already expressed, created equal, but even within the programs, is there a way to the right of the description, we talk about the number right now, but is there way to the right of the description to understand either ramp up time/cost, or what it took to *(inaudible)*, and/or what it would take to resurrect that assuming we get the revenue? That would help from a weighted average perspective. Just put the pure revenues--excuse me, pure expense saved in perspective to each other. And that would give just a little bit of a…making them all not kind of an equal program just based on a dollar value. Thank you.

CHILD:
That's all the cards I have. For this topic. Oh, I'm sorry….Jennifer.

JENNIFER BESTOR:
So, my name is Jennifer Bestor. I'm a community member and I have not had a child in the schools for four years. An earlier speaker stated that this was a worst case scenario. As a financial person for a long period of time, that is not true. As somebody who has studied school finance across the state for over six years, that is not true. I would like to remind you what you said earlier about the MPAEF and the reason people donate to the PTO and the MPAEF. Many of the things you listed up there are in fact exactly those programs that family members and community members believe they are funding through the MPAEF. When you take those things out, people will reconsider those donations. So this may not be a worst case scenario. Secondly, Ahmad, I have great respect for you and I've spent a lot of time following you, but a cash flow balance…a cash flow reserve of 15% is not generous, or frankly for a basic aid district even acceptable. The standard for a district this size would be a…what you're calling a reserves balance but it's really a cash flow at the end of the year balance, of about 25% or greater. Why? Because if there is a downturn…remember, we're a basic aid district, that is to say that we get our property taxes twice a year, December 20 and April 20--yes, there are other bits and pieces that come in, but we get our property taxes those two times so our big hits come at those two times. So if we get

caught in a downturn with 15% on hand on June 30, and the County doesn't come through the way it typically has because everybody else has been caught in that downturn, then we are in a worst case scenario. So please, when you look at these cuts you have to take them very seriously. So let me jump forward. Terry, you said there's no such thing as a free lunch. That's actually not true under Prop 13. One of things that I always do when somebody gives an an address here, is I type it into 'sanmateotaxcollector.com' and I look…I'm not going to out anybody or do anything like that, but I did notice as I was looking through that property tax bill, I noticed something fundamental. I noticed the $875 MPCSD parcel tax, and then I noticed the sewer fee. Now, I realize this may be on community TV, so I will not make a specific suggestion, however the sewer fee was $1,031. Now this will be true throughout our district--every single parcel will have an $875 ESD parcel tax right now, as we know going down, and every single one will have a $1,031 sewer fee unless there are two people living there. So I'm going to suggest in the spirit of the French teachers, a 'merde' tax. That is to say you raise the parcel tax to just under the sewer fee--that would be $1,030. And just let me jump forward, say one more thing, and that is I volunteered at Ravenswood and so I stepped out, and that's why I did the work and have been doing the work on a statewide basis. I became very complacent about what was going on in my own district. Those 50 people organized when I wasn't looking, online, and I have have been able to follow that conversation online as a few negative, mean, anonymous people gave everyone the impression that this was a broken district. Some of the comments I've heard here tonight--gold plated, platinum, amazing--those are all going to get twisted on that forum, but some of you who maybe still have the guts to follow that forum will notice that I jumped in about two weeks ago and I said "no". I said if you're going to lie, I'm going to out your lies, and it's me, and it's Jennifer Bestor. But I stood up for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association for the last six years on split role. I'm sorry to say I've also stood up for the California Teachers Association and to Jerry Brown on the reserves issue, and I'm not going to be cowed by Town Square. But I do ask anybody who's got a really strong stomach to stick with me and like my posts, because it's really hard when four people like me and 38 like somebody who has never seen a county Office of Education review of a budget before…hello? So, forward with the merde tax. Merci beaucoup.

CHILD:
OK, I think that is all of the public comments. So now I will turn things back to to Board. I would remind this is…Erik, one of our three sessions on this issue, we've got two more coming up?

BURMEISTER:
Yes, this is not even technically a session on this issue. This is public comment at a regular Board meeting based on the direction that you gave the Superintendent to come to you with recommendations for reductions. I would like to remind everybody that we have posted two special Board meetings. At that time, it is important for the community to come and offer their input. It is not intended for the Board to have conversation necessarily between themselves or take action; it is strictly for you guys to listen to the community and to take input from the community, so it will be really important that we do this again on the 24th or 25th, but feel free to come to both. And I would also like to say that tonight's public comment was specifically in response to the reductions. We will be presenting additional information from the Communication Team about the kinds of information that you would feedback on as Board members regarding potential parcel tax. So things like timing, structure and amount will proposed as examples, and the community will have the opportunity to give us feedback on timing, structure, amount, and I think we could add in there strategy as well.

CHILD:

So let me turn it back over and see what comments Board members have after what you've heard or direction you want to provide to Erik, or any different along the path that we're moving.

THYGESEN:
I'll start. First of all, I want to thank everybody for coming here tonight. I want to really thank all the teachers who showed up in such force. And I really want to give direction to our Communication Committee, of which Stacey and I sit on, that we've got to do a lot better job of turning out non-teacher community members because, you know, only a handful of our teachers are residents here and actually vote on our stuff. So, even though it's really helpful and we want you to keep coming and keep speaking, we need the broader community to be here. We need, you know, because otherwise we could end up in the same situation.

CHILD:
Well, we need their feedback. We have to realize in what fashion is the community going to provide. So, sort of making the meeting be the standard, I'm not sure. Hopefully our survey and some other things are going to get the information…

THYGESEN:
And I believe that is one of the lessons that we are trying to take out of the last time around, is that things have changed in our community. We sort of went out and did our preliminary education of people the same old way that we always did, and everybody in all these meetings said 'Yes, we get it, go, that's the right thing to do', and then we threw it over, you know, and we did focus groups, you know, to testing of the broader community, and it was all green-light-go, and then we threw it over the wall, and then we don't have control over it anymore, and the community didn't show up in mass to do the type of campaign that is needed to actually educate the broader community. I believe that is our fault that we didn't recognize that there is a different way…you know, the way in which people are receiving information has changed. And so, I think that we…somehow we didn't get through with our communication because I do believe that if enough people had heard the information that was being discussed, that there would have been a broader groundswell, but I'm waiting to hear that as a Board member, because I need to hear from the broader community. We're going to have a chance to hear through other channels, but we do need people coming actually to the meetings and actually interacting for a lot of reasons. The other thing that I heard some people say tonight, though, is that there seems, you know…Jennifer, you said that there is a free lunch. Where was the free lunch? *(Inaudible from the audience.)* OK, you're paying, OK. *(Inaudible from the audience.)* Yeah, OK. Well, the thing is that I still think there isn't a free lunch, except the one Jennifer's going to give me. And I think that there…you know I hear from people from the various different foxholes talking about like somehow Board and you know, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and CBOO, somehow we want you to find places to cut the money that enables us to keep everything the way it is, and keep the quality, and keep everything good. And the fact is, is that that is not going to happen. That's not going to happen. The fact is, is that this district has done a good job of constantly looking for ways to do the work as best we can, and try to deliver a program that is comparable to that experience in Palo Alto and Las Lomitas and Portola Valley, Woodside and Hillsboro, and we've had to do it with less resources. And so we've had to do it in a way where there's constant pressure on the CBOO, there's constant pressure on the Assistant Superintendent, there's constant pressure on the Principals, there's constant pressure on the teachers, to be constantly looking for better ways to do things, and that is why we have been able to deliver a program that is comparable to these other districts for many years now for less money per student. We have been spending less money per student for quite some time. And so, there's an ongoing process where we're always looking for opportunity, but there are not some big opportunities out there that are

going to allow us to maintain what we've got. You know, we're not going to be able to keep the gold, as Mark said, there just aren't. And I've heard people saying like 'Oh, well let's just do some design thinking and figure out these ways to do things with fewer teachers', and so on and so forth. Well, I heard a number of teachers speak very eloquently tonight about the value of the programs that we've created. And you know, the thing about educating children and the reason why it can't be done on the cheap is because, if you go back to…look at our guiding principles, and we have, you know, engagement, innovation, leadership, partnership and perseverance. And engagement is…these are on equal footing, but engagement is #1 on the list for a reason, because you can't educate kids if you can't engage them. And if you read the description of engagement it says that engagement is built on a foundation of strong relationships. And you cannot get through to children and educate them without building strong relationship. And you're not going to build a strong relationship with children when you're trying to do it on the cheap by trying to reduce the number of adults that those children have to interact with on a day-in and day-out basis. And so, as much as I would love to have some technological solution where we, you know, can do a good job educating children, we're not going to be able to do it on the cheap--never have, never will. Now the fact is, is that our district, we get less money from our property taxes per student that these other districts that we're trying to provide a comparable program to. They also have a few other sources of revenue. For example, Las Lomitas in addition to having more property tax revenue per student that we do, they also happen to have some rental property. Some property…they have more school properties than they need and so they rent them out. They rent one of their schools to Phillips Brooks. They rent another one of their schools to the Woodland School. They get a large amount of rental income from doing those things that they're able to add to their ongoing revenues. We don't have that here. Every single school property we have is used to educate Menlo Park City School District schools. That's not fair, but it just is the way it is. And so, the only means that we have of being able to provide the quality education that we do is to have a level of funding that enables us to continue doing what we're doing. We're doing it for less than these other districts, but we can't do it for way less, because our staff are great but they're not magicians. And so we are in a situation where we have the highest parcel tax of any of these other school districts by a fairly large amount, you know, it's $875 per student right now, and if you go to Portola Valley or Palo Alto or Las Lomitas or any of those, their parcel tax is significantly less than ours because they have sources of funding from their property taxes, and in some cases things like rental income from properties, that is just more than ours. So we can either sit back and decide to be victims of this and live within our means, or we can decide what we want our means to be, and you know, I love what Jennifer…but we can't even decide that our means are, you know, what we're paying for sewer…I love that. So the fact is, is yes, we have higher parcel tax than these other districts do. We need to maintain it and we need to increase it in order just to stay even. And I'm sorry, life isn't fair, that's just where we are, that's the way it is, and we're not magicians here. You know, we're not going to find tons of cost savings that are going to enable us to keep our programs and services as they are. We're going to have make tough cuts that are going to hurt, and are going to do damage now, and are going to do damage for years to come, and are going be very hard to build back. And that is the honest truth…that is the honest truth. So, you know, with that, a couple of the community members that were here, I think I already got an email from one, Karen--is she still here. I think I got a LinkedIn request…did I get a LinkedIn request from you? *(Inaudible),*Ok, I got ….send me an email. You know, I'm happy to…community members who say 'How can I get engaged', get in touch with me and I will hook you up. You know, in terms of process here, because we're in a situation now where, if we don't get parcel taxes at a certain level, we have to make cuts, and so we have to do planning now and making these cuts. I don't want to make these cuts. I want to get the funding so that we don't have to make these cuts, but we have to do the planning as if we're not going to get the money, because if we don't we have to have the plans already all in place, we have the pink slips ready to go on March 15. We have to because we don't have enough reserves to keep on going the way we're going and

preserving. So we have to do this, but at the same time, you know, we'll be looking at ways, what the options are for improving our funding through parcel taxes because it's really the only option that we have. And we'll be listening to the community, and we'll be listening to what all of you tell us in meetings. We'll be listening to what all of you tell us through the survey information that we get back. And then we're going to have to make a tough decision, and that tough decision is, you know…I don't think there's anybody up there who wants to be making any of these cuts, but we'll be listening because we have to figure out, you know, to what extent where are people on this, and if people are saying….you know, because we have to have confidence that whatever parcel tax we go out for, that we're going to win it, so that we have to have confidence that we're going to win it, and we can't go out for something that isn't winnable because that will do damage to the district. So, we're on a big listening tour right now. The call to action will be there. Call me, I'll give it to you. So that's all I have to say right now.

HILTON:
I'm fine with the process and the procedure. I don't need to reiterate things that have already been said. I will say one thing. I'm a very practical person. What are the things that need to be done. For those of you that are still left. Once a Board calls and votes for a parcel tax, it takes a steering committee of 30 people at minimum, and a ongoing group of dedicated volunteers of at least 50. This community had a very difficult time getting to those people. Many of you have your own insights or thoughts as to why that didn't happen, but it needs to happen moving forward. So if this is something you care about and you don't have time, find someone that does. Because it takes, whether it is going to be through a cyber campaign as a whole new design thinking that we have never imagined, or if it's walking house-to-house, it still takes a group of volunteers, and I did it myself long before I was ever part of this School Board, and I will continue to do it in the community but we can't do it with just 10, so get the word out. Thank you.

CHILD:
I hear all this. I want to make sure we give any direction we want to staff about what you want to see differently. So, I'll tell you, one thing I heard, which I…from a number of people I thought was interesting is, can we get some way as we're looking at the various proposed cuts…and I'm not sure how you do this, Erik, whether you do the old, you know…Terry used to be a consultant, but you know, you do circles that are half full, quarter full, and looking at the impact on current staff, impact on children. And everybody'll argue that oh no, you don't have that, but we've got to have a starting part, and I think that this would be helpful to me is looking at at least some way to kind of start thinking about that, and if the staff impact in over a number of…you know, maybe it's a different staff impact on year 1-2-3. I mean you figure out a way to do it. I think we've got to take this sheet, though, and get more to it so that we can continue our…because at the end of the day, I hear you. I mean, I'm totally supportive…

THYGESEN:
But we have to have a plan if we don't get it.

CHILD:
That's my point. I think we have to have a plan for two reasons. It's a plan if we don't get it, but it's a plan to show the community what is going to happen. And I think it's also a plan to think about how to use size of potential parcel tax. I think you don't just...I don't think it's just binary. I'm not sure you just are going to say there's not one cut we can stomach, we've got to have the whole…and in light, and if you were to do polling data that says, you know, what do you do, polling data says you can do $400, not $500. You have to come up with what's the hundred of…you know, I'm using round numbers here. But I think we do have to…we've got to continue on this path of prioritizing. You know, we probably hope

none of it happens, but we have to come up with a plan to prioritize and come with the cuts as we would do it under various scenarios. And then I think…and I think that will also help the community think about how, if we're moving forward on size, I think it'll also help size because at some stage you're really then…you're looking at a trade-off, and I think, you know, when we start talking about focus groups or whatever we're going to do, you're going to say this is what you don't get at this size, this is what you don't get at that size, and I think we're going to have to take and do that sort of data to come up with a funding increase that makes sense and that we're confident we can pass if that's the plan.

BURMEISTER:
Yes, we're going to do the best we can to provide you the information that you want. When we talked about about what we would be presenting to you tonight--when I say "we" I mean the cabinet--and in working with Maurice on his presentation, and what we would provide in terms in recommendations, we did not provide a prioritization because we didn't feel that was a) our responsibility at this point in time; but b) we felt it was really important to get the community's input and to hear from them, and we want encourage you if you didn't speak tonight or if you know people who couldn't be here tonight, we do have an online input form. We already have over 115 folks who've written in and would encourage that to continue, so please let us here your voice. The other thing is, is that the end of the day you guys have to vote on this, and so between now and November 9, we need you in whatever way and shape and form you see fit to offer us your priorities as well, because at the end of the day you guys are going to be voting on whatever proposal we adopt. So, as a cabinet we want to serve the community, we want to give the Board what they need to make the decision, but at the end of the day, we don't want it to be our four voices represented in that prioritization, we need it to be the community's and we need it to be specifically the Board's because at the end of the day you guys are going to make the decision about where we're going to move.

CHILD:
So I think what you're hearing from Erik is, we're going to have to prioritize, so you need to think about what else you need. And I think clearly it's more community input. We're requesting that, we're begging, we'll see what we get, right?

BURMEISTER:
This turnout is phenomenal. I think we have a lot of parents here, they didn't speak at the same degree that the teachers and staff did, but I want to thank everybody who did because we run that risk of preaching to the choir where we say people need to give input, and we're saying that to a group of people who are giving their input. I want to thank the community and thank you guys for opening this process, and I don't know how much more transparent we could be, and how much more we could beg the community for their input, and at the end of some point in time we just have to move forward with recommendation.

CHILD:
I just want to make sure Board members are thinking about if there's other things you want from Erik or Maurice that are going to help you on prioritizing, you need to let them know. Either bring it up now, or…

HILTON:

…was already brought up is that the proposed cuts need to be divided into that staggered chart of what the …so you as a district need to do that, that is not what we do. You do that. And then based on input we either help calibrate it or make a choice on it. But that is work that you need to do.

BURMEISTER:
I agree, but we want to present to you this staggered framework in a way that represents the priorities that you have that you can communicate to us ahead of time, we would like to able to know that early…

HILTON:
And I think we have, right….

BURMEISTER:
And what I heard was, I heard that class size increases were more of an interest to you than some of the other pieces, and then we heard a lot of community input. Does that influence your decisions, does that influence the direction you want us to go? Those are the kinds of questions that I think we need to understand between now and November 9.

CHILD:
Any else on this? OK, thank you.